**Created in His Image**

***Genesis 1:26-27***

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Introduction: I opened last week’s morning message with a question: “What is your understanding of marriage, abortion, & capital punishment?” I also asked how you would define the morality of these issues. We considered the clash of worldviews: Secular Humanism & Christian Theism. We noted that “clash” by how these competing worldviews answer certain questions. In answer to the question, “Who am I?” Christian Theism responds: I am created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26) & I am created one of two genders (1:27).We also asked, “Why am I here?” to which Christian Theism answers: I am created for God’s glory (Col. 1:15-18) & I am crowned with God’s glory (Psalm 8:4-5).

This morning I want us to consider in more detail just what it means to be created in the image of God. Tonight we will look at how that image has been distorted, & then next Sunday we will consider how that image can be restored. For today, let’s look at these verses in Genesis 1 by noting the terms that are used & the truths that are taught.

I. The **terms** that are used in Genesis 1:26

A. The identification of the terms:

1. *“Image”*

a. The Hebrew word is *“tselem.”*

b. The word means “an object similar to something else & often representative of it”

(Grudem, *Systematic Theology*).

(1) In I Samuel 6:6, it is used of replicas of tumors & mice.

(2) In Ezekiel 23:14, it is used of paintings of soldiers on the wall.

(3) In Numbers 33:42, II Kings 11:28, & Ezekiel 7:27 it is used of pagan idols or statues

representing deities.

2. *“Likeness”*

a. The Hebrew word is *“demut.”*

b. The word means “an object similar to something else, but it tends to be used more

frequently in contexts where the idea of similarity is emphasized more than the idea of

being a representative or substitute” (Grudem).

(1) In II Kings 16:10, it is used of King Ahaz’s model or drawing of the altar he saw in

Damascus.

(2) In II Chronicles 4:3-4, it is used of figures of bulls beneath the bronze altar.

(3) In Psalm 54:4, it is used of the venom of the wicked which is “like” the venom of a

snake.

Summary: “The idea is that they (the 2 terms) ae very similar in their characteristics, but there

is no thought of actual representation or substitution (with the second term)” (Grudem).

B. The implication of these terms:

1. The Hebrew readers would understand the words to mean that men were *like* God & men

would *represent* God; as if God said, “Let us make man to be *like* us & to *represent* us.”

2. A full understanding of these terms requires a full understanding of *who God is* (in His being

& actions), as well as a full understanding of *who man is* (& what he does). Cf. Ps. 46:10.

II. The **truths** that are taught in Genesis 1:26-27

A. The **aspects** of being created in the image of God:

1. Moral aspects >

a. This speaks of moral sensibility; an innate sense of right & wrong.

b. This also speaks of moral accountability; to one’s Creator for his actions.

Note: Ryrie suggests, “When he (man) sinned, he lost the moral likeness, which was his sin-

lessness, but the natural likeness of intellect, emotions, & will he still retains.”

2. Spiritual aspects >

a. A spiritual life enables man to relate to God (able to pray, praise, & hear from Him in His

Word). This is one aspect that separates man from the animal kingdom.

b. An immortal life; “You will live somewhere forever.” See Hebrews 9:27.

3. Mental aspects >

a. This is the ability to reason & think logically as well as to learn.

b. There is an awareness of eternality, creativity, & subjectivity (complex emotions).

4. Relational aspects >

a. This refers to man’s interpersonal relationships (marriage, family, church, community).

b. This includes man’s dominion over creation.

5. Physical aspects >

a. Though God has no “body” since He is Spirit (John 4:24), yet our bodies reflect something

of God’s character.

b. Our body’s ability to see, hear, speak are God-like qualities (He sees, hears, speaks, etc.).

Summary: “Our bodies have been created by God as suitable instruments to represent in a

physical way our human nature, which has been made to be like God’s own nature”

(Grudem). See II Cor. 6:19-20.

B. The **analysis** of the 2 genders created by God:

1. Male/Female creation speaks of harmony >

a. The interpersonal relationship in marriage – Genesis 2:24.

b. The interpersonal relationship in family – Psalm 127:1-5.

2. Male/Female creation speaks of equality >

a. They are equally important to God; both are created in the image of God.

b. They are equally valuable to God. See Galatians 3:27-28.

Contrast: A rabbi’s prayer – “Lord, I thank Thee that I am not a woman.” And compare

China’s one-child policy that resulted in girl babies being left to die in order to have a son.

Consider: “If God thinks us to be equal in value, then that settles the question, for God’s

evaluation is the true standard of personal value for all eternity” (Grudem).

3. Male/Female creation speaks of authority >

a. The man created first indicates headship & leadership. See I Corinthians 11:9.

b. The woman was created as an *“help meet”* – “A helper suitable to him; his counterpart”

(Ryrie). Yet sin brought a distortion of the previous roles; Genesis 3:16.

Summary: “So in both cases, the curse brought a *distortion* of Adam’s humble, considerate

leadership & Eve’s intelligent, willing submission to that leadership which existed before the

fall” (Grudem). [Eve’s desire (to conquer), to usurp authority & man’s misuse of authority by

ruling harshly.] See Grudem’s summary, p. 467 (copy) & compare Ephesians 5:21-33.

Conclusion: We will see the extent of man’s distorted image tonight in Romans 1. “Yet we must remem-ber that even fallen, sinful man has the *status* of being in God’s image. Every single human being, no matter how much the image of God is marred by sin, or illness, or weakness, or age, or any other disabil-ity, still has the *status* of being in God’s image & therefore must be treated with the dignity & respect that is due to God’s image-bearer. This has profound implications for our conduct toward others. It means that people of every race (ethnicity) deserve equal dignity & rights. It means that elderly people, those seriously ill, the mentally retarded, & children yet unborn, deserve full protection & honor as human beings. If we ever deny our unique status in creation as God’s only image-bearers, we will soon begin to depreciate the value of human life, will tend to see humans as merely a higher form of animal, & will begin to treat others as such. We sill also lose mush of our sense of meaning in life” (Grudem).