

“Made In The Image Of God”

What Does This Mean? What Difference Does It Make?

By Rev Sylvester Herbert

Genesis 1:26 declares that God made man in His own image and in His own likeness. This verse does not mean that we are identical copies of God, thereby making us gods ourselves, but rather that God made us to resemble Him in some ways. What are those ways?



- (1) *We resemble God mentally in that we can reason and make free choices. Our rational and volitional powers set us apart from the rest of the animal kingdom.*
- (2) *We resemble God morally in that we have an internal moral compass, more commonly referred to as our conscience. People everywhere have a sense that some things are right / good, and some things are wrong / bad.*
- (3) *We resemble God when it comes to our unique relational qualities, that is, we can engage in complex interpersonal relationships.*
- (4) *We resemble God functionally in our ability to create things. We proclaim the image of God every time we use our talents and skills to conceptualize and make creative works. This may evidence itself through our ordinary vocational duties or when we do special things*

like writing a book, composing music, painting a landscape, inventing a machine, etc.

The image of God, also referred to as the *imago dei*, is so important that those who wantonly destroy it are liable for capital punishment. “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image” (Gen. 9:6). Even to curse someone is regarded as an attack on God through the person who bears His image. “With the tongue we

praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness” (James 3:9). This should never happen, says James (3:10).

Four Ways Being Made In The Image of God Should Affect Your Life

1. You have value and worth. Believe you are special!

Many people today struggle with self-esteem. This struggle results in poor quality of life and sometimes even self-harming behaviours such as eating disorders, drug abuse, or suicide. There is absolutely no need for anyone to travel that road of self-destruction. You can know that God loves you and regards you as special because of the high price He paid for you through the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16). So, stop believing lies about yourself – lies other people tell you as well as lies you have been telling yourself. Begin to see yourself the way God sees you!

2. Other people have value and worth. Treat them with respect!

Some categories of people for whom this truth has special relevance include the differently abled, the unborn, the infirm and the elderly.

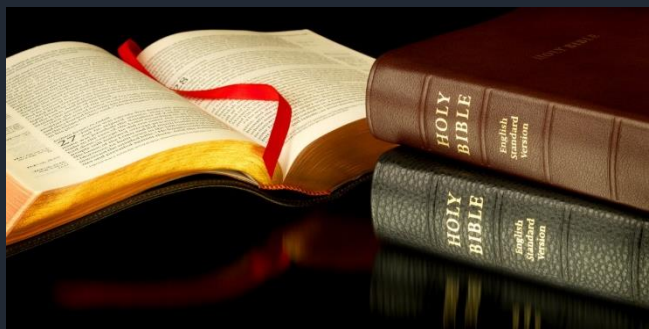
It is fatally easy to see these categories of humans as expendables whose rights can be trampled upon because of their extreme vulnerability. We should



ever remind ourselves that they, like everybody else, are a part of the human family and deserve our protection, care, and respect as God's image-bearers (Matt. 7:12; 1 Peter 2:17). Statements such as "I hate you!" or "I wish you were dead!" have no place in our social intercourse.

3. You have the power of choice. Exercise wisdom when choosing!

Your life is not subject to chance, or to what your horoscope says. You need not be defined by your past or by your current



limitations and challenges. If you feel trapped in any way, you can assess your life's situation, come up with options, think through the implications of each, then make an intelligent decision informed by the Word of God (Psa. 25:4; James 1:5). Do not throw anymore pity parties for yourself! God's image in you is designed to work for you.

4. The image of God in you is marred. Commit to having it restored!

Who can deny that everyone is deficient in some way in their mental, moral, relational, and functional capacities? Our reasoning is

sometimes flawed. The best among us makes poor choices. Our God-given faculties are often used in the service of sin. Our relationships are not generally characterized by

genuine love for one another but rather are tainted by our love of self. The Word of God informs us that all this has come about because of the Fall of Man (Gen. 3). The gospel is the good news that Christ's work on the cross makes possible the renewal and restoration of the shattered image of God in us (Eph. 4:23-24). Jesus is the perfect representative of the image of God and those who are in Him are being conformed to His image (Rom. 8:29). Let

us respond to Him in continued obedience so that the restoration of His image in us can be maximized.●