

INTRODUCTION

The story of creation: after God spent five days creating water, sky, land, plants, animals, the stars, he created man and woman.

[26] Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

*[27] So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.*

*[28] And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." [29] And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. [30] And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. [31] And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.
(Genesis 1:26–31)*

Why did God create humanity?

- Did he do it because he was lacking?
- Did he do it because he was lonely?

Isaiah 43 tells us. God says;

*Bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the end of the earth,
everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made.*

WE WERE CREATED FOR GOD'S GLORY

There are a few things to note in there.

- 1.) The obvious is that we were created to bring glory to God.
- 2.) We were created to know and enjoy God (sons and daughters).

Westminster Catechism: *“What is the Chief end of Man? To glorify God and enjoy him forever.”*

I love how **John Piper** rewords this: *“God is most glorified in us, when we are most satisfied in him!”*

So, our ultimate goal as humans is to give God glory with our lives. The Scriptures lay out the ways we do this:

- 1.) **Enjoy a relationship with him** (Psalm 16:11) “In your presence there is fullness of joy”
- 2.) **Praise him with your lips** (Psalm 63:3). The noblest use of our tongues is to give praise to God.
- 3.) **Obey his Word.** To the corrupt priests in Malachi’s day, the Lord said: “If you don’t listen, and if you don’t take it to heart to honor my name, ... I will send a curse among you” (Mal. 2:2). How had they dishonored God’s name? They had disobeyed God’s Law by presenting defiled food on the altar (Mal. 1:6-7; see also Deut. 15:21).
- 4.) **Pray in Jesus’ name.** “Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:13). To pray in Jesus’ name is to align our prayers and desires with God’s purposes.
- 5.) **Produce spiritual fruit.** “My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples” (John 15:8). The fruit that issues out of our union with and obedience to Christ brings God glory. The Bible names several kinds of spiritual fruit, including: the fruit we bear when we win others to Christ (Rom. 1:13), the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), and our good deeds (Col. 1:10).
- 6.) **Honor God with our Sexuality.** “Flee sexual immorality! ... glorify God with your body” (1 Cor. 6:18-20).
- 7.) **Seek the good of others.** “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31). The context is Paul’s discussion of whether it was right for believers to eat meat offered to idols. He stated the guiding principle in verse 24, “No one is to seek his own good, but the good of the other person.” When we make lifestyle choices for the good of others, we glorify God.
- 8.) **Give generously.** The result of the Corinthians’ giving to the poor believers in Jerusalem would be that “they will glorify God for your obedient confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity” (2 Cor. 9:13).
- 9.) **Live honorably among unbelievers.** “Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits” (1 Pet. 2:12). Jesus said, “let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

- 10.) **Be faithful when persecuted.** “But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in having that name” (1 Pet. 4:16). If we want to glorify God, then we’ll not be ashamed of the name of Jesus.
- 11.) **Face death with faith.** Jesus predicted Peter would die as a martyr and “would glorify God” in his death (John 21:19). Paul hoped Christ would be glorified in his death (Phil. 1:20). We can show God to be great in the way we approach death because we know “to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).

WE WERE CREATED IN GOD’S IMAGE

Humans – “very good” – There is something unique about humanity.

If all the Bible told us about ourselves is that we were created for God’s glory, that would be great. But it actually wouldn’t distinguish us from the rest of creation. Because *all* of creation is for God’s glory. Psalm 19:1 says, “the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.”

What makes humanity unique is that we are the only aspect of creation made “in the image of God.” Genesis 1:26 says, “*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*”

What does this mean?

We were made to be like God

As creatures made in God’s image, we were made to be like him. Therefore, the more we understand about God, the more we understand about ourselves. And the more we understand ourselves, the more we understand God.

So, two weeks ago, we talked about the communicable (shared) and incommunicable (unshared) attributes of God.

Unshared attributes of God: Omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, immutability, eternity, sovereignty, etc.

Shared attributes of God: Holiness, love, truth, righteousness, mercy, beauty, etc.

For example, we are moral creatures, created with an innate sense of right and wrong. This is a reflection of God’s perfect sense of right and wrong.

In addition, we are not merely physical creatures; we are also spiritual creatures, which means we are somewhat like God, who is spirit. Our spirit is a reflection of God’s nature and allows us to relate to him personally.

Another example, our ability to think about and process information is a reflection of God's knowledge. And our ability to relate to others, as well as our desire for community, is a reflection of God's perfect community within the Trinity.

Other ways that theologians have considered how humanity is unique from the rest of creation:

- The ability to create
- The ability to worship
- The ability to relate
- The ability to reason
- [What are some others?](#)

Sin Distorts the Image of God in Us, but Does Not Destroy It

Because of sin, God's image in us is partly distorted. His image is not seen as clearly as it once was.

- My daughter dropped and broke a mirror this morning. You can still see yourself in the mirror. Just not perfectly.
- This is what sin has done to us. It has distorted our ability image God as clearly as we once could, but it's not lost (James 3:9).

The likeness, defiled by sin, doesn't look everything like it is supposed to. For example, sin distorts our moral judgment, clouds our thinking, and hinders our fellowship with God and others.

But the good news of the gospel is that through the death and resurrection of Christ, the image of God is being restored in us. God redeems his children, so that we can "be conformed into the image of his son" (Romans 8:29), who is the "image of the invisible God," (Colossians 1:15). The Apostle Paul says that Christians have a new nature, "Which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Colossians 3:10). And while here on earth, we "are being transformed" into Christ's image "from one degree of glory to another (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The promise of the gospel in the kingdom of heaven, we will become like Jesus. 1 Corinthians 15:49 says, "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven" (1 Corinthians 15:49). Because we are being transformed into the image of Jesus, we will one day fully reflect God's image as we were created to do.

Until then, the task of the Christian to mirror God's image as best as we can, with the help of the Spirit.

We seek to display God's character: Holiness, love, truth, righteousness, mercy, beauty, etc.

We also should strive to honor the image of God in our neighbors: The doctrine of the *imago dei* should lead us to care about:

- Poverty alleviation
- Rescuing and rehabilitating the abused or mistreated
- Lives of the unborn
- Uphold the dignity of the disabled/elderly

- Work on behalf of refugees/immigrants
- Religious liberty
- Flourishing of marriages and families
- Loneliness
- Mental Health issues
- Racial unity
- Sexual abuse, pornography

We were made to reflect God's character to the world

N. T. Wright uses the language of an angled mirror.

Grudem:

As creatures made in God's image, we were also made to be his representatives on the earth. Much like a king who places images of himself around his kingdom to show where he rules (images such as statues and pictures, for example), God has, through us, placed images of himself across his world. This is why he commanded Adam and Eve to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28). When they replicated God's image across the earth, they demonstrated all the places where God rules and reigns. And since "the earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof" (Ps. 24:1), God desires that his image "fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28). When we fill the earth with God's image, we demonstrate all the places where he reigns and rules and bring him the glory he desires and deserves.

- We reflect God's image in two ways:
- Multiplication and Dominion

[28] And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Multiplication

- Not only childbearing. But evangelism and discipleship/mentoring.

Dominion

- Talk about vocation
- What we do matters to God

Questions for Review and Application

1. Why were we created? What are some specific examples of ways we can fulfill the purpose for which we were created?
 2. What does it mean to be created in God's image? How does that affect your view of yourself?
 3. What are our responsibilities as God's image bearers? What are some ways you and your church can fulfill those responsibilities?
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