

## **CREDO 4 – IMAGE: God Loves**

This is our FOURTH study in a series titled **CREDO** –

CREDO = Latin for I BELIEVE. In this series we are following the story line of the Bible to discover the essential beliefs of the Christian faith.

Tonight our topic is IMAGE: God Loves.

We are going to look at the doctrine of imago dei, which means “image of God” in Latin.

So let’s turn to **Genesis 1** and once again Metro — lets PRAY that God the Holy Spirit will REVEAL to each of us the glorious truth that God made us in His image for the purpose of relationship with God and with one another — and that He would reveal to us Jesus Christ as the PERFECT Image Bearer of God — and that we — by the power of the Holy Spirit might be conformed to the Image of Christ.

### **QUESTION #1 — What does it mean to be Human?**

This is a question of HUGE consequence in virtually every thing area of life — from theology to sociology, history, biology, and psychology.

Bottom line — the world around us PROCESSES life and BEHAVES according to the way it answers this question!

Before we get to the text of Genesis we want to lay a bit of historical background as to HOW man has understood himself and his humanity.

**Up until the time of Augustine** (one of the Church fathers)

Man essentially understood himself and his humanity in terms of his relationships — You were a part of a family — a family lineage — part of a local place — part of a state/nation — part of a religious group — part of an ethnicity with a language.

Then came Augustine who wrote a book titled “The Confessions”. He started to look at himself as **an individual** and about his inner life. He began to define himself — NOT by his sphere of influence and circle of relationships around him — but by his INTERNAL and PERSONAL

AUTONOMOUS IDENTITY. This led to the concept of human beings being AUTONOMOUS INDIVIDUALS.

**Years later came another Christian — Rene Descartes**

In trying to answer the question – What does it mean to be a human being — he came up with the saying — “Cogito ergo sum” = “I think, therefore I am.”

St Augustine said that we are autonomous individuals. Descartes said that we are more than that — We are autonomous individuals with rational minds.” Our mind is what makes us human.

**Building upon that was another Christian named Jonathan Edwards —**

A very famous Puritan. He was a great thinker and academic. Some believe him to be perhaps the most brilliant mind in America’s history.

He said that we are individuals with reasonable minds who can be saved, transformed and improved by God’s grace to God’s glory.

**Then came a man named Jean-Jacques Rousseau —**

He said that you are an individual with a rational mind — But you don’t need God and His grace to help you — You don’t need to look outside of yourself to God — You need to look INWARD to SELF .

You’re not really a sinner — you’re basically a good person. You don’t need to seek God’s love — you need to love your self. You don’t need to seek God’s acceptance through Jesus — You need to accept yourself as you are.

You don’t want to have the condemning self-assessment of calling yourself a sinner.

**Then came a man named William James — One of the greatest psychologists in the history of America.**

He said — Not only are you a pretty good person — and not only do the answers to life lie in you rather than in God — — You don’t need God at all! What you need is a highly trained specialized psychologist.

Leave it to a therapist to come up with THAT idea — You don't need God — you need ME!

You don't need GOD to **walk** with you — you need ME to walk with you! You don't need GOD to **speak** to you — You need ME to speak to you! You can't need GOD to **assess** you — You need ME to assess you!

The assumption is that man is that the human body is essentially a MACHINE and that through psychology and therapy you can fix people by reordering their psychological understanding.

We are not against ALL counseling, psychology or therapy. But in it's MODERN FORM (from William James) it omits God who is the GREAT counselor. IN fact the Bible says that Jesus is called *WONDERFUL COUNSELOR*.

We are not opposed to *wonderful counselor* Jesus and those who counsel with, for, like through and to Jesus — We ARE opposed to those who counsel without Jesus — without God — and without an acknowledgment of human sin.

ULTIMATELY — This is looking to someone OTHER than Jesus to be your functional Savior!

**Then leads to a man named Abraham Maslow —**

He came up with what is known as the Hierarchy of needs — and your greatest need is NOT to glorify God — but instead achieve Self-Actualization.

You want to be as healthy as you can be — As successful as you can be — as influential and affluent as you can possibly be.

**This leads to our contemporary culture and a sociologist named Christian Smith**

He calls it Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.

Moralistic — You want to be a good person.

Therapeutic — God is the big therapist in the sky

Deistic — God is not near on a regular basis. He is far removed from your everyday life. He might on occasion throw you a bone / bit of help

You need to fix yourself — save yourself — Transform yourself  
BECAUSE basically you are a pretty good person.

THAT is the world you live in and grew up in. You ARE on your own — God is more a fictional character who IF He does exist might love you — But He is not intimately involved in your life to help you.

THE RESULT is a CULTURE of PRIDE and DESPAIR.

Pride because we think we are great. Despair because when we are honest we don't know what to do.

## **QUESTION #2 — What does the Bible tell us about what it mean to be Human?**

**FIRST** — The Bible tells us that we were created by God. Which is the exact opposite of atheistic thinking.

Ludwig Feuerbach (19th century) was an atheist who declared that God did not make us, but rather we made God as a figment of our imagination. Students of his thinking include

Karl Marx (who applied this politically)

Sigmund Freud (who applied this psychologically)

Friedrich Nietzsche (who applied this philosophically).

**IN CONTRAST** — the Bible tells us in Genesis 1–2 that we did not create God, but rather God created us

**Gen. 1: 1 In the beginning God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth.**

From that we learned that God pre-exists and is separate from creation.  
He created everything.

Following from that is the 6 days in which He prepares the earth form  
man.

**Gen. 1:26 <sup>26</sup>Then God said, —**

He is the God who speaks

**“Let us —**

We see the Trinity — One God who eternally exists in three persons,  
Father, Son and Spirit

**make man —**

That is mankind — Adam — which includes woman

**in our —**

Again — the Trinity — One God who eternally exists in three persons,  
Father, Son and Spirit

**image, after our likeness.**

THAT is what we are going to talk about tonight — What it means to  
be made in the image and likeness of God. We understand the terms to  
be essentially the same.

We are made in God’s IMAGE and 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.” <sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image  
of God he created him; male and female he created them.**

**NOTE WELL:** We read back in **Verse 25** that God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds

**But of mankind** we are told that we were made in **the image of God!**

We are the IMAGE BEARERS of God.

Next week we will look at sin and the effects that it has on the world and mankind.

**Some ask the question** — “Is the IMAGE OF GOD still seen in mankind **after** the fall in the garden and after the curse pronounced upon mankind and the world because of the fall?”

The answer is YES — Genesis 5; Genesis 9; James 3 all tell us that though sinful we are still God’s image bearers.

Genesis 5:1-3

Genesis 9:6 Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

James 3:9 With it (the tongue) we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

Sin does not make us LESS than human — it does make us FALLEN and LOST humans in need of a Savior.

**<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.**

**SOME ASK** — *IF God created us in His image — and SINCE He created man and woman — Is God male or female?*

Jesus said in **John 4:24** God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

God is NOT gendered — He is NOT male or female.

Male and female PROCEED from God and are made EQUAL in the image and likeness of God.

This addresses the chauvinist and the feminist as to which gender is better?

The TRUTH is that men and women are EQUAL because they bear the image and likeness of God.

Well how do we explain this the emotionally?

It is not that there are male and female emotions — rather there are human emotions that are expressed in masculine and feminine ways. Men and women both LOVE — get ANGRY — GRIEVE. We SHARE the SAME emotions but we work them out a bit differently according to GENDER.

SO — We are made in the image and likeness of God — MALE and FEMALE.

God does REVEAL Himself as FATHER in the Bible. Jesus referred to Him as FATHER. Jesus is worshipped as the SON of God.

NOWHERE in the Bible do we find God called MOTHER. SO he predominately REVEALS Himself in masculine terms. **But God is NOT engendered!** In His Incarnation Jesus came as a MAN. But God is NOT engendered. God is SPIRIT — But He made US male and female.

**Then we read**

**<sup>28</sup>And God blessed them.**

Please note the LOVING relationship — Grace and kindness and affection towards the man and the woman.

**And God said to them,**

NOTICE — God speaks to them KNOWING that UNLIKE the animals He had created — the man and the woman were made in His *image and likeness* — we can COMMUNICATE — He can talk to us and we can respond.

**<sup>28</sup>“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.” <sup>29</sup>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. <sup>30</sup>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.**

God said — I’ve created and prepared all of this as a gift for YOU! The earth is YOURS — have dominion and be good stewards of it — take care of it.

**<sup>31</sup>And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.**

SO — as He finishes His creative work it is VERY GOOD — There’s no sin — There’s no curse — no death — no tears.

GENESIS 1 is a PANORAMIC view of creation.

GENESIS 2 zooms in on the account with the focus on the man and the woman.

REMEMBER from our study CREATION: God Makes — we said that the Eastern form of storytelling is different from the Western method that is beginning — middle — end.

IN the Eastern form of story telling it is beginning — middle — beginning.

That’s why Genesis 1-2 is about the beginning. Then Genesis 3 onward is about sin— fall and the curse. Then at the end of Revelation (19-20) is about Judgment and then 20-21 is about a new heaven and earth — a new creation — the tree of life in the midst of it — a new forever with God as He intended *IN THE BEGINNING*.

So let's look at **Genesis 2** in which the close up is on the man and the woman.

**<sup>7</sup>then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground**

How did God make the rest of creation? He SPOKE.

How did He make Man? He FORMED man out of the dust of the earth.

**and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.**

We are given a spiritual dimension that separates us from animal life.

**<sup>8</sup>And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup>And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**

**<sup>15</sup>The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.**

**IMPORTANT OBSERVATION:** BEFORE sin there IS work

We were MADE to work and GLORIFY God in it! When sin comes into the picture work takes on a much more complicated and difficult.

**<sup>16</sup>And the Lord God commanded the man, saying,**

**CRUCIAL:** Man is a MORAL being — We are not like animals or plants. God can SPEAK to us moral commands that imply moral action to be taken.

**“You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”**

As a moral being God gave to man a moral choice with consequences.  
Obey and Live — Disobey and die.

**<sup>8</sup>Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone;**

**INTERESTING: Genesis 1 ended in Verse 31** with God saying that everything was very good!

There is NO sin yet — But God says there is something that is NOT good! It was NOT good for man to be alone!

The man has God ABOVE him and creation BELOW him. But he does not have anyone along side of him — a friend — a peer — a helper. God is going to remedy that.

**I will make him a helper fit for him**

Many women bristle at this — to be referred to as man’s helper!

But this is no slight at all. It is a high compliment.

FIRST — It implies that man NEEDS help!

Secondly — The term HELPER is used in reference to God. He is CONSTANTLY referred to as HELPER in the Psalms. Jesus calls God the Holy Spirit **THE HELPER!**

This is NOT a DENEGRATION — It is a DECLARATION of her NECESSITY and of the striking way in which the woman bears the image of God.

**<sup>19</sup>So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the**

**man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup>The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field.**

The man gave names (Dylan tune)

This is AUTHORITY — This is RULE.

**But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. <sup>21</sup>So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.**

This BEAUTIFUL! Everything was spoken in to existence by the Word of God EXCEPT for man — He was FORMED by the “metaphorical hands” of God. And the woman is created from the SIDE of the man.

This shows us that the woman is not to be out ahead of the man — as feminism teaches

She is not to be behind the man — as chauvinism teaches

But she is to be along side of the man as an EQUAL IMAGE BEARER of God.

(Welcome Home — That’s where she comes from... that’s where she belongs).

**<sup>22</sup>And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.**

**NOTE:** God MAKES the woman and BRINGS the woman to man. God STILL works that way — He forms the woman in the womb and then BRINGS her providentially to the man for which she was made.

**SO — God has FINISHED making the woman —** It his her first day of existence. And He brings her to Adam. And we have recorded for us the FIRST SPOKEN WORDS in all of human history!

He looks at his wife and says

**<sup>23</sup>Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”**

In the Hebrew this is rhyme — It is poetry.

Then he makes a three-fold declaration on the binding relationship established by God which is still binding upon marriage today!

**<sup>24</sup>Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother**

Grow up and be a man!

**and hold fast to his wife,**

Get married

**and they shall become one flesh.**

Enjoy the physical intimacy that is prescribed by God (and blessed by God) within the context of a life long — heterosexual — monogamous relationship

**ONE** is the same used for God in Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear O Israel — The Lord our God is **ONE**.

As the Father Son and Spirit are **ONE** — **SO** the man and woman in marriage and in the consummation of the relationship are **ONE**.

**SO MARRIAGE** pictures the loving community that is enjoyed by the Trinity.

THAT is why God said that it is not good for man to be alone.

WHAT ABOUT those who are SINGLE?

**It doesn't mean** that single people DON'T bear the image of God.

THEY DO! It means that single people are NOT to be alone. They are to be found in a loving community — friendship — extended family — being committed to a church community.

THAT is how the SINGLE person acts in a Trinitarian way.

THE BIG IDEA is that RELATIONSHIPS are what God intended as a reflection of His image.

<sup>25</sup>**And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.**

No shame — There was just intimacy and pleasure in marriage.

Next study we will see how sin ruins all of this.

THE MAIN POINT is that we were made for FOUR categories of relationship

We are to relate to GOD — That is our THEOLOGICAL relationship.

We are to relate to OTHERS — That is our SOCIOLOGICAL relationship

We are to relate CREATION — that is our ENVIRONMENTAL relationship.

We are to have a relationship with OURSELVES — I know I've been created by God — HE loves me — He speaks to me — There are things He wants me to do and other things He doesn't want me to do. THAT is our PSYCHOLOGICAL relationship.

In our next study we will see how SIN mars ALL of those relationships

Ruins our relationship with God

Ruins our relationship with others  
Ruins our relationship with the environment  
Ruins our lives psychologically.

The world is a MESS because the individuals within it are marred by sin!

### **QUESTION #3 — Where does man fit in relationship to God and Creation?**

**Psalm 8** is like a mini-commentary on Genesis 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> Yet **you** (god) have made **him** (man) a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor <sup>6</sup> You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,  
<sup>7</sup> all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, <sup>8</sup> the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

**KEY INSIGHT:** The Hebrew could mean the angels — or it could mean God himself (elohim).

The Bible defines our place relative to **GOD** and **CREATION**.

Mankind is **BELOW** God as a **WORSHIPPER** — And **ABOVE** lower creation in dominion

**CRUCIAL CONNECTION:** Nearly every error in anthropology is the result of

shoving us **UP TOO HIGH** in relationship to God

we are basically good — we have the spark of the divine within — we are actually god.

or shoving us **DOWN TOO LOW** in relationship creation.

We are basically animals. **THAT** is too Low.

Many take that position as the excuse for every kind of sin

**EXAMPLE:** Talk show host to male caller who keeps committing adultery – his wife was angry with him Tell your wife your just the male in a highly evolved animal species and as highly evolved males men we need to have sex whenever and with whomever – get over it.

**QUOTE: Hugh Hefner** — *“Sex is a function of the body. A drive which man shares with animals. Like eating, drinking and sleeping. It's a physical demand that must be satisfied. If you don't satisfy it you will have all sorts of neurosis and repression psychosis. Sex is here to stay. Let's forget the prudery that makes us hide from it. Throw away those inhibitions, find a girl who's like minded and let yourself go.”*

We are not just animals with a drivers license and a job!

We are HUMANS made in the IMAGE of God with moral responsibility and accountability.

It is **ONLY** by seeing ourselves between God and the animals do we have both our humility and dignity.

#### **QUESTION #4 — What does it mean that we are God's image?**

We have MORAL LIKENESS to God.

We have the ability to make decisions that have an impact on others around us and the environment and ourselves

We have social abilities — we can communicate — we possess emotion.

We also have NON-MORAL LIKENESS to God.

We can reason — think — learn

We are immortal — We have a spiritual dimension

We have the ability to create

We have the ability to appreciate beauty and aesthetics

ALL of these come from what theologians call IMAGO DEI.

Having said that we must understand that there are certain of God's attributes that are NOT shared with us — these are called the **INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES of God**. These belong to God alone because ONLY He is God — and we are not!

Omnipresent — He is everywhere — we can not be

Omniscient — He knows everything — we do not

Omnipotence — He is all powerful — we are not

Immutable — He never changes — and we do

Eternal — He alone has no beginning — we were made

Sovereign — He rules over everyone and everything — and we don't

There are ways that we are somewhat like God — These are Shared Attributes or **COMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES** that belong to God and us

God is Spirit — We possess a spirit

God is Holy — We can live — by God's grace — a holy life.

God is Love/Good — We can know and experience and give the love of God

God is Truth — We can be truth tellers and truth receivers

God is Just/Righteous — We can love and fight for

God is Merciful — We too can be

God is Beautiful — We can create and appreciate beauty — music art — architecture — fashion — food

ALL of this comes out of the fact that we are the image bearers of God.

Whether Christian or not you still enjoy the benefits of being made in the image and likeness of God.

We will see next week that we are marred and stained by sin — but we are still blessed by being made in the image and likeness of God.

**QUESTION #5 — What are some of the common ways that people misunderstand the concept of the image of God?**

We are made up of multiple parts.

We have a mind that thinks.

We have what the Bible calls the HEART — the seat of our affections.

We have a soul — a spirit.

We have a body.

Errors are made when — in an attempt to define the essence of our humanity — what it means to be a human being — we reduce our existence to just ONE of those aspects of human existence.

**EXAMPLE: The Materialist** — We are just a body — a piece of meat. No soul — NOTHING beyond our last breath — Nothing SPIRITUAL about us

**EXAMPLE: We are just the MIND** — That alone makes us human.

Descartes — “Cogito ergo sum” — “I think, therefore I am.”

But what about the person that is in a comma? Is he LESS than human? What about the unborn child, and we are not sure what they are thinking? Is he less than human? What about the child born with a Mental defect? Does that make them less than human?

NO — They bear the image and likeness of God.

EXAMPLE: Others, Like B.F. Skinner — say that to be human consists in being acted upon by your environment.

IF THAT is what defines us as HUMAN — THEN our humanity is essentially a matter of VICTIMHOOD — You are a victim of culture and environment

If you grew up in a Bad family — It's your parents/siblings fault.  
If you grew up in a Bad country — It's your country's fault  
If you grew up in a Bad neighborhood — It's your neighbor's fault  
If someone sinned against you — It's their fault.

You are a VICTIM.

SKINNER says we essentially a product of our environment rather than the product of the image and likeness of God.

FIRST — It ROBS us of our dignity

SECOND — Fails to take into account the fact that WE make culture. We CAN'T say people are good but culture is bad. Who

made culture? People! Why is culture bad? Because people are bad!

It overlooks the problem of SIN! It creates a VICTIM mentality. If you didn't have a dad you get a blank check to live however you want for the rest of your life. If someone has abused you — you assume your posture as VICTIM and NOT as an image-bearer of God and you get to blame everyone and if you're really lucky you can get a big settlement along the way.

You are

NOT just a body.

NOT just a mind.

NOT just held hostage by your environment.

EXAMPLE: We are not just a soul

Hinduism and Buddhism make this error. The goal is to get the soul separated from their body.

Jesus came as a human being in a human body in order to show us that the ESSENCE of being human is to have a SOUL and a BODY. When Jesus comes for the Church — and when we stand before God after death — is not to be merely a SOUL — we we live forever in a glorified body.

EXAMPLE: We not just emotions

The essence of humanity is to merely FEEL deeply. GO ahead and get angry — that makes you human — GO ahead and cry — that

makes you human — Do anything to laugh — that makes you human.

Ultimately that is played out today in the mind set of — I can't love God or others unless I first love myself.

THAT is NOT our problem,

Love others as you love (present active indicative ) yourself

We love God — not because we have learned to love ourselves.

We love God because HE FIRST LOVED us. And THAT makes me want to love God and love others.

**BIG POINT:** You are NOT just a body — a mind — emotions — the product of environment.

You are a whole person made in the image of God.

HERE'S the OUTCOME of seeing yourself as just ONE of these things that collectively make us human.

If you think you are just the body — we just treat your body — you medication / diet / exercise.

If you think the problem is mental — we give you a counselor and some new insights and some encouragement.

If you think it's just emotions — we want to get you to laugh or cry — be passionate — get you connected to your hopes your hurt your pain your mourning your pain your hopes and dreams.

If you think you are a product of your environment — then we work on changing your environment so you can THEN live a new life.

ALMOST ALL of our modern counseling is based upon the idea of REDUCTIONISM — treating only ONE aspect of their being.

You have to deal with the WHOLE person — That is what God does. God deals with us in such a way that we RESPOND to Him with all of our heart soul body and strength.

None of this is to say that all medicine or counseling is bad. But in and of themselves they don't address the WHOLE person — and as a result they don't give the MOST help.

By taking ONE aspect of our being over and above the rest, we are guilty of worshiping created things such as our body, mind, emotions, soul, or culture instead of the Creator God who makes all things.

## **QUESTION # 6 — Who BEST images God?**

### **JESUS!**

**2 Cor. 4:4 speaks of Christ, who is the image** — There's the language of Genesis 1; 5; 9 — **of God.**

**Col. 1:15 He is the image** — there it is again — **of the invisible God,**

**HERE WE COME TO THE APPLICATION OF THIS GREAT  
DOCTRINE OF IMAGO DEI —**

You might say — HOW do I IMAGE God to a lost world? I don't know HOW to live a life in light of the fact that I have been MADE by God with DIGNITY and VALUE — PURPOSE and HONOR. HOW should I LOVE my life — WHERE should I look?

One of the GREAT FLAWS of secular counseling (and sadly, many times “Christian counseling”) is that there is NO FUNCTIONAL EXAMPLE of what NORMAL IS and DOES.

If you are going to help someone you have to say — HERE is NORMAL — compare yourself to that and see what changes must be affected. If we CAN'T do THAT — we are never going to help people.

JESUS is what a NORMAL human being is SUPPOSED to be like. JESUS is what you and I would be like without sin. We would love God — we would obey God — we would serve others — we would be humble — have complete on going trust in God — we would be compassionate — we would be generous with our stuff.

THE WORST THING we can do is to compare others to ourselves — say *“I'M normal — and if people aren't like me there is something wrong with them!”*

THAT is what man does — and in that we attempt to define NORMAL humanity. And of course that is why you see the politically liberal defining the politically conservative as abnormal — the fashion conscious person defines the unfashionable as abnormal.

WHAT does a NORMAL person look like?

JESUS is NORMAL! HE is NORMATIVE!

ALL of US — ABNORMAL. We are SINNERS — HE is NOT.

Had sin not come into the world, you and I would image God — reflect God — show God — like Jesus does.

**ILLUSTRATION: John Calvin** — “To image God means to REFLECT God like a mirror.”

God is LOVING — The earth should see that through us.

God is TRUTHFUL — The earth should see that through us.

God is LOVING — The earth should see that through us.

God is MERCIFUL and COMPASSIONATE — The earth should see that through us.

God is JUST and HOLY and RIGHTEOUS — The earth should see that through us.

**PROBLEM** — Because of sin we DON'T mirror God well.

Jesus Christ is without sin — HE mirrors God perfectly.

If you want to know what you are supposed to look like — DON'T compare yourself to yourself — or your parents or your friends.

Compare yourself to Jesus — WHO is He? He is the One who has PERFECTLY imaged God.

**QUESTION #7 — HOW do we do that?**

**In our everyday life this is worked out from two sides.**

**FIRST — it is the result of RELATIONSHIP with our creator.**

**Romans 8:29 For those whom he foreknew — he knew that He would make you and love you from eternity past.**

**he also predestined to be conformed to the image — there's our word again — of his Son**

For us to IMAGE God **begins with** the work of the Holy Spirit **CONFORMING US** into the IMAGE of Jesus — Who is THE perfect image bearer of God! Being made more and more like Jesus.

Our JOB is NOT to set up someone else as our normative example. Neither is it our job to by our own strength TRY to act and talk and live more and more by Jesus.

Every day the Christian gets up and is seeking by the grace of God and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit to become more and more like Jesus — and bearing more fully and completely the image of God

**SECOND — we make decisions to put off those things that hinder our life-changing relationship with God — and distort the reflection of the image of God.**

**Col. 3:9-10 <sup>9</sup>Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices <sup>10</sup>and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.**

A Christian is someone who has PUT OFF an old way of living and has PUT ON a new way of living that has its source in the transforming power of the Gospel.

**YOU PUT OFF** lying and stealing because those things do not mirror God — God doesn't lie! God doesn't steal!

You might say — *Well in my environment* (inner city / third world / floor of the NY Stock Exchange) *people lie and steal!* WRONG environment! You should be in relationship with God.

You might say — *Well my physical desires say...* — WRONG desires! They're corrupted!

Our GOAL — our HOPE is — to PUT OFF the old way of living and thinking, acting and feeling — and then LIVING OUT our NEW IDENTITY as God's image bearers.

We are not gods — we are not animals — we are humans created in the image and likeness of God — to be in relationship with God and others and then mirror God to the earth.

**LISTEN METRO — THIS TRUTH determines our moral decision making process!**

*Am I going to do this thing that God calls sin? THAT doesn't mirror God! I shouldn't do that.*

*Should I believe this — do this — feel this — think this — say this?*

The real question is — *Will that reflect God well to others? Will they see Jesus?*

Or — *Am I a broken mirror and don't reflect God well — and when others see me they are getting a very distorted image of what God is like.*

And when I make a wrong moral choice — when I sin — I need to REPENT of sin and TRUST in Jesus and ENJOY the process of Jesus putting together the proverbial broken mirror of my life so that more and more the broken mirror of my life can more accurately reflect the goodness of my God — that Jesus would be seen.

SIN is the equivalent breaking of the mirror — Salvation is the process where God by His grace puts the mirror back together so that people can see His image in us — so that our lives will be all about Jesus !

This reflecting of the image of God is culminated and perfected in death!

**1 Cor. 15:49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust (The first Adam), we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven (Jesus — the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam).**

In our next Credo study we will see how in our sin we reflect the image of father, Adam. But in Jesus we are able to image God better and better. And then we will die (or be raptured) and we will rise be given glorified bodies and our minds and our hearts and our wills and our emotions will be fully restored to their intended state and we will we will forever be God's PERFECT — non-corrupted image bearers forever.

All of life is enjoying the work of God enabling us to image Him in the

earth.

**HERE'S THE DEAL — When you make decisions ask this question: What will this reflect about Jesus?**

What am I preaching with my life — my money — my food — my sex — my drink — what am I preaching?

What am I preaching with my relationships — work ethic?

What am I reflecting and showing?

Is God pleased?

**LAST QUESTION — What is a life that images God?**

**1 Cor 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.**

God made us in His image and likeness. Through sin the mirror was broken and we don't reflect God well.

But through Jesus we see what it PERFECTLY looks like to reflect and image God.

By the power of the Holy Spirit we can be transformed so that we too can more and more reflect the glory of God on the earth.

**THIS IS A GREAT LIFE. This IS LIFE.**

It is LIFE when you are broke — when you are suffering — when failing hurting and dying. Because the question is NOT — how can I live a life that glorifies me? The question is — How can I act in such a way as to mirror Him? That means that the WORST parts of life can become the GREATEST opportunities to reflect the glory God. Not just love people — but enemies. Not just forgive people for their minor wrongs against us — but the BIG ones. Not just fall apart into a pit of despair when suffering — but when suffering we can be like Jesus in His sufferings who brought glory to God the father.

The part of contemporary Christian theology that I hate most is that the JOY of the Christian life is to be rooted in someone or something other than the mirroring of Jesus! That Jesus exists to give you everything you want and need! WRONG — We exist to give God the glory in everything and in every place!

THAT approach to the Christian life leaves Christians miserable because our joy is inextricably linked to mirroring Jesus and bringing HIM glory and honor!

Everything else is vanity — a chasing after the wind. It is a wild goose chase with no goose.

You are looking for something that can not be found — and that is joy and meaning and significance **apart from** doing what you were made to do — and that is to reflect the image of God to the earth and bringing glory to Jesus.

**HERE is how we do image God**

**By submitting to God and to His authority** — Admitting that He is God and you are not — do what He says.

**BY worshipping God** — He speaks and acts we respond.

**We represent God — With truth and justice.** We don't simply accept people as they are

Some of you in the name of compassion and kindness say of your loved ones — well that's the way they are. **YOU SHOULD BELIEVE BETTER** for them.

Why do you let your spouse live the way they are living? Well — that's the way they are! **THAT** is not the way they were **MADE** to be. They were made to image God. So — lovingly and truthfully and respectfully speak the truth to them.

**By serving God** — By advancing His kingdom. By making culture that glorifies Him as he commanded our first parents to do. By loving in your marriage. By living as a witness to the world. Jesus said — Let your light so shine that.....

**By loving ALL people of ALL races** — Racism says that some races are more like animals than humans. This is antithetical to the Bible. There are animals and there are humans. Humans bear the image and likeness of God — Animals do not. Racism is the logical extension of evolutionary thought. It is not Biblical thinking. In fact in **Revelation 5** we see men and women before the throne of God who were redeemed from **every tribe and language and people and nation**

There is no place for racism or gender discrimination BECAUSE ALL People male/female — young/old — black/white — rich/poor ALL EQUALLY bear the image and likeness of God. Jesus died for ALL those people so that ALL of them could mirror Him and be with Him forever!

**CHECK THIS OUT** — We live in a world that cries out — we need racial harmony. QUESTION: WHY? If there is not God and we are the product of evolution — there is not guaranteed equality among the species.

REMEMBER the FULL title of Darwins book: The Origin of Species?

*The Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection; or, the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life.*

The cry for racial equality ONLY makes sense in the light of the Biblical account of creation! ALL men made in the image and likeness of God!

**By respecting ALL human life** — The weak — the powerless — the elderly — the unborn — the marginalized — those who struggle with disability.

WHY is that unborn kid — that elderly shut in — that person in a comatose state — worthy of my time energy money love concern and compassion? Shouldn't we just leave them behind? NO — because they bear the image and likeness of God. And when extend compassion and mercy and care to them we are reflecting the image of God and we are honoring God who made them.

Look at a nation without Christian foundations or a nation that has

abandoned Christian foundations — and they regard such as throw-aways.

## **THE ONLY WAY TO DO ALL OF THIS IS THROUGH RELATIONSHIP**

FIRST — with God!

God is a loving Trinitarian community — and we have been made to experience loving relationship with Him!

You do that by repenting of sin and trusting Jesus.

Jesus is God, who became man.

He lived a life we should have lived and have not.

He died the death we should have died — and will not if we trust in Him.

Give your sin to Jesus — Have Him forgive your sin and send the Holy Spirit to make you into a new person who more and more — day by day — reflect the glory of God to the world. And when you die you will image and reflect the glory of God perfectly forever in your glorified body.

SECONDLY — You need to be connected to people because God said that it is NOT GOOD for you to be alone.

You need God and His people.

Before sin entered the world Adam had a perfect relationship and God still looked at Adam and said that it was not good for him to be alone.

So let us — as a church — come along side of you even as Eve came along

side of Adam — that was his bride. The church is Jesus' bride —let us come along side of you.

Be a part of the church family.

Don't just come for goods and services (so-to-speak)

Church is the place where we reflect God's image to others as a functioning community.

**NEXT OPEN — FALL: God Judges**