

What Does It Mean to be Made in the Image of God?



Ever had one of those moments when you said something or reacted a certain way and then you caught yourself? *I just turned into my father!!*

Some of us look like our parents, but all of us tend to pick up some habit, mannerism, or phrase that makes people say, “You remind me of your mother (father)!” We shouldn’t be surprised. We’re made in their image in so many ways.

That may be a compliment to you. For others, being like their parents is the last thing they want. As teenagers, many of us yelled, “When I grow up, I’m not going to be like my parents!” We wanted to be our own person, to create our own image.

We still do. We create an image of ourselves on social media that paints us in a certain light. We control what we say and what images we display. We are our own spin doctors. We work hard to control our image. That’s unfortunate because the best image of you is the one God created you to have.

You are created in the image of God. “God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female” (Gen. 1:27).

You were created to be like God and represent Him. Image has nothing to do with physical characteristics. We are made to commune with God and display His character. Let me use a phrase common to most Christians: We are to be like Christ.

The tendency is to define what “the image of God” means by what is important to us.

- During the Renaissance, artistry and beauty were high values in European culture. Consequently, God’s role as the Creator—the Creator of all that is good and beautiful—was lifted up. Since we’re in the image of God, we’re to be people who create beauty.
- During the Enlightenment, reason and order were lifted up. Discussions of God highlighted His divine reason and orderly work in the universe. To be made in His image, then, meant we are to be, first and foremost, people of reason and order.
- During the Victorian era, morality was paramount. God is the God of morality, and to be made in His image, meant we are to be, above everything else, moral people.

There is an element of truth in all these, but we need to guard against focusing on one aspect of God while ignoring other aspects of His work and character. We are created in God’s image, to be like Him in every way.



Sin marred that image within us. Unfortunately, when we look at others, we rarely see the image of God. Instead, we see the evil dictator, the self-centered celebrity, and that annoying neighbor. We see ourselves.



We were created for the purpose of bearing God’s image, and Jesus came to earth to restore that broken image in us. Jesus gave us a perfect demonstration of God’s likeness.

- “The glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor. 4:4).
- “He is the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15).
- “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his nature” (Heb. 1:3).

Want to know what God is like? Look to Jesus.

Even when Jesus was rejected as the Son of God, even as He was tortured and executed on a Roman cross, He still reflected the image—the nature and character of God.

- He thought of others. He saw to it that His grieving mother was cared for (John 19:25-27).
- He affirmed the faith of others (Luke 23:39-43).
- He called out to God the Father to forgive (v. 34).

Trust Christ. Follow Him. Lean on Him. Let Him forgive you, restore you, and transform you into the person He created you to be. Even with your unique personality and abilities, God’s image can shine through you. Don’t think you’re limited because of any perceived “ordinariness” in you. Don’t think you’re attractive enough? It doesn’t matter. Don’t think you’re skilled enough? It doesn’t matter. In fact, the power and character of God may be most visible in those of us who are “plain and ordinary.”

“Brothers and sisters, consider your calling: Not many were wise from a human perspective, not many powerful, not many of noble birth. Instead, God has chosen what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen what is weak in the world to shame the strong” (1 Cor. 1:26-27).

As God told Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).

Let others see Jesus in you. When you reflect the character of Christ to others, you are the gospel to them. And God will use you to help others be restored to the image of God.