

## Salvation and the image of God

Now as is the case with everything God does, He created people to display His **glory**. He achieved this by making people in **“His own image and likeness.”** Here in the text of Genesis God explicitly tells us that we were made to **bear His image** and to show forth His **likeness**. See here the reason **why** people were created by God.

**Genesis 1:26-27** - 26 Then God said, **“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;** and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 And **God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.** NASB

But what does it mean that we were created in the **“image and likeness of God?”** It really is a very simple concept and means that people are like God and represent Him in many divers ways. Grudem comments.... *“Out of all the creatures God made, only one creature, man, is said to be made “in the image of God.” What does that mean? We may use the following definition: The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God and represents God. When God says, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen 1:26), the meaning is that God plans to make a creature similar to himself. Both the Hebrew word for “image” and the Hebrew word for “likeness” refer to something that is similar but not identical to the thing it represents or is an “image” of. The word image can also be used of something that represents something else.... Because “image” and “likeness” had these meanings, Scripture does not need to say something like, The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God in the following ways: intellectual ability, moral purity, spiritual nature, dominion over the earth, creativity, ability to make ethical choices, and immortality [or some similar statement]. Such an explanation is unnecessary, not only because the terms had clear meanings, but also because no such list could do justice to the subject: the text only needs to affirm that man is like God and the rest of Scripture fills in more details to explain this. In fact, as we read the rest of Scripture, we realize that a full understanding of man's likeness to God would require a full understanding of who God is in his being and in his actions and a full understanding of who man is and what he does. The more we know about God and man the more similarities we will recognize, and the more fully we will understand what Scripture means when it says that man is in the image of God. The expression refers to every way in which man is like God.”*  
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In this idea of **bearing the image of God**, we see the **reason** and **purpose** for which we were created and **why we exist**. Here is the **significance** and meaning for human life, it is to **be like God** and **bear His image**. And it is for this reason that we know that mankind is the highest created order of beings and has the unique role and responsibility to **bear God's own image**. And as a result, we have also been created to experience God in profound ways. We are created with a capacity to **enjoy the pleasantness and beauty** of the virtue and **Goodness of God**.

**Psalms 16:11** - 11 Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; **In Thy presence is fulness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever.** NASB

**Psalms 17:15** - 15 As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness; **I will be satisfied with Thy likeness** when I awake. NASB

**2 Corinthians 4:17** - 17 For momentary, light affliction is **producing for us an eternal weight of glory** far beyond all comparison NASB

**Ephesians 2:4-7** - 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, 7 **in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.** NASB

**Ephesians 3:16-19** - 16 that He would **grant you, according to the riches of His glory**, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 **may be able to comprehend** with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and **to know the love of Christ** which surpasses knowledge, that you may be **filled up to all the fullness of God**. NASB

**1 Timothy 6:17** - 17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, **who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy**. NASB

He created us to be both **receptors** and **reflectors** of **His virtue and glory**. Receptors so that we could be **“satisfied”** and **“filled up to all the fullness of God”** so that in **our full satisfaction** we would then seek after and **sound forth the praise of His glory** as an overflow of the enjoyment of His Goodness, the excellency of His own virtue or the pleasantness of His attributes.

**Reflectors** so that we would then **seek after** and **sound forth the praise of His name and worship Him** for His own profound excellency, the highest and most worthy glory, the Glory of the Triune God! We were created to put on display the Glory of God and this is the great meaning and purpose of our lives, to **bear His image**. In this we will both glorify and enjoy God! Grudem comments... *“The fact that God created us for his own glory determines the correct answer to the question, “What is our purpose in life?” Our purpose must be to fulfill the reason that God created us: to glorify him. When we are speaking with respect to God himself, that is a good summary of our purpose. But when we think of our own interests, we make the happy discovery that we are to enjoy God and take delight in him and in our relationship to him. Jesus says, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). David tells God, “In your presence there is fulness of joy in your right hand are pleasures for evermore” (Ps 16:11). He longs to dwell in the house of the Lord forever, “to behold the beauty of the LORD” (Ps 27:4)... Fullness of joy is found in knowing God and delighting in the excellence of his character. To be in his presence, to enjoy fellowship with him, is a greater blessing than anything that can be imagined. How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs, yea, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God....For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. (Ps 84:1-2,10).” (from Systematic Theology, Copyright © 1994 by Wayne Grudem)*

### **Enjoying God, Worshipping and becoming like Him**

God wants to make us happy and blessed in the enjoyment of Himself so that in our enjoyment of Him we would overflow with praise and worship. Then as we increase in the enjoyment of God’s nature, as we worship Him we become more like Him, displaying with even greater intensity the glory of His virtue in ourselves as we take on and participate in the very nature of God.

**2 Peter 1:2-4** - 2 **Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus** our Lord; 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us **everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him** who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, **in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. NASB

This cannot truly happen in us until we truly appreciate the virtue and Goodness of God’s own nature through the **“true knowledge of Him.”** We must come to know Him personally and intimately, to **“know”** Him truly in our heart. It is **“through”** this **“true knowledge of Him”** that His virtue is **“multiplied”** to us as Peter states, **“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.”** And this he tells us is how we become like God. We have **“everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him.”** This is to say that we become like God or we **bear His image and likeness** in an increasing way, we **“participate in the divine nature,”** in **“godliness,”** through coming to know Him as His