

# Genesis Ch1v26-31 - In God's Image

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[ 0 : 00 ] Then God said, Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish, in the sea, in the birds, in the sky, and over the livestock, and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful, and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish in the sea, and the birds in the sky, and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

Then God said, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth, and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

And to all the beasts of the earth, and all the birds in the sky, and all the creatures that move along the ground, everything that has the breath of life in it, I give every green plant for food.

And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day. Well, let's pray.

[ 1 : 16 ] Let's see what we can learn from God's word today. Let's pray. The God who spoke this universe into being, out of nothing, creating life, creating mankind, making us.

Father God, we ask that you now will speak to us through your word in such a way that it grabs a hold of us and helps us to see clearly who we are, how we should live, and what it means to be your image bearers.

Father, I pray that you will change us today, change us for good, change us so that we would reflect your glory better.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Look with me at chapter 1, verse 1, the first verse of the Bible. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now go to verse 26, where we started our reading.

[ 2 : 50 ] Then God said, let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish, the sea, and the birds of the sky. Did you notice a change in those two verses?

We've been given some new information about God. Look again closely at verse 26. Then God said, let us make mankind in our image.

So, who is the us and the our? It seems that God is a lot more complex than we first thought. While we're not given all the details at this point in Scripture, we are being given an insight into who God is.

As we read through the Bible, God is always referred to God as one. There is only one God, but yet this God can speak of himself as us and our.

As we read the Bible progressively, bit by bit, God reveals that God is one in three persons. The us and the our will become identified as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

[ 4 : 06 ] So, when God says in verse 26, then God said, let us make mankind in our image, God is declaring that he is a relational kind of God.

He already enjoys an eternal loving relationship within himself. He talks within himself. They come to an agreement that we're going to make mankind.

mankind. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are united in perfect harmony. So, when God creates mankind, he doesn't do it because he needs anyone.

It's not as if God is bored or that he's somehow lonely, but God longs to share the joy he has within himself with mankind.

God takes delight in creating mankind. He creates us. He's created you to welcome us that we would share in his eternal loving relationship.

[ 5 : 16 ] So, this morning we're going to look together at who we are made to be. Made to be in relationship with God. First, made in God's image.

We're really going to be focusing on verses 27 and 28. So, look at verse 27. God created mankind in his own image. In the image of God, he created them.

Male and female, he created them. So, three things we're going to see from this verse. First, look at image. An image is a reflection.

Like when you looked in the mirror this morning in the bathroom, you see a reflection of yourself. It's not your true self, but an image of yourself. Now, God creates us to be his image bearers, to reflect him.

God can't be seen, he's not a physical being like us, but his intention is, is that he would be reflected in human form and character.

[ 6 : 24 ] We are to be a visible, representation of the invisible God. Think of it like this, it's really quite extraordinary.

Think of the sun and its brilliant light shining by day. At night, the sun is still shining on the other side of the world to where we are, and its light is reflected on the surface of the moon, which in turn shines back down on the earth.

So the sun reflects its light off the moon back down to earth. Now, the reflected light is not the same as the sun's light. We can't see the sun, but it's a reflection of that light.

So as God's image bearers, we are to reflect the beauty and greatness of God. We were created and designed in such a way that we would shine forth his glory, that we would display his love, his justice, his mercy, his purity.

God wonderfully creates an image of himself, and you and I were created to be that very image.

[ 7 : 44 ] So, image. But, verse 27, in the image of God, he created them, male and female, he created them.

God's reflection is to be seen in mankind, and the different kinds of mankind, if we want to put it like that, are male and female.

Both equally reflect the image of God. One is not better, and one is not less than the other. Men and women are equal in value, worth, and dignity. There's no inferiority, and no superiority.

Now, while male and female are equally God's image bearers, that doesn't mean to say that God is somehow 50% male, and 50% female, and he kind of makes images of half and half.

No, we saw last week, didn't we, that God is distinct from humanity. He's not like us. He's not restricted to a physical body. But yet, we are to reflect his image.

[ 8 : 50 ] Men and women are to display his character. Now, before we move on, it's important to underline here that God has created gender.

We are either male or female. We're not interchangeable beings. And it's important because gender is being redefined, we'll read about it and hear about it, as something that is fluid, not fixed.

In other words, we are not assigned our gender at birth, but we choose our gender at will. This ideology is summed up in a picture book written for four-year-old children called The Gender Fairy.

It tells the children, quote, Only you know if you are a boy or a girl. No one can tell you. And the author's hope is this, to quote again, Some children will realise that their true identity is not the gender they were assigned at birth, and will choose to make a social transition to live as their true gender.

Picture book written for four-year-olds. You see, behind this gender ideology is essentially a search for identity.

[ 10 : 17 ] Who am I? Looking for meaning and purpose. And the good news that we've been looking at at the beginning of Genesis is that we were created for something much greater than we could ever choose or design for ourselves.

We were created by God to share in his joy and to reflect his glory. This is where all humanity finds our true happiness and purpose.

Of course, gender struggles are a very real issue, and they shouldn't be ignored. We need to lovingly listen and show compassionate care.

We need to gently come alongside people of all ages and all backgrounds. parents. We need to support parents whose children may struggle.

We are to show very simply and clearly that we were designed and created by God to share in his joy and reflect his glory as male and female.

[ 11 : 25 ] To help us more on this, I highly recommend a book by Sharon James called Gender Ideology. I have this little book here. The quote that I read to you comes from it.

Really helpful, very short. Have a look at it. Read it. Or if you want to talk to me further about these things, please do. We're created, male or female, to be God's image bearers.

Now this makes it wonderfully unique. All of us, male and female, are created as God's image bearers. Nothing else in all creation has the privilege of being image bearers.

Every single person, rich or poor, abled or disabled, black or white, all of mankind are equally and uniquely made in God's image.

That means, and Ralph touched on this in Psalm 8, that we are above the animals, but under God. God's image and we're all equal, but we're above the animals, but under God.

[ 12 : 39 ] That is, we're not the same as animals. We were created to be thinking, rational human beings, giving love and receiving love with feelings and emotions. We were made to commune with God and be in relationship with God.

So, we are not the same as animals. We're above the animals, but we're also under God. God. We're not God with infinite power and wisdom.

We're not autonomous, independent beings. We were created to be like God and in relationship with God, but always under God. Now, the problems begin when we reduce human beings to the status of an animal.

When we do that, life is no longer valued. Life can be terminated at will, like you do to a pet who's no longer wanted, or when the pet gets sick.

Well, let's put it down. After all, we're just all animals, aren't we? It's okay to do that. In the same way, the problems begin when we take the place of God or we put ourselves equal or above God.

[ 13 : 49 ] We become the rule makers and the decision makers and we make rules that are no longer good for us, but ultimately harm us. Listen, to be created as God's image bearers, that means we are male and female and we are wonderfully unique in the place of all creation.

This is God's design of us and it's always best for us. So, we're made in God's image and then second, we're to live out this image.

Having created mankind, God now shows us how we are to live as his image bearers. Again, three things we're going to focus on in verse 28. Here's the first one.

God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number. Go and have more children, increase the number of people. In other words, image bearers are to go and make more image bearers.

God's design is that it would be one man and one woman who would enter into covenant relationship with God and with each other and make more image bearers.

[ 15 : 14 ] Have children so that they too will reflect the glory and greatness of God. That's the purpose. If you have children, their purpose is to reflect the glory and greatness of God.

Now, as we'll see in a minute, we're living post-fall. Life is now broken. Physically and biologically, our bodies don't always function as they should and sadly, it's sometimes the case that husbands and wives are not able to have children.

And this can be particularly painful as wanting children is a deep and natural longing. So let me say to those, whatever age, we can learn from this.

Or if you plan to get married in later years and have children yourself and have a family but you discover we're not able to, let me say a few things.

First, it's right to grieve. Children are a blessing and not experiencing that blessing is always painful. We shouldn't feel we should ever have to hide or excuse our grief.

[ 16 : 29 ] It's right to grieve. And second, God doesn't love us less. Sometimes we think God is being mean or perhaps punishing us.

No, God never withholds all that is good and best for us. God's love is not conditional on having children. And third, there are other ways people serve.

Couples who can't have children often may feel or other people will say, oh well they're disqualified, they can't serve in certain ways now. No, God gives us all gifts and abilities.

That means we can serve in children's ministry or it may mean that we serve in other ways. We all have a purpose and a place. And lastly, God's grace is enough.

On the darkest days when there are no more tears to shed, when the sense of loss and emptiness is crushing, do not fear. God walks with you.

[ 17 : 34 ] He will never leave us and his grace will always be sufficient. So, be fruitful. Second, in verse 28 he says, be fruitful, increase in number, and fill the earth.

It's God's intention that the earth would be filled with his image bearers. You know, in the ancient world, and even today we see it, a king's image would be set up in different parts of his kingdom. So you can even think of a modern state like today, like North Korea. You go anywhere, and there's images and pictures and statues of the Kims, the ruling dynasty, representing the present and reminding the subjects who rule.

Well, God is the true but good and kind ruler. And as the true king, he has created a kingdom. That kingdom is called the world in which we live.

And God has placed his image in the world called mankind. So together, men and women are to represent God throughout the world.

[ 18 : 48 ] Here's a quote for you just to summarize it. God is the sovereign creator who extends his kingship over the world, but he extends his rule through human beings.

For as God's image bearers, they must govern the world for God's glory. So whether we're at home, whether we're in school, at work, whatever we're doing socially, wherever we are, whatever is going on, we bear God's image.

We are to represent and reflect God's goodness and glory everywhere we step and everywhere we speak. Fill the earth.

And again from verse 28, be fruitful, fill the earth and subdue it. Verse 28, be fruitful, increase in number, fill the earth, subdue it, rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

Humanity is to rule the world, but their rule is not to be their own rule, it's to be a reflection of God's good and loving rule. We are to live God's way according to his order and design and together we are to extend that rule throughout the earth.

[ 20 : 08 ] But how do we live out his rule? Well, look at verse 28. God blessed them and said to them. Verse 29, and God said.

God, you see, communicates his rule through his word and so we are to extend God's word, rule through his word.

As image bearers, we should long to see God's word shaping and transforming society and lives. Image bearers are to proclaim the good and gracious word of the king.

That's why we're here, to spread his word, a word that will protect the weak, a word that will preserve life, a word that pursues justice, a word that ultimately proclaims a God who is creator and Lord over all this universe, demanding our loyalty and deserving our praise.

We rule well when we live life under the authority of God's word. So we are made in his image, we are called to live out that image.

[ 21 : 28 ] And third, we're restored to God's image. When God finished making mankind, there was delight, wasn't there? Look at verse 31.

And God saw all that he made and it was very good. Everything else we're told up to this point that God made was good. But the creation of his image bearers was very good.

God delights and take pleasure in what he has done. Imagine a world full of his unique image bearers. Imagine a world with nations filled with people reflecting his goodness and his glory, all extending the gracious rule of the king.

Can you picture it? God's name is a world full of people. Well, we only need to look inside our own hearts, wander around the city at night, turn on the news and we realize that something is not right with the creation of mankind.

kind. You see, because of our selfish and sinful lives, we've rebelled against representing God.

[ 22 : 42 ] Rather than reflect God, we much prefer to reflect our own desires and wants. We have no problem projecting and reflecting what I want and what I want to do.

and the image of God has become distorted. We have become broken mirrors, each and every one of us. Imagine for a moment with me, looking in a mirror, perhaps the one you looked at this morning.

Reflecting back at you is that image. In fact, the image can appear identical. Just gaze at that image in your mind.

Now take that mirror off the wall. And smash it to the ground. Right in front of you, just smash it on the floor. Bits fly everywhere.

Chips and cracks and sharp edges. Now just take time to peer into that broken mirrored glass. Look at it on the floor.

[ 23 : 46 ] Look into it. It's hard to make out your face, isn't it? Our image is distorted and twisted and out of shape.

But that's what we've become. We no longer reflect the purity and beauty of God fully. It is marred and tainted by our ugly life of sin. Instead of extending the good rule of God, we have crushed and corrupted one another by our own words.

Left to ourself, we will never be able to put it back together. another. But yet change is possible. Transformation is possible.

We may fail, but God's plan and design for creation right at the beginning of Genesis has not failed. God in his grace has sent his son to show us what an image bearer should be like.

Colossians chapter 1 reminds us, I have the quote here on the screen, the sun is the image of the invisible God.

[ 24 : 58 ] For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him. When we look at the person of Jesus, we see the full and glorious image of God, the purity and beauty of God on display.

not just a reflection of the light, but the pure and brilliant light of God itself, shining forth the glory of God. In the sun, we have a picture of the true image of humanity in perfection.

Protecting the weak, preserving life, pursuing justice, proclaiming the good and gracious word of God of sins forgiven, and of new life.

But not only does the person of Jesus show us what a true image of God should be, he restores the broken image of God in each one of us.

This restoration is done definitively, meaning once and for all, and progressively, ongoing over time.

[ 26 : 13 ] First, as we turn into Jesus in repentance, and I want us to think about how can my broken image be restored? How can I become more like the image God created me to be?

Well, first we turn to Jesus in repentance. That is, we own our sin and we take responsibility for who we are. And we look in faith to him for forgiveness.

It's like Jesus has taken our cracked and distorted image, and he's taken it on himself. And on the cross, he is utterly smashed and destroyed for us.

On the cross, Jesus takes our image and he is judged and condemned for me. But in its place, his pure and perfect image is given to us.

So when God now peers down and when he looks at us, he sees the true image of his Son in us.

The very reflection of God shining the glory of God back to himself.

[ 27 : 26 ] Get your minds around that. Picture God. If you are in Christ today, looking at you, the very glory of God shines back at him because Christ's image is in you.

The image of God restored definitively once and for all as we trust in Christ. But second, the image is restored progressively, isn't it, over time.

As we gaze at the image of God in Christ, so we look at his beauty and we say, I want to be like him. And with the Spirit's help, we begin to see the cracks in our lives and all those chips and all those flaws and we come to him to be gently renewed.

Colossians reminds us again, put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator.

Day by day, as we take the word of God and we look in and we read and see the true image of Christ, the beauty of the Lord Jesus, we see our flaws, we see how we don't match up, we confess our sin and we seek his power and help.

[ 28 : 44 ] Please Lord, change me, restore me, to become like Jesus. Broken mirrors, restored, bit by bit, his beauty and purity being conformed in us.

Let me give us two little things to do. In the morning, I hope you all get up bright and breezy and gaze at the mirror. Don't be ashamed of what you see in the mirror.

Have a good look. Every morning, I want you to look at the mirror. Gaze at the mirror. And as you gaze, be reminded of who you are in Christ, that as you look, think of how God now looks at you.

He looks at you as he does his own son. The image of God himself reflecting back to God in all holiness, in all beauty.

God's love. That's the first thing I want you to do. The second thing, just as you look at the mirror in the morning and you see all the cracks and all the bits and pieces that are falling off and everything else that's going on, and you fix yourself up and make yourself presentable, changing bit by bit.

[ 30 : 04 ] So we come to God and as we look at Christ, we say, I want to be, I want to have the beauty of Christ. I want to shine like him. Lord, by your Holy Spirit, will you change me today to be like the Lord Jesus?

His image is restored once and for all and he is taking us bit by bit to be more like Christ. Let's pray. Father, as we look at ourselves, we can have such a distorted view.

We can elevate ourselves to be something greater and bigger than we actually are and we can look at ourselves and think less of ourselves than what we actually are.

So help us to take our gaze off ourself and off the world in comparing ourselves to other people and other things and would you help us to gaze at the beauty of the Lord Jesus?

[ 31 : 22 ] To take up his word, to read it and to see who he is and to be amazed at who we are in Christ, the restored image of God.

But not only that, Father, would you be gracious and change us so that we are not harsh in our words, that we wouldn't treat others as different but as equal, that we would love each other as you love us and we would care for each other as you care for mankind.

Father, would you do that work in us all so that we may disperse and reflect the glory of God wherever we are tomorrow and all that we do.

We pray this for your glory in Jesus' name. Amen.