

701 // THE NATURE OF MAN //

Tony S. Reinke
January 28, 2006
Burnsville, MN
spurgeon.wordpress.com
tony@tonyreinke.com

Intro: In the next 30 minutes we are going to ask and answer two of the most important questions we can ever ask: *Who am I?* And, *Why do I exist?*

Q: What are we made of? // What are we made for? To understand the significance of bearing the “image of God” we will need to answer these two questions.

Purpose: *We were created in the image of God – as humble dust and eternal spirit – to see God face-to-face.*



1) WHAT ARE WE MADE OF?

a) Generally stated: Made in the image of God.

i) Culver: “The doctrine (*imago dei*) is assumed throughout (Scripture) but never defined.”¹

ii) 2 Parts. We are the union of material [dust] and the immaterial [soul].

(1) Genesis 1, 2 →^{1:26} Then God said, “Let us make man in our *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* [**both genders are image**] he created them ...^{2:5} When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up - for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground,⁶ and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground-⁷ then the LORD God formed the man of *dust from the ground* [**material**] and breathed into his nostrils the *breath of life* [**immaterial**], and the man became a living creature [**one = unified**].”

(a) *For emphasis we're going to break ourselves apart ...*

b) **Material (dust)**

i) **Q: Where does my body come from?**

(1) Dust was **very common!** Before the plants grew, there was dust as far as the eye could see. Dust still is common. What do you do before people come over to your home? You dust. Why? Because dust is everywhere that it floats

around and lands everywhere. GENESIS ... Before plants sprung up, dust everywhere.

(2) Take **dust + sin = HUMILITY!**

- (a) Dust = we each face **physical death** (Genesis 3:19 → “for you are dust, and to dust you shall return”).
- (b) Dust = our purpose is found in the **hands of the potter** (Isa. 64:8).
- (c) Dust = **temporary tent** for the soul (Ecc. 12:7) that gives us a yearning for our eternal tents (2 Cor. 5:1-2).
 - (i) Our bodies are not eternal!

ii) **Q: Where is my body going?**

- (1) *The Christian's body will be “changed” from one form to another through resurrection* (1 Cor. 15:35-52; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 3:20-21, μετασχηματίζει; John 5:28-39; Acts 23:6 resurrection from dead)

(2) **Seeds illustration.**

- (a) How many of you buy seeds in small packets? Those seeds are dead.
 - (i) Unless the Lord returns our lifetime, our bodies will be planted in the soil and will break forth as new life: “What you sow does not come to life unless it dies ... It is sown a **natural** body; it is raised a **spiritual** body ... **perishable/imperishable** **mortal/immortality**” (1 Cor. 15:36-58). *Real bodily resurrection. Where did Jesus' body go? Resurrected!*
 - 1. Seed dies → planted in ground → new sprout
 - 2. Body dies → planted in ground → raised to new life
 - a. For the Christian → death is a means to *life and freedom*.
- (b) We will receive resurrected bodies like Christ's with **flesh and bones** (Phil. 3:21 and 1 Cor. 15:49 with Luke 24:39 → ghost parallel).
 - (i) One day, the caskets and tombs of all Christians will be emptied! The seeds of many saints have died and rest peacefully under ground.

c) **Immaterial (breath; spirit/soul)**

- i) Take a deep breath! When your soul is gone, your dust cannot do that.
- ii) **Eternal.** Unlike our bodies, our souls are indestructible and permanent.
- iii) Genesis 2:7 → “⁷ then the LORD God formed the man of *dust* from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the *breath* of life [←], and the man became a living creature” (*If you can breathe your body has a soul.*)
 - (1) **The spirit/soul is demonstrated in the complexity of soul.** *Our lives are so much more than dust. Our souls include our self-~~conscience~~ -consciousⁱⁱ, thinking, our will, emotions, affections, creativity, reasoning, discernment,*

network of relationships, knowledge of what is right and wrong, a sense of the presence of God, and spiritual activities such as reverence, prayer and praise towards God. The soul is the driving force within us that pursues. “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God” (Ps. 42:1). “My soul clings to you” (Ps. 63:8), “The soul of the wicked desires evil” (Pro. 21:10). The soul is that restless thing inside of us that pursues, clings, chases, searches, desires, pants and craves after things. The soul is the mission control center of the appetites.ⁱⁱⁱ

- (2) The status of our soul is always revealed in the **objects it pursues**.
- (3) God must do a **radical work** in our sinful souls – He must **subdue** our rebellion and replace our selfish, sinful souls with a soul that loves Christ and true righteousness! He must replace our mission control center!
- (a) **TRANSITION: Now lets put the dust and the soul together ...**

d) **Life and Soul together.** We are the union of both.^{iv}

i) **Miracle of conception!** By God’s **incredible plan and power**, the body and soul are created simultaneously when a man and woman conceive a new child.^v The soul and the body of baby united long before birth ...

(1) *Therefore ... the body and soul of a baby exist together before it’s born. The soul causes the baby to kick and move. This animation is the work of the soul.*

(a) Animals are animated, too, but not with an eternal soul, they are given a temporary breath – which is no less a work of God (Gen 7:15). See Psalm 104 and especially v. 29: “when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.”

(b) Human animation is the work of the eternal soul.

(2) *Therefore ... to end the life of an unborn baby is to separate a soul from its body.*

ii) *Therefore ... each life is greater than the dust. We live in a dust-centered world.*

(1) A life is greater than it’s **physical beauty** or ugliness. We live in a superficial, appearance-driven culture.

(2) A life is greater than the **seeming insignificance** of an unborn baby.

(3) A life is greater than the **seeming insignificance** of an elderly man or woman.

(4) A life has so much **dignity** that to speak sinfully against another life is a great display of the sinfulness of our tongue!

(a) **James 3:8-9** → “but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.”

(i) Just how evil is the tongue = it curses the image of God.

1. But are we still in the image of God? No!

e) **RESTORATION: Sin and the image of God (2 aspects to our image).**

- i) **General Image (remains).** Though marred, sinners still carry the “image of God” (Gen. 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:8). How?
- (1) *Mind, will, emotions: Creativity, reasoning, discernment, network of relationships, dominion/authority over creation, art, architecture, music, joy, feeling. All have a consciences and a self-conscious ... All display the image of God even though the righteousness and godly obedience of our image is gone.*
- ii) **Righteous Image (lost).** This is lost. Sinners who bear the general image of God must be restored.
- (1) **Colossians 3:9-10** → “⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the **new self**, which is being renewed in knowledge after the **image** of its creator.”
- (2) **Ephesians 4:22-24** → “²² ... put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the **new self**, created after the **likeness** of God in true righteousness and holiness.”
- (a) **RESTORATION IMAGE:** Statue of Liberty restoration of 1986.
 Certain things had begun to rust. Iron ribs corroded and replaced with stainless steel. Rivets needed to be replaced. **But it was not all because of age** → Arm originally installed incorrectly and the flame was not installed as designed. *Artist of SoL had better intentions than the final product! Up went the massive scaffolding to restore the original design!*
- (i) The scaffolding of our restoration is the **GOSPEL!** We need more than remodeling! We need a radical soul transplant (Eze. 11:19). In the gospel this life transformation is initiated, continues on ...
1. The **process** of soul restoration
 - a. **Jonathan Edwards:** “The design of God was, to **restore** the soul of man to life and the divine image in *conversion*, to carry on the change in *sanctification*, and to perfect it in *glory*” (1:535).^{vi}
 2. **We are never saved through restoration! We are restored after we believe the gospel.**
- iii) **ORIGINAL DESIGN: Christ-likeness!**
- (1) He is the perfect “image of God!” ^{vii} Jesus is the perfect demonstration of the “image of God.” When we talk about growth and sanctification what we are saying is that our image is being restored into Christ’s perfect image.
- (a) **Hebrews 1:3** → “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the **exact imprint** of his nature” (see also 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15). Jesus is the perfect representation of the image of God.
- (b) **Romans 8:29** → “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son” [Elected to have our image restored into Christ-likeness!]

- (i) *Up goes the scaffolding around this sinner!* Christ-likeness is the Artists original intent for my life! God is discontent to leave His children as marred and broken images!
 - (ii) *God is leading towards perfect image restoration, perfect Christ-likeness! There is an end to the daily struggles with sin and incremental growth.*
- f) **SUMMARY:** So what are we made of? We are the *union* of two parts: The **material** and the **spiritual**, now in need of **restoration**.^{viii}
- (1) **TRANSITION:** This is what we are made of ... but what are we made for?

2) WHAT ARE WE MADE FOR?

- a) **A lot of things but one specifically: As bearing the image of God we were created to see God face-to-face.**
- b) Image of God = God can dwell inside of us, and we can, with spiritual eyes, see and know and love God.^{ix} God says, look beyond the sky and the world you see and look to Me! No other creature was created with this relationship!
- c) This is the punch-line of being created in the image of God: We were created to commune with God!^x
 - i) **Genesis 3 →**
 - (1) “^{8a} And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day...”
 - (a) *The garden of Eden represents the unhindered eternal enjoyment of the full presence of God’s glory!*
 - (b) Think about this ... God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. When have you read of this in the bible? Never again. *From Genesis 3 on, God meets men with fire and lightning and earthquakes and fear and trembling* (Moses, Isaiah, Paul, etc.)! “^{8a} And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day...”
 - (i) *Notice how unique this is!* When Isaiah encounters the presence of God he is brought to the ground as the foundations of the temple shook! When Abraham says the Lord he could only see the backside of God’s glory and that but for a moment. Yet in the garden of Eden, God walked through the garden in the cool of the day!
 - (ii) *Psalm 114.* The waters of the Red Sea fled from the frightening presence of God, the mountains trembled when God’s presence is displayed on them ... “Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord” (v. 7). *Tremble at the God that causes water to flee and mountains to shake in His presence!*
 - (iii) *Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19:16-20.* “¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain

and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. ¹⁹ And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. ²⁰ The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.”

1. *Read that again ...* “ Gen. 3:8a And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day...”

a. *Striking contrast! We'll come back to it ...*

(2) “ ^{8b} ... and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ ¹⁰ And he said, ‘I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.’ ¹¹ He said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?’ ¹² The man said, ‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.’ ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What is this that you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate ...’ ²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.”

(a) Don't miss the point: *sinner with a marred image are evicted from face-to-face fellowship with God Himself.*

ii) *So what does God do? Flee and dwell apart from us and ignore us? No! In His Graciousness? ... Up goes the scaffolding... RESTORATION!*

(1) **I'm going to begin tying everything together:** The restoration of the image of God in our lives is a restoration of the presence of God in our lives. The ultimate goal is that we see Him face-to-face.

(a) **2 Corinthians 3:18** → “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image”

(i) *God reveals glimpses of Himself ... restoration.*

(b) **1 John 3:2** → “Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared ... we know that when he [Jesus] appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.”

(i) **John Calvin:** “As this image is more fully restored, so our knowledge of God and his ways increase with it” (sanctification).^{xi} “As far as the image of God is renewed in us, we have eyes prepared to see God” (glorification).^{xii}

(ii) *Beholding the glory of God → restoration of our image → see more of God's glory. Cyclical! Until one day our image is perfectly restored and we are prepared to see God face-to-face!*

1. The full image begins to be restored now in REGENERATION and SANCTIFICATION ... completed restoration in GLORIFICATION.
 - a. **SANTIFICATION.** As we grow in godliness, the image is restored so we can see God better. The scaffolding goes up to restore the daily sense of God's presence.
 - i. *One of the amazing things about mature Christians is that they see God more clearly. This is because their image is being restored. As your image is being restored by the Spirit, you see God more clearly and communion becomes sweeter. We are headed somewhere in sanctification!*
 - b. **GLORIFICATION.** We look forward to one day when our image will be restored completely so we can see God face-to-face.
 - i. There is a direct connection between the restoration of our divine image with SEEING God!
 - ii. **Calvin understands this!** "To see Him" we must be "like Him." Jesus is the perfect likeness of God. *To bear the perfect image of God is to be prepared to see God face-to-face!*
 - iii. Thus we have come full-circle from Genesis, the garden of Eden and our personal glorification.

iii) **Perfectly restored image = To see God face-to-face!**

(1) Each day we, as Christians, are growing. We are being restored. We see more of God so that we can see more of Him. We are now being prepared for the day when our souls are separated from our bodies and we see God face-to-face. Everything moves towards this end.

(a) " ^{8a} And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day..."

iv) **Conclusion:** *We were created in the image of God, as humble dust and eternal spirit united to enjoy the full communion with God face-to-face!*

Application:

1. How does your body affect your soul? Morning devotion times? Corporate worship?
2. All souls are restless. They pursue, crave and yearn for things. What is the difference between the unsaved soul and the saved soul?
3. We live in a dust-centered world. What natural temptations do we face in trying to live an eternally-centered worldview? How does this impact your friendships?
4. A beautiful soul can reside in a non-attractive body and a wretched soul can dwell in a very attractive body. When thinking about marriage, are you most attracted to another's body or soul?
5. To some degree, everyone is made in the image of God and so when we curse others we are demonstrating the depravity of our tongue. Does my speech towards others more display my depravity or their dignity? (See Jam. 3:8-9).
6. If the tongue sins against God's image bearers what other things trample this dignity (abortion, cliques, favoritism, etc.)?
7. I find it easier to sympathize with someone in a hospital bed than with sinners who are under the judgment of God (see Matt. 10:28). Why is this? And how can we foster even greater sympathy for the lost?
8. What have you learned about the connection between sanctification (restoration of the divine image) and your present communion with God?
9. If we are being restored to see God face-to-face, what are tangible signs of progress now?
10. Personal study... Read 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:6. How is the Christian being restored into God's image?

Works cited

Culver, Robert Duncan. *Systematic Theology: Biblical and Historical* (Christian Focus: Great Britain), 2005.

Edwards, Jonathan. *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2 vols. (Banner of Truth: Edinburgh).

Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Inter-Varsity Press: Great Britain & Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1994.

Grudem, Wayne and Jeff Purswell (ed.). *Biblical Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith* (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999.

Reymond, Robert L. *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Thomas Nelson: Nashville, TN), 1998.

// Endnotes //

ⁱ Culver, p. 253.

ⁱⁱ A monkey is driven by a *conscious* awareness of impulsive desires. It eats when its hungry and sleeps when its tired. In the image of God, mankind is driven by a *self-consciousness*. We can transcend immediate impulses to see where we fit into a larger grid. We can say; 'Ten years from now I want to be an engineer.' Base upon this desire we can begin taking High School courses on engineering and working Summer internships and then choose a great Engineering school, etc. This is one of the many ways the image of God is discerned in men and women and not in animals who may be genetically similar in many ways (see Culver pp. 291-292).

ⁱⁱⁱ "About twenty times, however, *nepesh* is the subject of 'to desire,' 'to crave.' Here it is not the hunger/appetite/desire itself but that which possesses the appetite, 'the soul.' ... (Deut 12:20; cf. 14:26; 1 Sam 2:16)" *TWOT on 'nepesh.'*

^{iv} "The pictures of humans in Scripture seem to regard them for the most part as unitary beings. Seldom is a spiritual nature addressed independently of or apart from the body" (Erickson, p. 554). "We must at the outset make it clear that there is a strong emphasis in Scripture on the overall unity of man as created by God" (Grudem/Purswell, p. 193).

^v Roughly stated, there are two historic views on the origin of the human soul: **creationism** and **traducianism**. The best summary and conclusion on this debate come from Reymond: "The creationist view, emphasizing the *vertical* nature of the acts of God, contends that the soul of each human being is *immediately created* by God and united to the body either at conception, at birth, or at some time between these two events. It relies primarily upon five texts: Genesis 2:7, Ecclesiastes 12:7, Isaiah 57:16, Zechariah 12:1, and Hebrews 12:9. The traducianist view (Lat. *tradux*, 'branch' or 'shoot'), urging that God carries out his 'vertical' work primarily in and through *horizontal* or *mediate* means, holds that after the immediate creation of Adam both body and soul of each individual are immediately formed and propagated together by the natural generation effected by the sexual union of the human male and female. It appeals primarily to four texts: Genesis 2:2, 21 (interpreted by 1 Cor. 11:8), Romans 5:12, and Hebrews 7:9-10 ... It appears to be everywhere assumed by scripture that through conception human parents 'father' and 'mother' not just a physical body but the entire offspring, body and soul ... Creationism allows for only the physical or corporeal connection between Adam and his offspring and has to explain how human souls, immediately created by God and not by biological parents, become evil, whereas traducianism has a ready answer for why the individual is guilty of Adam's sin and is thus corrupt" (pp. 424-425). I agree with Reymond's conclusions. Grudem disagrees by saying, "the arguments listed above in favor of traducianism must be said not to be very compelling ones" (p. 485). But Grudem does not handle the discussion in light of Roman 5 where I believe argument stands or falls. Both sides understand that God is close at work in the miraculous generation of a new human, another point Grudem mistakes: "it seems strange to think of the mother and father as being responsible by themselves for any aspect of the child's existence" (p. 484-485). But traducianism does not teach this as Reymond explained earlier ("God carries out his 'vertical' work primarily in and through *horizontal* or *mediate* means"). It is rare that I disagree with Grudem, but here I must. I think the difficulty we have in accepting the miraculous generation of a *soul* through sexual conception is explained by our wrong naturalistic and mechanical understanding of the creation of a new *body* in sexual conception. Both the creation of a new body and new spirit are miracles only possible through the sovereign oversight of God!

^{vi} The broader quote is worth noting: “God’s design was perfectly to restore all the ruins of the fall, so far as concerns the elect part of the world, by his Son; and therefore we read of the restitution of all things ... **Man’s soul** was ruined by the fall; the image of God was defaced; man’s nature was corrupted, and he became dead in sin. The design of God was, to restore the soul of man to life and the divine image in conversion, to carry on the change in sanctification, and to perfect it in glory. **Man’s body** was ruined; by the fall it became subject to death. The design of God was, to restore it from this ruin, and not only to deliver it from death in the resurrection, but to deliver it from mortality itself, in making it like unto Christ’s glorious body [So death is part of the restoration of the body]. **The world** was ruined, as to man, as effectually as if it had been reduced to chaos again; all heaven and earth were overthrown. But the design of God was, to restore all, and as it were to create a new heaven and a new earth” (Edwards, 1:535).

^{vii} “No doubt Calvin as well as Aquinas before him and the texts of other authors (C. Hodge, J.O. Buswell) follow that line of argument I have reported as being drawn from Paul’s teachings (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15) and Hebrews 1:3 are right in finding Christ’s holy character an example of the divine image undistorted by sin” (Culver, p. 255).

^{viii} “The pictures of humans in Scripture seem to regard them for the most part as unitary beings. Seldom is a spiritual nature addressed independently of or apart from the body” (Erickson, p. 554). “We must at the outset make it clear that there is a strong emphasis in Scripture on the overall unity of man as created by God” (Grudem/Purcell, p. 193).

^{ix} “God hath made you rational, intelligent creatures, hath endued you with noble powers, those endowments wherein the natural image of God consists. You are vastly exalted in your nature above other kinds of creatures here below. You are capable of a thousand times as much as any of the brute creatures. He hath given you a power of understanding, which is capable of extending itself, of looking back to the beginning of time, and of considering what was before the world, and of looking forward beyond the end of time. It is capable of extending beyond the utmost limits of the universe; and is a faculty whereby you are akin to angels, and are capable even of knowing and contemplating the Divine Being, and his glorious perfections, manifested in his works and in his word. You have souls capable of being the habitation of the Holy Spirit of God, and his divine grace. You are capable of the noble employments of angels. How lamentable and shameful is it, that such a creature should be altogether useless, and live in vain! How lamentable that such a noble and excellent piece of divine workmanship should fail of its end, and be to no purpose! Was it ever worth while for God to make you such a creature, with such a noble nature, and so much above other kinds of creatures, only to eat, and drink, and gratify your sensual appetites? How lamentable and shameful to you, that such a noble tree should be more useless than any tree of the forest; that man, whom God hath thus set in honour, should make himself more worthless than the beasts that perish!” (Edwards, 2:128).

^x For more on this see Athanasius (c. 295-373), *On the Incarnation*, and Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology* (Blackwell: 1997) p. 425.

^{xi} Derek Thomas, *Calvin’s Teaching on Job* (Christian Focus: 2004) p. 39.

^{xii} From Calvin’s Commentary on 1 John 3:2.

File revised ... 1/28/07 7:10:00 AM