

// The Nature of Man //

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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?

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

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* [gender] 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 [one = unified] living creature.”



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”

Our lives are so much more than dust. Our souls include our self-conscience, 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.

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.”

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.”

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.**”

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).

Hebrews 1:3 → “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature.”

Romans 8:29 → “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son”

2. WHAT ARE WE MADE FOR?

Gen 3:8a → “^{8a} And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day...”

Gen 3:8b → “^{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.”

Sinners with a marred image are evicted from face-to-face fellowship with God Himself.

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

1 John 3:2 → “... we know that when he [Jesus] appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.”

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

Application:

1. How does your body affect your soul? Morning devotion times? Sunday morning worship?
2. All of our 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. We've already seen that the tongue sins against God's image bearers. But 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 and by what means is this even possible?