

Glorify God in Your Body, Part One: The Image of God

1 Corinthians 6:19 ESV (Pg 556) Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, **20** for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

- I. I am fascinated by the created world. I enjoy observing it, pondering it, and learning more about how it works. I enjoy watching National Geographic style documentaries, viewing the wonders that wildlife photographers have captured around the globe. I love to visit zoos and aquariums to get “up close and personal” with diverse animal life. I love it when I am hiking, and I happen upon some critter that I have never seen before. All of this sparks genuine worship in me.
 - A. I wonder what it must have been like on that 6th day of creation in the primeval world when the first birds were filling the skies, the mighty oceans were raging and filled to the brim with every kind of life; to hear in the distance, a lion release it’s first terrible roar. But nothing could have compared to seeing the construction of the first man and the first woman by God.
 1. **Genesis 1:26 ESV** Then God said, “Let us make man *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* he created them.
 - a) In Genesis chapter 2, we get more information on how God did this: **Genesis 2:7 ESV** 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.
 - b) Then further down in the chapter: **Genesis 2:21 ESV** So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. **22** And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.
 2. Denny Burk points out that “The text indicates no difference between the male and female with respect to their being created in God’s Image. The woman’s image bearing does not derive from the man, nor does the man’s derive from the woman. The man is no more an image bearer than the woman. The woman is no more an image bearer than the man. God assigns this dignity to both of them irrespective of their sexual difference.”¹
 - B. But what does it mean to be created in the “Image of God” and “after his likeness”? The Hebrew words for “image” and “likeness” “refer to something that is similar, but not identical, to the thing it represents.”²

¹ Burk, Denny; *What’s the Meaning of Sex?*, Wheaton IL, Crossway © 2013; pg. 161

² Grudem, Wayne; *Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan © 1994; pg 443

- C. Therefore, “The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is *like* God and *represents* God.”³ When talking about the similarities between humankind and God, there are many things that could be pointed out; for example: ⁴
1. First, the Bible says, “God is Spirit” (John 4:24) and we too have immaterial Spirits within us, enabling us to relate to God in prayer and praise. We also have immortality as God does, meaning we will live eternally.
 2. Furthermore, we can think and reason logically. We can also use complex language, and some of us even know multiple languages.
 3. We are also creative beings like God is. We have the capacity to make art, music, literature, and technology. We have even been given the ability to procreate, creating new life where there was none.
 4. Additionally, just as God is one, but consists of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, when I see you, I may see only one individual, but you uniquely and distinctly consist of your physical *body*, your *soul* (mind, will and emotions), and your eternal *spirit*. You too are, in a sense, three in one!
- D. In all of creation there is not a single living thing outside humanity that bears the dignity and honor of being made in the image and likeness of God.
1. Therefore, all human life is valuable to followers of Christ. This is why the defense of abortion, which snuffs out pre-born life; and euthanasia, which discards lives that are deemed to be obsolete or valueless; is incompatible with a true profession of Christ’s Lordship.
 2. A true Christian always defends the right to life from conception until natural death. This is not a political position, as much as an affirmation of all people’s inherent dignity as image-bearers of Almighty God.
- II. Sadly, however, we see in Genesis 3 that God’s vice regents and image-bearers rebelled against his benevolent rule and turned to the worship of themselves, as well as a vast variety of idols.
- A. Every single one of their offspring, up to the present day, has followed suit. Positionally, the human race still bears the image of God, but they are not as fully like God as they were before. This is evidenced in both the remainder of scripture, as well as human experience.
1. The moral purity of the human race is gone and they no longer reflect God’s holiness. Their intellects are corrupted by vanity and fear. Their relationships are driven by selfishness and lust rather than self-sacrificing love.
 2. We can no longer understand the Image of God by observing humanity as it now exists, but rather by casting a gaze back to the garden, when God created the man and the woman and said that his work was “very good”.
- B. But when the time of Christ dawned, humanity once again got a glimpse of what the perfect Image of God looked like. As the perfect model of humanity, Paul says of Christ **Colossians 1:15 ESV He is the *image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.***
1. Everything that was lost by the human race in the fall was demonstrated by him in his perfect life.

³ *ibid*, pg. 442

⁴ *ibid*, For what follows, see pp. 446-449

2. John speaks of those who saw this perfect life, or heard of it later, like some of us have. **John 1:12 ESV** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.
- C. The right to become the children of God means a restoration to all the benefits of being created in the Image and likeness of God.
1. The perfect life that Christ lived, he lived for the benefit of those who would believe in his name; he obeyed for them, obliterating the power of their disobedience.
 2. His brutal death was substitutionary in nature meaning that he died the death that we deserved, taking the full penalty of all our sin upon himself.
- D. The result is that you and I can now progressively grow up into Christ, returning daily (step by step) to the fullness of the image of God.
1. **Colossians 3:5 ESV** Put to death therefore *what is earthly in you*: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. **6** On account of these the wrath of God is coming. **7** In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. **8** But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. **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*.
 - a) “Being renewed...after the image of it’s creator” speaks of the ongoing reclaiming of the full image of God; an action that grace is working in the life of the believer. It is this renewal the evidences that one is truly saved.
 - b) **2 Corinthians 3:18a ESV** And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are *being transformed into the same image* from one degree of glory to another.
 2. We know from these passages that grace is working this transformation in us from the preceding passages, but how does he accomplish that change in us and on what basis? Let’s return to this morning’s text to discover the answers to these questions...
- III. **1 Corinthians 6:19a ESV** Or do you not know that your body is *a temple of the Holy Spirit* within you, whom you have from God?
- A. The first thing that we notice in this passage is that this body is not only the housing for *your* soul and *your* spirit, but we learn that, as believers in Jesus Christ, *the very Holy Spirit of God*, the one that hovered and brooded over the waters from the moment of creation has taken up residence in that same body!
1. In the 21st century, we probably can’t appreciate the revolutionary nature of this truth on the first century mind. The Greeks had saturated the Roman empire with the philosophies of Plato, with a huge effect on the way the people of that time viewed the concepts of “body” and “spirit”; the material world and the immaterial; believing the material world was sinful and inferior.
 2. This was communicated in 3 ways: “(1) Existing things are imperfect copies of the eternal, perfect forms, with Good being the highest form. (2) Knowledge of the empirical world through sense perception is misguided and should yield to philosophical truth. (3) Through philosophy the soul

grasps the forms, but the body is a hindrance. Salvation consists of the soul's escape from it's imprisonment in the body.”⁵

- a) This belief in the essential “badness” or hindering nature of the body gave rise to two heresies in the early church. Gnosticism taught that “spiritual realities are inherently good, while physical realities are inherently evil.”⁶ Therefore the Son of God could neither be embodied, so they concluded that he only **appeared** to be a man.
 - b) Similarly, Asceticism encouraged the denial of “otherwise legitimate physical pleasures” by “eating and drinking only certain foods and beverages, sleeping on the floor, forgoing marital sexual intercourse, and more”.⁷
- B. But with the gospel comes the revelation that the body itself isn't evil at all, and that fact is demonstrated in 3 ways: that the Son of God took on a physical body; that he has declared that he will one day resurrect and glorify our physical bodies; and that even now our bodies serve as the actual Temple of God - not a building in Jerusalem.
1. The context of 1 Corinthians 6 is sexual immorality. Paul is saying that when a Christian commits degrading sexual acts, he is literally defiling the temple of God. One of the most horrifying events in the Jewish memory happened in 167 B.C. when the Seleucid King Antiochus Epiphanes built an altar to Zeus in the Jerusalem Temple and sacrificed a pig upon it⁸.
 2. That Temple was torn down in A.D. 70 by the Romans and can no longer be desecrated. But could it be that we commit similar offenses to the holiness of God when we offer our bodies up in sacrifice to various lusts and desires?
 - a) And does that principle apply to our nonsexual issues as well? The way we eat, sleep, exercise? The idle entertainments we engage in? We addictions that we tolerate?
 - b) **Romans 12:1 ESV** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. **2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
- C. If we are the temple of the Holy Spirit (and all believers are!), shouldn't we exercise great care that we don't offend the great God of the Temple, or make him to feel offended, insulted or unwelcome? May God forbid that we should!
- D. This is not a matter of “trying harder to be better”. Your spirit may be willing, but your flesh is weak. Therefore, God has given us the Holy Spirit to dwell within us to guide, convict, correct and teach us how to live as pleasing to God. He is available to you to bring you back to your original design in the Image of God.

⁵ Allison, Gregg; The Baker Compact Dictionary of Theological Terms, Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Books ©2016; Pg 163

⁶ ibid. Pg 92

⁷ ibid. Pg 27

⁸ http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/miscellanea/trivia/no-man.html

- IV. But on what basis are we able to return to our rightful identity as the Image of God? Paul reminds us simply **“You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.”**
- A. What powerful and liberating words these are, “You are not your own”.
1. What burdens of performance and perfection are lifted from my shoulders when I can embrace the fact that “I am not my own”.
 2. Charles Spurgeon saw the beauty and magnitude of these five words, writing, **“Does any man here think it would be a pleasure to be his own? Let me assure him that there is no ruler so tyrannical as self. He that is his own master, has a fool and a tyrant to be his lord. No man ever yet governed himself after the will of the flesh but what he by degrees found the yoke heavy an the burden crushing. Self is a fierce dictator, a terrible oppressor; imperious lusts are cruel slave drivers.”**⁹ Charles Haddon Spurgeon
- B. But the fact that I am not my own is not because I have been conquered or taken into the custodial care of another. It is a much more elemental thought than that. I am not my own because I have been bought with a price.
1. Though this is a repulsive image to the modern mind, Paul is deliberately borrowing the image of the slave markets found throughout the Roman world¹⁰. Once purchased, a person was relieved of their individuality and became the sole property and possession of another.
 2. Three times in three books Paul refers to either himself or Epaphras (one of his associates) as the “slave of Christ” (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10, Col. 4:12 HCSB). The idea is that he is obligated to go where Jesus sends him, to say what Jesus gives him to say, to do what Jesus commands him to do, and to suffer what Jesus commands him to suffer.
 - a) Why is he willing to do this? Because he had been in control of his life and made a mess of it! He had reached the top of every pinnacle placed before him only, only to find, as he says in Philippians 3 that it was all “rubbish” and “dung”. In spite of the loss of his right to chart his own course, he judged slavery to Jesus to be infinitely better!
 - b) **Matthew 11:28 ESV** Come to me, all who labor and are heavily laden, and I will give you rest. **29 Take my yoke upon you**, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”**
 3. Never did Jesus deceive us by telling us that there was no yoke, and that would be no burden, but he did promise that by grace they would be “easy” and “light”. He promised rest for the souls of weary, heavily laden men and women. And all it cost was a life of slavery to Jesus. Paul couldn’t see the downside. When you and I meet Jesus, we too will say, “What a deal!”
- C. But remember that you weren’t just bought; you were bought “with a price”. This implies great expense. What was the cost? **1 Peter 1:18b ESV** you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, **19** but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

⁹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon_charles/sermons/1004.cfm

¹⁰ ESV Study Bible, Wheaton IL, Crossway © 2008; note on 1 Corinthians 6:20; pg. 2399

1. With the ebbing away of the life of the Son of God, all of heaven's treasury was emptied to pay your ransom. No greater cost could be calculated or even imagined.
 2. Christ has purchased you. Paul is saying that you should not live as though you are still your own. If you are Christ's, you have no right to make demands. He bought the rights.
- D. And he has not only purchased you, but he also bought a multi-national, multi-ethnic people for his own glory!
1. Bend your ear close and listen to what the choir in heaven is singing this morning: **Revelation 5:9 ESV** And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and **by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, 10** and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."
 2. God created us in his image. After the fall, he showed us the perfect image of God in Christ. He redeemed us so that we could be restored to the image of God. He placed his Holy Spirit to dwell within us as a temple and to help us. He has purchased us at the high cost of his own blood. What should be our only response to all of this amazing, glorious, breath-taking truth?
- E. "So glorify God in your body." If we have been created in the image and likeness of God; if we have been made the temple of the Holy Spirit; if Christ has truly purchased us with his blood, we can never again ask questions about the ways in which we use this body like, "Is it pleasurable?" or "Is it easy?" or "Is everyone else doing it?" or even "Is it permissible?"
- F. As believers, our standard needs to go way up! The only question we should be asking ourselves constantly about the things we do in this body is, "Does it bring God Glory"? We will be discussing this more next week in part 2.