

## Image-Maker

### Presentation Handout

#### Image Perception—We live how we perceive...

- University of CA–San Diego sociological study by John Evans
  - Those who believed humans bear the image of God held more humanitarian attitudes than those who agreed with the purely biological definition of a human.
  - The respondents with the biological definition of humans were less likely to view other people as special, less willing to stop genocide, and more likely to accept the ideas of buying kidneys from poor people, suicide to save money, or taking blood from prisoners without their consent than the ones who believed humans were made in God's image.
  - Humans live out the image they believe about themselves! And how they treat others is based on this perception too.

#### Made in God's Image

- Humans are God's crowning act of creation.
  - This is reflected in the fact that all of God's creative activity between day 1 and day 6 led to the crescendo of God's creation—human beings {**Genesis 1; 2:8-9a**}.

#### Bearing the Image—What does it mean to be made in God's image

- Presence/Community {**Genesis 1:26a, 27**}
  - We were created to live in God's presence, connected with Him {**Genesis 3:8a, 9a**}.
  - God had to be in the presence, close to, Adam & Eve to create them with His "hands" from the dirt, like a potter meticulously working with clay, and then breathe into them the breath of life.
  - This shouldn't surprise us. God is a Godhead/Trinity community of Father, Son (Jesus) & Spirit (Holy Spirit)—God's selfless, other-centered love is a love that cherishes community, others.
  - Our image-bearing involves living in community with other human beings too. God made human *beings*, not human being, in His image and He blessed *them*, not him/her only {**Genesis 1:26-27**}.
  - God also said: "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper compatible to him" {**Genesis 2:18**}. The surprising use of "not good" emphasizes God created human beings for community-companionship and that His creation was not complete until they lived in this divine-given community-companionship.

**TAKE-AWAY:** Sin breeds in disconnectedness and isolation. In **Genesis 3** Eve sinned after she separated from Adam, after sinning Adam & Eve disconnected and isolated from God in fear. This is why addictions also live-in disconnectedness and isolation, like sexual addictions, as well as depression and suicide, etc. This was never God plan!

- Pleasure/Joy {**Genesis 2:8-9a; Psalm 36:8-9**}
  - God and pleasure in the same sentence— isn't that an oxymoron? No! God is the Pleasure-Maker/Giver who created human beings to experience His ultimate divine-given pleasure.
  - God created everything in our original world for human beings' pleasure. Even the name "Eden" means pleasure or delight.

**TAKE-AWAY:** Even after sin in the tapestry of our world's brilliant colors, delectable foods and favors, budding love between a young man and women, or sexual expression in a covenant marriage between a husband and wife; we see God's pleasure gift.

- Protection {**Genesis 2:16-17**}
  - Many people would see **Genesis 2:16-17** as negative—God is a "kill-joy!" He enjoys "crushing" our pleasure, our fun. He's a "prude."
  - But, this isn't true! Notice the context for **Genesis 2:16-17**. What comes before is a description of God providing pure, divine pleasure and what comes after is God not wanting Adam to be lonely, so He provides community-companionship for him. This doesn't seem like God is a "kill-joy" but One who cares for human beings, trying to protect them so they can experience His divine gift of pleasure to the fullness!
  - Surprisingly, God governs with much freedom and little or limited restrictions, which are for our best to protect us and our pleasure-joy God has given. Notice how trees God restricted, only one—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. How many did God give free, unrestricted access to—1,000; 5,000; 10,000; 25,000? Whatever the number it was much more than the one restricted!
  - God's pleasure is only experienced inside the *protection* of His will, His truth, His purity, and His boundaries {**Psalm 19:7-11**} in heart obedience. All other "pleasure" is a masquerading lie from Satan that ultimately harms and/or destroys!

**TAKE-AWAY:** Sin, no matter how "pleasurable" it may seem for the brief moment, will never produce pure, divine pleasure. Instead, it leaves its victims destitute and empty! This is why God "restricts"—to protect us and our joy and pleasure

- Purpose {**Genesis 2:15**}
  - God's purpose is revealed in the words: "tend" and "keep." Both words are used in reference to the priests or Levites' service in the Old Testament sanctuary {**Numbers 3:7-8**} with "tend" also being associated with worship {**Exodus 3:12**}.
  - What is God trying to teach us about living in His image with *purpose*?
    - Work is a divine gift, not just a punishment because of sin.
    - We are God's spiritual priests who are to reflect His character and will to the world and call the world to Him.
  - Just like the OT sanctuary and the Garden of Eden were meeting places between God and humanity, our lives are to be a "meeting place" for others around us to see and experience God. This is why the Bible now calls us "living temples" {**1 Corinthian 6:19-20; 1 Peter 2:4-5**}. This occurs many times in what many would call "mundane everyday life" as: stay-at-home moms taking care of their families, in a factory job, as a mechanic, as a laborer, in the medical field, as a teacher, as a care-giver, in a service industry, as a farmer/agriculture, as a student, as a business owner, being a good neighbor, etc.

**TAKE-AWAY:** How one lives their life every day is what impresses others for God and His kingdom, opening up opportunities for a verbal witness about Him and His truth.

## Hope in a Broken Image

- Obviously, we have all failed to achieve the ideal of experiencing and bearing God's image! We don't need others to tell us this. We know it from personal experience.
- So where is the hope in the broken image that we experience now in comparison to God's beautiful, original plan He had for human beings?
- **In the One who originally created human beings in His own image!**
- Here is God's amazing hope and promise to us in Christ Jesus...

<sup>1</sup> "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.... <sup>5</sup> Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.... <sup>8</sup> But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, <sup>10</sup> and have put on the *new man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the *image of Him* who created him."

*Colossians 3:1-2, 5, 8-10*

**REFLECTION:** Sadly, we're all broken images of God's original, beautiful image. There's no denying it! Yet, God is the divine Image-Maker who will if we cooperate with Him by faith remake or remold us back into His original image in Christ Jesus, like a master violinist playing beautiful music on an old, worn-out, beat-up violin that he has polished, refined, and retuned.

*Will you put yourself in the hands of the divine Image-Maker?*