



The Imago Dei & the Missio Dei

Implications of Imitating Christ and the Pursuit of Holiness

“There are many who preach Christ, but not many who live Christ. My great aim will be to live Christ.”

Robert C. Chapman, *Agape Leadership*

“For to me, to live is Christ . . .”

Apostle Paul, *Philippians 1:21*

“Much of our contemporary church life seems superficial, self-indulgent and compromised. All too often we are greeted with media reports about scandalous behavior of prominent Christians or about the hypocrisy of this group or that. Evangelicals today are disillusioned with what has long been put to them as ‘holiness teaching’. What they have heard now strikes them as sterile, superficial, stunting real growth and irrelevant to today’s perplexities and conflicts about Christian living.”

J.I. Packer, *The Pursuit of Holiness*

The Image of God: *Imago Dei*

Man was created to glorify God. In God's design of man He imbedded His image, His nature.

Genesis 1:26-27 : Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness . . . so God created man in His own image.

James 3:9 : With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

- ❖ The need for redemption became necessary, providing a means by which the heart could be transformed and man could once again make choices to live in a fashion that displays the essence of God's nature.
- ❖ The dilemma of hypocrisy in the believers' relationships

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What is the image of God? The Hebrew word for "image," tselem, comes from a root that speaks of carving. It is the same word used to speak of graven images (Ex. 20:4). It almost seems to convey the idea that man was carved into the shape of God. It suggests that God was, in essence, the pattern for the personhood of man. That is not true of anything else in the space-time universe.

Clearly, because the image of God is unique to humanity, it must describe some aspect of human nature that is not shared by animals. It isn't talking about biology or physiology. It certainly isn't a reference to the way that we look as creatures made of flesh and bone. After all, "God is Spirit" (John 4:24). And "a spirit does not have flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39).

Above all, the image of God can be summed up by the word personhood. We are persons. Our lives involve relationships. We are capable of fellowship. We are able to love other persons in a Godlike sense. We understand communion. We have an amazing capacity for language.

The image of God is personhood, and personhood can function only in the context of relationships. How can you reflect God's qualities today in your relationships?

Excerpt from "Moments of Truth" by John MacArthur.

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The concept of man as the *image* or *likeness* of God tells us that man as he was created was to *mirror* [i.e. to make visible the Invisible] and to *represent* God [i.e. to act as God, under God and for God's creation]. We must learn to know what the image of God is by looking at Jesus Christ. What must therefore be at the center of the image of God is not characteristics like the ability to reason or the ability to make decisions...but rather that which was central in the life of Christ: love for God and love for man.

Anthony A. Hoekema Created in God's Image, pg. 67, 22

The Purpose of Sanctification: *Imago Dei*

To display God's nature in order that others would see God and come to glorify Him.

Hebrews 12:10: Be holy for I am holy.

Leviticus 11:44-45 : For I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy . . . For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

Exodus 19: 4-6 : Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

“God’s plan for Israel was a global plan. They understood that the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant was to set apart Israel to live according to the standards of God, to put on display the very nature and character of the one true God before pagan and lost nations, so that they could also be blessed.”

R. Kent Hughes, *Set Apart*

The Communicable Attributes of God: *Imago Dei*

God's character is revealed in relationships: Goodness, Justice, Love, Truthfulness, Mercy, Compassion, Peace, Patience/Longsuffering, Righteousness, Forgiving, Unity

Galatians 5:13-26

Do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh,, but through love serve one another . . . the flesh sets its desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are in opposition to one another . . the deeds of the flesh are enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying . . .but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control . . . If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.”

Colossians 3:12-13

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

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Matthew 18:33

Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?

Luke 6:35-38

But love your enemies, and do good . . . and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.

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“Man is never more like God than when he forgives.”
John MacArthur, *The Freedom and Power of Forgiveness*

- ❖ Fleshly behavior displays selfish destructive behavior in a relational context. The fruit of the Spirit results in godly (God-like), selfless behavior within a relational context.

“To forgive without upbraiding, even by manner or look, is a high exercise of grace – it is imitation of Christ.”

Robert C. Chapman

The Incarnation: *Imago Dei*

Christ revealed the Father's nature to a lost world.

John 1:14,18 : The Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . . we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten Father, full of grace and truth” . . . No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

John 13:34-35 : Love one another, even as I have loved you . . . By this all men will know that you are my disciples.”

“God is love, His children please Him only so far as they are like Him,
and walk in love” Robert C. Chapman

Matthew 20:28 : Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

The Incarnation: *Imago Dei*

Christ revealed the Father's nature to a lost world.

Philippians 1:21, 27 :

Conduct yourself in manner worthy of the Gospel.

Philippians 2:1-6

. . . complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Discipleship: Imago Dei

We are to imitate Christ's character as reconciled image bearers.

Ephesians 5:1 : Therefore, be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us.

I Corinthians 11:1 : Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

Colossians 3:3-10-17 : . . . and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.

I Timothy 2:11-14 : For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for Himself a people of His own who *are zealous for good deeds*.

Spiritual Leadership: *Imago Dei*

In the church and in the home, leaders are to follow the example of Christ

I Peter 5: 1-3 : Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder . . . shepherd the flock of God among you, . . . proving to be examples to the flock.

II Timothy 2:24-25 : The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth.

❖ The theme of good deeds in the book of Titus states the clear purpose for spiritual leaders to set an example of godliness.

Titus 2:1-14 : So that the word of God will not be dishonored (v.5), so that the opponent will be put to shame (v.8), so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect (v. 9) . . . For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing them to deny ungodliness. . . to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

The Church's Witness: *Imago Dei*

The conduct of the Body of Christ either reflects or distorts the testimony of Christ

I John 1:6 : The one who says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same manner as He walked.

I John 3: 2,3 : We know that when He appears we will be like Him . . . and everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies Himself, just as He is pure.

❖ Just as Christ revealed the Father to a lost world, as imitators of Christ, we are to reveal the Father to a lost world.

I John 4: 5,19,21

No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us . . . If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen . . . the one who loves God should love his brother also.

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I Peter 1: 13-16

Therefore (v.12 announced through those who preached the Gospel to you), prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ . . .but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your behavior, because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am Holy’”.

I Peter 2: 9

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. . . keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles . . . [so] they because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

I Peter 3:8-9

To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead . . .

The Church's Witness: *Imago Dei*

The conduct of the Body of Christ either reflects or distorts the testimony of Christ

I Peter 3:15-16

But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you were slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

I Peter 4:6-10

For the Gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God. The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgement and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint. As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

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The conduct of the Body of Christ either reflects or distorts the testimony of Christ

- *II Corinthians 3:18-4:6;17-21*

- But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image form glory to glory, just as form the Lord, the Spirit. . . . but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in sight of God, . . . the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ as Lord . . . Therefore of anyone is in Christ he is a new creature . . . therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us . . .

The Church's Witness: *Imago Dei*

The conduct of the Body of Christ either reflects or distorts the testimony of Christ

“The very existence of a group of Christians with unique relationships to one another is in itself a witness. We have seen that from the beginning, one of God’s primary means of revealing Himself to the world has been through people.”

Jim Petersen, *Living Proof*

The Church's Witness: *Imago Dei*

The conduct of the Body of Christ either reflects or distorts the testimony of Christ

“The world has a right to look upon us and make a judgment. We are told by Jesus that as we love one another the world will judge, not only whether we are His disciples, but whether the Father sent the Son. The final apologetic, along with the rational, logical defense and presentation, is what the world sees in the individual Christian and in our corporate relationships together.”

Francis Schaeffer, *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*



What Then Are The
Implications?

Holiness is essential to the believer because:



- ❖ Sanctification's aim is not primarily for our personal benefit, but ultimately God's glory.
- ❖ Therefore, the scale of our choice to sin or not to sin is not "the pleasure of sin for a season" vs. the "blessing if God's favor", this is only taking into account personal benefits and will lead to easy yielding to temptation.
- ❖ The scale must be weighted Biblically, with my choice to sin will distort the picture of God's character (His holiness) and will justify the unbeliever's accusation of "hypocrisy".
- ❖ The opposite is true, if we display the character of God by living holy lives, then we demonstrate the attributes of God which are portrayed and promised in the Gospel message.
- ❖ Sanctification is essential for an effective witness to the lost.

Recommended Reading:

- ❖ The Holiness of God, *R.C. Sproul*
- ❖ The Pursuit of Holiness, *Jerry Bridges*
- ❖ Holiness, *J.C. Ryle*
- ❖ Possessed by God, *David Peterson*
- ❖ Sanctification: The Christian's Pursuit of God-Given Holiness, *Mike Riccardi*
- ❖ Created in God's Image, *Anthony A. Hoekema*
- ❖ The Attributes of God, *A.W. Pink*
- ❖ The Attributes of God, *A.W. Tozer (vol. 1&2)*
- ❖ The Attributes of God, Teaching Series Study Guide, *Steve Lawson*
- ❖ Set Apart, *R. Kent Hughes*