

Series: God & Man & Woman #760

Title: The First Man & the First Woman, Part 3

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world! Many of you know that Adam (the first man) and Eve (the first woman) were both made in the image of God. We read this up front in the opening chapter of the Bible, “**27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.**” This is truth that we sometimes find hard to grasp. We talked about this challenge yesterday. So, let us ask, what does it mean that Adam and Eve, *and us*, are made in the image of God? I said I have five ways in which we bear the image of God, all found within the Bible, to share with you. Last time I gave you the first.

Today I want to remind you what that is, and say a little more about it, before we move onto the second way in which we are made in the image of the Living God. First, we said that we exist as living, personal beings. God is a living, personal being and so are we. I wanted to add the following, but ran out of time. As a way to see Adam and Eve as living, personal beings think about this in the context of their physical bodies.

Adam had a body. Eve had a body. In Genesis 2 we read about their bodies in some detail. We’ve already done that with the man’s and soon we will see that with the woman’s body. Then, what they did was to use their bodies to express that they were living, personal beings. The man and the woman talk to one another, they listen to one another (using their mouths and ears). They worked that garden together, using their arms and hands and legs and all the muscles it took to cut back the bushes and trim the hedges. They enjoyed sex with one another as husband and wife (using the sex organs in their bodies). So that their living, personal being was expressed through their physical bodies.

Now it is true that God does not have a physical body. The Bible teaches us that God is Spirit. John 4.24 says it plainly, “**God is Spirit.**” So, while we know God does not have a body as we do, there is still something about our bodies that reflects His image. We are like God in this respect: He has stamped His image on our being and there is a physical, bodily component to this. Each day we function – we carry out our lives in these bodies – bearing on us the image of *God*. I wanted to add this as we get going on this Friday.

And now I think we are prepared to move onto the second way in which we are made in the image of God. The **second** way that we are made in the image of God is that **we are relational beings**. Yes, this is related to the first, but stands on its own. God is clearly relational. The living God related to the first man and the first woman in the garden and God relates to us in the garden of our lives. Likewise, we relate to God *and* we relate to one another. We do not always relate *well*. But we live in relationship to God and each other. In this way we bear the image of God.

And of course the most profound way in which God demonstrates His relationship to us is through the life of His Son Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches that God the Father sent Jesus the Son to us, in order to forgive us of our sin, such that we can live in relationship *directly* to God. As Jesus said in John 5, verse 37, “**The Father sent me.**” And Jesus certainly taught that, like God, we are to be relational beings. Think of how Jesus emphasized the two greatest commands. In the Gospels He says, “**Love the Lord your God**” and “**Love your neighbor.**” That is love in two relational directions. Love upwards to God (vertical) and love sideways to other people (horizontal). This love is expressed in relationship.

Whenever we love God and love one another we are bearing the image of God. God is love and we are to demonstrate His love in our relationships. This is what the people of the world are missing out on when they attempt to vigorously erase the image of God from themselves. They refuse to express love in relation to God and one another. And, I fear, this is what too many Christians are also doing. In relationships, we get hurt and so, wounded, we pull back. *But*, to bear the image of God means we are relational beings. We need one another and we need God. So that as God’s image bearers we will not be able to stay away from Him and one another for long. To do so is to destroy ourselves.

Have you ever wondered why it is hard to totally withdraw from all relationships? In 2020 we dealt with the coronavirus (COVID-19) and that meant that worldwide people were ordered to stay away from one another. We had to “social distance.” While that may have been effective in slowing the spread of the virus, it was disastrous for our mental and emotional health and well being. Suicides went way up! Why, because people bear the image of God. As God is relational, so are we. We are made, we are designed to live in relation to one another. We cannot bear to be socially distant!

As you know, I love coffee (sometimes tea too), and one of the observations I often make in a coffee shop is the deep sense of how strangers, around a cup of coffee, will live in relation to one another. We have a local coffee shop nearby us and whenever I go in there (especially in the mornings) I find the same group of elderly gentlemen in one corner sipping from their coffee cups and talking about the day’s news. I *love* that. I have deduced from the content of their conversations that these men are not Christians, but little do they know they’re bearing the image of God in the sense that they’re living in relation to one another. Even strangers do that, how much more so friends and family. And certainly, the church! This sense of belonging to one another comes from *God*.

We are made in the image of God. We are relational beings. And now **third, we are made in the image of God as emotional beings**. We know this about ourselves, right? You and I are full of emotions. In fact, we often express multiple emotions at the same exact time. Have you been the loving father or mother of the bride or groom at a wedding? On the one hand you are filled with such joy and happiness for your son and daughter. On the other hand you have sadness or sentimentality that they’re now all grown up, leaving you to cleave to their spouse. Where did the time go?

Are you a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, attending the funeral of a family member or friend who also belongs to Christ? A part of you swells with joy and hope, knowing this believer is absent from the body but present with the Lord. He or she is in heaven! But, you grieve. You are sad. You will have to live down here without this person. At Christian funerals we both laugh and cry. We have such mixed emotions.

But, you ask, does God have emotions? I answer, yes, He does. Let’s just take a couple of the emotions I just mentioned: joy and grief. Does God feel and express joy? Yes. Listen to Zephaniah 3, verse 17. *What?* Yes, there is a Book of the Bible called Zephaniah. It is near the end of the Old Testament. And here is what Zephaniah 3.17 says, **“The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.”** God has joy! We have joy.

And God also has grief. Listen to Genesis 6, verse 6, **“The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.”** (Genesis 6.6) Or, think of Jesus (who is God). Over in John 11.35 we read, **“Jesus wept.”** God grieves. We grieve. God has emotions. We have emotions, because we are made in the image of God.

It is valuable that I say a distinction must be made between God’s emotions and ours. God does not have mood swings. He is not moody. Up and down (as we are often are). The Bible records God’s emotions in a way that we can understand. This is part of how God relates to us who He is. But unlike us all of God’s emotions are grounded in His holiness. God cannot sin, and therefore God’s emotions are always expressed without sin. We do not have time to do this now, but go through the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and follow Jesus around closely. You will read of Him expressing emotion, but He always does so perfectly.

Some Christian traditions and churches (pastors) will teach that human emotion is bad, even evil, and we need to deny or suppress our emotions. That is not biblical! We must be on guard about sinning with our emotions, yes. Definitely. Be self-controlled. *But*, there are times to have grief, to have joy, to feel angry, of course to love but also to hate, and even to be jealous. The idea that Christians are emotionless robots is just not true. Do not suppress or deny your emotions, rather give them over to Jesus Christ, such that He can transform them!

Much more can be said about this, but we are nearing the end of our time. The key point to take with you is this: we are made in the image of God as emotional beings. And, as this week ends, I remind you we are compiling a profile of the first man and the first woman at this time in Eden.

So far we have this: they were both real, historical people. Second, they were made in the image of God. So that we know what it means to be made in the image of God we have said first, we exist as living, personal beings. Second, we are relational beings. Third, we are emotional beings. Next week we will see how we bear the image of God with our intellect and our will. So, join me again on Monday for God Is!

---END---