**Living in the Image of God**

<https://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/rango/names-rango>

**If you had to use one word to describe yourself what would it be?**

Seems like image is everything these days. Anyone can create the image they want for themselves on social media and anyone else can easily destroy that image.

***What does image mean to you?***

Martin Luther said that if he could understand the first two words of the [Lord’s Prayer](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3A9-13&version=NIV) (Our Father) as well as Christ did, the rest of his life in Christ would fall into place.

***What do you think that mean?***

Do you really see yourself as a child of God, and understand all that it implies? (Think of your parents – what does it mean to be their son or daughter?)

Luther’s observation shows that it is easy to *know* God’s words, but much more difficult to grasp the reality they signify.

This is true with regards to the “image of God.” Most believers have heard that we are **created in the image of God**, but few grasp the profound significance of its meaning.

***What does being “created in the image of God “ mean to you?***

Understanding how we are made in the image of God is foundational for understanding our value, significance and purpose and how we value those around us.

**The Image of God**

Genesis 1:26-28 t*hen God said ‘****Let us make man in our image****, according to our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth.’ And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

Our worth is connected to our Creator. If God is of great and unmeasurable worth, then we, beings made in his image, must be of great value too.

Our value is present in creation, but even after the fall of man into sin. In Genesis God reminds Noah that man is still made in God’s image:

Genesis 9:5-6 *Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the* ***image of God*** *has God made man.*

So if everyone is made in the image of God then To harm (Bodily or verbally) another person is to attack God through his image bearer. Did you catch that?

James 3:9 *With the tongue we bless our Lord and Father and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness (or Image) of God.*

We find that even lying reflects on the image of our creator

*Colossians 3:9-10 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge* ***in the image of its Creator****.*

These verses show us that the way we treat people is an indication of how we value the image of God that we were created in. As kids the way we act is a reflection on our parents. You will often find people questioning the parenting skills of someone who is always acting up. With that said, when we tell people we are Christians but always acting contrary to how the Bible says we should live, that reflects on God.

Have you ever heard someone say “You call yourself a Christian but you always …”? What we do as Christians reflects on Christ because of whose name we bare, that’s why we are called CHRISTians.

# What Does it Mean to be an Image-Bearer?

There are few questions more significant than what it means to be an image-bearer of God. It’s at the heart of what it means to be a Christian. It governs our ethics, calling us to see every person (not just those like us or those we like) as valuable and treat every individual with dignity, respect, and honor. It helps us answer questions like:

* Why do I exist? What is my purpose?
* What makes my life valuable?
* Where does my worth, dignity, and value come from?
* How should I relate to those around me?

The good news of being in Christ is we regain what was lost at the Fall and the Spirit is working to remake us into God’s image (2 Cor. 3:18). We find value and purpose by rooting our identity in Christ Jesus and not by taking on an identity given to us by the world. Who we are, fundamentally, is who we are in Christ.

* In Christ we’re reconciled back to God and again experience the joy of intimacy and fellowship with Him.
* In Christ we again belong to God our Father and the Church as our family.
* In Christ we find what is worthy of worship, and our hearts and minds re-center their worship on Jesus as we begin looking more like him.
* In Christ we find our purpose as we represent Jesus on this earth and make ourselves servants for the good of others.
* In Christ we can have healthy relationships because we experience the grace, forgiveness, and love of God that enables us to give grace, forgiveness, and love to others.
* In Christ we’re given the wisdom of what is good and upright, and what will lead to God’s glory and our joy, and the Spirit helps us to then walk in such things.
* In Christ we reclaim what was lost with Adam and begin to experience the life God intended for us.

In other words, my identity in Christ can be summarized as follows:

I was made in the image of God. Sin corrupted me and distorted my identity but didn’t eliminate the image of God in me. Before Christ I didn’t understand who I was. In Christ, by grace, through faith (Ephesians 2:8 ) —I am reconciled back to God, redeemed from my former shame and sin, and now my identity is restored in Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

The Christian life is about the Spirit remaking us into a new creation, in the image of God, by transforming me into the image of Christ, and as this happens, I discover God’s good and perfect plan for what it means to be a Christian.

As Christians we reflect and represent Christ to this world. We bare God’s image to this world. We fulfill our original design to spread the glory of God. Although I am now a new creation in Christ and have a new identity in Christ, I will still fall prey to sin that confuses, confines, and condemns us to our old self but we await the day when sin will be removed completely and we will finally be glorified so that we will live forever with Christ.

**Part 2**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFUQlBe6i6I>

**Implications of Being an Image Bearer**

**1. We will realize that there are no ordinary people.**

C.S. Lewis wrote in his book [*The Weight of Glory*](http://www.amazon.com/Weight-Glory-C-S-Lewis/dp/0060653205): “*There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal.”*

We are not ordinary people and the people you see every day, even the ones to whom you give little regard, were all created in the image of God and not one of them is ordinary in God’s eyes.

In light of this truth, how can we declare the value of the people around us?

**2. We will recognize our Sin along with God’s mercy & grace.**

Today, many people focus on their self-worth without giving much thought to their sinful nature. Others emphasize their unworthiness and sinfulness without any note of God’s mercy and grace.

The apostle Paul was never shy to talk about his sinful nature but he always mentioned the overwhelming grace of God along with it:

1 Corinthians 15:9-10: 9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

1 Timothy 1:15-16 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

Paul calls himself the “worst of sinners,” but also notes, “yet for this reason I found mercy…that in me, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience…”.

We can say the same. No matter what we have done, God’s grace works in us. To deny or fail to acknowledge this truth is to say that God’s grace is not enough or even useless.

Certainly, it is right to take time for self-examination, confession, and repentance. But we should eventually come back to God’s mercy and grace and our own self-worth coming from being made in the image of God.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

**3. The image of God will look like Christ in Me.  At least it should**

2 Corinthians 3:18 tells us that as the Spirit of the Lord works with in us as we become more like Christ and reflect his Glory.

Romans 8:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

* **Wow - We are called to be brothers and sister of Christ**

How does that make you feel? How should it make you feel?

Always remember that YOU are being “conformed to the image of his God’s Son.” Jesus is the perfect representative of the image of God, and we are being made like him.

* **Don’t ever look down on yourself or others because we are all made in the image of Christ**

Once we begin to understand this idea of being made in Christ image, we will see a change in our relationship with Him and our relationship with others around us.

Big question: How did Jesus act? He didn’t rule or did he served (Washed feet of Disciples), He associated with the broken (Tax collectors, Fishermen, Sinners), He forgave those who set out to hurt him (Even those who crucified him), and he showed love and kindness to everyone.

Ephesians 4:22-24 put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to **put on the new self,** **created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness**.

Being made in the image of God should provide the basis for all we do. If we are made in the image of God, we share his characteristics. For example, because God Loves us, we should show love to those around us.

1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Because God is quick to forgive us we should also be quick to forgive others.

# Colossians 3:12-13 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

**5 We will use our God given gifts for Christ**

Knowing the basis for our value in Christ should show each of us that we have gifts and talents we are called to share with others.

Not everyone realizes that they are called to do something. You may think you don’t have anything to offer but we all have a calling, a gift or a talent that we are called to use to Glorify God. So many Christians don’t believe they have any value, and fail to recognize their God-given. Some may have gifts but think they are not worth sharing and others may just not want to share them for whatever reason

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Romans 12:6-8 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us **use them**: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

**Living the Life of an Image Bearer**

Rediscovering the biblical doctrine of being an image bearer begins with understanding who we are and where we came from. It begins with knowing we are made in the image of God and acting like it. Image-bearing alone should cause our hearts to leap for joy. As image-bearers, we are all made to glorify and magnify the Lord. And by all, I mean all mankind. The Lord did not distinguish between the Christian and non-Christian in creating them in His image. So we should treat all equally and it is with this knowledge that as Christian we should delight in sharing the gospel through our gifts.

There is no one walking the earth who is not in need of the gospel. We are all part of humanity, each one of us heading toward either heaven or hell. It takes the power of the gospel to transform an image-bearer’s heart of stone and bring it into a heart of worship and delight for God. The only way for a heart to be on fire for God is through the pursuing, saving grace of God, which changes hearts.

Ezekiel 36:26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

 As Christians, who understands our true nature before God, we should be eager to share the gospel with fellow image Bearers, Both Christian and non-Christian alike.

The bottom line: As image bearers of Christ we have a responsibility to reflect Christ for others to see this means the way we act, the way we dress, the words we say, the friends we make all should reflect Christ in us. We need to live up to our name as Christians and set an example to all those around us. Don’t try to fit in. Try to stand out!!!!!!!!!!

***Whose image do people see when the look at you?***

***Do you bear the image of Christ?***

[Bible Project: image of God](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbipxLDtY8c)

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