

APPLYING TRUTH TO LIFE

Grace Gatherings

THEOLOGY NIGHTS | JANUARY 17, 2024

GRACE CHURCH
WILLIAMSBURG

Question 9

Explain, **using biblical categories**, your understanding of the image of God in man.

Perhaps the most incredible reality about every **person** is that they are made in the image or likeness of God, both male and female, and given charge to rule over all the earth (Gen. 1:26-27).

Perhaps the most incredible reality about every **Christian** is that we have, and can reflect, both the mind and character of God as His image bearers (1 Cor. 2:16).

Question 9

How do **unbelievers** reflect the image of God?

What traits in human beings make them human and set them apart from animals and creation in general?

Question 9

Characteristics that further define mankind as God's image-bearers:

1. **Ontologically**: (man's being, his existence) Man is living, personal, self-conscious, active, and has personality (expresses human personhood). Our physical and spiritual selves combine to express God's image.
2. **Volitionally**: Mankind chooses and discerns right from wrong.
3. **Intellectually**: Mankind reasons from a rational mind. We think logically as problem solvers about complex things. We are aware of ourselves, others, and God from a conscience stamped with God's laws of right/wrong. Memory, imagination, creativity, and language for relating to God and others.

Question 9

Characteristics that further define mankind as God's image-bearers:

4. **Emotionally:** Fear, anger, guilt, anxiety, regret, shame, happiness, sorrow, and joy. Laughter and crying. We have multiple feelings at the same time.
5. **Relationally:** With God and others. Only people can give/receive love.
6. **Functionally:** God has equipped mankind to both desire and fulfill the dominion mandate. Males and females have bodies that can fulfill God's command to multiply and fill the earth with more humans.

Question 9

What does the image of God **in mankind** have to do with God's **sovereignty in salvation** (His control of who, when, where, and how each person is saved)?

- Given that the Bible tells us that every human being is made in God's image, why doesn't every person reflect that image fully and consistently?

Answer: Sin! (Rom. 3:10ff; Eph 4:17ff)

- This **marred** image tells us that something is desperately wrong inside each of us, and it points to mankind's need for a **Savior** -- Someone to act on behalf of the sinner for his/her salvation -- to effect forgiveness for sins.
- But it also tells us that God still makes us to bear His image in unique ways apart from other aspects of creation. Human beings are especially important to God. (Gen. 5:1-3 referring to all the offspring of Adam/Eve; Gen. 9:6; James 3:9)

Question 9

What does the image of God **in you** have to do with **Christian sanctification** (growing in Christlikeness throughout your life)?

- We were made to **reflect God's mind and character**. Our redemption (freedom from sin's death penalty and dominating power) restores us to spiritual **life** and closeness to God, **so that** we can be **continually conformed to Christ**.
- 1 Cor. 2:16; Eph. 4:1-3, 5:1-2; Phil. 2:3-8, 15; 1 John 2:1-6
- We are commanded to grow in the knowledge and grace of God, so that we can please Him in all respects as His image-bearers.
- 2 Pet. 3:18; Col. 1:9-10
- Our new spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ means He is living in us, so that we bear the image of Christ (God) as we become increasingly like Him. This is a miracle of God's grace at work in each believer.

Question 9

All this (and more) leads us to conclude that God's image is stamped **on** us and **in** us in a way that defines us as uniquely **human**.

We operate as we do because we are **structurally** defined as God's image bearers. It cannot be done, but if you were to remove God's image from your person, you would cease to be a person; you would cease to be a human being.

Question 9

What we do is based on who we **are**: we are **fundamentally** bearers of God's image.

Faith in Jesus Christ makes our image-bearing **glorifying to God** and restores us to that "**good**" that God made us to be in His world.

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