

# Man in God's Image



**Bro Kory Cunningham**

**Genesis 1:26–28**

This past year I turned 40. So for my 40th birthday I tried to think I should do something great because 40 is not a really great age to turn. I wanted to do something epic fun that'll make 40 a good thing so I decided to try to hike 40 miles in some of the best places in the world. I got some buddies together and we went to Yellowstone and Glacier, and we did 40 miles of hiking in about three days. It was just spectacular. The reason I wanted to go, especially to Glacier, is I love nature. I love the outdoors. I love national parks. Glacier, the tagline is the crown jewel of the continent. In fact, we had a picture of just one that I took.



I could show you a whole bunch, but that's actually a picture, that's not a painting, it's the real place. You don't see it but just off the hill just a bit, there is a huge grizzly bear eating. It didn't eat us so that was good, but it was just unbelievable to see Glacier National Park. We're taking pictures, we're videoing—you just cannot believe the beauty and the majesty. I think it's named appropriately, the crown jewel of the continent. Of all places, if you could go somewhere for one day, go there; it's the crown jewel.

In Genesis 1, we've learned that God is Creator and that God created a good creation. So if you look at all of His creation over the span of what He did and all that He created—the cosmos, the universe, everything you see on planet Earth—what's the crown jewel? What's the best, what's the pinnacle? What's it all pointing to? We don't have to guess; God actually tells us the crown jewel of His creation is you and me. It's us, human beings. We are the only ones made in the image of God. In fact, the whole narrative of creation, the way God arranges these six days of creation, it's all pointing to day six. The crescendo, the grand event is on day six when God makes man in His image. So let's go there to day six of creation, Genesis chapter 1. We're going to look at verse 26 through 28.

## **Scripture**

***"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"***

Last week we dealt with the creation, God creating the world in six days, and so we saw this rhythm of creation, there is a cadence to God's creation. He's doing certain things in certain ways. What strikes us on day

six is the pattern is broken, and God breaking the pattern is going to speak to us that something unique, something special is happening here. The crown jewel has happened, and that is the creation of you and me, the creation of human beings. So I want to draw your attention to the pattern we saw last week. You can see it's very symmetrical. It all looks sort of the same. We see in verse 3, "And God said, let there be light." Verse 6, "And God said, let there be an expanse." Verse 9, "And God said, let the waters under the heavens be gathered." Verse 11, "And God said, let the earth sprout vegetation." Verse 14, "And God said, let there be lights." Verse 20, "And God said, let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures and let the birds fly." Verse 24, "And God said, let the earth bring forth living creatures." So we're seeing a pattern. "And God said," and then "let there be" or "let the earth bring forth" and then there was. We see this pattern all throughout. And then all of a sudden you get to verse 26 and you see there's a break in the pattern. It doesn't say "And" God did another thing; it says "Then," which tells me that all of the 'ands' have been weaving together, they've been in a rhythm, and they're all building to this point. It's "And," "And," "And," "Then" now we're ready—the curtain is drawn, stage is set—we're ready for the moment that God has been waiting for, that God has been preparing for. Something different is happening that is unique and special over all the rest of creation. So what is the "then?" "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'" Notice the other break in the pattern that's different. Before, it was God said let there be or let the earth bring forth. Now, God said let us make something, and not just something, but let us make that something in our very image. The 'us' I think is a clear picture of the Trinity—Father, Son, Holy Spirit. The triune God, Creator God is making us human beings in His very image.

So what does this tell us about ourselves? Well, it tells us that we are the crown jewel of God's creation, that we are unique, and that we are special. It's not just a break in pattern, notice verse 27. What you'll notice is it's what sticks out. It doesn't flow in the regular narrative; it's actually a stanza. It looks like perhaps poetry. Kent Hughes says this is the first poem in all the Bible. So God has been telling us the story in narrative form, how He made everything, and then all of a sudden He breaks and writes a poem, or you could say He stops and He begins to sing a song about His

most prized possession. Here's the song, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God, He created him; male and female He created them." He doesn't just break the pattern to show it's been building to this, He actually sets a poem, He sets a song so that everybody listening, everyone reading, knows this is the point of creation. This is what it's been leading to, this creation of mankind in His image. And notice it's male and female. What does it mean that we're male and female, and how do men and women uniquely mirror God? We're going to talk about that next week, but for now we see that it's both; it's men and women, or mankind, bear the image and likeness of God.

So, in reading it and hearing it and looking at it, you see the main event is day six, the creation of human beings. Which means humans alone bear the image of God. That's point number one for you to know, you alone bear the image of God. Ten years ago, there was a story about a Silverback gorilla named Harambe and a kid, two or three years old, who fell into his pen at a zoo. What do you do in that moment? You don't know what the gorilla's going to do, is the gorilla going to attack, is the gorilla going to be friendly? Nobody knew, so pretty quickly the leadership of the zoo decided to shoot the gorilla in order to save the kid from potential death. Now, if you heard about this back then, you know that it was a dumpster fire after that. There was so much controversy, so many headlines. At first, it was "KID IS SAVED!" But the next day, it was "WHY DID GORILLA DIE?" There were all these articles and opinions on why did they shoot the gorilla. Was the gorilla innocent? Was the gorilla guilty of a crime? Did the gorilla deserve to die? Shouldn't we have just looked at both of these? Maybe the kid deserved to die; he's the one that fell into the pen. We had this cultural moment where we all had to figure out what is right. Do you shoot a gorilla to save a kid or do you just let the two go at it and see who lives? Well, Genesis 1 settles the issue—you always shoot the gorilla, every time. It's not a question, it's not a decision; the boy bears the image of God, the gorilla does not. The gorilla dies every time, not a discussion.

I was reading about a professor who says every year he poses the same question to his class, which is if your dog was drowning and a stranger was

drowning and you can only save one, who would you save, your dog or a stranger you don't know? I mean, I have a dog named Grizzy. She cuddled with me this morning. I was typing up my notes at 5:00 AM and she comes and snuggles in my chair. I love Grizzy. So the question is would I save Grizzy, or would I save the stranger? The professor said the class is usually always a split. A third of the students pick the dog, a third of the students pick the stranger, and a third of the students say they just can't decide; they don't know what they would do. That's probably pretty general to maybe be unsure, to not know. Well, let's just be clear, as Christians Genesis 1 settles the case—you let your dog drown and you save the stranger every time. No question. I know, I know...I love my dog too, but guess what. My dog does not bear the image of God; strangers do. People that I don't even know bear the image of God, which means they have value, dignity, and worth from God. They are God's crown jewel of His creation. We save the people and let the animals die. Genesis 1 is very clear on this, and we have to make sure that we are very clear that we see human beings in this light.

Now yes, we are in some ways linked to the world. I mean, we're made from dust like animals are, so we are linked in some ways, but also we have the very breath of God as we're going to see in chapter 2, and we're made in His image. Yes, we're like the earth and we're like animals, but we are also very unlike; we bear the image of God, us alone. This also means some things about us that we love. Even though maybe our friends don't believe the Bible or God, they also love the things that the Bible actually teaches. Things like human rights. Most of us like the idea that humans have rights. In fact, it's in our Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." We love that, that we have been given rights by our Creator. No one can take them away. They were gifts. But the problem is if you take away God and you take away image bearing from God, then it's just all made up. If there's no creator and we don't bear His image, then human rights are a made up category. We're just evolved animals that decided we should have some rights, but it's made up, it's imaginary, and we can all disagree and rearrange those

rights however we want. I can respect your rights or not because you made them up and I made them up, and there's no foundation for those human rights. But none of us believes that. We all believe that somehow there are human rights and the reason is because it's actually true, that we were made by God in His image; therefore, we do have human rights because God made us and we uniquely bear His image.

There's a book that I want to read called The Air We Breathe. One of my friends, Jackson Greer is reading it and he's been telling me about it so it's on my to-do list. I watched some videos from the guy who wrote it and he says this, "The extraordinary impact of Christianity is seen in the fact that we don't even notice it." What he's talking about is western culture. Western culture has a lot of values, things like freedom and equality and progress and rights, but the problem is we have no idea where we got those values from—it's just the air we breathe; it's just everything we know. Of course we have rights, of course we should have freedom, and of course there should be equality; it's just a general assumption. And the reason is, is because the air we breathe is a leftover of Christianity. The air we breathe is what the Bible has taught us. The air we breathe is what Christ has brought us. But now, we are forgetting those things so we want freedom and rights apart from Christ, apart from a biblical worldview. The problem is they don't exist apart from Christ or biblical worldview. They're imaginary; they're not real...so we have to be the people that root the things we love in actual reality...and that is the Bible tells us we have rights and freedom and that we should fight for certain things because we are unique, we are different; we're made in the image of God. It's not just the air we breathe; it's the truth about who we are. We have to be the people that remind those around us that the world they enjoy is one that is brought from a Christian worldview. We are image bearers of God.

Secondly, as image bearers we rule God's creation. Notice right after telling us we are made in the image of God, verse 26 says, "And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So let man have dominion over all the world. God made it and now He's given us the right to rule over it. Let's think about

big picture. What does it mean to be made in the image of God? Well, we're going to get a lot of details but here's the big picture of what it means for you to be in the image of God. You are made to reflect God and to rule on God's behalf. That's big picture. God made you with the purpose that you would represent Him, that you would be His little living, breathing statue, walking around planet Earth. So when people see you and bump into you and get to know you, do you know who they're getting to know and bumping into? God. They're seeing who God is, how God would react, how God would love, how God would forgive, how God would be patient, how God would make a decision. You are reflecting God like a mirror. When you stand in front of a mirror, it reflects you. That's what a mirror does. We were made as mirrors to reflect our Creator so that when people see us they don't just see us, they see things about our God. That's what it means to represent God—to show others how God would act, what God would say, what God would do. That's what we were made for. Now, we're going to see something's going to go terribly wrong, it's called the fall and sin. So we don't do this very well, but we're talking about Genesis 1 and 2, the two chapters of the Bible that are perfect. There are two more in the end, the last two chapters are Genesis, everything else is a bunch of messy middle, but we're in the perfect stage—it's all good so far and that's what we're made to do, to represent God.

But it's not just that, also we are to rule on behalf of God. I mean, check it out. God made an entire planet and then put you and me in charge of it. It's like your dad giving you the keys to his favorite sports car and telling you to go take it for a drive. But you know, when driving that sports car there are some rules. It's dad's car so I don't get to do whatever I want. I'm going to drive it like dad would drive it. That's what God has given to us. He made the whole world and then He said now you human beings who bear my image, you rule over it, you have dominion over everything that I've created, but you rule the world under me. In other words, to be in the image of God means you're supposed to rule the world how God would rule the world. Now, some of you are like I don't rule the world, I'm sort of a nobody. Well, do you know what you do rule? You rule a portion of the world. There's a part of the world that you rule over, you have authority over, you have leadership over, you have things that belong to you, you

own a few things. Maybe you are a kid and you're like, "I don't own anything." You're like, "I share a room with my sibling, and I don't even have my own room." Well, let's talk about your bed. You own your bed, and maybe you have authority over the dog. Your dad says you can't tell your sister what to do, but you can tell the dog what to do. So let's start with bed and dog. How do you rule over bed and dog in the way that God rules over the universe? Well for one, I'd make sure to make my bed every day because I'm doing it for the glory of God. How about picking up our room? We're trying to rule the world how God would rule the world. Then you would extend it into our work and the things that we own and things we do, the way we mow our yards, everything that we do is supposed to be an extension of how God would rule the planet. I don't own it but I'm a steward of it, He's left me in charge of it, and the way I rule is the way God rules. So we use the world but we don't exploit the world. We do things that would be Christ honoring in how we take and use the things that God has given us.

So, the big idea is you were made to reflect God and you were made to rule under God. So let's just think about what does it mean then, like details, about what it means to be made in the image of God. What does it even mean to be human? I mean that's a good question to ask right now because we're super confused. If you asked what does it mean to be a woman or what does it mean to be a man, what does it mean to be a human being, we're all sort of confused on all of those questions. Genesis 1 and 2 actually answers all of those. To find the answers to those questions you start here, you start with image of God because God made mankind in His image. We are image bearers of God, that's the starting definition. When we stray, that's where we find our home, thinking about us in the image of God. It's like a train finds its home on train tracks. When you remove a train from the train tracks, the train doesn't go very well. That's us apart from our maker, us apart from God. You have to put us in our proper context. That is we know everything about ourselves in relation to who made us. God made us in His very image so we have to start there. We are image bears of God; that's the most important part of your identity. Think about your identity. That's a big topic today. What is our identity? What's your identity? Can you change your identity? The most important



and foundational part of your identity is you bear the image and likeness of God. That's the core of who you are as a human being; you bear the image of God.

So let's think about image of God just from a church history perspective. What did other historians throughout the church think about the image of God? We'll start with Irenaeus (AD 130-200). He believed that after the fall the image of God remained, we're still in the image of God, but the likeness of God faded away at our fall and what Jesus does in salvation is He brings back the likeness of God. In other words, we're made like God again at salvation. Thomas Aquinas in the 1200's, he saw image of God as primarily our intellect, our reasoning, the way we think. We're thinking beings and that set us apart from the animal kingdom, so it's how we're unlike animal kingdom in our thinking that makes us image of God. Then you have John Calvin in the 1500's saw the image of God as not just the intellect, it's more about man's soul. We are eternal beings, we can pray, we can have conversations with God, we can contemplate God, we have a spirit, that's what makes us image of God. Then you have Karl Barth in 1800's. He would say it's about the relationship; it's that male and female together, that's what makes us image of God. You have Emil Brunner who died in the sixties who says it's not a relationship with man and woman; it's our relationship to God that makes us primarily image of God. Now, I would say that none of these is wrong things, but all of them are in some ways limiting what it means to be in the image of God. It's not one thing or another; it is the totality of who we are. We are made in the image of God.

So again, what exactly does that mean? I'll give you a few simple definitions of image of God from a few theologians. Wayne Grudem says the fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God and represents God. Anthony Hogan would say it means that we reflect Him like a mirror and that means we represent Him or we rule over the world on behalf of Him. Bruce Ware, we're images of God in order to image God. We image God, that's what we do. Herman Bavinck says man does not simply bear or have the image of God; he is the image of God. I think that's an important distinction. You don't just bear God's image, you don't

just resemble God; you *are* His image, you *are* His likeness. It's part of who you are in the core of your being; you are an image bearer of God.

Now, let's think a little bit more about how the people that Moses is writing to would've thought through image of God because it's kind of interesting. Here God says, to presumably the Israelites coming out of Egyptian slavery, He's retelling them how they got here, how God's creator, how God made the world, He starts talking to them about creation, and then He just tells them...and by the way, I made you in my image and my likeness. But there's no definition, God doesn't tell us what exactly that means, so the presumption is the people who heard it would've known it. In other words, they would've already heard language "image of God." I want to just go through a little dialogue from Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum. They wrote a book called God's Kingdom through God's Covenant. In the book, they say if you want to think about what image of God would've meant to them, you have to look at the culture they're living in. And so, when it came to their culture how did they interpret image of God? Then you have to compare and contrast it to what God is saying in the Bible and then you'll have a fullness of what it means to be made in the image and likeness of God.

So, what was their cultural context? Well, the pharaohs had a title, which meant they were the image of god...every pharaoh who is a king is the image of god. In fact, we have several inscriptions, one from 1600 BC that says, a living statue of 'such and such' god. So a pharaoh is literally a living statue of 'so and so' god. He's in the likeness of that God, the image of that god. In fact, by the Nile River in Egypt, you see these huge images that are set up of Ramses II. He's in the likeness of this god, which means he is the son of god on earth. Being the son of god, in the image of that god, he gets to rule over this part of the world on behalf of that god. So wherever his image is, there is sonship and there is kingship over that part of the world. So if you're in a boat and you come around the corner and you see that, you know if you're going to fish there, you have to ask this guy's permission because that dude rules this place and that dude doesn't just rule it; his god rules it. He's in the image of this god, and this god's

going to be angry and do something crazy if you fish there without permission. It's about authority; it's about power.

So, that's how they understood image of God—it's the king at that time. That king is in the likeness of god because he's the son of that god, and he bears the image of that god, meaning he gets to rule on behalf of that god. That's the comparison, so now let's do the contrast. Moses is saying I'm telling you that God didn't just make one of you in His image; God made all of you in His image...every single one of you, every single person on the planet bears the image and likeness of God. Do you know what that gives all of us? It gives all of us sonship that all of us are like God; we are sons and daughters of God. We are children of God in His likeness, and then in His image as image bearers, we all get to rule the world under God. There's not just one pharaoh, there's not just one king, all of us are kings and queens under the True King of kings. This would've been explosive for them! They would've kind of understand image of God—yeah, it's one dude who gets to rule. No, image of God is all of you everywhere. You all bear the image of the high King who created the cosmos, that means all of you are sons and all of you get to rule under Him and showed the world what He's like. That's what it meant to bear the very image of God. It's not just one person; it's all of us.

Let's think through those things a little bit differently. Let's think of likeness and image and the fact that it means that we are sons of God. Notice what we see in Genesis 5:1–3, “This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.” God made man in His likeness, and we're going to see that's about sonship. There's a connection there. Notice, “Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness...” What does that mean about Seth? Seth is Adam's son. Why? Because he's in his likeness. We are sons; we have sonship because we are in the likeness of God. Verse 3 continues, “...after his image, he named him Seth.” There's this connection that likeness is speaking about, Seth being a son of Adam because he's in his likeness, and Adam is a son of God in His likeness. Therefore, by extension, Seth is also a son of God in His likeness. So it

means that all of us have sonship, that all of us are sons and daughters of the high King.

Then we go to this idea of image, and image means that we get to rule on God's behalf. We don't just represent Him; we also get to rule on His behalf. So, we're going to look at Psalm 8 because David gives us commentary on Genesis 1:27. Notice what Psalm 8 verses 5–6 say, "Yet you have made him [man] a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet." Notice the language of kingship. We're crowned...who wears a crown? A king. We have glory, we have honor, and we're given dominion over the works of all that God does, and all things are put under our feet. That is ruler language, that's king language, that's conquering language. That's who we are. Why do we get to be kings? Why do we get to be queens? Because we're made in the image of God, and wherever the image of God is, that's where God rules. Now, we have similar things we can kind of compare that to, like our ambassadors for the United States. I looked up the list of our ambassadors this morning and there's a whole big list of all these various countries we have ambassadors in. Now, that ambassador, that person, is not there just representing themselves; they're representing the United States of America. In a lot of ways, they're representing our president in that country while they are there. They are doing what we would do as Americans, or what our President would do if he were there in that place. That's what God is saying. He gave us His image so that wherever we are, that's where God rules. Think about Nebuchadnezzar when he set up an image on the plain. What was the image about? That's where Nebuchadnezzar rules so bow down and worship the image. Why? Because the image is Nebuchadnezzar. The image is an extension of his likeness and his rulership. That's you and that's me with God. Everywhere we are, we get to rule over the world in good ways like God would rule it. That's our privilege. That's our right. That's what God has done for us.

Notice this image of God comes with commands. Notice chapter 1, verse 28. It says, "And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish

of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” Here we have this cultural mandate, as theologians call it. God blesses them and then He says be fruitful and multiply. In other words, get married and have babies. It's good. You should do that. Do you know why we should get married and why we should have babies? Because we were made in the image of God, male and female. Do you know what's really cool? God did that once with Adam and Eve, and then He tells them to go and make more image bearers of God. You, together, make babies. Those babies are image bearers of God. That's why when we get to show a little baby and everybody says, “Awe!” that's an awe moment because Bro. Ricky is holding an image bearer of God! We get to make more image bearers of God.

God says not only to multiply, but “fill the earth.” Why should we fill the earth with babies? Why should their babies get married and have more babies? Why should we fill the earth with human beings? Because human beings bear the image of God. God wants His Glory over the whole earth, and He gets His glory on the whole earth by human beings bearing His image all over the world. This is part of the great commission. Guess what we get to do now? We get to go therefore and make disciples. We get to renew people in the image of God all over the world, so that all over the globe the image of God would reside, so that everywhere you see people you see who God is and how God rules. That's the glory of the beginning. That's the glory of the gospel.

Not only are we to fill it, but then we are to “subdue” it. Subdue means to take all the raw material that God has made and twist it, mold it, move it. Take a tree, cut it down, and build something with the wood. Figure out how to make concrete and make something cool. Build culture, build buildings, twist, subdue, act, and guess what? Have dominion. That means to rule as kings and queens over all that He has made. God's given us permission, not just to keep things the way they are, but to make things better, to produce and do and move and reflect Him and rule like He rules. Now the question is, is this still true of us? Because we haven't got to Genesis 3, but we're getting there, and Genesis three tells us there's been a great fall. And guess what? We don't do well at imaging God. We don't

do well at ruling on God's behalf. So what do we do, as far as now? Has the image of God been lost, or has it just been distorted? Because what we see at the end of day six is God actually says, it's now very good. Adam and Eve were created and now human beings are here in His image, now God says it's very good. Like Bambi and Wally...the point is people are bad. Like people kill Bambi's dad and that's a bad thing, and Wally sees that human beings are pretty bad slobs who litter a lot so the world will be better if we all disappeared. That's kind of a cultural narrative—the problem is humans. The problem is not humans; we were part of God's very good world in the beginning. Now humans are problems because we have fallen. Like Pascal says, we're both the glory and the garbage of the universe. And it's absolutely true. We do the best of things and we do the worst of things.

So the question is do we still bear the image of God? Do we still represent Him and rule under Him, or has all that been erased by the fall? The Bible tells us that the image of God has been distorted; it has not been destroyed. We still all bear the image of God, even though we do it poorly. I'll give you some scripture to show this. For instance, Genesis 9:6, murder deserves the death penalty because humans are still made in the image of God. James 3:9 says with our tongue, we bless our Lord and Father, and with it, we curse people who are made in His likeness. That's New Testament after the fall. People are made in the likeness of God and that's why we can't curse people, we can't talk down to people, because every person has value, dignity, and worth. Why? Not because of how smart they are, how good they are, or because they agree with your political person; it's because they bear the image and likeness of God. Everybody deserves respect, dignity, they have worth, because everyone's made in the image of God; that's after the fall. So it's been distorted, it's not been destroyed.

Here's the good news of the gospel. Jesus is renewing the image of God in us. Notice Colossians chapter 3, verse 10. It says this, "...and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator." That's the story of the gospel. When we come to know Jesus Christ, do you know what happens? When we repent and believe in the Lord, there is a renewing of the image of God that starts to take place in

our life. We start to look more and more like Jesus, who is the perfect image of God. That's what the gospel brings to us. So yes, we're distorted, we do all sorts of crazy wicked things, but when we come to Jesus, God begins to make us new. God begins to make us different. So if you're a believer, here's the path you're on every day—you're being renewed more and more into the image you were meant to be. Every day you're getting a little bit better, a little bit more like Jesus, a little bit more like God, or at least you should be. Through repentance and faith, daily you're being renewed more and more to be and act and rule like God rules. So right now, through the gospel, we are being renewed into this image.

But it's not just that we're going to be being renewed forever, there's actually going to be a resurrection. I love what 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians says, "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven." Right now, we bear that image that Adam gave us. It's broken, it's marred; it's distorted. It's not destroyed; it's just distorted. Jesus is renewing it in us, but one day there's going to be a resurrection. There's going to be new heavens and a new earth, and we are going to perfectly and again image and rule how God is. We're going to show who God is and we're going to rule like God. That's the future we're going in. But right now as believers, we get to be renewed and we get to do it day by day. We get to show the world who God is.

So an explosive statement—crown jewel of creation. Guess what? You're made in the image of God. So here are some questions as we end. Number one is this. Do you believe you're made in the image of God? Do you really believe that? Do you really believe you're the crown jewel of God's creation? That God formed you and He breathed you the breath of life, and you are a special creation. He knitted you together in your mother's womb. He loves you and you are in His image, and every other person on the planet is too. That's important too. Not just you are, but every person on the planet also bears the image of God; therefore, every person deserves your respect. Every person has value, dignity, and worth. Do you really believe that? The second question is this. Are you representing God well? You are made, here's your purpose, to represent God to the world, to show who God is to everybody you come in contact with. The way you talk, the

way you walk, your attitude—in everything, you're supposed to reflect like a mirror who God is. So the question is how are you doing? Are you giving an accurate picture of who God is to the people around you, the people you come in contact with? Are you representing God well? And then lastly, you were created to rule. That's what image means; it means to rule. Wherever you are, that's where God rules. Are you ruling your little part of the world? That's your job, that's your hobby, that's your house, that's your dorm room, that's your friendships; that's all the space of authority that you have. Are you ruling that in a way that God would rule—a way that cares for nature, a way that is good to your neighbor, a way that is loving and honoring to Him? Or are you just ruling however you want to? Is life selfishly all about you? I can imagine all of us in some ways are saying, I don't do all those things right. That's what response is about. Respond to God's call to represent Him well, to bear His image to those around you, and rule your part of the world as God would rule.