

“In the beginning...HUMAN BEINGS” 2.18 + 21.10

I'd like to begin with a social experiment that I've tested over time; it involves a full length mirror.

- Have you ever noticed how people walk past a mirror of any kind? It reveals volumes about that person. Rarely, if ever does anyone ever just pass by w/out taking notice.

Just PAY ATTENTION ☺

- Business types generally make adjustments of some kind: ties or jackets
  - Self-conscious stop and check their smile no spinach in teeth etc.
  - Middle-aged stop with disdain & stare quietly @ the mirror, bemoaning the hair-line that is receding, while their waste line continues to expand ☺
  - I'll tell you what I've never seen: someone who stops @ the mirror & SMILES & then says, “PERFECT” & confidently striding away.
  - WHY this happens is not a complicated matter to analyze. Most people figure out early on their personal flaws & inadequacies ☹
  - Healthy self-images are very rare; seldom do people make it out of the middle school without coming to grips with personal imperfections.
  - IF by chance, someone has a healthy self-image by these tender years; their peer group will soon be able to warp their sense of value & worth.
- Sociologists explain that our self-image @ the end of the day is largely dependent upon what kind of messages you have received from other people. Am I liked? Am I loved? These messages are reinforced by our family + friends + our team mates that we allow to validate us.

Social scientists explain the “Theory of the Looking – Glass Self”

- YOU become what the most important person in your life – spouse, parent, child, supervisor, teacher, coach, etc. - thinks you are.
  - Allow me to state the obvious: How ludicrous (unhealthy) is it to allow another person the ability to define you or to give you personal self-worth?

Imagine how different your life would be if you could see yourself from God's perspective, not the marred image culture would have you believe.

Write this: God doesn't deal in waste management ~ you're not a piece of dung!

God knew that many of us would struggle with self-image & self-worth, so “in the beginning of creation,”

I. 6<sup>th</sup> Day = God created HUMAN BEINGS

A. (R) Genesis 1: 26a or p. 3 in pew Bible

1. For the 1<sup>st</sup> time in chapter 1, the language changes in the ‘Creation account;’ in v. 26 action in creation moves from just God creating to a plural = “Let us.”
2. So, WHO is God talking to?
3. The answer is not revealed until later in God's word ~ His revelation to us:
  - a. (R) John 1: 1 – 5 or p. 809 in pew Bible  
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  - b. (R) John 1: 14 reveals the identity of God's co-Creator
  - c. (R) Colossians 1: 15 – 17 or p. 902 in pew Bible

- i. Jesus has existed with God since the very beginning.
- ii. B-4 creation God anticipated our most intimate need.

#### 4. INSERT Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- a. Incredible tool for identifying the basic needs of an individual
- b. (5) Basic needs:
  - i. 1st need = Physiological needs air, water, food, sleep, etc
  - ii. 2<sup>nd</sup> need = Safety needs security, employment, health
  - iii. 3<sup>rd</sup> need = Love & Belonging friendship & community
  - iv. 4<sup>th</sup> need = Esteem Needs confidence, respect by others
  - v. 5<sup>th</sup> need = Self Actualization ~ upper level development morality, creativity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, etc

As any good tool, it has its limitations. Dr. Maslow left out our most intimate need:

#### 5. (R) Colossians 1: 18 – 22

Our greatest need was peace with God & without His son's death on the cross; we would still be enemies with God!

BACK to the beginning of God's story:

#### B. (R) Genesis 1: 26a + Genesis 1: 27

The climax of God's creative activity - the apex, zenith, pinnacle of creation - is the fact that "God created us in His image".

As you can well imagine ~ the common understanding of what it means "to be created in the image of God" is highly contested:

I'm not going to throw out every idea that is debated; but simply give you my interpretation:

- C. "...image of God," in its immediate context in Genesis & the broader scope of scripture seems to refer to all those human qualities or capacities that separate us from animals & like God our creator.

These qualities or capacities include:

- Human being are rational & self-conscious
- We are moral beings having a conscience that urges us to do what is right
- We are creative like our Creator ~ able to appreciate what is beautiful to the ear & the eye.
- We are social, able to establish with one another authentic relationships of love.
- Most important difference we have a spiritual need makes us hunger after God.

Bible says,

"...we are fearfully & wonderfully made" Psalm 139: 14

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You are made in the exact "image of God." Genesis 1: 27

BACK to the very beginning of God's story:

D. (R) Genesis 1: 29 – 31,  
“...God looked over all He made & saw that it was very good!”

E. Change gears

1. Question some of you must be wondering about the validity of this passage; because you understand better than anyone your own personal flaws + your own shorting comings + your self – image is scarred-marred-imperfect if it's nothing else.
2. Question Did God make a mistake when He created you; did He create you with a flawed self-image?
3. If so, God's word is inaccurate – false – it's a lie if your original image is anything less than God's image!
4. (R) I Timothy 4: 4 – 5 or p. 911 in pew Bible  
“...everything God created is good”

Let's address the elephant in the room:

Originally God did not create you in a flawed state but unfortunately “...the image of God” within us, has been corrupted by our own doing.

Our free will ~ ability to choose between right & wrong has polluted God's image; with all certainty God's image within you, has not been destroyed!

YOUR fallen state = YOUR marred self image is a result of the invasion of sin that you allowed into your life!

NO BLAME can be attributed to God, because the Bible affirms in multiple places that “everything that He created is very good” Genesis 1: 31

So, Can you regain this lost ground? = YES

Has 'God's image' been marred beyond repair in my personal life? = NO

God is waiting @ this moment to re-Create your life, but it takes your personal initiative!

II. God's image restored within you by His 1<sup>st</sup> act of creation:

A. (R) Ephesians 2: 8 – 10 or 896 in pew Bible

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B. Ephesians 4: 24 confirms, “Put on your new nature, created to be like God, truly righteous & holy.”

Viewing ourselves from God's vantage point changes how we VIEW OURSELVES ~ God adores you!

- o Brennan Manning tells the story of visiting Ireland and taking a walking tour of the beautiful countryside. He came across an Old Catholic priest sitting next to a pond fishing.
- o He asked him, what are you doing; “just enjoying the day talking with God.” So what did God say to you, “He told me I was his FAVORITE!”

C. I stopped beating myself up for past mistakes & stupidity...

- The day I realized:
  - I was God's FAVORITE; He loves me so much that He would not allow my stupidity & sin to keep me at odds with Him forever!
  - That truth was proven @ creation & @ the Cross; when Jesus endured the terrible suffering for my sins; His actions speak volumes

& YOU are God's Favorite!

It's TIME to allow God to redeem your fallen & marred self-image! It starts with a confession ☺