



# Made in the image of God, part 1

Genesis 1:26-31, 2:5-17

[based on the sermon preached on 17.7.22 – available on the [church app](#) or at <https://lwac.org.au/sermons>]

## KEY IDEAS

1. The biblical Christian answer to the questions of where do we come from? who am I? and why am I here? are radically different from our prevailing secular culture.
2. God is our creator and owner; our allegiance is to him and our chief goal and aim is to glorify him.
3. God is a unity but differentiated; God's creation is also marked by unity but differentiation.
4. This unity yet differentiation extends to human beings, too: Adam and Eve.
5. Humans have both capacity to have dominion over the earth and responsibility to do so in ways which glorify and honor God who owns his creation: we are just his stewards.

## CONNECT

- What is one part of you which you believe most clearly communicates or reveals the image of God in you? It could be a talent or ability, a personality trait or gifting, or some other feature. What is that one thing by which you see God expressed through you?

## STUDY

### Read Genesis 1:26-31

- What do you make of the text declaring in v. 26 “Let us make man in our image.” What does the plurality of this possessive adjective indicate?
- Some theologians point out that the wording of v. 27, that “God created man in his image; male and female,” indicates that “man” here refers not just to the male but to both, as in a male-man and a female-man. In other words, a male-human and a female-human (unity and differentiation). If this is correct, how might this impact the important contemporary discussions about male and female roles and equality?
- There has been much theological discussion and debate over exactly what constitutes the image of God in mankind. The three primary options are that the image is something

substantive (literally something within us, like our rationality or our spirit), or relational (our capacity for relationships with God and others), or functional (in our dominion or rule over the other creatures and the earth). The most prominent option is the substantive because if the image is something real and substantial (like our reason, our spirit and our moral capacity), then these also form the basis of our relationships and our rule over the earth.

- Why is every human being made in the image of God vitally important for moral issues such as prohibitions against murder, physical harm and abusive behaviour, as well as abortion, euthanasia and capital punishment? What difference does it make for these issues if we are made in the image of God (or not made in the image, as Atheists would claim)?
- Is it significant that the plants and animals are made “after their kind” but mankind is made “in the image of God”? Why or why not?
- Does God’s command in v. 28 to rule over the earth give us permission to abuse nature? Why or why not?
- In v. 29 God gives man plants and fruit for food. Does the absence of animal meat indicate God’s original design for us was solely a plant-based diet? Even the animals and living creatures were only given plants as food. What do you make of this?
- Do you think God’s pronouncement in v. 31 that all he created was “very good” was about Adam and Eve only or does it apply to the totality of all his creation?

### **Read Genesis 2:5-14**

- Genesis 2:5-9 provides a significantly different depiction of creation than the six day account in 1:3-26. What do you make of this account in Genesis 2? Is it creation from a different angle? Is it a shorter version? How does it compare to the account in Genesis 1?
- What is the significance in 2:7 of God forming man from the dust of the ground and breathing into him the breath of life? Though other animals breathe oxygen too, this account does not say animals have the breath of life the way humans do. What do you make of this? What is so special about this breath of life?

### **Read Genesis 2:15-17**

- What is the significance of God putting Adam in the garden to work it in v. 15? What does this say about the value and dignity and importance for us of human work? Are we less than fully human in some significant way if we don’t have some meaningful work to do?
- Notice two unique trees were also planted in the garden, in v. 9: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But in v. 17 God only prohibits Adam from eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, not the tree of life. Why do you think God did this?

- What did God mean when he declared that the day Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would die? Physical death? Literally that very day? What else might “death” mean here?
- Why did God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil there in the garden in the first place? Why not just leave it out?

## **APPLY**

- Which aspect of this study has struck you the most and why? What are you going to do as a result ?
- Identify one or more truths from this study which speak to and can be applied in your life.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.

## **PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH AND FOR ONE ANOTHER**

- According to need.