



## I. Compressive and Mysterious

We are in the image of God in a comprehensive way. This includes our moral nature, our purposeful being, and the form in which we appear. There is deep mystery in all of this.

God the Father is invisible, he is spirit, and yet he has an image in his Word that is the eternal reflection of him. Human beings reflect that image in body, soul, and mind. (Genesis 3:8; 18:1; Genesis 32:24; 30; John 1:18; 8:56-57; 17:5; 12:41 / Isaiah 6:1)

God's image is not only the intellect or the moral attributes, it is the whole human person

*And above the expanse over their heads, there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. 27 And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. (Ezekiel 1:26-27)*

1. I am cautious of excessive philosophy that downplays the mystery of God in the human experience.
2. We need to affirm the existence of the pre-incarnate Christ, who is the original image in which Adam was created.
3. The human body is part of imaging God, although it is hard to determine to what extent or in what way. We experience revulsion and elation in its appearance. The human body is a reflection of the divine, and so it can easily become an idol. It is also a gift made for glory (1 Corinthians 6:13-20).

## II. Human Beings are Moral (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:22)

*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17)*

The words of 2:16-17 are part of God's initial covenant with man (with 1:28-30).<sup>1</sup>

### What the Commandment Revealed:

#### ◆ The goodness and the grace of God toward his people

*"So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good." (Romans 7:12)*

#### ◆ Human beings are called to live from a state of grace, by the word of God: "You shall not eat" (2:17). (Matthew 4:4; John 14:15; 3:36; 1 John 5:2)

#### ◆ Mankind shares in the moral attributes of God

Deuteronomy 1:39 uses the phrase "knowledge of good and evil" to describe children in a state of innocence.

By asserting their independence and listening to the lying speech of the Serpent, they were like children who grew up too fast. They became defiled, entering into a spiritual war that they were not ready to face. They became aware not only of good but of true evil.

<sup>1</sup> Lane T. Dennis and Wayne Grudem, eds., *"The ESV Study Bible,"* (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008), paragraph 1146.

The moral dimension of humanity stems from our capacity to *understand* and *make choices*. Thus, God gives man the ability to obey or not to obey by placing the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the garden.

Humanity's ability to choose means we also have the capacity to share in the moral attributes of God (Gen. 4:7; Deut. 30:15).

### **The Moral Argument**

1) If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist. 2) Objective moral values and duties do exist. 3) Therefore, God exists.<sup>2</sup>

## **III. Human Beings are Spiritual and Material (Gen. 2:7)**

The animating spirit of life is the breath of God (Gen. 7:22). We commune with God in our spirit (Gal. 6:18; Eph. 3:16; Rom. 8:16, 23).

It is equally important to understand that we are rational *creatures* who are from the earth. Your embodied experience is the one meant to be immortal (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

We are purposed to live in harmony with the created order to bring order, unity, and beauty within it. ***Work is a priestly and godly calling that predates the fall and gives us purpose*** (Genesis 2:15).

In the fall, our desires became corrupted and disordered, allowing the flesh to reign over the spirit. Through Christ, we must triumph with our spirit over our earthly/animal nature, bringing it back into proper order and submission to God (Gal. 5:16-17).

## **IV. Immortality is a Gift of God**

The Lord, in his grace, gave mankind access to the tree of life. Immortality is the gift of God (2:9; 3:22).

*“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man’s heart.” (Ecc. 3:11a)*

What was the most significant point for you?

Consider taking more time to study, think, and pray about it this week.

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<sup>2</sup> William Lain Craig, <https://www.reasonablefaith.org/animated-videos>.