

Study 2

Topic: Made in God's image

Sub-theme: Made in the image of God (1)

Sunday date: May 5

Key ideas: Image bearers, intrinsic value of each person

Key texts: Gen 1, 5:3, 9:6, Ex 20:4, Col 1:15

Further reading/resources:

- *Marc Cortez, Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed*
- <https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/what-does-it-mean-to-be-made-in-gods-image>
- <http://st-eutychus.com/2018/if-were-going-to-talk-about-the-image-of-god-in-a-foreign-language-lets-get-it-right-or-why-im-more-interested-in-the-selem-elohim-than-imago-dei/>
- <https://gospelinlife.com/downloads/in-the-image-of-god-5979/>
- <http://andrewfullercenter.org/blog/blog/2013/06/the-first-abolitionist-gregory-of-nyssa-on-slavery>

What makes people valuable?

Different cultures have valued people based on different criteria. Can you think of others? What about in Sydney today?

Aristocracy	
Plutocracy	
Technocracy	
[today] ?	

What positive impact does the way our culture values humans have?

What do you think are some of the costs?

Read Genesis 1:1-31.

In v.27, human beings are described as being made in the 'image of God.' There's only one problem - not a great deal of detail is supplied about what this means.

"The interpretation of the image of God has often reflected the Zeitgeist and has followed whatever emphasis happened to be current in psychology, or philosophy, or sociology, or theology."

- Edward Curtis

Some of the interpretations are below. Can you think of consequences for holding each one?

Approach	Details	Problems	Consequences
'Structural image'	Identifies the image as humanity's unique capability for rational thought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualistic - doesn't allow for collective role in imaging God • All of creation seems to image God this way (Ps 19:1, Rom 1:19) 	
'Functional image'	Identifies image not with what we do but what we are. In ancient near east, the king imaged God as divine representative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes that Genesis depends on extra-biblical sources to speak of 'image' • Very narrow understanding 	
'Relational image'	Image is found in our relational nature - to God, to each other, to creation - just as God is relational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to find in the biblical account 	

What do you think is significant about the fact that:

- all humanity, not just rulers
- men and women, equally
- men and women, together

are described as being made in the image of God?

Read Genesis 5:3. What does this add to our understanding?

Read Genesis 9:6 and James 3:9.

What are the implications of being made in the image of God?

In the New Testament, the focus shifts from humans in general as the image of God to Jesus as the true image (2 Corinthians 4:4, Hebrews 1:3).

How does this help us understand the significance of God's command in Exodus 20:4?

Romans 8:29 and 1 Corinthians 15:49, the goal is for not us to be 'in the image of God' but 'conformed to the image of his Son'.

What do you think this means? What is the difference?

Read Colossians 1:15-20. Here, Jesus is called the image of God. How else is He described and how does this help us understand Jesus' as the true image of God?