

Question Group 1

In Genesis 1:26-27, what phrase does God repeat in describing how He makes mankind? What does image of God mean? How is God's image reflect in our daily life?(8 mins)

Since the last century, people have been studying the differences between humans and other animals. Many have tried to define this difference through aspects like physical features, behavior, living conditions, and even DNA. However, these methods miss the mark. Humans, ultimately, are created beings, similar to animals. Many animals share similar organs, body structures, and even a large part of our DNA. This resemblance has led some to mistakenly conclude that humans are just higher animals evolved from others. But this is a shallow conclusion, because sharing an environment and some biological traits with animals is unsurprising; after all, we are all part of the created world. But the true difference between humans and animals goes far beyond surface characteristics.

God, who is spirit, has no physical image that can represent Him; only internal traits reflect His likeness. This spiritual distinction is what truly sets us apart from animals. Here are some key aspects:

1. Humans were created for relationship—especially a relationship with God. Humans can be aware of God's existence, something no other animal can experience. Worship is unique to humanity; animals do not worship or seek connection with God. When Adam was created, he was given the role of managing all creation, directly accountable to God and in relationship with Him. Adam's failure affected the entire world, bringing a curse on all creation.

2. Humans have creativity—though not the power to create from nothing, we can use

existing materials to invent things that have never existed before. We arrange objects in an orderly, often beautiful way, something animals are not capable of. Humans can take disorderly things and give them purpose and order. This ability requires logical and abstract thinking, as well as a sense of beauty—qualities that reflect God's image as the Creator who brought order and beauty into the world.

3. Humans, before Adam's fall, bore God's image in moral qualities. Humans were created to be holy, righteous, goodness, loving, and patient. These qualities reflect God's nature and were part of His image in us. However, after Adam's sin, this part of God's image was most deeply affected. Humanity lost much of this original likeness to God and began to act more like the current animal kingdom, where creatures compete for survival. This change led to moral decay, as seen in events like the Nazi atrocities, where Social Darwinism was used to justify horrific acts. Although some moral standards remain in humanity, these standards are flawed and fall short of God's glory.

4. Human souls are eternal, whereas animal spirits, though they exist, are not. This fundamental difference is significant: animal spirits do not live on after death.

Ecclesiastes 3:21 LSB

Who knows that the breath of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth?

Human souls are destined for eternity, whether for salvation or judgment. Those who reject God will experience eternal separation from Him and suffer forever in hell, while those who follow God will live with Him forever in a new heaven and new earth. Because of this eternal aspect, humans are infinitely more valuable than animals in God's eyes.

In light of this, we should not view humans merely as animals. To God, the human soul is infinitely more precious than that of an animal, and our spiritual nature sets us apart in a profound way.

In Genesis 1:26, it says that "God" said, Let "us" make man in our own image." God is singular (one person) but us is plural (more than one person). What do you make of this?(2 mins)

In verse 26, God refers to Himself using both singular and plural forms, which may seem unusual. However, this is because our God is a Triune God—He exists as three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, yet He is one God. Although the three persons of God are not as clearly revealed in the Old Testament, the New Testament, through the revelation of the Son, helps us to understand more deeply the words God spoke in Genesis chapter 1.

Question Group 2

In verses 16-17, what did God say that mankind could eat from in the Garden of Eden? What did He say that they could not eat from?(1 min)

Why do you think eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil was the one that was strictly forbidden? Why this particular tree? (If this is not something you've learned before, make a guess.)(5 mins)

God has a marvelous plan for this world, one that human wisdom alone cannot fully grasp. His will is good, and He accomplishes it through His wondrous works. Even in situations that seem negative, God can use them to fulfill His ultimately good purpose. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is part of this plan. God placed this tree in the garden and gave Adam and Eve a clear command—not to eat from it, though they could freely eat from any other tree. The tree itself held no magical power, and humanity did not lack anything that would require them to eat its fruit.

Some people believe that if humanity hadn't eaten from this tree, they would have lacked wisdom, but this is incorrect. Humans were created in God's image, possessing wisdom from the start, and God even appointed them to rule over all creation, which required great wisdom. Others think that before eating from the tree, humans couldn't distinguish between good and evil. This, too, is a misunderstanding. Eve clearly knew it was wrong to eat the fruit, as doing so would violate God's command.

I believe the effect of eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is this:

Eve was tempted because she desired to be like God, particularly in deciding what is good and evil. God alone is the decider of good and evil. Before the fall, humans shared God's standard for good and evil, but after the fall, they began to set their own standards. This is why those who start wars believe they are justified and why people in conflicts each consider themselves right. This tree was not something humanity needed, and God expressly forbade it. Nevertheless, His purpose remains good. Though the world's beginning was marked by misfortune, its end, because of God, will be filled with goodness.

Question Group 3

In verse 18, God says that it is “not good for man to be alone.” What does that mean is good for man?(5 mins)

In this lesson we have seen that God is great and powerful and has authority over mankind. We have also seen how God desires to have a closer relationship with us. How might these things seem to be contradictory?(5 mins)

God created humans not only to establish a relationship between Himself and humanity but also to create loving relationships between people. This reflects part of God's image, as the Triune God exists as a fellowship of mutual love. Therefore, being created in God's image means that we share this characteristic—humans are made for relationships of love.

Another aspect of humans being made for relationship is our complex language. Many animals communicate, but their communication is limited to simple commands or expressions. Human language goes much deeper, allowing us to express thoughts and emotions. This ability to communicate profoundly is necessary to build deep relationships, it enables us to form relationships that reflect God's love.

I believe that, in God's creation, the relationship between parents and young children closely resembles the relationship between God and His children. In a healthy family, young children have a sense of reverence for their father, seeing him as powerful and capable, and they naturally respect him. Yet, this strength does not instill fear because they know their father would never harm them; instead, he protects and cares for

them. The relationship between God and His children is similar. We do not approach God with indifference or neglect; we revere, worship, and honor Him. At the same time, we deeply experience God's love, so His power does not make us afraid. Rather, His almighty nature brings us comfort, for we know that nothing can truly harm us under His protection.

Now What?

Given that God made us for very close connection with Him, what does that tell us about what our relationship with Him is meant to be like? How big of a priority in our lives, then, is growing closer to the Lord meant to be for us? What is God's expectations to us?