

God's Image Bearers & Kingdom Ambassadors

Identity Precedes Behavior

- “No one can consistently behave in a way that is inconsistent with how he perceives himself.” – Neil Anderson
- A correct understanding of identity must come before correct behavior and action.
- Believers must align their self-perception with God's truth in order to reflect His image accurately.
- Right identity produces right behavior; wrong identity leads to inconsistent living.

The Image of God (Genesis 1:26 NKJV)

- “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’”
- God is spirit (John 4:24), meaning humans do not physically resemble God but reflect His invisible attributes.
- Being made in God's image means we resemble His character—moral, spiritual, and relational.
- Humanity is a visible representation of an invisible God, similar to how an idol represents a deity.
- Our value and significance come from who we represent, not from what we do.
- God's morality: ability to distinguish right from wrong and desire justice.
- God's fellowship: desire for relationships, connection, and community.
- God's creativity: ability to create, design, and produce.
- God's free will: ability to make choices, reflecting God's own decision-making nature.

The Fall of Man

- The fall of Adam resulted in both loss of dominion and distortion of God's image.
- Sin marred the clarity of God's character within humanity.
- Negative traits such as pride, guilt, shame, manipulation, envy, jealousy, and selfishness became dominant.
- These traits are byproducts of the fall and distort God's intended image.
- The enemy seeks to distort God's image because humanity reflects what he is not.
- Opposition toward humanity is rooted in representation of God rather than personal identity alone.

Restoration Through Christ

- Romans 8:29 (NKJV): “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”
- Colossians 1:15 (NKJV): “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.”
- Hebrews 1:3 (NLT): “The Son radiates God’s own glory and expresses the very character of God, and He sustains everything by the mighty power of His command.”
- Jesus perfectly represents God where Adam failed, fully revealing God’s heart and nature.
- In Christ, the invisible becomes visible and God is made known to humanity.
- Through Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, believers are cleansed of sin.
- The Holy Spirit indwells believers, transforming their character and nature.
- God’s primary goal is not behavior modification but full restoration of His image in believers.

From Image Bearers to Kingdom Ambassadors

- John 20:21 (NKJV): “So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’”
- Understanding identity as image bearers prepares believers for their role as ambassadors.
- We cannot effectively represent God until we understand who we are in Him.
- Our effectiveness as ambassadors is directly tied to our understanding of identity.

What is an Ambassador?

- An ambassador is a high-ranking diplomatic representative of a nation in a foreign land.
- Represents the full authority and interests of their government.
- Speaks only what the government instructs—personal opinions are irrelevant.
- Chosen and appointed, not voted in.
- Remains a citizen of their home country, not the foreign land.
- Responsible for relaying messages between governments.
- All needs and provisions are supplied by their home government.
- Upholds the image and reputation of their nation at all times.

Ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:16–21 NKJV)

- “Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh... Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”
- “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.”
- “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”
- “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
- Philippians 3:20 (NKJV): “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- John 12:49 (NKJV): “For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.”
- Matthew 6:33 (NKJV): “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Application & Key Takeaways

- Through Christ, believers return to their original role as representatives of God.
- Image reflects God’s character; ambassadorship exercises God’s authority.
- We represent the Kingdom of God while living on earth.
- We speak God’s message, not our own opinions.
- We are chosen and appointed by God, not self-selected.
- God provides for His ambassadors as they seek His Kingdom.
- Our lives should reflect both the image and authority of God in the world.