

What does it mean that man was created in God's image and likeness?

Being that the Bible states that God has no material form, and the fact that all of us look very different both in person, race and gender, I believe the Image and Likeness He imparted upon us refers to His characteristics and attributes.

I believe the seat of who we are is found in our soul – the soul is the eternal aspect of man, the part Jesus resurrects, the part that flees to God when we die, the essence of who we are. Our soul contains our person, our memories, the lessons learned, the reasons we will understand Who God is, the center of our total worship of a worthy God.

I also believe this is seen in God's 'respect' towards our person, in that He never violates our person and expects us to do the same. Our sins against each other are rooted in personal offense, not so much the physical. Hatred, envy, lust, slander, pride – all are against another's person. Consider suicide, a sin because it violates our own person. Or drunkenness, as it arrests our moral awareness and surrenders it to another controlling factor. Conversely, love must be expressed toward another, or how can it be love? Love perfectly expressed toward another is our example in Jesus. Also consider that even in our Salvation, God has never forced or violated another's person. Even in groups that argue 'free' will vs predestination, both parties must agree that while a decision was made, then why was it actually made and by whom? Even then I would argue that we make a decision as a moral agent, yet under the undeniable, unavoidable urging of God. But, He stops at urging, never resorting to force that takes our moral accountability away. I see God bringing us to a point where what other choice can we possibly make?

In this 'person' I believe He has lent much of His own aspects, so that in seeing into ourselves and the people close to us, we might know something about Him. Consider some of the expressions of humanity, or of being human: Emotions, creativity, morality, organization, desire, personal expression, worship, and perhaps most importantly, our central desire for lack of discomfort – namely, peace. Peace is one of the most central aspects of God's trinity.

I believe we can see something of the Person of God by putting together the pieces of evidence we find in the genders. Man and women are undoubtedly different, yet each is made in God's image, and therefore each tends to possess a predominant part of Him. However, in the beauty of a healthy marriage, both spouses might experience a fullness of love and peace as they each contribute their person to a whole that exceeds the sum.

As parents, we can understand Father's parenting over us. Under authority, we can learn the comfort of being cared for by someone we trust. As an authority, we can grow in our mandate to provide and be righteous. All of these require the attributes God has passed to us, and are at the same time the proof He actually did.