



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#162)
Holiness and the "image of God."

1

WHY???

Why should we be HOLY?

But because the God who called you is holy **you must be holy in every aspect of your life.**
Scripture says, "**Be holy, because I am holy.**"
1 Peter 1:15-16 (GW)

Yes. It is a command from God...
But it's not an arbitrary command; nor is it an unreasonable one.

- ⇒ It is based on who *God* is and who *we* are.
- ⇒ It is an obligation for all people, though only followers of the true God will be willing to obey it.

(It is sad that many who *claim* to be "Bible believers" don't "follow" Jesus, so they don't pursue holiness.)

2

AN OBLIGATION FOR ALL PEOPLE?

Yes. ALL people are going to be judged.
Only those who are holy will be able to remain in God's presence.

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to **be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.**
Hebrews 12:14 (NIV)

- ⇒ **The unsaved [= people who are not holy]** may see God (i.e., Jesus) for a short time – at the judgment, when they give account of their lives, just before they are cast in to the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15).
- ⇒ **The saved [= people who are holy]** will be able to see and have fellowship with him *forever*.

[Jesus is the one we will see.]
[Jesus] is the **image** of the invisible God...
Colossians 1:15a (GW)

3

AN OBLIGATION JUST FOR PEOPLE? WHY NOT COWS OR ORANGUTANGS?



DO I NEED TO BE A HOLY COW?

NO, BUT YOU NEED TO BE A HOLY PERSON!

Yes. Just people.

Though other things (objects, places, days of the week, and even cows) can be dedicated (by people) to God, or used (by people) for God, *only people have the obligation to pursue holiness.*

★ This is because people have been made in God's "image."
No other created entity has this relationship to God. ★

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HUMANS

Made in the "image of God."
(Genesis 1:26-27)

(Some passages may describe them as being "like God.")

WHAT IT ISN'T:

① **This does not blur the distinction between God and people.**

- ⇒ It does NOT raise *us* to God's level, or lower *God* to our level.

INSTEAD: We are to view ourselves as created beings who have been made to reflect God's nature in creation. We are his representatives, made to rule over the world in his behalf.

We are *finite* beings, made to reflect the nature of the *infinite* God.

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Sinners often blur the differences between God and themselves.
This is a type of idolatry!

You imagined that I was just like you.
Psalm 50:21 (LEB)

Scripture tells us that God is not a human.
He is creator of all; *we* are created beings. *Never forget this!*

God is not a man ...
Numbers 23:19 (CSB)

For I am God and not man, the Holy One among you ...
Hosea 11:9b (CSB)

He [God] is not a mere mortal like me [Job]...
Job 9:32a (NIV)

Scripture also tells us that God is spirit, invisible, unseeable.

... the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God ...
1 Timothy 1:17b (CSB)

God is spirit ...
John 4:24a (CSB)

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Even so, this invisible God has revealed himself.

- ✓ **All creation is an expression of his invisible qualities.**
From the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly observed in what he made. As a result, **people have no excuse.**
Romans 1:20 (GW)
- ✓ **Humans are his "image bearers."** (= The issue we are looking at.)
Human sin has destroyed our ability to properly fulfil our function as "image bearers," and has distorted our understanding of it.
Therefore, God has revealed himself in another, more perfect way:
- ✓ **God has taken on a human body (= Jesus Christ).**
No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.
John 1:18 (NIV)

[Jesus] is the **image** of the invisible God...
Colossians 1:15a (GW)

(See also Hebrews 1:3; Philippians 2:5-11.)

GOD SHOWS US, IN JESUS, THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE THE "IMAGE OF GOD."

We need to become more like him – Jesus, who is God.
This is what we learn when we accept the Good News message.

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; **to be made new in the attitude of your minds**; and **to put on* the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.**
Ephesians 4:22–24 (NIV)

This attitude change is the "renewed mind" of Romans 12:2.

* (The New Testament Greek concept used here is related to the idea of "putting on" clothes – and some translations will state it that way. Also in Colossians 3:10.)

WHAT IT ISN'T:

② **Being made in God's "image" does NOT refer to our bodies.**

- ⇒ Physically, we are connected to the rest of creation and are to interact with it. (Our bodies and creation are important.)
- ⇒ God uses the physical dimension to *teach* us about himself. He does this through *figures of speech*.

EXAMPLES:

The **eyes** of the LORD are on the righteous, and his **ears** are open to their cry for help.
The **face** of the LORD is set against those who do what is evil ...
Psalm 34:15-16a (CSB)

- ⇒ Even so, in the future, when God's "image" is perfected in us, our bodies *will* be affected.

❖ **When Jesus returns, the final change will affect more than just our "image-bearing ability."**

On that day, *all* the effects of sin will be removed. Even our *bodies* will be changed. They will no longer be an expression of weakness, decay and death.

[Jesus] will **transform** our lowly bodies so that they will be **like** his glorious body.
Philippians 3:21b (NIV)

When the change is complete, we will be like Jesus. *Knowledge of this fact will influence the way we live now!*

Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when he appears, we will be **like him** because we will see him as he is.

And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure.
1 John 3:2-3 (CSB)

WHAT IT IS: **We, as humans, are to be as much like God as is possible for a *created* being to be.**
Our lives are to be *patterned* after what God is like.

This fact is to control every aspect of our existence.

- ⇒ Our rule over the world (i.e., the way we treat creation) is to be patterned after God's rule over all creation.
- ⇒ Our interaction with each other is to be patterned after the way God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, interacts.

EXAMPLES:

What God does on his infinite level, we are to do on our finite level.

- God communicates ... we are to communicate.
- God knows all ... we are to grow in knowledge.

MORE EXAMPLES:

And ultimately:

- **God is holy ... we are to be holy.**

HOW CAN WE ACCOMPLISH THIS?:

What sin destroyed, Jesus restores!

SIN has corrupted us. It has marred God's "image" in us. *But it has not removed it.*

JESUS CHRIST has come to restore our ability to do what we were created for.

❖ **For those who belong to Jesus, success is guaranteed.**
God guarantees it!

For those he foreknew he also **predestined to be conformed to the image** of his Son ...
Romans 8:29a (CSB)

- ❖ We are becoming more like him now.

[We] are being **transformed** into [the Lord's] **image** with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
 2 Corinthians 3:18b (NIV)
- ❖ Using the power that God provides, God's people are now doing what's necessary for that change to occur.

[You] have put on the new self, which is being **renewed** in knowledge in the **image** of its Creator.
 Colossians 3:10 (NIV)

 - What this power accomplishes is described in Philippians 2:13.
 - This change *begins* with the renewed mind of Romans 12:2.
 - "Putting on" the new self has to do with the conduct that is the result of this renewed mind.

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- ❖ Many of these verses mention change, transformation, renewal, made new, or created (as something new).

God created us holy; we changed into sinners; we need to change back into holy people.
This is possible only for those who are "in Christ."
- ❖ The goal of this transformation is to become like God in true righteousness and holiness.

... the new self, **created** to be like God in true righteousness and **holiness**.
 Ephesians 4:24b (NIV)
- ❖ Why? Because sin is incompatible with holiness.

But among you there must not be even a hint of [many examples of sin in verses 3-5] because these are improper for God's **holy** people.... for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.
 Ephesians 5:3, 6b (NIV)

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One last thing... Remember this phrase?

THIS MEANS "EVERYTHING WE DO"! → But because the God who called you is holy **you must be holy in every aspect of your life.**
 Scripture says, "**Be holy, because I am holy.**"
 1 Peter 1:15-16 (GW)

- ❖ This is similar to the concept found in passages such as this:

So, whether you eat or drink, or **whatever you do**, do everything to the glory of God.
 1 Cor. 10:31 (GW)

No area of life is to be excluded from this command.

The **unsaved** may view it as "getting religious," or even "being too religious" or "fanatic."
 We are to view it as "becoming what God originally made us to be."

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(Many passages that have this focus.)

EVERYTHING WE SAY OR DO. → Everything you **say** or **do** should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.
 Colossians 3:17 (GW)

SAYING AND DOING ARE ABILITIES THAT COME FROM GOD. → Each of you as a good manager must use the gift that God has given you to **serve others**. Whoever speaks must **speak** God's words. Whoever serves must **serve** with the strength God supplies so that in every way **God receives glory** through Jesus Christ. Glory and power belong to Jesus Christ forever and ever! Amen.
 1 Peter 4:10-11 (GW)

EVEN IF WORKING FOR SOMEONE ELSE. → **Whatever you do**, do it wholeheartedly as though you were working for your real master [God] and not merely for humans.
 Colossians 3:23 (GW)

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YOUR MISSION!

Be what God made you to be!

Before the creation of the world, he chose us through Christ to be **holy** and perfect in his presence.
 Ephesians 1:4 (GW)

(Don't be one of those FAKES, who *claim* to "believe the Bible," but don't pursue holiness.)

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Credits

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