

7. The Nature of Man

Man and woman were made in the image of God with individuality, the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else. When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence upon Him and fell from their high position under God. The image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment.

Human beings are God's special creation—made in His own image. Like God we have the power of choice. God wants us to choose to love Him and to care for our world and its inhabitants.

- We are created by God in His image. Genesis 1:26-27
- God places the breath of life, or spirit, within us, making us living souls—a unity of body and spirit. We have no soul that can exist apart from this unity of body and spirit. Genesis 2:7
- God gives us the power of choice, but we remain dependent on Him. Acts 17:24-.28
- God wants us to learn to love as He loves. Matthew 22:35-40
- We should take good care of God's creation. Psalm 8:4-8

Texts for further study: 1 John 4:7-8, 11, 20; Genesis 2:15

The image of God in mankind became marred when Adam and Eve sinned in Eden. We are now born with tendencies toward evil and are subject to sin and death.

- Adam and Eve's wrong use of the power of choice resulted from trying to be independent of God. Genesis 3
- Because of their sin, all their descendants are subject to death. Romans 5:12-17
- Our natural inborn tendencies are toward evil. Psalm 51:5; Ephesians 2:3

Although we are born with sinful tendencies, God does not reject us. He sees what we can become through His grace.

- Jesus' life and death reconciles us to God. Romans 5:6-11; 2 Corinthians 5:19-20
- God gives us His Holy Spirit to restore His image in us. Psalm 51:10-11; Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:10; John 3:5

Personal Application

-  How can I learn to love as God loves?
-  What provision has God made to help me overcome my natural tendencies toward evil?
-  I am created in God's image! The potential for growth is limitless! I am thankful that He has made His Spirit available to renew His image in me.

Commitment

- Because I recognize that I am Your special creation, and am constantly dependent on You, I seek the renewing power of the Holy Spirit to restore me to Your image.