The Original Design

SCRIPTURE

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Genesis 1:27 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

Have you ever stopped to consider the magnitude of your origin? You are not an accident of biology or a product of chance. You were designed with a specific blueprint in mind: the very image of God. When God created humanity, He didn't just want a servant or a pet; He wanted a reflection. He desired a being who could think His thoughts, share His feelings, and reflect His character of love.

This "image" wasn't just physical. It was a moral and spiritual likeness. Adam and Eve, in their unfallen state, possessed a mind in perfect harmony with God's will. Their affections were pure, their appetites were under the control of reason, and their love was selfless. They were a perfect mirror of their Creator, radiating His glory to the universe.

However, we know the story didn't end there. Sin entered and shattered the mirror. The image was defaced, though not erased. We still bear the marks of our Maker—our ability to reason, to create, to love—but it is distorted by selfishness. We are like a magnificent building that has been bombed; the grandeur is still visible in the ruins, but the glory has departed.

As you begin this week, meditate on your high calling. You were made for more than just survival. You were made to mirror the Divine. The purpose of your life is to reveal His character. Ask the Creator to restore His image in you today.

PRAYER

Dear Father, I am in awe that You made me to reflect You. I confess that the image is broken in me. I long to be restored. Help me to remember my true identity today—not as a product of this world, but as a child of the King. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Genesis 1:26–28
- Psalm 8:3–9
- Ephesians 4:24
- Genesis 3:1–13
- Isaiah 59:1–2

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does creation in God's image imply about human purpose and dignity?

2. Read Genesis 1:26–28. How does this passage deepen today's understanding of God's work in our lives?

3. What would it look like for you to treat another person with the dignity of someone made in God's image?

The Intruder

SCRIPTURE

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Isaiah 59:2 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

If we were created to be like God, why are we so unlike Him? Why is our world filled with hatred, greed, and pain? The Bible gives a one-word answer: Sin. But sin is not just "breaking the rules." It is a vandal. It is an intruder that entered the human heart and marred the divine image.

When Adam and Eve chose to distrust God, a fundamental change took place in their nature. The "circuit" of love was broken. Instead of being centered on God and others, the human heart curved inward on itself. Selfishness took the throne. It's an infection that every human being inherits.

We see this infection everywhere. We see it in the wars between nations, but we also see it in the wars in our own living rooms. We see it in our impatience, our pride, and our defensiveness. We are "alienated from the life of God" (Ephesians 4:18) because the image of love has been replaced by the image of self.

This is a hard truth to face, but it is necessary. A doctor cannot heal a patient who refuses to admit they are sick. We must recognize that our problem isn't just that we do bad things; it's that we have a fallen condition. We are carrying a virus that distorts our ability to love. But thank God, the Great Physician has a cure. He has not left us to die in our brokenness.

PRAYER

Lord, I admit that I have an intruder in my heart. I see the selfishness that mars Your image in me. I don't want to be controlled by it any longer. Remove the selfishness from my heart and restore Your likeness in me through the life of Jesus Christ. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Genesis 3:1–13
- Isaiah 59:1–2
- Romans 5:12
- Ephesians 4:18
- Genesis 1:26–28

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How has sin disrupted the original design for human life?

2. Consider Genesis 3:1–13. What does this passage add to the main lesson of today's devotional?

3. What would it look like for you to identify a selfish attitude that distorts God's image in you?

The Pattern of Restoration

SCRIPTURE

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." Colossians 1:15 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

If you want to restore an old, damaged painting, you need to know what the original looked like. You need a reference. In the work of redemption, Jesus Christ is our Reference. He is the "express image" of the Father's person (Hebrews 1:3). When the world had forgotten what God looked like—and what humanity was supposed to look like—Jesus came to show us.

Jesus is the Second Adam. He came to pick up where the first Adam failed. He lived a human life exactly as it was intended to be lived: in total dependence on God and total love for others. In Him, we see the image of God perfectly restored. We see power used to serve, not to control. We see dignity in humility. We see strength in meekness.

Therefore, the goal of the Christian life is not just to be "good people." It is to be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29). Jesus is the pattern. God is working to reproduce the character of Jesus in you. He wants your reactions to be like Jesus' reactions. He wants your thoughts to align with Jesus' thoughts.

This gives us a concrete goal. When you are wondering how to handle a difficult boss or a rebellious child, look at the Pattern. Ask, "How would the Jesus, handle this?" He is not just our Savior; He is our Model. And the good news is, He doesn't just set the example; He gives us the power to follow it.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You for coming to show us the Father. You are the Masterpiece. I want to be like You. Impress Your image upon my heart today. Let me study Your life so I can reflect Your character. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Colossians 1:15–20
- Hebrews 1:1–3
- John 14:9
- Hebrews 1:3
- Romans 8:29

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is Jesus the true pattern for the restoration of human character?

2. How does Colossians 1:15–20 help clarify the spiritual principle in today's reading?

3. What would it look like for you to study one episode in Christ's life and imitate His response?

The Agent of Change

SCRIPTURE

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

How does this restoration happen? Do we grit our teeth and try harder to be like Jesus? No. Paul gives us the secret in 2 Corinthians 3:18: "By beholding we become changed." We are changed into the image of what we look at.

This is a law of the mind. If you behold violence, you become violent. If you behold vanity, you become vain. But if you behold the glory of the Lord—His character, His love, His sacrifice—you are imperceptibly changed into that same image. It is a slow, steady transformation, "from glory to glory."

The "Spirit of the Lord" is the artist in this process. As you gaze at Christ through the "glass" (mirror) of Scripture, the Holy Spirit works on your heart. God softens the hard edges. He removes the stains of selfishness. He repaints the colors of love and patience. Your job is not to do the painting; your job is to stay still and keep your eyes on the Model.

This is why daily time in the Word is non-negotiable. It isn't just a religious duty; it is your "sitting time" for the portrait. If you don't spend time beholding Him, you cannot be changed. You will inevitably reflect whatever else you are looking at—the media, the culture, or your problems. Choose to behold Him today.

PRAYER

Dear Father, I submit to Your work in me. I turn my eyes away from the distractions of this world and fix them on Jesus. As I behold Him in Your Word, do the work of transformation that I cannot do myself. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- 2 Corinthians 3:17–18
- Titus 3:4–7
- Romans 12:2
- Colossians 1:15–20
- Hebrews 1:1–3

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What role does the Holy Spirit play in transforming us as we behold Christ?

2. Read 2 Corinthians 3:17–18. What connection do you see between this passage and today's Scripture?

3. What would it look like for you to make time to behold Christ through prayerful Bible reading?

The Pain of Chiseling

SCRIPTURE

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works..." Ephesians 2:10 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

The Greek word for "workmanship" in Ephesians 2:10 is poiema, from which we get "poem." You are God's poem, His work of art. But creating a masterpiece can be a painful process. If you are a block of marble being shaped by the sculptor, each stroke of the chisel may feel like a loss. But the sculptor sees the beautiful image that is being brought forth.

When we go through these times, our natural reaction is to ask, "Why is this happening to me?" But the better question is, "What are You trying to remove, Lord?" He is not punishing you; He is sculpting you. He sees the image of Jesus hidden in the stone of your life, and He is doing whatever it takes to set it free.

We are like an old run down house. God comes in to rebuild and remodel that house. It hurts when He knocks down walls and rips out the floor, but He isn't just patching up a cottage; He is building a palace where He intends to live. Trust the Sculptor. The pain is part of the restoration.

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, I trust Your hand, even when the chisel hurts. I know You are working to reveal Jesus in me. Help me not to run from the process, but to endure the shaping with patience and hope. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Hebrews 12:5–11
- James 1:2–4
- 2 Corinthians 3:17–18
- Titus 3:4–7
- Romans 12:2

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can God's shaping work involve uncomfortable correction and growth?

2. What encouragement or instruction does Hebrews 12:5–11 offer in light of today's devotional?

3. What would it look like for you to receive a specific correction with humility and discernment?

The Final Product

SCRIPTURE

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." 1 John 3:2 (KJV)

DEVOTIONAL

The work of restoration is a lifelong journey, but it has a glorious destination. John tells us that "we shall be like Him." This is the finish line. God will not leave the work unfinished. One day, the last trace of selfishness will be removed. The last scar of sin will be healed. You will stand before Him, and when you look in His face, you will see a reflection of His character in your own heart.

This hope purifies us (1 John 3:3). Knowing where we are going helps us keep moving. We are not fighting a losing battle. The victory has already been won by Christ, and He is faithful to complete the good work He began in you (Philippians 1:6). Imagine a world where everyone reflects the image of God perfectly. No more misunderstanding. No more hurt feelings. No more greed. Just a perfect, harmonious society of love. That is the Kingdom of Heaven. And that Kingdom begins "in you" right now. You are a prototype of the new creation.

So, do not be discouraged by your failures. A painting in progress often looks messy. But the Artist knows what He is doing. He has a vision of the finished product—a radiant, loving, Christ-like you—and He will not stop until the work is done.

PRAYER

Father, thank You for the promise that I will be like Jesus. When I get discouraged by my progress, remind me of the finish line. Give me the grace to keep pressing forward, knowing that You are faithful to complete what You started. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- 1 John 3:1–3
- Romans 8:29
- Philippians 3:20–21
- 1 John 3:3
- Philippians 1:6

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the promise of being like Christ teach us about God's ultimate purpose?

2. How does 1 John 3:1–3 support or expand the lesson we have considered today?

3. What would it look like for you to choose a present habit consistent with the promised restoration?

Sabbath Summary & Reflection

SCRIPTURE

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." — Ephesians 4:23-24 (KJV)

SABBATH REFLECTION

This week, we have explored the profound theme of Restoring the Image. We traced our journey from the original design in Eden, through the tragedy of the fall, to the hope of restoration in Christ. We learned that Jesus is our Pattern, the Spirit is the Artist, and trials are often the chisel. We discovered that we become what we behold. Now, on this Sabbath, let us pause and reflect on the "work in progress." • Reflect: Think about your reactions this week. When you were squeezed by pressure, what came out? Was it the "old man" of selfishness or the "new man" of Christ? • Evaluate: How much time did you spend "beholding" the Lord this week versus beholding the world? Remember, the transformation is directly linked to the time spent in His presence. • The Invitation: As you enter a new week, the call is to Cooperate with the Sculptor. Restoration is not a passive process. We must "put on" the new man. The encouragement for the future is to be intentional about your "beholding." Make a plan. Set aside time to gaze at the glory of the Lord. And when the chisel of life strikes you next week, don't just grit your teeth—surrender to the work. Say, "Lord, make me like Jesus."

PRAYER

Father, thank You for the privilege of being restored. I commit this next week to You. Keep my eyes fixed on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of my faith. Continue Your work in me until my thoughts, words, and actions reflect Your character. Amen.

FURTHER STUDY / ADDITIONAL BIBLE READING

- Ephesians 4:22–24
- Colossians 3:9–15
- Revelation 21:3–5
- 1 John 3:1–3
- Romans 8:29

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do creation, sin, Christ's example and restoration form a single biblical story?

2. How does Ephesians 4:22–24 bring together the spiritual lessons of this week?

3. What would it look like for you to ask God to renew a specific area of your thinking and conduct?