

Women: Created in God's Image

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Genesis 1:26-27

These are familiar verses to all of us and are an important aspect of understanding who we are not only as women, but as part of God's creation. *God created humanity, both male and female, in his image.* The Latin phrase, Imago Dei means “image of God” and is a phrase worth pausing and considering as it grounds and reinforces the core of who we are. Often, we think of these verses and use them to describe ourselves as being an “image bearer”, a lens to view ourselves and others through. Because the term “bearer” is defined as something that is carried or held, it is helpful to expand the thought from just bearing God's image to focus directly on how we are God's image and the implications this has on our life.

Created in God's Image - Points to our Equality, Dignity and Worth

Genesis 1:26-27 teaches us that male and female each equally reflect the image of God. Neither males nor females have any more or any less of this reflection. Understanding and believing this creates a sturdy foundation for understanding the inherent dignity, value, and worth that all humanity is created with. As women this should inform how we view and treat others as well as how we should think about and take care of ourselves. Too frequently, we interpret our self-worth by our emotions or self-talk in situations that are occurring. Unfortunately, our emotions are faulty, and we develop unhelpful thinking styles that lead us to make inaccurate inferences about our own self. Internalizing messages that we are worthless or worth less than others denies the image of God in ourselves. Our own sense of worth must rest on something more solid and consistent than our own self-talk, and the perceived opinions and feelings of other people. It must rest on the truth of the Word.

Created in God's Image - Gives us Purpose

In addition to being made in the image of God, we are also created *to do* like God. Another implication of being made in God's image, is the function or purpose we are called to fulfill.

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” Genesis 1:28

This scripture is God's instruction to Adam and Eve in the garden. He asked them to labor in the Garden of Eden and to have dominion over it, which points to the idea that work was a pre-fall blessing. To this day, as women created in the image of God, we can delight in working for and caring for the things of God. Allow yourself to acknowledge the gifts and abilities that God has equipped you with. By his grace you can use these gifts to step confidently into the roles he has given you in church, home, workplace, and community.

Created in God's Image - Gives us our Identity

Our identity should be firmly rooted in what God says about us. This equips and provides us with a firm foundation as we learn about ourselves, navigate the challenges of life, and interact with those around us. The beauty of being created in the image of God is recognizing that our identity is in Christ alone. We live in a world where there are many distractions that

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attempt to take our focus away from this truth. Distractions can come in the form of busyness, endless “to-do” lists, and the messages we absorb through media. When we listen to these messages and our schedules are dictated by our to-do lists, we are left striving to meet an impossible, unrealistic standard. This standard can easily become our master, with its never-remitting demands. We serve a God, after whom we are created, who loves us as we are, and desires us to grow, mature, and draw closer to him. A settled, healthy identity helps us to do just that. We are God's image, crafted in his likeness and set apart from the rest of creation.

With confidence we need to believe the truth found in *Psalms 139:14*:

*“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made:
marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.”*

For every one of us, acknowledging the significance of being created in the image of God is essential. Women should consider how we each fit into the amazing Creator who created us. First, with our equality, dignity and worth grounded in him. Next by honoring God with our purpose as our time, talents, and abilities are directed towards heavenly things. And lastly by honoring that he is in us and our identity is “a bearer of his image” through our daily interactions. Embracing and living this belief shows the world that we as women are humbled and honored to bear his image. We are one of God's “very good” creations - created in him and for him.