

4. CORRUPTION. “WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?”

Genesis 2.25 – 3.24

- Do you remember the six parts of the story?
- Do you remember the big question that Genesis 1 answers?
- What is the first big question answered in Genesis 2?

“IN GOD’S IMAGE”

Backtrack for a moment to Genesis 1.26-31, where God creates humanity “in his image.” God does NOT create the animals “in his image,” just mankind. What does “created in his image” mean?

I think the stories in Genesis 1-2 show us what “in God’s image” means, by having the man and woman repeat things that God has done previously.

God	The man and woman
Rules over creation (all of Genesis 1)	Rule over the animals that God created (1.26, 28)
Creates & fills creation (all of Genesis 1)	Are “fruitful” (i.e., creative) and “fill the earth” (1.28)
Works at tasks (2.2) that benefit the things he is in charge of (e.g., creating food for the animals he created, 1.29-30)	Works at tasks that benefit the things he is in charge of (irrigating the garden in 2.5, 15; naming the animals in 2.19-20)
Names the things he is in charge of (1.5, 8, 10)	Names the things he is in charge of (2.19-20, 23; cf 4.1-2, 25)
Is social & relational (“let us”, the heavenly King addresses his court; 1.26, cf. 3.22)	Is social & relational (2.18)
Is moral, making choices about what is right (2.18)	Is moral, making choices about what is right (2.16-17)

If I’m reading it right, “in God’s image” means that, in some essential ways, we are supposed to be like God. We are supposed to live with the same purpose. The work that we are supposed to do is HIS work, and we are supposed to do it HIS way.

What does being made “in God’s image” teach us about being human?

Here are the things I see. Being made “in God’s image” means that:

- We have dignity and value, for we bear God’s image and likeness (1.26).
- The people around us, even those who are very different from us, have dignity, worth, and purpose, because they also bear God’s image.
- We are supposed to live our lives in ways that are consistent with God’s character as revealed in the Bible, especially as revealed in Jesus Christ.
- God has given us the task of taking care of the things that he has entrusted to us (1.26, 28; 2.15). We are to care for these things as if God himself was doing it through us (because he IS caring for these things through us.) We are his agents.
- God created us with essential differences (male & female) and essential similarities (both in the image of God) (1.27, “in the image of God he created them.”)
- We are different from (higher than) the animals and other created things around us (2.15, 19), because only we bear the image of God (1.26).

SUMMARY: WHO ARE WE?

So: If Genesis 1.26 – 2.25 was all the material you had to describe what it means to be human, could you describe it? What would you say?

Here’s what I see:

- We are creations of a loving creator, created for his purposes.
- We are made for meaningful work; “meaningful” = it benefits someone or something outside of ourselves.
- We are made in God’s image:
 - We are moral creatures, like God.
 - We are creative, like God.
 - We exercise dominion; this means we have responsibilities that animals do not.
 - We are social creatures, like God.
- We are different—here, male & female—but we are equal, equally in the image of God.

WHERE ARE WE?

There is a third “character” in these stories, creation itself. Think back over Genesis 1 & 2, and notice what these chapters teach us about creation?

- That creation is GOOD. ☒
- That creation is NOT God, but is separate from God. (We should not worship nature.) ☒
- That God created it for our benefit and responsible use. (While we are higher than the rest of creation, we cannot abuse it.) ☒
- That God entrusted it to us. We are stewards of it, caretakers. It doesn’t belong to us, it belongs to God. ☒

WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

The fourth worldview question is “what’s the problem?” Virtually EVERY CULTURE IN HUMAN HISTORY has acknowledged that our world is not the way it’s supposed to be.

Notice 2.25: "Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame."

1. What does this verse tell us about Adam & Eve's relationship at the end of chapter 2?
 - "Nakedness" is not meant to be sexual or salacious. The word here = innocence.
 - "Nakedness" here means a relationship with no rivalry, no fear of rejection, nothing hidden or kept back from each other, complete and total intimacy. **This is the relationship God created us to have with HIM and with the people we love.**
2. Things change in Genesis 3. As we read, notice what the serpent says and what he is like.
 - The serpent is "crafty" or "shrewd" (3.1). This word implies dishonesty, and is the opposite of what "nakedness" meant in 2.25. Adam & Eve aren't hiding anything, but the serpent is hiding everything.
 - Notice how what the serpent says is half-true.
3. What is the serpent trying to get Adam & Eve to do? Go deeper than "He wants them to eat the fruit. He wants them to disobey God."

What is the manipulation here? What does he want them to THINK?

THIS IS IMPORTANT. In Genesis, people commit their worst sins when:

- God has told them he is going to give them something or do something for them, but
- ... they don't trust that he will do it, so
- ... they go out and try to do it for themselves.

This is a pattern that we will see repeatedly in Genesis.

4. What does this story teach us about ...
 - a. Satan?
 - b. Temptation?
 - c. The nature of sin?
5. What are the consequences of Adam & Eve's sin ...
 - a. For Adam & Eve? For their relationship with each other?
 - b. For creation? For Adam & Eve's relationship with nature (the world around them)?
 - c. For their relationship with God?

6. Notice the change in the meaning of “nakedness” from 2.25 to 3.7, 10:
- In 2.25, there is no shame. Nakedness = innocence, honesty, having nothing to hide.
 - In 3.7, 10, there IS shame. Nakedness = being in danger, vulnerability, exposure to attack or to being exploited.
7. **SHAME IS ONE OF THE CHIEF CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.** How does shame make us feel?
How does shame make us act?
8. For the Christian, is shame legitimate?

Christian philosopher Brene Brown says that guilt and shame are different.

- GUILT says, “I did something awful,” or “I failed.”
- SHAME says, “I AM awful,” or “I AM a failure.”

Hebrews 12.2 says that Jesus defeated our shame on the cross. “For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

God has vindicated him, publicly honoring him, removing our shame and honoring us with him. Hebrews 2.9-10 says, “We see Jesus ... now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. [He] brought many sons and daughters to glory.”