

YOU ARE IMPORTANT

Jesus wants to make you the best that God created you to be.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ Genesis 1 tells us of the creation of the physical universe. At every stage, God saw that what was created was good. Then came the defining creation, the crown jewel: God created mankind in His image (v. 27).
- ❖ There's something unmistakably distinct about this piece that makes it stand apart from the rest of creation in the universe. Mankind was made in God's **image**.
- ❖ You are important and special to God.
- ❖ Reading through verse 27, we see that we see that it closes with the words, "male and female He created them." There's a certain equality within the human race that the writer finds important to emphasize.
- ❖ Both men and women are **like** God, in the sense that the scripture we read tells us that they were made in His **likeness**. When we look at either, we should see God.
- ❖ That we're made in the image of God is a very powerful birthright. Numbers 22 illustrates the truth of this blessing; but the only one who can allow this blessing to flow is the person themself.
- ❖ When the Israelites were on the borders of the Jordan River in the final months before they began to take the Promised Land, Balak the king of Moab was afraid of them. So, he hired Balaam, a pagan diviner, to curse Israel. But Balaam blessed Israel three times saying, "I cannot curse who God has blessed" (Num. 23:8).
- ❖ The way Balaam saw Israel reflects the way we ought to see other people. We need to see God in every person. Whenever we're jealous of someone and secretly try to limit their gifting, it's a call to beware.
- ❖ Don't be jealous. There's an anointing of God in you that is fully adequate for you to be the best that He created you to be. Running your race with patience and using your gifting to support others will release the power of God's blessing in your life and earn you a crown.
- ❖ Going back to Genesis 1, we see that God blessed humanity to have dominion, but something went wrong. Satan—originally created as Lucifer, which means "shining one, or light-bearer"—tried to make himself equal to God and was cast out of heaven.
- ❖ When humans came along and received the privilege of representing God on earth, Satan tricked them into trying to do the same thing he had done, saying that they would become like God if they disobeyed Him.
- ❖ And that set off the age-old pursuit of people trying to subdue the one thing in creation that God did not give them dominion over: other people.
- ❖ In Romans 1:25, Paul talks about how people worshipped the creature rather than the Creator. That's the spirit of Satan. Man desires worship from other people—God's image. And in so doing, he gives Satan power to rule.

KEY SCRIPTURES (NIV): Genesis 1:26-28;
 Ephesians 4:11-13; Romans 1:18-32;
 Colossians 1:16; Psalm 139:14

- ❖ But Jesus restored us to attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. He gave people power to be restored to our place of dominion through His life, death and resurrection.
- ❖ He left in place a perpetual body of believers called the Church, entrusting them with the mechanisms to restore everyone in every generation.
- ❖ Ephesians 4:11 shows us how He set up the fivefold ministry: "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers...."
- ❖ In the church, the fivefold ministry is imparted to specific people, not so that they can be exercise yet another form of dominion over people, but "to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up..." (Eph. 4:12).
- ❖ God's gifting is all about building up, not dominating over, "until," as verse 13 continues, "we all reach unity in the...attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."
- ❖ The idea is that we should become fully like Christ—in His likeness, in His image. By each of us becoming what God created us to be, the people of God will usher in just and prosperous societies that reflect what God intended for us from the beginning of time.
- ❖ You are important to God. God needs the church and the church needs you. Let's recognize who we are in Christ and get on with His work of taking people back into the blessing of dominion.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. What do you believe your gifting to be (i.e., cleaning, cooking, praying, etc.)? Do you (or how can you) use that gift as part of a ministry?
2. Are there instances where your gifting released God's blessing in your life?
3. Is there a gift you desire? Why, and have you ever tried to obtain it?
4. Take time to go to God in prayer for your gifting.

PRAYER TIME

"For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:29). Lord, help me to recognize what You have already placed inside me, so that I may be the best You want me to be.

Start-up: "In case of emergency...: " What would be one of the first things you reach for in an emergency situation? (What has more importance?)

WEEK OF SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 2022

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

✓ (Reminds me/Confirms) 💡 (New idea) 🔄 (Think about)

! (Do this) ❤️ (Speaks to my heart) ↕ (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

Go deeper with your Life Group family.
 CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE
 WORD