

# HE IS THE SPITTING IMAGE OF...

**Intro:** **Genesis 1:27** *So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

- What does “made in the image of God” mean?
- What happens when an increasingly secular society says: “We don’t believe in God anymore”?



QUOTE: Anonymous letter to someone called Diognetus, from around 130AD. It is the earliest known piece of Christian writing explaining Christianity to specifically pagan readers; that is, to the majority of Graeco-Roman society at the time. Here is an extract:<sup>1</sup>

*Christians cannot be distinguished from the rest of the human race by country or language or customs. They do not live in cities of their own; they do not use a peculiar form of speech; they do not follow an eccentric manner of life...*



*Yet, although they live in Greek and barbarian cities alike, as each man’s lot has been cast, and follow the customs of the country in clothing and food and other matters of daily living, at the same time they give proof of the remarkable and admittedly extraordinary constitution of their own commonwealth.*

*They live in their own countries, but only as aliens. They have a share in everything as citizens, and endure everything as foreigners. Every foreign land is their fatherland, and yet for them every fatherland is a foreign land... They busy themselves on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws, but in their own lives they go far beyond what the laws require.*

*They love all men, and by all men are persecuted... they are treated by the Jews as foreigners and enemies, and are hunted down by the Greeks; at all the time those who hate them find it impossible to justify their enmity.*

- How do we become the soul of our society?

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Dr Patrick Sookhdeo, International Director of Barnabas Fund, in the editorial P3 of BarnabasAid magazine May/June 2022. ( for further details, see [www.barnabasfund.org](http://www.barnabasfund.org))

# 1. What does the 'Image of God' mean?

## (a) Made Spiritual:

**John 4:24** *God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."*

- Worship in spirit and truth
- Adam and Eve had such a connection with God that it is described as "God walked in the garden with them" (Genesis 3:8)
- The disconnect happened when they chose to listen to and act in response to another voice.

## (b) Mentally Alive

### (i) *Ability to choose:*

- Choice involves reason
- Reflection of God's intellect and freedom

### (ii) *Ability to Create:*

- Our Creativity reflects God's image
  - Illustration: the making of products with 3D technology
  - Other examples:
    - To write a book
    - Comprehend maths / sciences
    - Enjoy uplifting music
    - Names of pet / child/ car

## (c) Moral Compass

- We all have a conscience

**Romans 2:15** *They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right (NLT)*

- How do we explain this?
  - Can molecules reason? (Discern if / how / when)
  - While a chemical reaction (hormones) can explain the desire to mate, they do not explain our need to give and receive LOVE.
- We are told we can squash our conscience

**1 Timothy 4:2** *Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.*

- Every time we see someone:
  - Recoil from evil
  - Praise what is good
  - They reflect God's image whether they acknowledge Him or not

## 2. How to Become the Soul of our Society

- Being in the image of God speaks of relationship

### (a) Firstly with God:

- Connection to God restored
  - Redeemed, bought back
  - To become what you were made for

**Colossians 3:9b-10** *since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

### (b) Then with People

**Colossians 3:11** *Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.*

- A cultural mix...
  - Jews or Greek – nationality /culture is not the focus
  - Circumcised or uncircumcised = religious background doesn't matter
  - Barbarians – those who could not speak Greek – uneducated
  - Scythians – known for alcohol and drug abuse; warlike people
  - Slave or free – whether enslaved by something or those who have had a reasonably stable life.
- They began to see the image of God in each other 

- Christians in first 300 years were noted for:
  - Saving lives of unborn / newly born
  - Caring for the aged
  - Champions of women
  - Champions of orphans
  - Champions of the poor
- To be the soul of our community we have to practice it here.

**Colossians 3:12-17** *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*