

## ***Chip Off the Divine Block***

20 October 2011

Let's talk about God—the Creator—the *Divine!* In Psalm 8:3-9 “Israel’s Sweet Singer” said:

*“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,*

***4**what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?*

***5**You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.*

***6**You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet:*

***7**all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field,*

***8**the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.*

***9**O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”*

• **Scripture says that humans are created in the image of God**—Genesis 1:26-27 “Then God said,

***1) ‘Let us make man in our image,***

***2) in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’***

***27So 3) God created man in his own image,***

***4) in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.**” Four times in these two verses God reinforces the fact that humans were created in the image of God! • What does *created in the image of God* mean? Since no one has seen God and lived, what do we know about his image? We know that God said that the “in his image” included male and female—alike they bear his image! I don’t understand it—but God said it in Genesis 1:27.*

J. I. Packer in his book, *Knowing God*, explains that when the Bible says God made man and woman in his own image—it’s that God made us to be:

**(1)** free *spiritual* beings,

**(2)** responsible moral agents with powers of choice and action,

**(3)** able to commune with him and respond to him, and

**(4)** able to be godly in a relationship with him: good, truthful, holy and upright. (Ref: Ecclesiastes 7:29 “*This only have I found: God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes.*”)

God created humans “upright,” but we have gone after many schemes. Who is the author of schemes? The father of lies: Satan. So instead of manifesting the likeness of our Father God, we have all desired what Israel desired: the gods of other nations—idolatry. We have served self and sought out Satan’s schemes!

The image of God includes **the mind** (thinking processes), **the will** (choice), **the spirit** (life), and **the emotions** (especially that desire to love and be loved). What is conspicuously missing is the divine *physical* image. We cannot assume we're created in God's physical image, for it has not been seen, but it's enough that he gave to the man and woman he created a physical image that he, the triune-God, approved! Genesis 1:31 says, "*God saw...it was very good!*"

From birth, every person has a **need to be loved and to love**. We've all heard of terrible situations where children in Russian orphanages, and elsewhere, were provided for but deprived of love. This deprivation causes what doctors have called "failure to thrive". Our great God wanted people to thrive and he provides for and fulfills our capacity and propensity to love in his command in Matthew 22:37-39 "*Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind and soul...and thy neighbor as thyself*, and then assures us of his own love for every person when he said, "*For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son...*" John 3:16.

When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5 and instructed him to teach them to the people, he gave him two reasons for the commands in Deuteronomy 6:2—so

- 1) the people and their descendents **would fear the LORD their God**, and
- 2) that **they would enjoy long life**.

**This is a good place to stop and talk about the sin of image-making and what it is.** The first command tells us to love God and serve him only—to have no other gods before him. The second commandment *not to make any likeness of any thing for use in worship* expounds on the first commandment, and points us to the principle that, to quote Charles Hodge: "Idolatry consists not only in the worship of false gods, but also in the worship of the true God by images."

Since our worship should only go to God, and since his physical image is unknown to us, anything we make to represent God Almighty would fall so far short of his actual appearance as to be an affront to His Majesty. So we are not to worship any other god, idol or image, nor are we to use pictures and statues that depict God—**make no graven image or likeness for use in worship**. The second commandment bans it—otherwise it would be a repeat of the first commandment.

• **Now we can talk about the *Chip!*** The Divine is God, and the "chip" is, first of all, the one who believes in Jesus Christ as Savior, and is, therefore, in the family of God. When we ask the Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us of our sins and we receive his payment for our sins, then the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our hearts immediately.

We often say “Lord Jesus, come into my heart,” and he does so in the person of the Holy Spirit—who begins right then and there His sanctifying work in us—conforming us to the image of Jesus Christ. And this is a lifetime process, until the day we are glorified in God’s very presence. “Chip” is the believer who is the growing Christian! How and when does that happen? Doesn’t every believer become a growing, thriving Christian? This is God’s plan for believers, but...

There needs to be a willful choice made to make Jesus Lord and Master of our lives, to *follow* Christ—*followership*—and allow the Holy Spirit, who already dwells in us, to fill us up and do his transforming, purifying, and conforming work in us. The Holy Spirit is absolutely committed to conforming believers to the image of Christ and thereby manifesting the family likeness in us!

We said that all people have been *created* in the image of God, but what does it mean for a follower of Christ to be **conformed to Christ’s image**? God’s purpose for your life and mine is for us to be like Jesus! God made us to be **human beings...before human doings!** Two thoughts concerning **being**:

- 1) We focus **relationally** to God, and not religiously;
- 2) We focus on **yielding** to God, and not wielding our own way.

It’s a *choice* we will make—or *not*! Only the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of adoption—indwelling us can shape us into Christ’s image. Our part is to desire that, to submit to the Holy Spirit at work in and through us to make us like Jesus. We must remain—abide in the vine—remembering that Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. There are no self-made Christians! We must *focus* on Jesus: “*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith*” Hebrews 12:2.

**Romans 8:29** (memory verse) “*For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*” Because of the *incarnation*—God the Son became fully man; while remaining fully God—the Prophet Isaiah movingly describes the suffering Savior, and makes reference to Jesus’ physical appearance as well in **Isaiah 53:1-5**:

“*Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*  
 2 “*He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.*

3“*He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

4 “*Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.*

5 “*But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*”

To allow the Holy Spirit to do his “extreme makeover” and conform us to the image of Christ is not an easy choice; following Jesus is not a popularity contest—it’s not a “win friends and influence people” thing. “In fact,” J. I. Packer says, “we may experience isolation, criticism, abandonment by friends and practical frustrations of all sorts...regularly leading to upsets and distresses which one would otherwise escape.”

**Psalm 34:10** says that “*many are the afflictions of the righteous,*” and **John 15:18-19**—“*If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.*”

We need to have a quiet awareness that the life of Christ is being modeled. In other lessons we have said about the storms, trials, persecutions of life, that they are likely being used to empty our hands of our own resources, our own sufficiency, and turn us back to our faithful provider. And we have agreed that God knows what will **get through** to each one of us!

The first step is **devotion to the divine by the ‘chip’**. Packer again: “God’s people should be positively and passionately devoted to His person, His cause and His honor.” To be devoted to means to have zeal for—to have a burning desire to please God—being devoted to His person—His image.

- Mary Magdalene had been healed of extreme mental, physical, and emotional distress and she had accepted Christ’s forgiveness of her sins. She was in the family of God, and could have been content with that, but she chose to go further in her spiritual journey and to identify with the Lord Jesus in his sufferings—to be his follower—to be conformed to his image. And she is a beautiful example of a woman whose life was poured out in response to God’s extravagant grace.

- In *Women of the Bible*, Ann Spangler and Jean Syswerda tell us about Mary: “Though characterized as a prostitute in many popular writings, the Bible says only that she was possessed by seven demons. She probably suffered a serious mental or physical illness from which Jesus delivered her.

“Since her miraculous healing, everyone in Magdala had marveled at the change in her. How could Mary not love such a man? How could she not want to do everything for him? She thought she was living in heaven—to be close to Jesus; to witness healing after healing; to be stirred, surprised and refreshed by his teaching. This, indeed, was joy to a woman unaccustomed to joy.

“For the past three years she had followed the rabbi across Galilee and Judea, providing for him out of her own small purse. She had loved his hearty laughter and the smile that flashed across his face whenever he saw her. Wherever they went, she felt privileged to tell her story, grateful to be among his growing band of followers. But Jesus had his share of enemies, she knew. Religious leaders in Jerusalem had been stung by his truth-telling, offended by his galling lack of diplomacy. Still, every trap they laid for him had failed...until now.

“Her devoted path had brought great sorrow as she watched Jesus’ agony at Calvary. However hideous his suffering, she needed to be near him—to devote to him. Afterward, though, her joy would overflow when she was a witness to his resurrection—the first. ‘Mary,’ He had said...startled, she cried out, ‘Rabboni’ (meaning Teacher).”

“To wait for God, and to suffer His will, is to know Him in the fellowship of His sufferings, and to be conformed to the likeness of His Son,” said Anna Shipton. And A. B. Simpson: “We are members of His body, His flesh, and His bones, and if we can only believe and receive it, we may live upon the very life of the Son of God.”

What would the Church be like if every believer yielded to the Holy Spirit’s prompting to look like Jesus, talk like Jesus, act like Jesus and love like Jesus? Do you remember the little bracelets: **What Would Jesus Do?** God’s Word—**Scripture—is full of Jesus “doing” as a direct result of “being” Who he is!** He conformed to the Father’s image, will and word. As members of the family of God, if we are to truly follow Christ, we must **“manifest the family likeness”**—be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ!

We will not become more like Jesus until we have committed ourselves to spend more time in His **Way**; more attention to His **Truth**, and more immersed in His **Life** (ref: John 14:6). The indwelling Holy Spirit is poised and ready: It is a choice we can make today; it—sanctification—will not happen by osmosis, by chance, or without our consent. It will happen as a result of our yielding ourselves to the Holy Spirit’s rule and work in our lives: daily allowing Him to shape us into Christ’s “being,” and then sharpen us for His service—“doing.”

Henry van Dyke: “...when people are like Christ, earth will be like heaven. It is the divinity of King Jesus, manifested in human flesh, real, living, and eternal, the hope, the joy, the glory of all creation”—the image of the *Divine* God!