

## **Session Two: God Made and Loves People**

**Theme:** Perfect by His Blessing!

**Law/Gospel Focus:**

God created Adam and Eve perfect in His image. Because Adam and Eve sinned, all their descendants brought with them a mind ignorant of God's good plan for their lives, emotions that seek pleasure in things that displease God, and a will that rebels against God's will. But God in His love sent His only Son Jesus into this world, whose mind perfectly affirmed God's plan for people's lives, whose emotions sought pleasure in doing perfectly only that which pleases God, and whose will perfectly reflected and responded to God's will. Jesus lived perfectly on our behalf and then suffered the punishment we deserved because of our sin. His death on the cross provides life to all who confess Him as Lord and Savior. God's love for us in Jesus transforms our minds so we know and affirm God's plan for our lives, our emotions so that we seek to please God, and our will so that we seek God's will.

**Objectives:**

By the power of the Holy Spirit working through God's Word we will:

- 1) describe the creation of God's special creatures—man and woman—and His plan for their lives;
- 2) confess our sin and receive assurance of God's complete forgiveness through faith in Christ Jesus;
- 3) demonstrate by our words and actions the desire to please God and to seek His will for our lives.

**Introduction:**

"I'm looking for the perfect man."

"I'm looking for the perfect woman."

Although a noble dream, the person who seeks to marry the perfect person will usually spend a lifetime searching.

1). Why is searching for a "perfect" person a futile journey?

2). What is the best that a person could hope for when searching for the "perfect person"?

## **Inform:**

Read Genesis 1:26-2:25.

## **About the Text:**

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness’” (Genesis 1:26).

The stage was now set for the climax of God’s creative activity. God said: “Let us make man.” Long before we humans ever thought about God He was thinking about us and making plans for us to share life with Him, to live with Him as members of His family.

God approached the creation of this highest creature in a manner different from any other of His creative activity. Here He gave no simple creative order: “Let there be!” Before creating the first human, God engaged in solemn deliberation. The reader will note the plurals (“Let us make . . . in our image . . . in our likeness”). The New Testament makes it clear that the three persons of the Holy Trinity were all active in the work of creation.

God stated clearly what His purpose was in designing this highest creature. He was to exercise rule over the rest of the creation, “over all the earth.” This divine program for the human race makes it clear that God’s human creatures were not just another species of animal. Mankind—male and female—is clearly distinguished from the animals, set apart for a function different from the one the creator assigned to these lower creatures. Mankind was to manage the earth for God. All of earth’s resources were placed under His jurisdiction. When God blessed the human race (Genesis 1:28) He ordered it to subdue the earth, to rule over it.

The fall into sin has greatly modified this dominion over God’s creation. The created world is no longer completely subordinate to fallen mankind. Animals attack and kill him; water drowns him; and finally earth covers him. But God’s authorization “Subdue the earth and rule over it!” has never been revoked. . . .

To equip His first human creatures for the awesome assignment of managing the earth for Him God created them in His image, in His likeness. Here is the ultimate evidence that mankind, whom God created male and female, is preeminent in God’s creation. Some Bible students have seen in the “image of God” only a reference to man’s humanness, his self-consciousness, his intellect. But that is clearly not the biblical meaning of the term. (Even after Adam and Eve fell into sin and lost the divine image, they retained their human personality and their powers of intellect.) The image of God cannot describe a physical resemblance to God, since God is a spirit. The New Testament describes the divine image as a special knowledge, knowing God to be the source of every blessing (Colossians 3:10). It describes the divine image as holiness, an absence of sinfulness (Ephesians 4:24).

In trying to understand the concept of the image of God, it may be helpful to describe the effect the divine image had on the personality of Adam and Eve—on their intellect, emotions, and will. Unlike the mental dullness and ignorance we bring with us into the world, Adam and Eve understood perfectly with their intellect what God wanted them to know. While they possessed the image of God, their emotions were also in tune with God’s; they found their greatest

happiness in God. And unlike the rebellious will each of us brought into the world, their will was in complete harmony with God; what He wanted was what they wanted. Every impulse and desire of theirs was in tune with God's good will. Created in the image of God, they were human replicas of what God is like.

We know that this beautiful relationship with God was destroyed when Adam and Eve doubted God's love, disobeyed His command, and dragged the whole human race down with them. All of the descendants of Adam and Eve, with a single exception, brought a sinful image with them into the world—a mind ignorant of God's plan for them, emotions that find joy in things that displease God, and a will which rebels against God's good and gracious will. The New Testament brings us the wonderful news, however, that through faith in Christ the image of God is again created in the sinner, who is thereby restored to that precious relationship Adam and Eve once enjoyed with God.

As long as we live in a sinful world, the image of God is only partially restored in us by faith. That new nature created in us by the Holy Spirit must coexist with the sinful image we received from our parents. St. John assures us, however: "When Christ appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1John 3:2). When the believer enters eternal life, the image of God in him will be completely restored.

"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called "woman," for she was taken out of man" (Genesis 2:23).

This, then, was the first marriage. God designed a special creature from a part of Adam's body and brought her to Adam. Adam received her as his wife, and she was willing to be his wife. That this blessed transaction was not a one-time thing, but a basic divine establishment for the whole human race of all time becomes clear from God's statement which He apparently made through Adam; "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."

Adam and Eve enjoyed their new relationship. Even though they were naked they felt no shame, because they were in full control of their sexual impulses, and expressed them in perfect love to God and in unselfish love to each other.

(From The People's Bible Commentary: Genesis, 1988 Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI.)

- 1). List the events in the creation of man and woman.
- 2). Why is the creation of man and woman often called the climax of God's creation?
- 3). What was God's purpose in designing His highest creature—man?

- 4). Describe the image of God in terms of Adam and Eve’s intellect, emotions, and will.
- 5). How did the Fall change man’s dominion over God’s creation?
- 6). How did the Fall affect the image of God in terms of Adam and Eve’s intellect, emotions, and will?
- 7). How did God finally restore the image marred by sin? See Galatians 3:13-14.
- 8). Describe the significance of Genesis 2:24 for Adam and Eve and for couples today.

### **Connect:**

The story of the creation of Adam and Eve completes the account of God’s good creative work. All of life is perfect, from the order and grandeur of nature (epitomized in the Garden of Eden) to relationships between God and human beings. It is difficult to imagine the joy, peace, and harmony of paradise. Our world today is anything but peaceful and harmonious; every day brings “bad news” of conflict, destruction, and death. God’s plan for His creation is life, but because of our sinfulness we constantly live in the “valley of the shadow of death.” Yet God’s grace shines forth in the midst of earth’s darkness. In Christ, God restores His creation to its original perfection—here and now only partially, but completely and for all eternity in heaven. By His mercy alone God “recreates” His chosen people, forgiving and renewing His children by His Spirit at work through the Sacraments.

God’s rich blessings upon His creation are also evident in the gift of marriage to the first man and woman. Without Eve, Adam is incomplete, he lacks the “suitable helper” that God has provided for all other creatures. Once more, God reveals His goodness and love toward His world by “building” a match—the ideal companion—for the man. (The world build or make in 2:22 describes a master craftsman at work; similarly the word form in 2:7 portrays a skilled potter at work with his clay.) As a result, God’s creation is now whole. Humankind, as male and female, husband and wife, enjoys the many blessings of life and fellowship with the eternal Lord.

- 1). Describe the significance in your life of God recreating you through faith in Christ Jesus.
- 2) How has sin affected the “one flesh” union God desired between a man and a woman?

3). God provides means through which He strengthens our faith in Christ Jesus—Word and Sacrament. How can a couples' involvement in and with these faith-strengthening means affect their relationship? (Consider also how these means will affect other relationships.)

4). What evidence of God, the master Craftsman, is still evident today?

5). Through faith in Christ Jesus, God begins His work of restoring His image in us. How will this restored image affect our intellect, emotions, and will?