

Identifying My Real Need in Life

Since the image of God in man has to do with our likeness or similarity to God (Gen. 3: 5), the starting point should be, "Who is God?" What are the triune God's needs? He has no needs. He is completely fulfilled. The Father loves the Son. The Son is ecstatic about the Father and wants nothing but the Father's will. God's greatest pleasure is himself. *"For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever"* (Rom. 11: 36). The natural reason to praise God is for what he has done for me. This is okay, but it doesn't go far enough. From the Bible's perspective, God deserves praise simply because he is God. The natural focal point for our thoughts is not our own deep longings but the immeasurably great *"God of all glory"* (Acts 7: 2). Glory is honor, radiance, beauty, splendor, majesty. Holiness is the word that summarizes God.

I. When you are consumed with the glory of God's image, you have need of nothing.

For example, the Holy One is the loving bridegroom who expects a spotless bride. He is the feast-giver who invites everyone to the feast, but expects attendees to wear the garment *He gives to them* (Matt 22:11-14). He is the redeemer who redeems us with justice (Is. 1: 27). When you witness the glory or holiness in Jesus Christ, the ultimate image of God's glory (Heb. 1: 3), you know the glory of God. "We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1: 14). He is called "the Holy One of God" (Mark 1: 24). In his prayer immediately before his arrest, Jesus prayed that the Father would glorify Jesus so that Jesus in turn may glorify the Father. The deepest desire on Jesus' heart was the glory of his Father (John 17). This is the life of God in the soul of man.

II. You are most similar to God when He is the object of your affection.

We should delight in God, as He does in himself. We are to make his name famous or hallowed throughout the world; we are to declare the coming of his glorious kingdom. As the Westminster Catechism says, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him [or delight in him] forever." How do you take delight in God? How do you enjoy Him forever?

(A). You catch a glimpse of His beauty...

(B). You work harder and longer to get even more of His beauty...

(C). You express the beauty you have received in your conversations with others...

The way God's people come into his presence is by faith. By faith, we have the indwelling glory of the Spirit. The glory doesn't fade, but we grow even more radiant (II Cor. 3:18).

III. The image of God in me is both a noun (what He has done) and a verb (what I am doing).

Our hearts are always active, either in bringing glory to God or to self. In this sense, the image of God in man is a verb. It is not just who we are; it is what we do. Faith, the means by which we image God, is expressed in the way we live, as are its many synonyms, such as imitating God (Eph. 5: 1), representing God (2 Cor. 5: 20), mirroring or reflecting the glory of God (Ex. 34: 29-35), loving God, and living according to His will. The image of God in us is not about psychological need; it is about God's abundance gifts spilling over to other people.

(This lesson and others are from Edward T. Welch, *When People Are Big and God Is Small*).