

GENDER ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS



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What was God thinking?

PATSY CAMENETI

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*Harrison
House* MA

Tulsa, OK



CHAPTER 2

Precisely the Way He Wanted It

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was
on the face of the deep.

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then
God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

Genesis 1:1-3

In these first three verses of the Bible, we see the trinity of God. In verse 1, we see God the Father. In verse 2, we see the Spirit of God who moved upon the face of the waters. In verse 3, we see the second person of the Godhead. The word *said* identifies God’s Word. Before Jesus Christ was made flesh and dwelled among us, He was in the beginning with God as the Word.

1 In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 From the very beginning the Word was with God. 3 Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. 4 The Word was

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the source of life, and this life brought light to people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.

John 1:1-5 (GNT)

Creation began in Genesis 1:3 when the light the Father willed to be created was commanded to be and was brought into existence by the Holy Spirit. Each day of creation unfolded the same way.

By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen.

Hebrews 11:3 (NLT)



THE PATTERN
GOD USED TO
MAKE MAN
WAS HIMSELF.

God didn't use what already existed on earth as a pattern. He created things that had never existed before by His Word. When it came to making man, God did not use a pattern of anything He had made previously on any other day of creation. *The pattern God used to make man was Himself.*

26 God said, "Let us make human beings *in our image to be like us*. They will reign over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth and the small animals that scurry along the ground." 27 So God created human beings *in His own image. In the image of God* He created them, male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish of the sea the birds in the sky and all the animals that scurry along the ground."

Genesis 1:26-28 (NLT)

The Tabernacle

In addition to all that was created in Genesis 1, the two dwelling places God commissioned to be built in the Old Testament illustrate the fact that God did not use earthly patterns. We also see that God is very specific about what He wants and how He wants it.

Precisely the Way He Wanted It

Acts 7:44 says, “Our ancestors carried the Tabernacle with them through the wilderness. It was constructed according to the plan God had shown Moses” (NLT). It wasn’t constructed according to any design that Moses had seen in Egypt. Although Moses was familiar with the leading architecture of the day, he did not use Egyptian architecture to build the tabernacle. It was a new plan. It came from heaven—not from Egypt.

In Scripture, Egypt is a nation, but it’s also used as a type or symbol of the world. When God wants to build something, He doesn’t get His plan from the world. It originates in Himself, so the plan for the tabernacle began in heaven. In fact, when Moses was preparing to build the tabernacle, God gave him this warning in Exodus 25:40, “Be sure that you make everything according to the *pattern* I have shown you....” In Egypt? No! “...*on the mountain*” (NLT).

God had Moses come away from every other influence and even took him away from the people he was leading. The tabernacle was not some kind of concoction that emerged from a group discussion or a special committee assigned to come up with what it should look like. No, God took Moses away from every other influence, up onto the mountain of God, and there, God gave him the pattern of the original that came from heaven itself.

The words *be sure* in Exodus 25:40 are not a casual instruction. God didn’t tell Moses, “It would be nice!” Or, “I would kind of like it!” No. God said, “Be sure!” In fact, God said, “Be sure that you make everything—not most everything—according to the *pattern* I have shown you here on the mountain.”

Notice again in Exodus 26:30 God says, “Set up this Tabernacle according to the *pattern* you were shown on the mountain” (NLT). God wasn’t trying something on a whim or as an experiment. No. He had a pattern in Himself, and He showed it to Moses.

The altar must be hollow, made from planks. Build it just as you were shown *on the mountain*.

Exodus 27:8 (NLT)

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The entire lampstand, from its base to its decorative blossoms, was made of beaten gold. It was built according to the *exact design* the Lord had shown Moses.

Numbers 8:4 (NLT)

They serve in a system of worship that is only a *copy*, a shadow of the real one in heaven....

Hebrews 8:5a (NLT)

The words *they serve* refer to the system of worship that the priests and Levites carried out, which was only a copy or a shadow of the real one in heaven.

...For when Moses was getting ready to build the Tabernacle, God gave him this warning: “Be sure that you make everything according to the *pattern* I have shown you here on the mountain.”

Hebrews 8:5b (NLT)

The Temple

The next building that God had built was the temple, and God was just as precise about it.

11 Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; **12** and *the plans for all that he had by the Spirit*, of the courts of the house of the Lord, of all the chambers all around, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries for the dedicated things.

1 Chronicles 28:11-12

Like the tabernacle, Solomon's temple was built exactly according to the specs and design that came from God. As a result, both were filled with the glory of God upon their completion.

Just know this: God never fills man's plans with His glory. Man may even dedicate his plan to God. Still, He won't fill it with His glory. The only thing that God fills with His glory is what comes from Him. If man does the work, God won't take the credit (Psalm 127:1a).

Precisely the Way He Wanted It

For my birthday one year, an intern of ours who is an exceptional artist presented me with a beautiful picture she had painted. However, I noticed when she gave it to me that it was unsigned. So, I asked her to please sign it. Her signature said it was indeed her work and finished. A true artist won't sign a painting if somebody else does the work on his or her painting. The artist may say, "Well, I contributed," but he or she won't sign it unless it's original and complete.

God signed the tabernacle and the temple with His glory. Do you want the glory of God on your life as well? It comes on a life that represents and reflects Him. God's glory is His signature.

Adam

Like other Bible genealogies, the one found in Luke 3 names each man and his father. Let's look at the final verse of this genealogy in Luke 3:38, "...the son of Enosh, the son of Seth the son of Adam the son of God." That's just profound! Adam didn't come from anybody else. God made him. And what pattern did He use?

To answer that question, let's look once again at the creation of man in Genesis. God said, "Let Us make man in *Our image*, according to *Our likeness*" (Genesis 1:26). God said it again two more times in verse 28, "So God created man *in His own image*. *In the image of God* He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:28). God is not redundant; He's purposeful. For Him to repeat this phrase so many times is a big deal.

One primary reason we know that man didn't evolve from any other type of life created earlier is that God very plainly said four times in these verses the pattern He used to make man was Himself. The pattern was not from something He made from some plant or animal He made some other time in His creation. No, the verses make it abundantly clear. God Himself is the pattern in the creation of man. That's pretty cool!

Just how significant is it to be made in the image and likeness of God, and what does it mean? To help us wrap our heads around the concept, let's look at some words and definitions that describe *image* and *likeness*.

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Webster's Dictionary defines *image* as *a physical likeness; a representation as is produced by reflection from a mirror; form, appearance, resemblance counterpart, copy, embodiment, illusion or imaged, imaging, counterpart, embodiment; to reflect the likeness of; to mirror, to resemble; a tangible or visible representation;*¹ *an optical counterpart or appearance of an object, as is produced by reflection from a mirror.*²

Strong's Concordance uses these words for *likeness*:³ *similitude, figure, form, like, pattern, model, shape*. In using these words, we can see that man was created as a model, figure, form, shape, profile, and a similitude of God. Adam was made to represent, resemble, reflect, and image God like a mirror. God was the pattern for man.

Man and woman were perfect visible images of the invisible God. Like a mirror is *not* a person but images or reflects a person, Adam and Eve were made to image and reflect God. You couldn't see God, but you could see man. In other words, if you could see man, there wouldn't be any confusion about what God was like. Man was God's likeness.

Notes

1 Image – Webster's Definition includes: exact likeness; semblance; A tangible or visible representation; incarnation. Example: A person strikingly like another person as in "she is the image of her mother." God created man in his own image, (Genesis 1:27 RSV).
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/image>

2 Dictionary.com uses these words: (1) a physical likeness or representation of a person, animal, or thing, photographed, painted, sculptured, or otherwise made visible. (2) an optical counterpart or appearance of an object, as is produced by reflection from a mirror, refraction by a lens, or the passage of luminous rays through a small aperture and their reception on a surface. (3) a mental representation; idea; conception.

3 Likeness – Strong's Concordance 1823 – Original Word: תּוֹמָר
<http://biblehub.com/hebrew/1823.htm>



CHAPTER 3

What God Looks Like

...what you learned about Christ.

Ephesians 4:20 (NLT)

It's a beautiful and interesting thing to study the doctrines of the Bible. We can study an entire lifetime and never exhaust the teachings of the Bible. Yet, my question is this: What do you personally know of God? What do you know of His personality and His characteristics? What have you experienced of Him? Without using “churchy” clichés, what have you personally learned not only about Christ but about the Father and Holy Spirit as well?

Surely all of us want to know God more because nothing compares to the delight of every discovery. Bible studies through colleges, great books, and sermons can help you learn about God's personality, but life actually gives you the opportunity to experience different aspects of God. That's why I don't mind getting older. Bring on the years! Each season of life gives me more opportunities to know God more deeply and richly.

This in itself takes the sting out of any season of life. With God, bad seasons in life don't have to be remembered for the bad. Even the most

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awful tragedy or complicated problem in any season gives you an opportunity to lean into God, get His perspective, and come to know and experience Him more. In this way, every season is known by what you've come to know and discover about God rather than by something sinister or disastrous.



EACH SEASON
OF LIFE GIVES
ME MORE
OPPORTUNITIES
TO KNOW GOD
MORE DEEPLY
AND RICHLY.

Below is a list compiled by Bible school students from many countries and backgrounds that describes the characteristics they have personally learned of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Something that stood out to me every time I had a different group of students compile a list of God's characteristics is that no matter where a person is born or what language they speak, when they come to know God, the same wonderful characteristics are identified world over!

Obviously, these characteristics are not exclusive to just one person of the Godhead, but the characteristics are shared by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. However, the purpose of these lists is to identify specific characteristics of each that someone would come to know through personal interaction.

In the list below, circle the characteristics you personally know of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Feel free to add characteristics of your own. We'll be referring to this list as *List A* repeatedly in the chapters to come. For easy reference, you'll find List A on page 278 as well.

What God Looks Like

LIST A: Characteristics of God

Characteristics of the God the Father

accepting	forgiving	kind	strong
accessible	good	long-suffering	smart
affectionate	gracious	loving	trustworthy
consistent	generous	merciful	welcoming
creative	giving	patient	wise
disciplines	honest	provider	
enduring	impartial	protector	
ever-present	just and fair	restoring	

Characteristics of Jesus the Son

assertive	consistent	humble	sacrificial
available	decisive	joyful	selfless,
caring	faithful	loving	servicing
committed	forgiving	mature	submissive
communicates	friendly	meek	true
compassionate	gentle	obedient	
conquering	good listener	peaceful	

Characteristics of the Holy Spirit

able	counselor	helper	revealer
activator	defending	honest	supportive
advocate	dependable	instructor	teacher
attentive	edifier	loving	trusted friend
bold	encourager	loyal	truthful
comforting	ever-present	nurturing	wise
convincing	help	peaceful	
corrects	forewarner	personal	
communicator	guide	powerful	

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These characteristics of God that you know and have experienced to be true are personal and very beautiful, and many of them would have an accompanying story. Each of the characteristics of God are worthy to study and experience. Songs, poems, and whole books have been written about His love, fairness, faithfulness, humility, strength, kindness, and Him being a friend or protector. Can you see how we'll not grow bored with Him even after thousands of years in heaven?