

*“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1: 2-4*

## **MADE AFTER HIS IMAGE**

by Craig Marlatt

I was listening to a local Christian radio station the other day and there was a program on which was one of those ‘call-in’ type broadcasts where they invite listener participation. The host of this particular show, as is his usual manner, presented a question to his listening audience that caught my attention. The question was basically this: “Why did God Create us?” I thought it was quite an interesting question and, as I listened, there were a number of good replies that came forth as people called in to respond.

After a while I turned off the radio in order to allow my mind to ponder the question, and for the Holy Spirit to speak to me. Interestingly enough, I had been wrestling with this very question for many months and had even recently spent several hours conversing with another Christian brother about this very subject.

Why did God create us? Are we meant to know? Can we really know for sure? If we look to God’s word we can see the answer to these questions very clearly: God made us, “That [we] might be partakers of the divine nature” ( 2 Peter 1:4).

In Genesis 1:26 we see the very first recorded words that God spoke concerning man: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”. This very clearly defines God’s purpose and meaning for man. That we might be in his image and likeness. If we take a close look at mankind (especially our own selves) we have a dilemma that confronts us: If we are created in his image and likeness. . .

1. God is in as bad a shape as we are in (if we are indeed his mirror image).  
(or)
2. God failed in His job and was not able to do that which He purposed to do.  
(or)
3. God is not through with us yet.

The Bible clearly indicates that answer number three is the correct one. Philippians 1:6 reads, “Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ!” In other words God is still active in the creation of man. Man is still being created in His image and likeness. The Potter is not yet through with the clay.

The problem with this is that there are many who apparently have no desire to be made in God’s image. They have been deceived by Satan and have been made to believe that man himself is the original, and not meant to be a mere image of God.

Because God has a will, then that which is created in His image must also have a will. Because part of God’s nature is that He is righteous, holy and pure, man, by an act of his will, must also choose to be righteous, holy and pure. It is in this choosing

(obedience) that we ourselves become participants in the divine grace of God. As the clay yields to the hand of the Potter with skill and patience He molds it into the desired form. That which does not yield is cast aside to dry and harden. So also, that life which refuses to yield to the Holy Spirit of God will eventually be cast aside as useless clay. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:41-42).

The world around us offers many contradictions. We see good and evil in co-existence; perfection and imperfection all within the scope of our vision. It is for those who have been born again through God's Spirit to choose that which is good; that which is from God, for it is through this choosing that we yield to the process of being conformed into His image.

If we are indeed overcomers, then we will overcome. If we are indeed being perfected, then we will one day be perfect. As we choose obedience, it becomes a part of our nature. As we yield to His working we begin to see His image in our lives. When you think about it, it's no small thing to take a handful of dust and make it into a vessel of righteousness. Nonetheless that is God's commitment to us: that we will someday be like Him.

Two thousand years ago a man named Jesus Christ walked the streets of Israel. He healed the sick, raised the dead, and spoke the truth. He was a giver, not a taker. The Bible says that He was the Logos: the Word of God made flesh (John 1: 14). Immanuel - God with us! The visible picture of the invisible God. That same Bible says, "Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

God will fulfill his word, and we will be in His image and likeness. Let us yield ourselves to Him, for in so doing, we have found life's true meaning.