

Imago Dei
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In the first three chapters of Genesis, Adam and Eve experienced perfect harmony and well-being that stemmed from the fact that they reflected God's image perfectly. They were both unbroken reflections of their creator, which enabled them to relate to God, themselves, and each other without distortion. According to Ellison (1994), this experience was one of complete acceptance, belonging, equity, competence, identity, security, transcendence, and significance. These psychospiritual qualities reflect the image and creative work of God. On the other hand, because of the fall there was psychological brokenness and chaos introduced by sin; Resulting in mankind's relationship with God being shattered and alienation ensued.

God's plan for restoring the brokenness of humanity would be to unite himself with creation through his son. The incarnation, which is God's eternal son in human form, was the instrument by which God reconciled us with himself and united us to himself. The son who knew no sin became sin to make sinners righteous. In other words, Jesus is fully human and fully divine at the same time, and he is equal with God in every way. In order for, the son (Jesus) to redeem mankind, he had to become like us, resulting in his ableness to share in our human existence, by defeating the enemy, destroying death and providing atonement for sins. Jesus's life on earth, expresses the reality of God becoming one of us and sharing in our humanity.

The idea that Jesus experienced a human birth, childhood, adulthood, and death, speaks of his ability to relate to us in every situation we find ourselves. He was divine majesty clothe in human frailty (Bird 2016). Christ's lordship and personal holiness challenges us to commit

every area of our life to Jesus. It is a call to love God with all of heart, soul, mind, and strength. To live Holy has nothing to do with how one is clothed, how many times they pray in a day, how much scripture they have memorized, nor how much money they give to their local church. These outward manifestations of holiness are not to be used in this writer's opinion, to define inward spiritual maturity. Correcting one's view of God, or what this writer would call ones "God complex," would play an intricate part in the way they relate to God. For example, there are those that may view God as genie in a bottle; One that they can summon when in crisis, then ignore or "put back" until the next dilemma. Or perhaps they view God as having a "favorite" therefore, they conclude that on their bad days or difficult season, God has forgotten them or doesn't love them. Maybe they see God as dictator who only watches for ways to punish them when they do wrong. These distorted views of God play a role in a person's lack of relational acceptance in their journey with God. Through grace God invites us to a loving relationship with him. Having the right view of God, will enable us to live our lives in a more vibrant and deeper way.

According to Holeman (2016), holiness is defined as fundamentally a *relational* term and refers not only to right relations to God, but to fellow human beings. In other words, holiness is not limited to a person's individual relationship to Jesus, but also their ability to relate rightly with others. Relational holiness is revealed in how one relates to God, in how a person manages their emotional reactions, and in how one relates to others (p. 86). The Bible instructs the Christian to love God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself NKJ (1980). This can only be developed by one's cooperation with the Holy spirit to assist us in responding to Gods love; that permeates through the believer and overflows to others, transforming relationships.

Since, Holiness is central to our identity as children of God and should influence the way we live, then it would be an important compass to use in theologically reflective counseling. The clinician can be the vehicle that God uses not to judge the clients, but to identify the factors that may limit clients capacity for holiness, and assisting them to remove the obstacles that stand in their way of relating to others. The counselor can assist the client to experience others differently, including God.

References

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