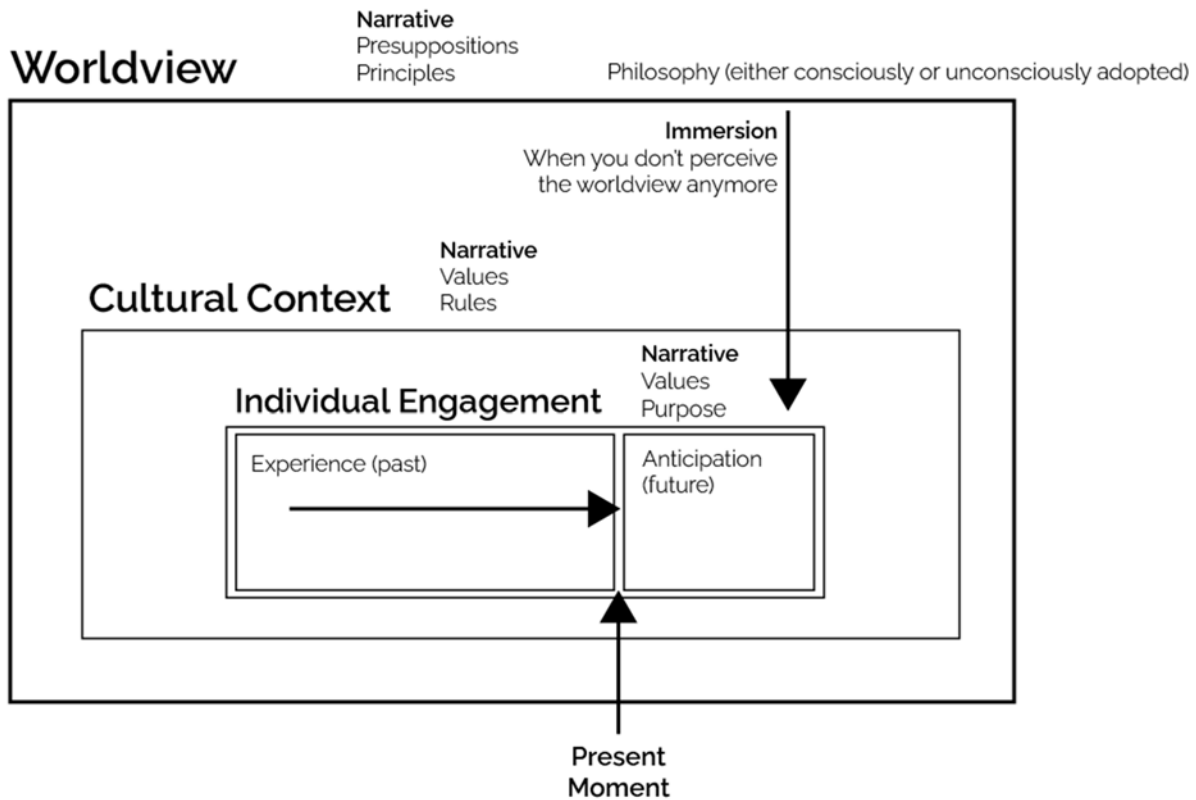


# Freedom in Christ

Pastor Michael Cranford

## Understanding worldview...



Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom 12:2)

- 1. Humans were created by God in His image, given breath and purpose, but formed materially from dust to impart a sense of humility and dependency.**

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." <sup>27</sup> So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Gen 1:26-27)

Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. (Gen 2:7)

**a) The creation of genders is fundamental to humanity, which indicates an equality of significance and value. The creation of genders seems inherent in (contained within) the image of God. Elevation of one gender over another is therefore antithetical to God's intent. Changing our gender is a contradiction to the image of God; it is essentially the attempt to redefine ourselves in our own image.**

<sup>21</sup>So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. <sup>22</sup>Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

<sup>23</sup>The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

<sup>24</sup>That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. <sup>25</sup>Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. (Gen 2:21-25)

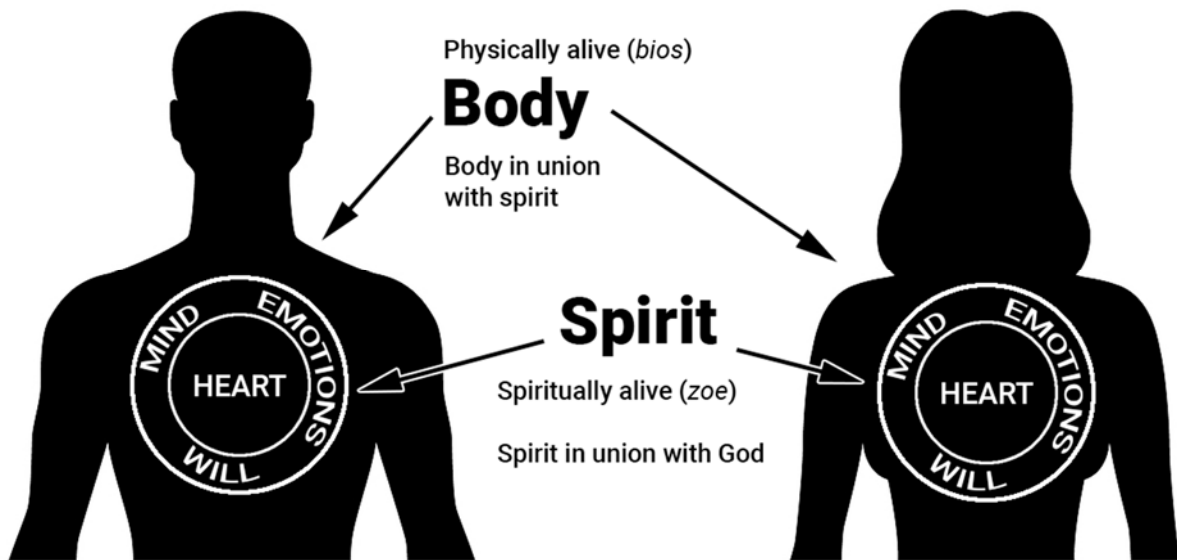
**b) The biblical worldview indicates that Adam (and therefore Eve) were real people who lived at a historic moment, not symbols. Their reality explains Jesus' reality as well as your reality.**

Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come. (Rom 5:14)

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. (1 Cor 15:22)

So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. (1 Cor 15:45)

- 2. Prior to the fall, human beings possessed life (Gen 2:7), significance (Gen 1:28), security (Gen 1:29), and belonging (Gen 2:18).**



3. **The fall occurred when Adam and Eve chose autonomy over dependence (Gen 3:5-7). The “knowledge” they took against God’s command was the ability to see and understand good and evil from a position external to God. Their own determination of good and evil caused them to view themselves differently. (Gen 3:7)**

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” <sup>2</sup>The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup>but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” <sup>4</sup>“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. <sup>5</sup>“For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” <sup>6</sup>When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. (Gen 3:1-5)

For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. (2 Thess 2:7)

**4. As a result of the fall, what we lost was the life God provided, the security and provision he gave us, the significance he planned for us. (Gen 3:16-24)**

<sup>16</sup>To the woman he said, “I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”

<sup>17</sup>To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup>It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

<sup>20</sup>Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

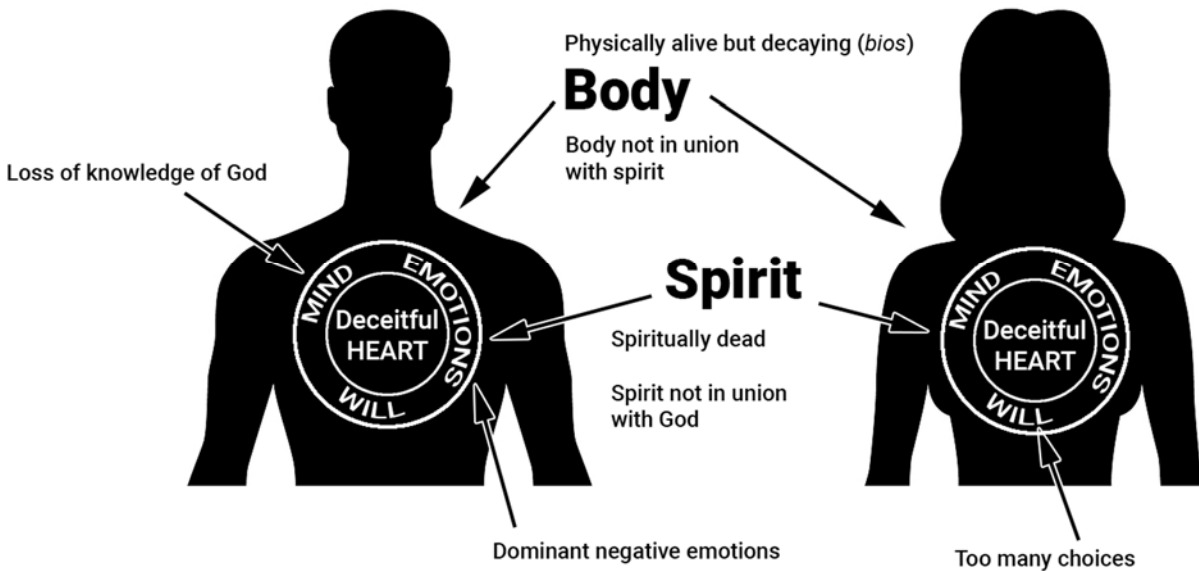
<sup>21</sup>The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. <sup>22</sup>And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” <sup>23</sup>So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. <sup>24</sup>After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. (Gen 3:16-24)

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup>in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. (Eph 2:1-2)

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned— (Rom 5:12)

**5. As a result of the fall, our losses became needs. We became weak, rejected, and consumed by shame. We now have a need to belong, a need for self-worth, and a need for strength and control.**

For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. (Rom 8:20-21)



- a) Acceptance gone. We experience rejection, therefore we have a need to belong.
- b) Innocence gone. We experience guilt and shame, therefore we have a need for self-worth.
- c) Dominion gone. We are weak and helpless, therefore we have a need for strength, power, and control.

What a spirit separated from God looks like:

- Loss of knowledge of God (Rom 1:21; 1 Cor 2:14)

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Rom 1:21)

- Dominant negative emotions (Gen 4:5-7; Eph 4:26-27; Phil 4:6-7; Ps 27:1)

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it." (Gen 4:6-7)

- Too many choices (Prov 14:12)

There is a way that appears to be right,  
but in the end it leads to death. (Prov 14:12)

**6. God’s solution is to offer us forgiveness, belonging, significance, and eternal life in response to our faith. Faith (trust) is, at its core, putting God first in our lives.**

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. (Rom 5:19)

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (John 4:13-14)

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (John 10:10)

<sup>12</sup> Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— <sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. (John 1:12-13)

**7. With new life comes new identity. We share Jesus’ life and become members of God’s family.**

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. (2 Cor 5:17; NASB)

<sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (Eph 2:4-7)

<sup>14</sup> Do everything without grumbling or arguing, <sup>15</sup> so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky <sup>16</sup> as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. (Phil 2:14-16)

**8. The pattern Jesus demonstrated was the opposite of Adam; he humbled himself to death and became dependent on the Father.**

By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me. (John 5:30)

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Phil 2:8)

“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28)

“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” (Luke 22:42)

**9. We are to follow this same pattern. With identity comes purpose.**

<sup>23</sup> Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.” (Luke 9:23)

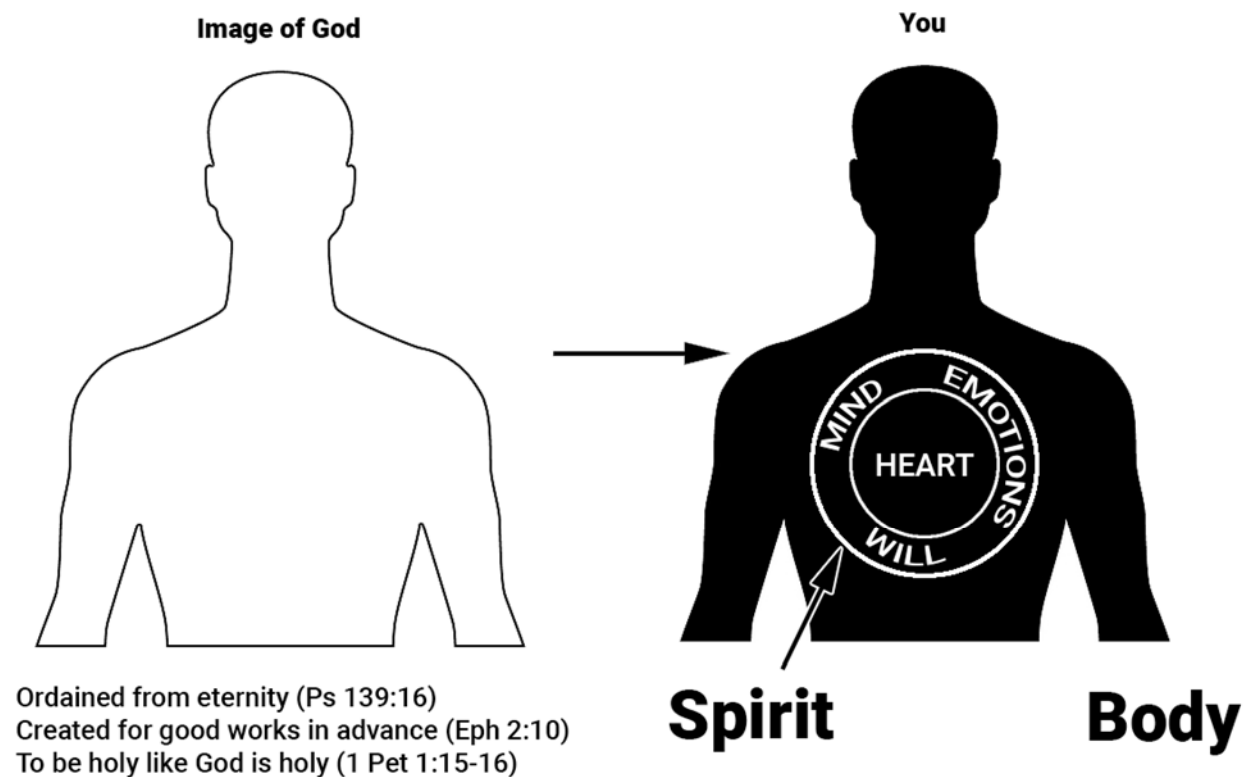
<sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. <sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. (Phil 2:3-5)

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal 2:20)

## The Image of God

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let Us make mankind in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the livestock and over all the earth, and over every crawling thing that crawls on the earth." <sup>27</sup> So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Gen 1:26-27; NASB)

Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living person. (Gen 2:7; NASB)



This is the book of the generations of Adam. On the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. <sup>2</sup> He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them "mankind" on the day when they were created. <sup>3</sup> When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered *a son* in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth. (Gen 5:1-3; NASB)

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let Us make mankind in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the livestock and over all the earth, and over every crawling thing that crawls on the earth." <sup>27</sup> So God



created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Gen 1:26-27; NASB)

### **The image of God has not been lost or corrupted!**

Whoever sheds human blood,  
By man his blood shall be shed,  
For in the image of God  
He made mankind. (Gen 9:6; NASB)

<sup>8</sup>But no one *among* mankind can tame the tongue; *it is* a restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup>With it we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse people, who have been made in the likeness of God. (Jam 3:8-9; NASB)

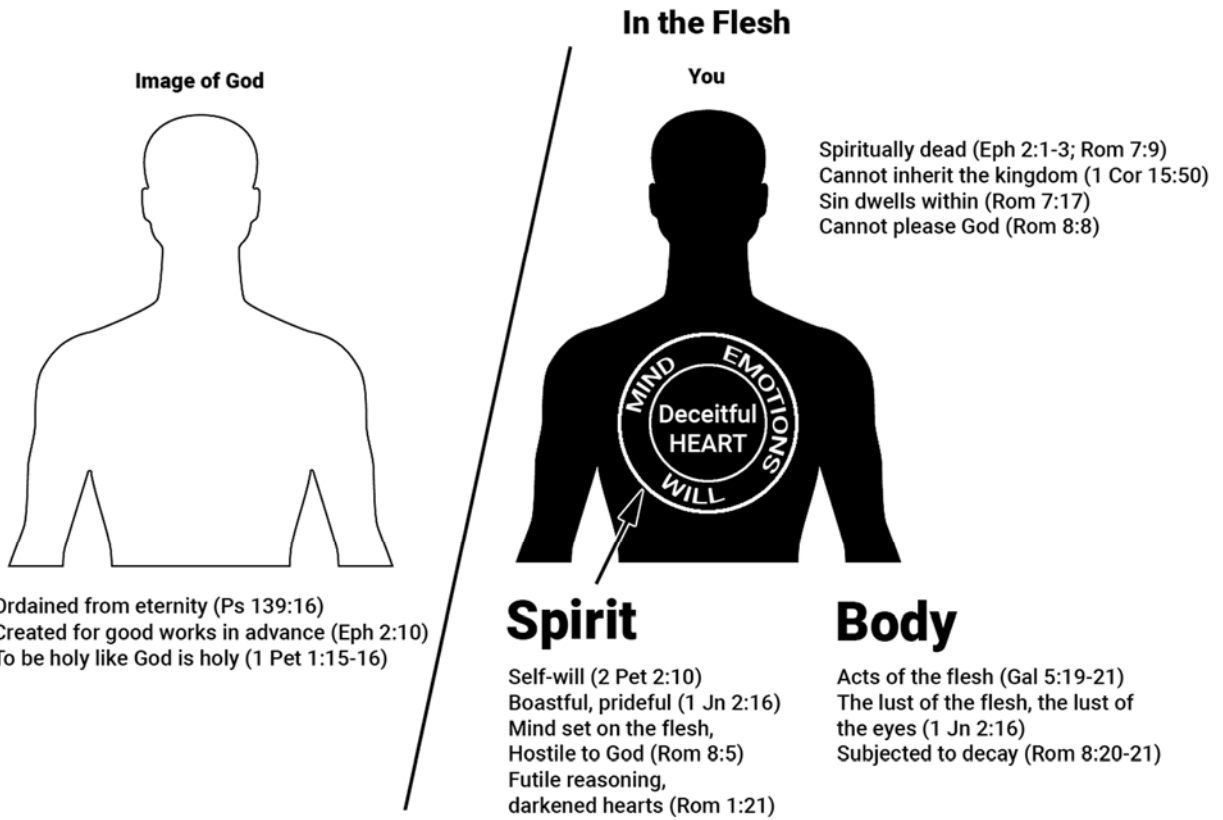
**Other passages that refer to Jesus as the image of God are not talking about our *creation* in the image of God. So they don't help us to understand this idea.**

<sup>3</sup>And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, <sup>4</sup>in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they will not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, **who is the image of God**. <sup>5</sup>For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants on account of Jesus. <sup>6</sup>For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (2 Cor 4:3-6; NASB)

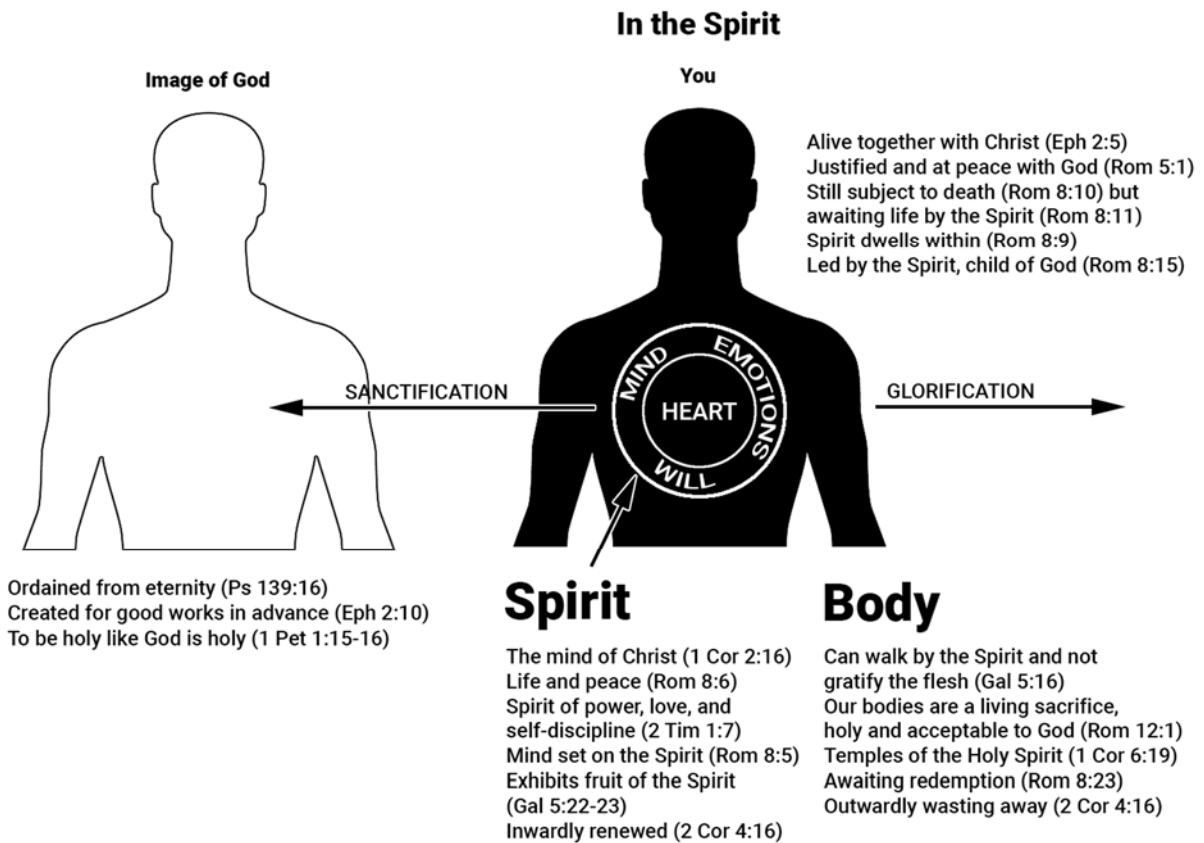
<sup>15</sup>**He is the image of the invisible God**, the firstborn of all creation: <sup>16</sup>for by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or rulers, or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. (Col 1:15-16; NASB)

And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. (Heb 1:3a; NASB)

**What did happen to the image of God during the fall?**



**How does the image of God relate to our lives today as Christians?**



But we all, with unveiled faces, looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Cor 3:18; NASB)

Do not lie to one another, since you stripped off the old self with its *evil* practices,<sup>10</sup> and have put on the new *self*, which is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created it—<sup>11</sup> *a renewal* in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, *and* free, but Christ is all, and in all. (Col 3:9-11; NASB)

<sup>18</sup> For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be* compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup> For the eagerly awaiting creation waits for the revealing of the sons *and daughters* of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it*, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. <sup>23</sup> And not only *that*, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly

for *our* adoption as sons *and daughters*, the redemption of our body. (Rom 8:18-23; NASB)

### Concluding ideas

1. We do not lose the image of God, so that means all people are equally significant. If the image is spiritual and not physical, it means that the physical dimension of our existence is not valutive. In other words, our gender is baked in and is part of our potential, but it doesn't make anyone better than anyone else. Nor do we look to differences in appearances or ethnicity as signifying value (Gal 3:28). They are differences that make no difference (2 Cor 5:17). (It's the same with God; the difference between Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit is a real difference but not in value or significance.)
2. The image of God is spiritual DNA, which implies a certain expression and a certain purpose, but just because we cannot or do not fulfill it (or do not express our potential) does not mean we lose the image. Thus, a fetus is in the image of God even though it never reaches its potential. A mentally challenged person, or a person with Alzheimer's, also is in the image of God, even though their ability to reason is distorted. All people have dignity and value.
3. Our abilities and responsibilities emerge from our spiritual DNA, but they are not the same as the image of God. Think of those as software, not hardware. But if the expression of the image is corrupted, then our abilities are necessarily corrupted also. A flawed system (e.g., a computer with damaged memory) is going to have flawed software (software that cannot function to its potential). If you've ever had a computer go bad, you know what I mean.

### Practical Insight

#### Christianity and the ongoing struggle against sin

1. **People separated from God cannot not sin (Rom 8:8).**

...and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. (Rom 8:8-9)

2. **Those who are in Christ have a choice: they can submit to sin (continue to put yourself before God) or they can put God first. We can choose what controls us. You are controlled by what you obey (Rom 6:16).**

<sup>11</sup> In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. <sup>12</sup> Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. <sup>13</sup> Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. <sup>14</sup> For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace. (Rom 6:11-14)

<sup>8</sup> For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) <sup>10</sup> and find out what pleases the Lord. <sup>11</sup> Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. (Eph 5:8-11)

- 3. The reason we continue to sin is because, while we are new people, not everything about us is new. The flesh (sarx) is described both as a realm of existence (Rom 7:5) and as a tendency within our physical bodies (Gal 5:16). As children of God, we are not in the flesh any longer (Rom 8:9), but we still can still obey it (Rom 13:14; Gal 5:13).**

For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were brought to light by the Law, were at work in the parts of our body to bear fruit for death. (Rom 7:5; NASB)

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the desire of the flesh is against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, in order to keep you from doing whatever you want. (Gal 5:16-17; NASB)

## What is the flesh?

Fundamental channels for the flesh:

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. (1 Jn 2:15-17)

Lust of the flesh: Physical appetites

Lust of the eyes: Coveting

Boastful pride of life: Pride/ego

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. (Gen 3:6)

Now those who belong to Christ Jesus crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.  
(Gal 5:24; NASB)

**4. The way we resist our learned habits of disobedience is to walk according to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells within us and gives us the ability to resist the flesh.**

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the desire of the flesh is against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, in order to keep you from doing whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.  
(Gal 5:16-18; NASB)

Walking according to the Spirit means:

1. Active response to the Holy Spirit. The picture is the Spirit leading and us following (Gal 5:25).
2. It is up to the Spirit to reveal and change us, but it is up to us to cooperate in the process.
3. The Spirit (functioning in this regard) is set in contrast to the law. The law was simply a pointer to holiness that triggered the flesh; the Spirit makes it possible to resist the flesh and become holy. (This is also known as sanctification.)

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. But we all, with unveiled faces, looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Cor 3:17-18; NASB)

4. To the degree we follow the Spirit's work within us, we see fundamental changes in who we are. This looks like tangible character traits that emerge consistently in our lives (Gal 5:23).

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:22-23)

- Flesh – We are to crucify the flesh and consider ourselves dead to sin (Rom 6:11)
- Body – We should offer our bodies as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1), not allow sin to reign and not continue submitting our bodies as instruments of unrighteousness (Rom 6:12-13)

- Mind – We should let our minds be transformed and renewed (Rom 12:2) and focus them on heavenly things (Phil 4:8). This is also described as having the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16)

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. (Phil 4:8)

- Emotions – We should keep negative emotions in check (Eph 4:31) and allow the Spirit to replace them with peace and joy (Col 3:15; Phil 4:4)
- Will – We should use our will to obey God and choose holiness (Phil 4:9; 1 Pet 1:15-16)

5. To the degree we do not submit to this work and instead indulge the flesh, we undermine the work of the Spirit and resemble the old self and identify ourselves with the present kingdom of darkness. We become less like the people we are supposed to be and fall under the control of our pride and impulses.

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, indecent behavior, idolatry, witchcraft, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal 5:19-21)

- Flesh – Allowed to control us and run free by indulging its desires (Rom 8:5-8)
- Body – We submit the members of our body to sin, which results in death (Rom 8:12-13). Even for a Christian, we can experience separation from God and real physical consequences (disease, heart failure, stress-induced trauma, etc.), including death.
- Mind – We can lose our focus and spend our lives in bitterness and unforgiveness (Eph 4:31). Satan’s primary attack against us is through the mind (Eph 6:11-15; 2 Cor 10:3-5)

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Cor 10:5)

- Emotions – We are ruled by negative emotions (Eph 4:31)
- Will – We use our decisions to find paths to behavior that is self-destructive and undermines the work of the Spirit (1 Cor 6:18; Eph 4:30)

## Renewing the Mind

Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Rom 12:1-2; NASB)

1. Faith is the operating principle of the life God wants for us. The first step in renewing the mind is changing the object of faith.
  - a) Faith is dependent on the object of faith. (Rom 10:2-3)
  - b) Faith requires knowledge of the object (Rom 10:17)
  - c) Faith is demonstrated and validated through action. (James 2:17-18)
  
2. Wanting what God wants: the subordination of the will is critical in the renewal of the mind.
  - a) Learn what God wants for you and pick it, as much as possible. (Matt 26:39)
  - b) Stop picking things that hurt you. Plan A and Plan B. Don't make allowance for plan B.
  - c) Learn to be content; unnecessary need is a pathway to control. (Phil 4:11-12)
  - d) Learn to be patient; God's resolution to your need may be dependent on timing (Ps 37:7; Rom 12:12; Jam 1:12).
  - e) Focus your mind on holiness; God's plan for you is good and pure. (Phil 4:8)
  
3. Emotions are one of the easiest pathways for Satan to take control of our lives. We need to keep them in check and centered on truth.
  - Suppression – a conscious denial of feelings. Emotional dishonesty. You can also drown your feelings in alcohol. Can result in real illness, psychosomatic, long term problems.
  - Indiscriminate – Create a chain reaction of other problems. Sometimes we do that, we react to our emotions with control or extreme behavior.



- Acknowledgement – Bring it to God. He can take it. Have at least one person you can be emotionally honest with.

**Activating event > Mental evaluation > Emotional response > Action**

- a) If what we believe does not reflect truth, then what we feel does not reflect reality. (Lam 3:1-26)
- b) Out of control emotion is opportunity for out-of-control actions. (Gen 4:6-8)
- c) Extreme emotion, especially rage, is an opportunity for the demonic. (Eph 4:26-27)

4. Let the past go!

- a) See your past in light of who you are in Christ. You are forgiven, a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17).
- b) Forgive others like Jesus has forgiven you (Matt 18:21-22).
  - Ask the Lord to reveal to your mind the people you need to forgive, and write them down.
  - Acknowledge the hurt and the hate.
  - Embrace the cross.
  - Decide to bear the burden of each person's sin.
  - Decide to forgive.
  - Take your list to God and pray specifically for that person, the offenses they committed and how it made you feel.
  - Destroy the list.
  - Don't expect that what you've just done will result in major changes in the other person.
  - Expect positive results in yourself for giving this to God.
  - Confess any wrongdoing on your own part.

## Strongholds

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Cor 10:3-5)

1. How strongholds are developed:

- Stimulation
- Temptation (1 Cor 10:13)
- Consideration
- Choice
- Act (Gal 5:19-21)
- Habit (Rom 6:13-14)

2. We are in a spiritual battle and Satan does not want us to be free. Satan has the ability to put evil thoughts into our minds (1 Chron 21:1; John 13:2; Acts 5:3).

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32)

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. (John 17:15-17)

Satan's plan of attack:

- Outwit you with his schemes (2 Cor 2:11)

...in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes. (2 Cor 2:11)

- Blind you to truth (2 Cor 4:4)

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Cor 4:4)

- Leads you astray (2 Cor 11:3)

But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. (2 Cor 11:3)

- Deceive you with his spirits (1 Tim 4:1)

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. (1 Tim 4:1)

3. The first step in destroying strongholds is believing truth and submitting our minds, emotions, and wills to Christ.

- Keep renewing your mind (Rom 12:2)
- Keep your mind alert and sober (1 Pet 1:13)
- Take thoughts captive (2 Cor 10:3-5)
- Immerse your mind in truth (Heb 4:12)
- Focus on truth and goodness (Phil 4:8)

## The Vulnerability of the Believer

### Misconceptions about the demonic:

1. Demons once roamed the earth but no longer exist.
2. Demonic activity is just an archaic way of describing mental illness.
3. Christians cannot be affected by demons.
4. Resisting the demonic is about power encounters.

### Who is Satan?

1. Satan was originally created as a cherubim (Ezek 28:12-14), which is apparently the highest type of angel. His sin was pride: he placed himself above God (Isa 14:12-15)—the same sin he incited in Adam and Eve in the garden.
2. Satan is ruler of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). He offered Jesus “all the kingdoms of this world and their splendor” (Matt 4:4)—and says they were given to him, along with the power to give them to anyone he chooses (Luke 4:6).
3. When Satan fell (at some time previous to the account in Genesis), he apparently was joined by a third of the angels, who became demons (Rev 12:3-4, 9). Jesus tells us that hell was prepared for “the devil and his angels” (Matt 25:41).
4. Our battle is against Satan and the spiritual powers he commands (Eph 6:11-12). He is free and actively roaming the earth in our time (1 Pet 5:8). We are told to be on guard against him. Jesus prays and asks the father to protect us from him (John 17:15). The activity of the demonic did not end after the resurrection (see Acts 19:13).
5. Satan is the “prince of the power of the air”; he is at work “in those who are disobedient”—i.e., non-Christians (Eph 2:2). He is not our ruler; we have been transferred from darkness into the kingdom of God’s beloved son (Col 1:13). Jesus has been awarded a higher power and authority (Matt 28:18). We are, nonetheless, passing through this kingdom of darkness, where Satan has power.
6. Satan has a scheme (Eph 6:11; 2 Cor 2:11)—to undo the work of God by attacking his people. He does this by accusing (Rev 12:10), tempting (Matt 4:3; 1 Cor 7:5; 1 Thess 3:5), and deceiving (Gen 3; John 8:44; 2 Cor 4:4; 1 Tim 4:1; Rev 20:3).
7. Satan will be defeated in a final battle by Jesus Christ and his holy people, and cast into the Lake of Fire for eternity (Rev 20:10).

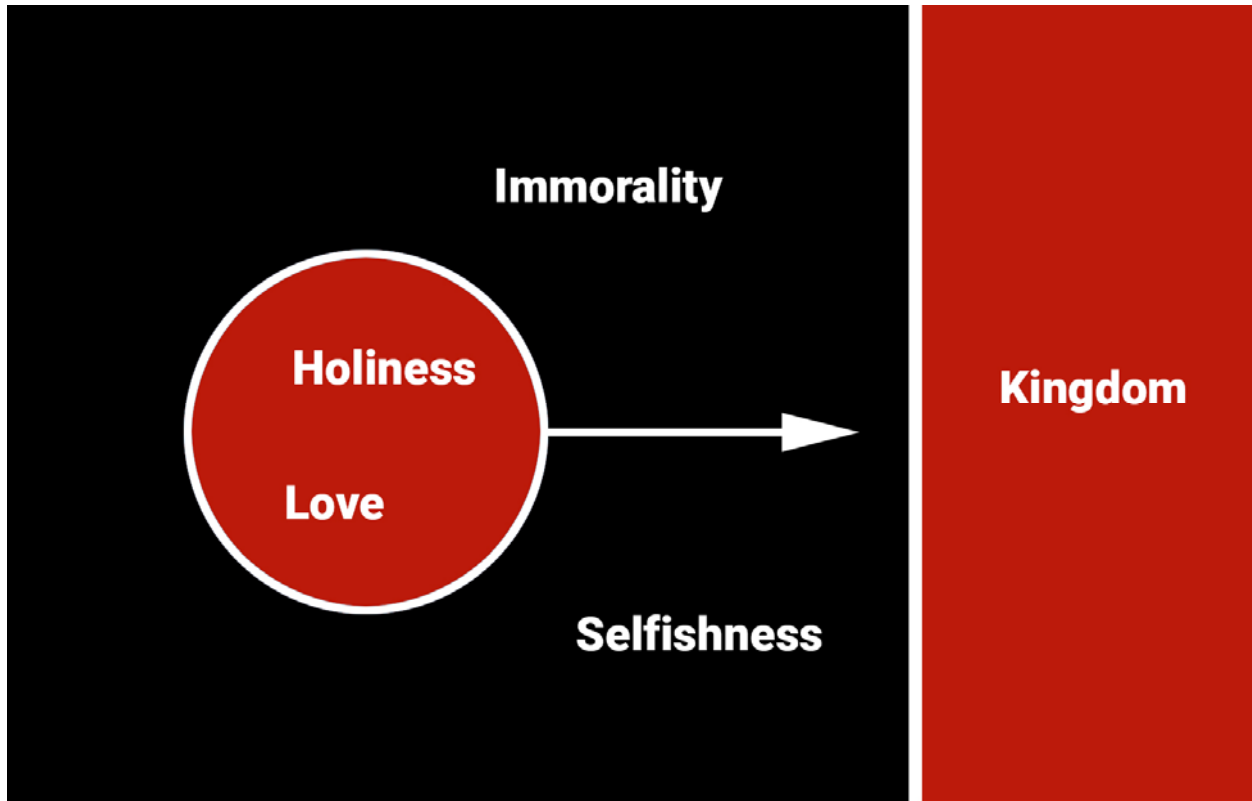
## **The Personality of Demons**

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. (1 Jn 4:4)

<sup>24</sup> “When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ <sup>25</sup> When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. <sup>26</sup> Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first.” (Luke 11:24-26)

1. Demons can exist inside or outside organic bodies.
2. They are able to travel at will, unaffected by physical structures.
3. They are able to communicate with humans and each other.
4. Each one has a separate and personal identity.
5. They are able to remember and make plans. They can evaluate and make logical decisions.
6. They are able to combine forces.
7. They vary in degrees of wickedness. They also vary in degrees of power over a human life (Mark 9:29).

## **Resisting the Power and Appeal**



1. Temptation

<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. <sup>16</sup> For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. <sup>17</sup> The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

2. Accusation

3. Pride

**Avenues of Control**

1. Demonization (Matt 4:24; 8:28; 9:32; 12:22; 15:22).

- a) The scriptural protection of a believer is partly dependent upon a believer's actions.
- What if we make provision for the flesh? (Rom 13:14; 1 Pet 2:11)

- What if we do not resist the devil? (James 4:7)
- What if we do not put on the full armor of God? (Eph 6:10-17)

b) Scripture indicates we have vulnerability (Eph 4:26-27; 6:10-17; 1 Cor 5:4-5; 2 Cor 10:5; 11:3-4; 12:7; 1 Pet 5:8)

But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. (2 Cor 11:3-4)

So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord. (1 Cor 5:4-5)

"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. (Eph 4:26-27)

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Pet 5:8)

Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. (2 Cor 12:7)

2. Ananias's heart was filled by Satan (Acts 5:3) but he himself thought of the sin (Acts 5:4).

Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God." (Acts 5:3-4)

3. We become slaves of sin if we obey sin (Rom 6:12-16). Slavery means a loss of control in a believer's life.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. <sup>13</sup>Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of

wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. <sup>14</sup> For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace. <sup>15</sup> What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! <sup>16</sup> Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? (Rom 6:12-16)

### Ready for Battle?

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Eph 6:10-17)

1. The belt of truth
2. The breastplate of righteousness
3. Feet fitted with readiness from the gospel of peace
4. The shield of faith
5. The helmet of salvation
6. The sword of the Spirit

### Steps to Freedom in Christ

