

Why Were You Born?

Most people go through life not even asking this question, let alone knowing the true answer.

Genesis 1:26 [NIV] *“Then God said, “Let us make man in our **image, in our likeness**, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”*

Every human being bears the “*image*” of God, that is, a being with intellect and the ability to make decisions.

But there is mentioned a second part to God’s purpose and that is “*His likeness*.”

Genesis 1:27 [NIV] *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*

Note at the beginning humans were only made in the “*image*” **not** “*both image and likeness*.”

The Hebrew text helps us understand the difference between “*image*” and “*likeness*”. The Hebrew word translated “*image*” is used to describe “*a shadow resemblance*”, something that is **not** the real thing but recognised as a temporary shape of what was to be the final reality.

The Hebrew word translated “*likeness*” is used to describe “*resemblance*”, “*model*”, “*son*” or “*manner*”.

Put all that together and we are talking about “*character*”.

The “*image*” of God we see walking about on the streets and we have temporary relationships with such people every day.

The “*likeness*” of God is something very different indeed, and all people have been given life by God to experience at some time the creation of this second phase to God’s Master Plan for humanity.

How is such an additional part to the completed “*model of God*” to be brought about?

When we understand the true answer to this question is when we can know the true answer to “*why we were born*”!

Two things about God we need to understand, both are revealed to us in His Word, the Christian Bible.

1 God is Love

1 John 4:15-16 [NIV] *“If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. **God is love**. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.”*

This is **not** a restricted love but a love that is not dependent on the response of the one loved.

2 God introduced Himself as a Father

Matthew 6:9 [NIV] *“This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,”*

A perfect father who calls all human beings His created children and loves us whatever our reaction to that love.

Romans 5:8 [NIV] *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

Even when we are in a rebellious attitude [sinning] towards Him.

Who then will show us where to look in God’s Word for these answers as to why we were born and how we should live our lives?

John 14:23-26 [NIV] *“Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. “All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counsellor, **the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in my name, **will teach you all things** and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*

The simple answer is the Holy Spirit; **if** we allow Him to do so!!

“If” is a small word with a very big meaning.

God will never force us to do anything.

The very fact that we are created in the “*image*” of God means we have the intellect to be able to “*think things out*” and make a choice.

God always sets the terms and the outcome of our choice, one way or another, but we have to choose to love and obey Jesus Christ the Son of God the Father, or reject Him.

What is the source of this intellect?

Job 32:8 [NIV] *“But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding.”* [**Proverbs 20:27; 1 Corinthians 2:11**]

This is the part of human beings that sets us apart from animals.

This is the part of us through which God is fulfilling His purpose to make us in His “*likeness*”.

For us to become a created child of His, whom He can love.

It is through this spirit in us that the Holy Spirit will teach us and bring that teaching to our minds when needed to make a wise choice.

Let us now then allow the Holy Spirit to lead us to the answer to the question ‘how are we to worship and obey the God of the Christian Bible?’

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.**”*

For us to offer our physical bodies [the “*image*” of God in which we exist] as a sacrifice.

Looking in the Old Testament where sacrifices were part of the worship of God and we see that what was sacrificed had to die.

What I am saying is that to become a child of God with His likeness we have to die.

The “*we*” is really the “*I*” for each of us that has to be crucified.

Romans 6:6-7 [NIV] *“For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.”*

Paul is talking to those who have made a commitment to the God of The Bible and are seeking to become Christians [Christ-like, God-like, in His “likeness” !!]

Our former life has to die, we cannot bring our old life into our new life as Christians.

Matthew 9:16-17 [NIV] *“No-one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”*

God is **not** in the process of patching up our old life with new ideas and habits, the old has to go, totally.

John 3:3 [NIV] *“In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is **born again**.”*

If we are eventually to be in the Kingdom of God [created family of God] we have to die and be “*born again*”.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

We are to be a “*living*” sacrifice, one that has died and been “*born again*”.

But don’t read over the statement that if we are to be on the “*first step*” of the ladder of discipleship becoming like Christ in character, we are to disregard “*our own lives*”, that is, be willing to die.

Is this all there is to fulfilling our reason for being given life?

No!

Dying to our own selfish life is the first step.

What follows?

I have inherited many characteristics of my physical father.

How did this happen?

By spending my childhood in his presence, listening to what he said and observing what he did.

How can we do this with our Heavenly Father to become a child with His characteristics?

A man called Philip asked this question.

John 14:8-9 [NIV] *“Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”*

When we look at the life and teaching of Jesus Christ we know exactly what our Heavenly Father is like.

How can we learn about the life and teaching of Jesus Christ?

The best way is to join others who are doing the same thing, and be helped and encouraged by fellowshiping with them, as they are taught by the Holy Spirit who is working today through men who have devoted a lifetime studying the Christian Bible.

The true spiritual teacher will acknowledge Jesus as central and that He is God in the flesh [The Incarnation].

1 Timothy 6:3-5 [NIV] *“If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, **who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.**”*

So-called servants of God who are only ministers for financial gain are “*robbed of the truth*”.

This anointing by the Holy Spirit is “real” in another sense.

John 14:15-20 [NIV] *“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; **I will come to you.** Before long, the world will not see me any more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”*

Our relationship with the Holy Spirit will make Jesus as “real” as if we were among the disciples who walked with Jesus when He was on earth.

Is this all to our becoming people created in the “likeness” of God?

No!

Ephesians 2:8-10 [NIV] *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no-one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.**”*

We were saved and created to do good works.

How can our works be good?

Matthew 11:29-30 [NIV] *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

The word picture painted in this scripture is one of two animals joined together at their strongest point, performing a job of work together. One is the lead animal [Jesus through the Holy Spirit] and the other the one who is the process of learning how to perform the job [the disciple of Christ].

What kind of work are we to do with Jesus under this “yoke”?

Matthew 25:31-33 [NIV] *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.”*

Here we are shown what will happen of this day of judgement that we will all have to face, so that we can prepare for it before the day dawns.

Matthew 25:34-36 [NIV] *“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’”*

Note these were physical acts of love that we can all be involved in.

Matthew 25:37-40 [NIV] *“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”*

Note two things about this group of people.

a) They were the “*righteous*” that is the ones who had fulfilled the purpose for living and were about to be received into the Kingdom of God [become created children of God].

b) They were unaware that what they did was so crucial, it had been performed naturally out of the newly received love from God.

Galatians 5:22 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness...”*

That love is one of the “*fruits*” that was the result of a close relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Such surrender of self to the Holy Spirit and serving others by the love of God given to us is the only way we can take on the “*likeness*” of God.

As we progress along this path, certain things will be happening in our lives to make this transition [it is called “*conversion*” by some people].

a) God will become “*real*” **not** some far off Being who we don’t really know.

b) Our **faith** will be increased, another “*fruit*” of the Holy Spirit.

c) Our companion and friend, the Holy Spirit, will now allow us to “*experience*” God in a limited way, still being mainly physical.

This “*experience*” will prepare us now for the far more wonderful spiritual life with God for eternity.

Times when I have shed tears of gratitude on my knees because of the mercy, compassion, faithfulness and love I have experienced receiving from my Creator God.

How I long for all Christians to experience this personal presence of our Creator God, and so be strengthened greatly to face the tasks and trials ahead.

This challenge for change I have presented to you is **not** going to lead to an easy life.

The future will be a painful transition, but the end result will be worth all the pain, anguish and sacrifice.

Matthew 7:13-14 [Message Bible] *“Don’t look for shortcuts to God. The market is flooded with sure-fire, easy going formulas for success in life that can be practised in your spare time. Don’t fall for that stuff, even though crowds of people do. **The way to life, to God, is vigorous and requires our total attention.**”*

Becoming a child of God is **not** a “*spare time job*”, it is a total commitment, a total “*living sacrifice*” on our part.

This path I have described is the **only** way we can fulfil the very reason we were born!!

Now we know why we were born, let us all strive by the power of the Holy Spirit in us to live that way from today onwards.

To worship our Creator God with our whole body, mind and human spirit, and seek to reflect the love He has for His created children.