

# NEIGHBORS MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE

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They Ministry of Neighboring #2, Genesis 1-3

February 14, 2021

*So God created man in his own image;  
in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.  
Genesis 1:27*

## **The image of God**

<sup>26</sup> 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."

<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.

*Genesis 1*

- 1) The "image" completes God's creative work
- 2) The image reflects God's rule and God's character (BUT as stewards who tend and care for all creation)
- 3) The image's second responsibility is to care for the image (see Jesus' answer in Mark 12:30)

## **Being the image relational, and that's where the fall hurts**

<sup>18</sup> The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone . . . .

<sup>8</sup> Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

<sup>10</sup> He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

*Genesis 2:18-3:8-10*

- 1) The image was created to live in a neighborhood
- 2) Death was bad enough, but the fall also battered the image and alienated neighbors

## The tension of the angel beast: this is why sanctification matters

<sup>3</sup> *When I consider your heavens . . . .*  
<sup>4</sup> *what is man that you are mindful of him,*  
*the son of man that you care for him?*  
<sup>5</sup> *You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings*  
*and crowned him with glory and honor.*

Psalm 8 (see 2 Corinthians 5:14-20)

<sup>3</sup> *For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.*  
<sup>4</sup> *Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,*  
*so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.*  
<sup>5</sup> *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*  
Psalm 51 (see Romans 7:7-24, but keep reading into Romans 8 if you want to!)

That's the burden of the angel/beast.

Bruce Cockburn, 1994

- 1) Our view of the image tends to swing between the “worm” and the “always victorious” extremes
- 2) The dangerous Reformed tendency is toward \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) We are all “bent” – in need of repentance and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit

## Leviticus 19: “Love your neighbor” because it honors the image of God . . .

<sup>14</sup> “Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the LORD.

<sup>15</sup> “Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.

<sup>16</sup> “Do not go about spreading slander among your people.

“Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life. I am the LORD.

<sup>17</sup> “Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt.

<sup>18</sup> “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD . . . .

<sup>32</sup> “Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD.

<sup>33</sup> “When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. <sup>34</sup> The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 19 (and New Testament commentary in Matthew 5, Mark 12:30; Luke 10, John 13, Romans 13)

- 1) The law is a manual for loving my neighbor!
- 2) . . . and because we know what it’s like to be included in a neighborhood

## Three thoughts about neighbors

### 1) Practice seeing our neighbors through God's eyes – there are no ordinary neighbors

“It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree helping each other to one or the other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all of our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.”

C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*

### 2) Have a starting point for the hardest neighbors to love: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>9</sup> *The commandments . . . are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”* <sup>10</sup> *Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

Romans 13 (see also Leviticus 19:17-18; 2 Corinthians 5:14-20)

The church is facing a crisis of gospel proportions. Our failure to be salt and light through love, sexuality, marriage, friendship, and mutual accountability has deeply compromised our witness to the gospel. We are not facing just one problem, or even two or three. Our whole way of life has fallen out of step with the Spirit and with the teaching of Scripture, and all of us must be called to account. And yet in this very realization we have the opportunity, together, to repent. We have the opportunity to reexamine our lives and our communities, to confess the sins we have committed against each other, and to call one another back to the costly path of loving discipleship. By following this path, we once again can find hope and offer hope to a desperate, broken world.

Introduction to the CRCNA's draft report “Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality”

### 3) Sometimes the image of God is hidden nearby – start loving a hidden neighbor

<sup>31</sup> *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

<sup>34</sup> *“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. <sup>35</sup> 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, <sup>36</sup> 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.’*

<sup>37</sup> *“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’*

<sup>40</sup> *“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.’*

## Resources for a ministry of neighboring

Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon, *The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door* (Baker Books, 2012)

The .pdf summary of the “Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality” report can be found here:

[https://r.search.yahoo.com/\\_ylt=AwrWpyklqyhgImMA3gAPxQt.;\\_ylu=Y29sbwNncTEEcG9zAzEEdnRpZAMEc2VjA3Ny/RV=2/RE=1613306790/RO=10/RU=https%3a%2f%2fwww.crcna.org%2fsites%2fdefault%2ffiles%2fsummary\\_human\\_sexuality\\_report\\_2020.pdf/RK=2/RS=o1IoYZUs79cZm7iWvsCj9Ap0iQA-](https://r.search.yahoo.com/_ylt=AwrWpyklqyhgImMA3gAPxQt.;_ylu=Y29sbwNncTEEcG9zAzEEdnRpZAMEc2VjA3Ny/RV=2/RE=1613306790/RO=10/RU=https%3a%2f%2fwww.crcna.org%2fsites%2fdefault%2ffiles%2fsummary_human_sexuality_report_2020.pdf/RK=2/RS=o1IoYZUs79cZm7iWvsCj9Ap0iQA-)

Kevin Harney, *Organic Outreach for Ordinary People* (Zondervan, 2009)

The Bible Project team has great stuff on Luke at <https://bibleproject.com/learn/luke/>

Spurgeon has a classic sermon, “Go, and Do Thou Likewise” at <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-good-samaritan/#flipbook/>

J. C. Ryle’s commentary on Luke 10 at <https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/110.htm>

Deffinbaugh’s sermon at <https://bible.org/seriespage/36-good-samaritan-luke-1025-37>

Timothy Keller has a good example of exegeting Genesis at <https://www.monergism.com/first-wedding-day-%E2%80%93-genesis-218-25>

I have really appreciated D. A. Carson’s Good Samaritan video at <https://youtu.be/DvRlipoRnsU>

The Bible Project team has a great video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4isSyennFo>, and poster and study for Genesis at <https://bibleproject.com/learn/genesis-12-50/>

I like Sailhammer’s commentary in the *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 1990); Bruce Waltke’s newer commentary *Genesis* (Zondervan, 2001); and Leupold’s commentary on Genesis available online at <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xiv.html>

Bob Deffinbaugh has a good series on Genesis at <https://bible.org/series/genesis-paradise-patriarchs>. His sermon on these texts is titled “The Meaning of Man.”

II. רֵעַ, [רֵיעַ]₁₈₇ n.m. Pr 17:17 friend, companion, fellow; רַ abs. 2 S 13:3 +, cstr. 1 Ch 27:33; sf. רֵעִי Jb 31:9 +, רֵעִי Dt 5:17 +, רֵעִי Ex 2:13 +, also רֵעִי 2 S 12:11 (sg.; Ges<sup>93 ss</sup>), רֵעִהוּ (Ges<sup>84 a i</sup>) Gn 11:3 + 114 times, רֵעוּ Je 6:21, רֵעָה 3:20; pl. רֵעִים Je 3:1 +, cstr. רֵעֵי Jb 2:11; sf. רֵעִיו 32:3, רֵעִהוּ (Ges<sup>91 k</sup>) 42:10; 1 S 30:26, רֵעֵכֶם Jb 6:27, etc.; 1. *friend* Gn 38:12, 20 (J), 1 S 30:26; 2 S 13:3; 1 K 16:11 (Ⓣ om.); רֵעֵךְ אֲשֶׁר כָּנַפְשָׁךְ Dt 13:7; רֵעִהוּ מִתְּךָ Pr 27:9 (text dub., v. Toy); Mi 7:5 (|| אֲלוֹךְ), Je 9:3 (|| אָח), 19:9 La 1:2 (+ אֲהַבְיָהּ), ψ 35:14 (|| אָח) + 3 times ψψ; especially Jb 2:11; 6:14 + 8 times Jb, Pr 17:17; 18:24 + 8 times Pr (12:26 v. מֵרֵעַ infr.), Ct 5:1 (|| דֹּדִים); associates Zc 3:8; term. techn. הַמְלִיךְ רַ 1 Ch 27:33 (v. רֵעָה), cf. 2 S 16:17<sup>0</sup>; of lover Ct 5:16 (|| דֹּדִי), husband Je 3:20, paramours Ho 3:1; Je 3:1; metaph. רֵעַ לְכַנּוֹת יַעֲנָה Jb 30:29 (|| אֶת לְתַנִּים). 2. in weaker sense, *fellow, fellow-citizen even another person*, with whom one stands in recipr. relations, Ex 2:13; 20:16, 17<sup>0</sup>; (Gi v 13:14<sup>0</sup>); = Dt 5:17, 18<sup>0</sup>; Ex 21:14; 22:7, 8, 10, 25 (all E), Lv 19:13, 16, 18; 20:10 (all H), Dt 4:42; 15:2<sup>0</sup> + 11 times Dt, Jos 20:5 (D), Ju 7:14; Je 9:7; 22:13; 29:23; Ez 18:6, 11, 15; 22:11, 12; Hb 2:15; Jb 16:21; Ru 4:7 ψ 15:3; 28:3; 101:5 Pr 3:28, 29; 6:1 (|| יָרַ!) + 18 times Pr; שָׂכַן וְרֵעוּ Je 6:21; 1 S 15:28 *hath given* (the kingdom) *to thy fellow*, = another than thou, so 28:17; 2 S 12:11; so also אִישׁ<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977). *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (pp. 945–946). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

