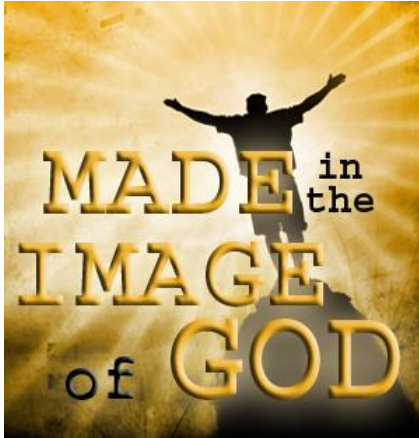


Is a Woman Created in the Image of God?

Pastor Kelly Sensenig



It is sometimes debated today among evangelicals that the woman was not created in God's image or likeness. Instead, it's taught that she was created in man's image. This is sometimes based upon a misunderstanding of Genesis 1:26-27. It's also assumed because God created Adam from the dust and Eve was created from Adam's side that this resulted in a woman reflecting man's image. It's also assumed because of what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:7 where he writes, "he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man."

One Christian website summarizes this position:

"Men were created in God's image. God breathed the breath of life straight into Adam. It is mind-boggling to think that mere man is in God's own image. In effect, man is in the likeness of God. God feels, he thinks, and he loves just as his creation does. As Adam was created in God's image, so Eve was created in Adam's image. God could have shaped two clay figures and breathed life into both, but he chose to take the woman from the man's own flesh and bone."

I would like to deal with this subject so that we can have a Biblical understanding on what the Bible says about women and the image of God. When we look at Scripture and investigate the proposal that a woman is not created in the image of God, or that the image of God is not passed on to women, we find this theory weighed and found wanting. This is because the Bible clearly reveals that both man and woman (male and female) were created in the image of God without affecting God's order for the sexes and the human race. Being created in God's image is what makes people (both men and women) human and creates the great chasm between humans and the animal kingdom.

There are three reasons why a woman is created in the image of God.

1. The creation account confirms that a woman was created in God's image.

Before doing any exegesis of Bible passages, it's hard for me to believe that a little baby girl is not created in God's image whereas a little baby boy is created in God's image. Of course, what I believe does not matter. "What saith the Scripture?" (Rom. 4:3). So, let's begin at the beginning.



Whatever comes after the beginning would not change what God said in the beginning regarding a woman's image-bearing creation.

I am going to share several verses about God's original creation with some running commentary alongside the Scriptural statements to develop the general teaching and idea of what the Bible says on the subject of both men and women bearing God's image. The Bible declares on three separate occasions that the woman would fall under the title of "man" (Hebrew word – "adam") and therefore also partake of God's image. Adam would bear God's image when God created him from the dust (Gen. 2:7) and the woman would also bear God's image when God would create her from Adam (Gen. 2: 21-22). Together, both the man and woman would fall under the designation of "adam" (male and female) and be created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Neither the man or woman received more of the image of God than the other.

Genesis 1:26-27

"And God said, Let us make man (adam – the male gender was used to connote male headship, but it was also a designation that would include the woman, who falls under the umbrella of the word "man" [humanity] and therefore the woman was part of God's unique creative purpose to bear His image) in our image, after our likeness (like the Godhead, where all three members of the Trinity share equality just like the man and woman would in their marriage relationship): and let them (the man and woman who were created in God's image at their appropriate

*times of creation) have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. **So God created man** (adam – humanity or mankind - the male headship title which would also generically designate both the male and female) **in his own image** (patterned after God’s likeness – morally, intellectually, spiritually, constitutionally – something that Adam and Eve equally shared), **in the image of God created he him** (the man who represents humanity); **male and female created he them**” (further describing what the term “man” means with the indication and understanding that both the man and woman would share in the image of God under the umbrella of the name man).*

Some suggest that the Bible is teaching here that only “man” was created in God’s image, since the woman is not mentioned as being created in God’s image, but this is not what the Genesis record is teaching. The woman most definitely is linked to the man in such a way that she also shares God’s image or likeness. The following explanation of “male and female created he them” defined the explanation of “man” (meaning both the man and woman together under his headship) and therefore clearly reveals that the woman shares in the creative image-bearing of God. The pronoun “them” (Gen. 1:27) illustrates this generic significance of mankind (both man and woman) being created in God’s image. God’s Word clearly teaches that He created mankind, both male and female, in the image of God.

Genesis 5:1-2 is looking back to creation and speaks of the same truth:

“This is the book of the generations of **Adam** (*the proper name*). In the day that God created **man** (adam – the male term designating leadership but which included the woman that came from man - a generic designation of mankind which connotes both male and female), **in the likeness of God** (patterned after God’s makeup – personhood, possessing a soul, spirit, and mental capacity that is distinct from the animals – something both Adam and Eve shared through God’s individual creative acts) **made he him** (the man); **Male and female** (further describing how the writer viewed “man” – a composite word [human being] meaning both the man and woman) **created he them** (both representing God’s image or likeness – the man being created from the dust and the woman from the man); **and blessed them**, and **called their name Adam** (adam or man – the male designation to indicate male headship but at the same time a designation that includes both the man and

woman [meaning humanity, human being, mankind) which confirms that both were image bearers under this designated name), in the day when they were created” (both were created on day 6 but chapters 2 and 5 gives us the details).

Once again we see how “man” is defined as both “male and female” and therefore the explanation of “man” (meaning both the man and woman together under his headship) reveals that the woman also participated in sharing God’s image with Adam at the dawn of creation. God’s likeness was passed on to both Adam and Eve through His direct hand of creation and together they shared God’s image in the ordained pattern of marriage (Gen. 2:7; 21-23). Out of respect for Adam’s headship, the woman is seen under the title “man” but at the same time she receives the same image-bearing qualities of the Creator.

Henry Morris is correct when he concludes:

“Finally, it is made clear that ‘man’ is also a generic term, including both male and female. Both man and woman were created (the details of their physical formation being given in Genesis 2) in God’s image, and thus both possess equally an eternal spirit capable of personal fellowship with their Creator.”

Both the original man and woman were created in the image of God. This means they were created with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9). This is something that both man and women equally share together. The woman does not get these things through the man but receives them directly from her Creator God.

Genesis 9:6 once again gives a record of the original creation:

“Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.”

Surely the woman would be included in this term “man” (adam) once again since the penalty for shedding a woman’s blood would be the same for shedding the man’s blood. All of this points to the Biblical truth that the woman was also created in the image of God. She falls under the designated title of “man” (the male and female). Both Adam and Eve were created in the moral, mental, and spiritual image of God. They were created with intellect, will, emotion, knowledge, and holiness

that reflects their Creator. Both could individually experience this likeness in their daily lives. For this reason, both a man and woman's blood should be avenged by bringing death upon their evildoers. This is insurmountable evidence that points to both the man and woman being created in God's image.

In Genesis 9:6, God once again uses the term for "man" (the word for a male - as in Gen. 2:8,15, 22, 25) to establish the headship principle and plan for marriage. God repeatedly used the word "man" (Hebrew - adam) and not woman when confirming the order of marriage. Of course, this specific naming occurred prior to the Genesis Fall. This means that headship was God's pattern for marriage from the very beginning – not just because of the Genesis Fall. At the same time, we can see that the "man" (Hebrew - adam) also points to a general reference to humanity (in contrast to the animals). This is important to also underscore.

God was using the name "man" to represent all of humanity (human beings in general which would include women). The name "man" was the word God chose to not only identify male headship but also a name that would represent all of humanity, both men and women (Gen. 2:22-23, 25; 3:12). In fact, this is why the word "man" was originally developed in our own English language to include both men and women. Sadly, this Biblically-based analogy is being replaced by gender-neutral terms today like "humankind" to override God's plan for male headship.

So don't misunderstand what I'm saying. The word "man" is not a gender-neutral term and the Hebrew reader certainly knew this. It should never be rendered as "humankind" as many Christians are doing in their writing today since the Bible always addresses the human race as "mankind" (Lev. 18:22; Job 12:10; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10; James 3:7). The Hebrew readers understood the word "man" to mean just one thing – man. The use of the name and gender which has male overtones or nuances is significant. God used the male gender ("man") because He was establishing the principle of male leadership in the home and society. It is significant that God did not call the human race composed of both men and women by the designation of "Woman" or "humankind" since this would take away from the *man* possessing a headship or leadership role.

In the creation account God establishes the order for the home and society by using the term “man” (adam) but at the same time He includes the woman in this designation (“male and female created he them”) indicating that both of them would reflect God’s image. This means the woman falls under the umbrella of the designation of “man” and this is what God intended and what the western world has followed until recent times. The implications of this would mean that a woman in the marriage relationship is to be treated with dignity for she is created in the image of God like the man. She is as valuable to God as the man. Her life is precious to God just like the man’s life. She equally shares the image of God with the man and also shares equal acceptance before God as the man (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28).

Now think of this. If a woman would not share God’s image, then she would not be human. The great distinction between the animal kingdom and humans is that the human race shared God’s special life and image (Gen. 1:26-27). The image of God is what makes humans different from the animals. All humans (men and women) share the image of God in various key ways.

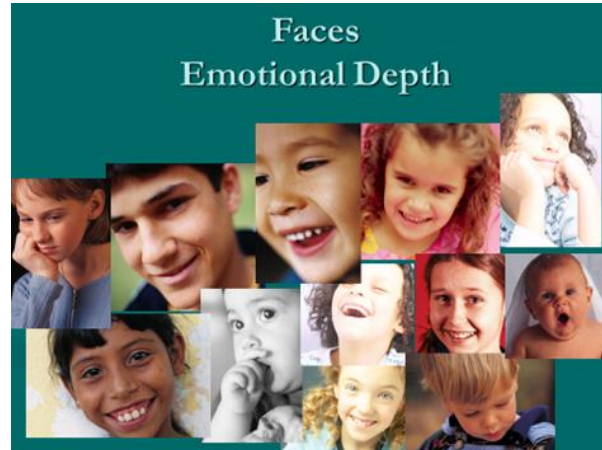
How Does Man and Woman Reflect God?

- **Self-consciousness (self-awareness)**
- **Moral consciousness (ethical responsibility)**
- **God consciousness (personhood & relational fellowship)**
- **Superior consciousness (personhood and excellence)**
- **Eternal consciousness (unending existence)**

Henry Morris concludes this about the image of God:

“In any case, there can be little doubt that the ‘image of God’ in which man was created must entail those aspects of human nature which are not shared by animals—attributes such as a moral consciousness, the ability to think abstractly, an understanding of beauty and emotion, and, above all, the capacity for worshiping and loving God. This eternal and divine dimension of man’s being must be the essence of what is involved in the likeness of God.”

Think of how man has a complex emotional design unlike the animal kingdom. This part of man's existence also reflects God's likeness or image. The human face can have a quarter of million facial changes that are controlled by twenty-eight paper thin muscles. These facial changes are used to magnify his emotional depth in expressing one's human experience.



This is only unique to man. The God-given likeness found in the inner complexities and qualities of the human race (personhood) is what makes man different than the animal kingdom.

The "image of God" is what makes us distinct from the rest of creation. God's image is what makes us human and spiritual beings, possessing certain spiritual qualities and traits of God within the spiritual or immaterial constitution of our "soul" (rational, emotional, volitional existence) and "spirit" (spiritual part of man's existence) which were created by God and placed within us at the time of conception (Zech. 12:1). It's the part of our humanness that scientists will never find in our DNA. God's image is not programmed into our chromosomes. It is part of our unique, creative design and makeup. Once again, the woman does not get these things through the man but receives them directly from her Creator God who built these qualities and traits into her human life at conception (Zech. 12:1).

Feinberg correctly states:

"Nowhere does the Old Testament indicate that the divine image and likeness are lost.... When one contemplates Genesis 9:6; James 3:9; and 1 Corinthians 11:7, it can be seen that it is incorrect to say unqualifiedly that the image of God was lost through sin."

How could God's image be lost? God's image is what makes us human! Although sin marred the moral and spiritual image of God within man, this too can be brought back through God's amazing regeneration (the New Birth) and the gradual transformation taking place in one's heart and life as a Christian (2 Cor. 3:18).

Acts 17:28-29

“For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.”

Paul is preaching to the pagan Gentiles in Athens and proclaimed that the whole human race is of the offspring of God. This means that everyone, even the pagans that Paul was talking to, is endowed with a certain likeness or image of God that is still stamped upon them. This is because we all come from God's creative hand. Brown stated that “the things that make mankind in the image of God are still present in the worst sinner as well as in the best saint.” In other words, kings and peasants, all sinners and saints, possess God's image; however, the moral and spiritual part of this image is uniquely reflected in Christian through the New Birth and makes the difference between saints and sinners.

Genesis 2:23 concludes our Old Testament part of this study:

“And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh (she mirrors me): she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

The word “Woman” (Hebrew - ishah) sounds similar to the Hebrew word translated “Man” (Hebrew – ish - a male person) in Genesis 2:23. They definitely have a similar sound in the Hebrew language. This similarity reflects the close union and partnership between the two, who were equally created in God's image, directly from God's own hands. The Man (ish) names her “Woman” (isha) because she had her source in him (the root of the word woman means soft and indicates she has come from his own flesh and body).

The fact that the woman was taken from the man does indicate that she would be someone that would be a suitable and submissive partner for him that would totally compliment and support him (Gen. 2:18, 20; 1 Tim. 2:12-13). In giving the woman her name, Adam was functioning as he had in naming the animals (Gen. 2:19). Yet the name that he gave to her matched his own. She was woman, and he was man,

which means they were perfectly suited for each other and could function together as a family unit.

2. The epistles reconfirm that a woman is created in the image of God.

James 3:9

“Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men (anthropos – humanity or human beings), which are made after the similitude of God.”



That a woman is created in the image of God cannot be denied. James verifies this. Think about this once again. The image of God in man means that human beings are basically spirit beings, possessing intellect, emotion, and will. Both man and woman share this. Being created in God’s image also means that mankind has obtained many of God’s attributes such as love, self-awareness, justice, grace, and mercy which are distinct from attributes associated with animals. They are part of the very being of humanity. Every person has these attributes. There is also the capacity to fellowship and worship God which is unique to mankind. Of course, both man and woman possess all of these image-bearing qualities together.



Again, it is the image of God within humans that makes them different from the animal kingdom. However, the difference in looks goes without saying! God decided to make a helper suitable (literally “a helper corresponding to him,” or “a corresponding helper”) for the man

(Gen. 2:18). The description of her as “corresponding to him” means what was said about the man in Genesis 2:7 was also true of her. God breathed into Adam the breath life. This would include God’s image which contains perpetual existence and a likeness to God constitutionally and spiritually.

This same creative likeness to God (the image of God) was passed on to Eve through her creation from Adam (Gen. 2:21-22). This is why Eve corresponded to Adam. She was a human that shared the image of God with him – not a giraffe that did not bear the likeness of a human or share God’s image. By the way, it would be hard for Adam to kiss a giraffe! Here is the point. Only the woman could be suitable to Adam if she possessed the same human traits and likeness of God as Adam did in his constitutional makeup or design. She possesses a soul and spirit like Adam so she could interact with him on his mental and emotional level and meet his physical needs, encourage him, and assist him in life. God bought a woman to Adam that could compliment him emotionally, physically, spiritually, and relationally.

Remember that the real image of God is reflected in our inward capacity to reflect our Creator’s consciousness of life, a complex volition, mind, emotions, and to be able to possess eternal existence, spirituality, and fellowship with God. This means that every woman is also patterned after the likeness of God. Eve was created from Adam (Gen. 2:21-23), which implies headship (1 Cor. 11:7-8; 1 Tim. 2:12–13) but nothing is said that Eve actually bore Adam’s image when God formed her from Adam. Since the Fall, there is a sense that all people (men and women) bear Adam’s image since it is passed on to the human race (Gen. 5:3; Rom. 5:12). This is definitely a flawed expression of God’s image, but nonetheless man still retains various features of God’s image (Gen. 9:6; James 3:9), which is a likeness of God that has been imprinted upon every person that is born in the human race.

Now what is James teaching when he states that mankind is made in the likeness of God? He reminds us of something very important. Although God’s image was *defaced* after the Genesis Fall, it was not *erased*. Man’s sin did not cause the loss of Adam’s distinct humanity and personhood (the image of God). Although the image of God in man was *distorted*, it was not *destroyed*. This is why man still has the propensity to worship, a moral conscience to some degree, and he still possesses rational faculties and deep emotional commitments to fellow human beings (marriage and friendships).

G. Campbell Morgan, in his book, “The Crises of the Christ,” said: “By the act of sin, the image and likeness of God in man was not destroyed but defaced, and in all the

history contained in the Old Testament Scripture, is seen a degraded ideal” (1903, p. 26).

The word “similitude” (James 3:9) speaks of God’s likeness or resemblance and is another term describing God’s image. Although the perfect moral image of God was lost in man due the Genesis Fall, there still remains a reflection of God’s image or likeness in both men and women. The Greek word used for “men” is “anthropos” which is another example of maintaining male headship, while at the same time confirming that both the man and woman (male and female) fall under the wider scope or meaning of this term, which speaks of humanity or human beings. Just like the man, the woman also lost her original, pristine image of God, which is something that needs to be restored in her inner spirit through the new birth or regeneration (Eph. 2:1-2; 4:24). Both the male and female shared in this loss equally because both of them equally shared in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27).

Ephesians 4:24 declares:

“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

Paul is speaking to all believers in Christ (both men and women) when he states that “ye have put on the new man.” This speaks of a once-for-all occurrence that occurs as the time of conversion or salvation. It speaks of becoming a new person through the infusion of God’s life and nature. This is what both men and woman are in Christ – a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17). At the moment of regeneration our human spirit is born again and God’s life is infused within us, as it was in the original couple (Adam and Eve). This inward life and nature of God can once again begin to reflect God’s moral and spiritual image in our daily lives (“which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness”).

In other words, Paul is teaching that the new birth brings us back to God’s original purpose for both the man and woman which is to reflect God’s image in their life. All of this is Scriptural evidence that both the male and female (man and woman) were originally created in God’s image. Through the New Birth, which both men and

woman equally share (John 1:12-13), God wants to bring them back to His original purpose which began in Genesis. This goal is to reflect His special moral and spiritual image through their lives. Regeneration is shared by both men and women and bringing them back to God's image or likeness, something the original couple possessed, is God's goal for His saints. The woman equally



shared in the image of God at the original creation and this image is equally restored through faith in Jesus Christ at the new recreation (2 Cor. 5:17).

2 Corinthians 3:18 teaches a similar truth:

“But we all (both men and women believers), with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even as* by the Spirit of the Lord.”



Paul once again reflects on how through the Holy Spirit's ministry operating in our hearts and lives, God wants to bring all of his saints (men and women) to reflect the Lord's image or likeness. This occurs over the process of our entire Christians lives.

It's called progressive sanctification or Christlikeness. Yes, we are to see the reflection of Jesus in our lives as we are gradually changed back into the moral and spiritual image that was lost in both the man and woman at the Genesis Fall. Since the image of Christ's moral perfection is gradually being restored on all of us after the Genesis Fall (2 Cor. 3:18), it is only natural and Biblical to believe that both the man and woman were created in the image of God.

Both Adam (the man) and Eve (the woman), male and female, lost this aspect of God's image in the Garden but through the new birth and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, both the man and woman can once again be “change into the same image from glory to glory” (from one expression of the beauty of Christlikeness to another). As we allow the Holy Spirit to control, the moral and spiritual image of

God is once again reflected in our lives. As far as saving and sanctifying grace is concerned a woman comes as deeply into communion with God as a man. She was made equally in the image of God and this moral image is equally restored through faith in Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Once again, Paul gives conclusive evidence that what was lost by both the man and woman (God's image) can gradually be restored in both the man and woman through the work of the Holy Spirit. If a woman was not created in God's original image, then why would Paul inform her that she can reflect God's image in her life through the New Birth and work of the Spirit? The one presupposes the other.

3. The teaching of headship and submission does not mean a woman cannot be created in God's image.

Since the Biblical evidence seems to clearly reveal that a woman was created in the image of God, representing God in the same way as man, then why do some Christians seem to overlook this central truth? It happens when we take one Bible verse, which on the surface teaches something opposite than the other Scriptures, and make the one verse the deciding factor on a subject. One verse that is used to support that a woman is not created in God's image is found in the headship chapter of 1 Corinthians 11:7 when he states that the man "is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man." We will unravel the meaning of this in a moment but we must start at the beginning of the chapter to understand this verse.

1 Corinthians 11:3:

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God."

Paul starts off this chapter with a bang! He clearly defines the functional authority in the church and between a man and wife. As far as functional authority goes, the chain of authority is the Father, Christ, man, and the woman (wife). What is true in the Godhead is also true in the realm of the church and relationship between the husband and wife. The Godhead share equality (John 10:30) but as the same time there is functional authority and submission (Luke 22:42). In a similar way, both the man and the woman share creative (the image of God) and spiritual equality

(acceptance before God) while still possessing their appropriate roles (Gen. 1:27; Gal. 3:28).

In addition, this chain of authority does not mean that Christ is not the Head of the woman since a woman is also part of the corporate Church and Christ is repeatedly said to be the “head of the church” (Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18). A woman possesses Christ as her spiritual Head (the Savior, leader, director of her life) as much as the man does. What Paul is addressing is the establishment of headship in relation to church ministry and this is portrayed in different roles, customs, and even hair lengths (1 Cor. 11:14-15).

1 Corinthians 11:7 states:

“For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.”

Sometimes there is the tendency to actually miss what Scripture says or to reinterpret certain sections of it in order to make it fit our own preconceived ideas or system. I think this sometimes happens with this particular verse.

I always come back to the old saying:

“The main things are the plain things and the plain things are the main things.”

I’ve already established that both men and women are created in the image of God and that they can share the sanctification of Christlikeness, which restores the image of God gradually in our lives. This includes all Christians. So, whatever Paul is teaching in the headship chapter does not invalidate a woman from sharing God’s image. Paul turns back to Genesis to make an important point on headship. He obviously has creation’s original purpose in mind when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 11:7 that man “is the image and glory of God (because of the headship position): but the woman is the glory of the man” (because of the submission position).

Paul is not abandoning the truth that a woman was made in the image of God or that she was not under the designation of “man” (adam), since God created man in His own image, “male and female created he them.” (Gen. 1:27). In fact, the reason nothing is said in this verse about a woman being created in God’s image is because

Paul is not dealing with this subject matter in the headship chapter. We might expect that Paul would state that both the woman and the man were created in the image of God (James 3:9) but because of his teaching on man's headship, he is not interested in discussing Eve being created in God's image. In other words, we should not infer from this statement that only the man is created in the image of God.

As Paul addresses the subject of male headship, he concludes that there is only one sense in which the man uniquely bears the image and glory of God that is not shared with the woman ("he is the image and glory of God"), and this unique God resemblance and glory (honor) pertains to the area of headship and leadership within the family unit and local church. Both male and female reflect all the wonderful qualities of God's image except in one area – headship and leadership.

So what did Paul exactly mean when teaching that man is the image and glory of God in contrast with the woman? He means that Adam held a special status (glory or honor) as God's image bearer because he was created first to be the head and leader of the woman. The word "glory" in this context speaks of honor because in 1 Corinthians 11:14-15 shame or dishonor is the opposite of glory or honor. Paul concludes that man was given a special honor by God ("he is the image and glory of God"). The special privilege or honor was that man was created to reflect His image in a unique manner as a head or leader of the home and church.

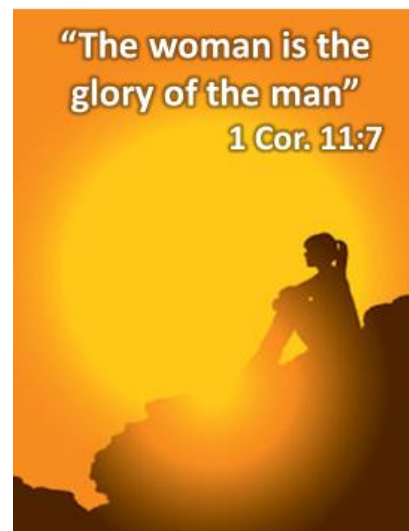
Paul also teaches in 1 Corinthians 11:7 that the woman is the glory of man ("but the woman is the glory of the man"). In other words, man in a special way reflects God's image and is honored through headship to be the leader of the home and church. However, the woman brings honor to the man (his role of headship) by submitting to his leadership in the home and church. In a practical way, as the man brings honor to God by practicing his leadership position, so the woman is to bring honor and respect to the man through her submission to his headship position.

This is why Ephesians 5:33 says:

"Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence *her* husband."

God made the woman specifically to be a helper for her husband and in submitting and serving him she honors her head which is her husband in the marriage relationship (Genesis 2:18, 20; Ephesians 5:25-29). Although a man and woman can both honor or glorify God in their hearts and lives (1 Cor. 10:31; Heb. 12:28; 2 Cor. 3:18), the woman can uniquely bring honor her husband (head) when submitting to his leadership. When it comes to headship and functional authority within the home and church, there is a unique quality of image-bearing that the man possesses (headship or leadership). Man reflects God and is given special honor in the sense that he was created to rule and lead the wife. He was created to be like God by possessing a leadership role. However, when the woman follows her husband's leadership and direction, she brings glory, honor, and respect to her husband ("the woman is the glory of the man" - husband).

In summary, what Paul is teaching in this headship passage is that man reflects God's image in a special sense as a ruler and leader. The woman does not reflect this part of God's image (headship and leadership), as the man does, since she was not specifically created to be a ruler like God. On the other hand, she brings glory (respect and honor) to the man and his God-given role when she submits to his headship position in the marriage and church. She is "the glory of the man" (bringing honor to the man) in the sense that she promotes reverence and respect for his headship position and authority over her through submission.



When a man fulfills this purpose and obligation as a leader, he becomes a reflection of God's image and the special honor bestowed upon him as a man. However, the woman in the marriage relationship actually promotes the special glory of her husband as her God-given head and leader when she submits to his leadership role. In a very practical way she will learn to honor, reverence, and respect her husband throughout the marriage because of the special honor given to him by God as her leader (Eph. 5:33).

1 Corinthians 11:8 gives us the reason for her submissive role: “For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.” God’s order is based on the fact that man was created first (1 Tim. 2:13) and that the woman was created for the man. But *priority* does not imply *inferiority* since Paul made it clear in 1 Corinthians 11:11–12 that there is partnership as well as headship in God’s creation (Eph. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:7). The man and the woman are one in the Lord (Gen. 2:21), which means they intimately share their lives together and one cannot do without the other. Furthermore, the woman may have come from the man at the beginning, but today it is the man who comes from the woman. Mark Twain was once asked: “What would men be without women?” His reply was accurate, “Scarce, sir...mighty scarce.” Marriage is an intimate partnership and friendship even though there are specific roles to carry out for each partner.

So, man was created first and that is important in the plan and mind of God. God could have created the woman at the same time as the man from the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7). But he did not do so. God teaches by the way he does things and the New Testament draws our attention to this order. The head of the woman is the man and he is to take the leadership position (1 Cor. 11:3,8-9; 1 Tim. 2:13). This headship is worked out in the New Testament in the context of the home as well as the church (Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

What Paul is teaching in this headship passage is that man reflects God’s image in a special sense as a ruler and leader. The woman does not reflect this part of God’s image (headship and leadership), as the man does, since she was not specifically created to be a ruler like God. On the other hand, she brings glory (respect and honor) to the man and his God-given role when she submits to his headship position in the marriage and church. So the woman in the marriage relationship promotes the man’s glory (his special honor as God’s representative leader and her head) when she follows his leadership.

Since man is said to reflect God’s image, some jump to the conclusion that a woman was not created in God’s image, but only in man’s image, and that she is a reflection of man’s image. However, Paul avoids this conclusion for several reasons. First, Paul is not talking about the woman reflecting



**Jumping to
Conclusions**

the man's image as he reflects the Creator's image. He is not concluding that a woman is a reflection of God's image through the man. The contextual meaning of the word "glory" does not indicate reflection but demonstrating honor, respect, and reverence for his headship position (1 Corinthians 11:14-15).

Second, the Bible clearly affirms that the woman was not created in man's image in any sense, since she was also created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27). The text of 1 Corinthians 11:7 would not undermine the consistent Biblical teaching on a woman being created in God's image. The statement regarding "the glory of the man" does not indicate reflection of any kind but is used in the sense that the woman promotes reverence and respect for the man's headship position and authority through her submission.



Here is an important note regarding the debate over a woman being created in God's image. *The Bible teaches that the woman is "the glory of man" (1 Cor. 11:7); it does not say that she was created in the image of the man.* This is because the Bible repeatedly teaches and confirms that a woman was directly created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27; 9:6; James 3:9) and that a Christian woman is being transformed into God's moral image through a lifelong process of sanctification (2 Cor. 3:18). Contrary to what some teach, Paul never teaches or assumes that the woman is created in the man's image anywhere in Scripture. In other words, Paul does not deny that the woman also bears the image of God in 1 Corinthians 11:7. On the contrary, he clearly implies that she does, by deliberately avoiding the statement that she is created in man's image. Paul never implies this.

The Bible never states that a woman bears a man's image or that she somehow reflects God's image through the man. The silence on this matter is important. A common expression floating around today that indicates silence or that nothing was said on a particular subject is the word "crickets!" The Scripture speaks clearly of a woman sharing God's image but it is silent on the matter of her bearing man's image. Paul does not come to this conclusion in 1 Corinthians 11:7 nor does the Bible give this impression anywhere. Eve shared God's image with Adam but Adam and men today uniquely reflect God's image as a leader and is honored by God as

such. However, the woman brings honor to the man's unique headship image through her submission. Paul is simply teaching that the woman brings glory (respect, honor, and reverence) to the man as she follows the particular and unique aspect of God's image that the man shares with God (headship).

Now think of this. Man was created in God's image (male and female), not as two identical and interchangeable halves (Gen. 1:26-27), but at the same time these two halves represent the Godhead ("Let us make man in our image") who are co-equal in essence and being (Heb. 1:3; 1 John 5:8) while practicing different roles. For instance, the Son submits to the Father (John 8:20). This means that both the man and woman can and do share God's image, possessing personhood, the same constitutional makeup as God, and today reflect God's likeness mentally and morally through the Spirit's transforming work (2 Cor. 3:18). At the same time, as image bearers, they can also possess unique and distinct roles of leadership and submission.



Elisabeth Elliot noticed this when she said:

"These two people together represent the image of God – one of them in a special way the initiator, the other the responder."

Even though Paul does not frame the discussion in the light of the woman responding to God, and reflecting God's image in this way, it is a wonderful truth to contemplate. Submission is also a unique way to reflect God's image since Jesus submitted to the Father's will (Luke 22:42) but still maintained his equality within the Godhead. Here is the simple truth. Even as there is submission within the Godhead, without taking away from the equality of the Godhead, so there is submission in the home and church, without taking away from the image-bearing aspect of God in both the man and woman.

Dr. Warren Wiersbe is correct when he states:

"There is a definite order of 'headship' in the church: the Father is the Head over Christ, Christ is the Head of the man, and the man is the head of the woman. Some

interpret head to mean 'origin,' but this would mean that the Father originated Christ—something we cannot accept. In His redemptive ministry, the Son was subject to the Father even though He is equal to the Father (John 10:30; 14:28). Likewise, the woman is subject to the man even though in Christ she is equal to the man (1 Cor. 3:21–23; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 5:21–33).”

Reflect on this for a moment. We actually demonstrate God’s love, His patience, His gentleness, His self-control (the image or reflection of God) when submitting to others. As one expositor remarked: “A willingness to subordinate oneself to others for God’s sake is, indeed, itself a component of the image, not a compromise thereof.” Even submission to unjust authority shows a special likeness to Christ (1 Peter 2:12, 19-25; 3:14-18).



So here is the key question. Does subordination itself detract from the woman’s capacity to image God? The answer must surely be negative. Think of this. Men also are always placed in subordination to other people (Exodus 20:12; Romans 13:1; Hebrews 13:17,21) but this does not negate them from being the image of God. The same is true for the woman. Being subordinate and submissive to the man does not take away from her individually possessing and directly reflecting God’s image. The woman in her submissive role under the man does not take away from her creative likeness as the image-bearer of God, any more than the submission of the members in the Trinity take away from their equality. This Scriptural analogy between the Godhead and marriage partners clearly teach that both the man and woman are equal in regard to sharing God’s image, while at the same time they do not possess equal roles.

The woman’s role of submission brings a special glory (honor) to the man who in a unique way was created to reflect God as a leader and director (head), while at the same time the woman was created to be submissive, even as Jesus was submissive to the Father. Submission does not mean the woman is inferior to the man in any way, even as Jesus was not inferior to the Father but shared His same essence. The

submissive part of the woman refers only to the purposes of God for man and woman in the creative order.

Because of man's priority in creation he has authority over the woman (Gen. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:12–13). The woman is therefore "the glory of man" (reflecting the man's special glory when submitting to her husband) but she is not created in the image of man. Instead, she is a direct reflection of God's image in that she is the greatest creation that God could bring out of the man. I think when God brought Eve to man, his reaction was probably one word - "Wow! I cannot find this in the Bible, but I assume that he knew that when God does something, he does it right!"

In conclusion, one reason for male headship is rooted in the order and manner in which God created man and woman (Gen. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:12–13). And it must be reconfirmed that this divine order was something which was present before the Genesis Fall. Yes, even before Fall God has ordained there to be a difference in the roles between genders in both the home and church. The Fall did not cause the difference in gender roles in the church and in the home. Lastly, the difference in roles is not erased by our new life in Jesus as some wrongly assume by abusing the meaning of certain verses in the Bible.

Galatians 3:28 declares:

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."



The Bible emphatically teaches that man and woman are spiritual equals before God (1 Cor. 12:13). There is an equality of the sexes in that the man and woman possess the same spiritual standing and blessings in Christ (Eph. 1:3). However, this does not mean there are equal roles between men and women in the marriage, home, or church, and even within society at large.

Nevertheless, both the man and woman are created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27). Together, as born-again Christians, we can fulfill our special roles as God's image-bearers through the Spirit's transforming work occurring in our lives today as we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).