



IDENTITY- Shattered reflection

April 21, 2024

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BIG IDEA – Because of our brokenness, we see and display a shattered reflection.

scripture focus - [Romans 1:18-23](#) But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And **they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools.** And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

The good news! God made us out of mud and fashioned into us His image, His very likeness of attributes. Sure, we got our moral capacity, dominion, and power over creation – just like God. However, we also received a free will which came with the capacity to do right or do wrong, good, or evil. [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#) nailed it in poem written in the 1800's about a little girl, but clearly, it's about all of humanity,

There was a little girl,
Who had a little curl,
Right in the middle of her forehead.
When she was good
She was very very good,
And when she was bad she was horrid.

I don't really understand how anyone cannot see that, as humans, we not only have the uniqueness and extraordinary abilities above and beyond all other living things, but we also have this awryness, naughtiness and rebellion. Do you not see it in yourself?

What happened in the garden defined what would happen for the rest of humanity!

The Brokenness of Life

"God has made us in His likeness, and one mark of that likeness is our free will."

A.W. Tozer

However, even though it is still a mystery as to why God gave humans a free will, we absolutely know how that gift was used in the garden so long ago.

The first two chapters of the Bible introduce men and women as created in God's image, on purpose and for a divine purpose.

This is in sharp contrast with the ancient and influential Mesopotamian myths that declared humans were made to labor as slaves to the gods, who themselves were "imaged" by stone idols.

This ancient truth has been conveniently left out of modern stories! This was the world for many years and it still the prevalent truth that exists in most countries today!

The ancient, elite kings and priests who cared for the stone and wooden idols also became a self-declared "imaged" of those god's presence and power on Earth.

The "hierarchy" (meaning "holy order") granted special status to a few but imposed forced submission on all the rest.

The earliest known cultures of this world, our human ancestry, has always been based on these gods and their representatives who were given vast power to rule over others.

Yet, Genesis 1 & 2 mentions no requirement for those who carry God's likeness. It does not list hierarchy, age, gender, race, class, or ethnicity. The implications are profound. Every man and woman is created to be in a close, caring relationship with God—but this relationship does not make them into gods. Hierarchy has no power in the garden!

That is, until the fall, recorded in Genesis 3.

Genesis 3 records the tragic response of Adam and Eve to the privilege, identity, and task that God had entrusted to them. The problem in the garden originates from human rebellion and ambition. The problem in the garden is sin. Sin tarnishes and stains the image of God in humanity to such an extent that while we remain image-bearers in God's eyes, we struggle to see it in others or even in ourselves.

What did sin shatter?

Sin shattered Shalom

Cornelius Platinga Jr, in his book, "[Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin.](#)" **Writes**, "Sin is a culpable and personal affront to a personal God."

The Apostle Paul wrote to the churches in Rome,

Romans 1:18-23 But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. **And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.**

Humans turned from worshiping the One who created them, to worshiping creation and making idols of the created things of the Earth. Through the fall, humanity ceased to fulfill God's original design.

Genesis 3:1-5

'The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, "**Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?**" "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'" "**You won't die!**" **the serpent replied to the woman.** "God knows that **your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it**, and **you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.**"

By asking a question, "did God really say...?," the serpent already knew the answer to, he got Eve to engage in conversation!

I find it interesting that Satan gets us to listen by whispering just the right question! What questions has the snake been whispering to you?

The serpent flat out lied!

- **“You won’t die.”**
- **“your eyes will be open”**
- **“You will be like God”**

They both ate and disobeyed God. In that moment, all the things that God provided for them would be harder because the relationship with God was shattered. Along with that relationship, peace with God was broken – **sin shattered shalom.**

Sin shattered our humanness.

“We must never underestimate the ability of human beings to get themselves tangled up.” A.W. Tozer

Now, instead of displaying the character qualities of God in work ethic, power to serve and protect, truth, covenant relationships, and selflessness. We seek me first, my life, my stuff, my way.

Israel’s 2nd King, David showed what happens when sin shatters our humanness.

Read Psalm 51.

[Psalms 51:1-4](#) Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just.

David wrote Psalm 51 after the prophet Nathan confronted the king with his sins.

David was **guilty of sloth, deception, adultery, murder, and covetousness, to name just a few.**

His flagrant use of power to get what he wanted does not reflect the image of God!

And what happens? Rape, lies, betrayal, murder and ultimately death of his son and loss of the kingdom. Did Bathsheba deserve what happened to her? Did Uriah deserve what happened to him? How about Bathsheba's unnamed son?

After being confronted by Nathan, David confesses his sins, and takes full responsibility for his behaviors and God forgave him – yet the judgment God on him still came to pass.

Salvation comes from God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Despite all of the immense privileges and honor God gave to human beings, men and women have no power to save themselves. Once again, the Creator Himself must take action to restore the image of God for all to see.

- **Compare and contrast the response of Adam and Eve after God confronted them with their sin (Genesis 3) with David's response after Nathan confronted the king with his sin. What are the similarities? What are the differences?**
- **Reflect on David's confessional prayer in Psalm 51. How do you see David acknowledge his image-bearer identity? In what way did Adam and Eve neglect such an acknowledgment?**

CONSIDER how sin in your life (past or present) has shattered your ability to represent God well to a broken world.

Write or say a prayer of confession to the Lord.

His grace is abundant, and His mercies are new every morning!

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Lamentations 3:22-23 Because of the Lord's faithful love we do not perish, **for his mercies never end. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness!**

God can restore our shattered lives.

"All evil of sin, though happening in many ways, agrees in being out of harmony with the divine will." Thomas Aquinas

How do we get harmony back, our peace back, identify and purpose back?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-17

[2 Corinthians 5:15-17](#)

He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them. So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

The image of God in humanity serves to highlight that humanity has a unique relationship with the Creator.

Does that reality continue to exist after the fall? Did the man and woman still bear God's image or likeness after their offense against God? Yes, and yes, but the image became shattered and stained.

We are still like God in our ability to reason and love. We remain relational beings, even if our relationships suffer due to our sins. We are driven to rule and subdue and continue to be missional beings.

Just like a mirror continues to reflect objects even when it's cracked, so humanity continues to reflect the Creator to some level, even through the effects of rebellion.

It is marvelous that God chose to create human beings in His image and likeness—but even more wonderful is what God does next!

While sin against God shattered the image and impaired our ability to live out the fullness of our identity, God Himself restores His image bearers through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son.

This is the gospel, the good news – we are broken, but God repairs, restores and redeems us!

Have you heard about Kintsugi?

[Kintsugi](#) (Japanese: romanized: "golden joinery" or "golden repair. It is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending the areas of breakage with urushi lacquer dusted or mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum. The method is similar to the maki-e technique. As a philosophy, **it treats breakage and repair as part of the history of an object, rather than something to disguise.**

Kintsugi does not attempt to hide the fractures and cracks. Instead, it does the opposite highlighting the broken places with precious metals. This is what God does with us, in our human brokenness. We cannot hide our sin from Him, and we cannot make it go away as well. Because of Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven, those fractures and cracks are filled with the most expensive and precious substance that humankind has ever know – the blood of Christ, who knew no sin but became sin on our behalf.

While every person still bears God's image, we are not all "children of God." Humanity once again has the choice to accept this remarkable gift of eternal grace or opt for the continued decay of the tarnished image, ending in death. Salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of our Heavenly Father.

It is God the Creator who then adopts those who put their faith and trust in Jesus as His children (Galatians 3:26, Ephesians 1). We are born again into God's family. God becomes our Father (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3) and we become His sons and daughters (1 John 3:1).

- **What lie has the enemy whispered to you?**
- **How have you seen sin show up in you, others, and the world around us?**
- **What is the Holy Spirit saying to you to help you see your true identity?**
- **How has God restored you? Write a prayer of gratitude to Jesus for His complete and costly grace.**

NOTES

Scriptures

[Romans 1:18-23](#) But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And **they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools.** And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

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Discussion Guide

YOUR STORY

Q: Think of a person you know whose life has been transformed by the love of Jesus. What makes them different? How do they bring delight and joy to others?

DIGGING DEEPER Read aloud Genesis 3:1-6

Q: What lie did the serpent tell, and how did it directly attack human identity?

Q: What did Adam and Eve forget about their identity? How did their failure to remember their true identity open their hearts to deception?

Q: What happens to us when we forget about our true identity?

Q: How did sin tarnish the image of God for Adam and Eve. How did they view God, themselves, and each other before and after their disobedience?

Sin brings destruction of Shalom & dehumanizes us and others. Not just ancient sin of Adam and Eve but current sin we wrestle with today. Read aloud Romans 1:21-22

Q: Why do we disobey God? Why do we not do what he has called us to do? Or do what he has told us not to do?

Q: What are some ineffective ways that you try to deal with guilt and sin?

Q: How have you seen sin corrupt people's hearts? How have you seen people behave or treat others as less than human?

Q: Every person still bears the image of God, even when they sin. What do you learn about God, yourself, and others when you consider this remarkable truth?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-17

Q: How can we stop evaluating ourselves and others from a human point of view?

Q: Have you experienced becoming a new person? In what ways?

Q: God's grace doesn't just work in you; it works through you. How have you experienced God working through you to bring restoration to another?

MAKE ONE

What small step can you take to increase the net shalom in your home, work, church, and part of the world?

Internet Links

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donated his new tomb for Jesus to be buried in. This fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah 53:9: "He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth."