

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Video Lecture Series

by Robert D. McCurley, ThM

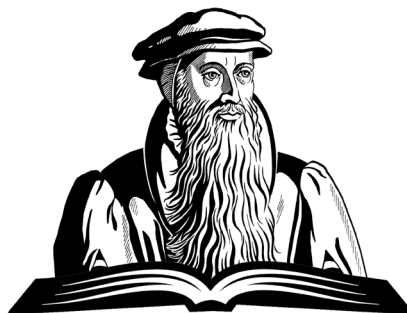
STUDY GUIDE

Module 3:

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 3:

MAN AS THE IMAGE OF GOD



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

John Knox Institute of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

© 2021 by John Knox Institute of Higher Education

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means for profit, except in brief quotations for the purposes of review, comment, or scholarship, without written permission from the publisher, John Knox Institute, P.O. Box 19398, Kalamazoo, MI 49019-19398, USA.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

Visit our website: www.johnknoxinstitute.org

Rev. Robert D. McCurley is minister of the Gospel at Greenville Presbyterian Church, in Taylors, South Carolina, a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), Presbytery of the United States of America.

greenvillepresbyterian.com

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

by Robert D. McCurley, ThM

STUDY GUIDE

Module 3

The Doctrine of Man

1. Introduction
2. The Nature of Man
- 3. Man As the Image of God**
4. The Freedom of Man's Will
5. The Nature of Sin
6. The Doctrine of Original Sin
7. The Doctrine of Total Depravity
8. The Doctrine of the Covenant of Works
9. The Doctrine of the Covenant of Grace
10. The Doctrine of the Law of God

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

by Robert D. McCurley, ThM

STUDY GUIDE

Module 3:

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

Lecture 3:

Man As the Image of God

Introduction

What exactly makes a person a person? This is an important question. It's important, of course, in terms of society at large—how people think about the difference between animals and human beings. But it's also important for us biblically, to understand the mind of God, and his design that he has given to the world as a whole. In this lecture, we're going to seek to get to the core of the answer—What makes a person a person?

Theme: *Man as the Image of God.*

I. Scriptural Basis

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them 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 in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:26–28)

1. The words “image” and “likeness” are synonymous and interchangeable.
2. Man is distinct from God.
3. Man is a representation of God.
4. Man being made in the image of God applies to all men, all places, at all times.
5. Man being made in the image of God applies to both men and women.
6. Man is given dominion over all creatures and all the world.
 - a. Man has authority.
 - b. Man has stewardship and responsibility, so he is accountable.

Questions:

1. Meditate on Genesis 1, verses 26 to 28. What knowledge of God and knowledge of man can you find in this passage? How does this apply to you? What questions do you have about this?

II. Doctrinal Overview

As summarized in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 4, paragraph 2.

“After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness and true holiness, after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts.”

1. Man is the image of God, or man is made in the image of God, and is not speaking of the image of God in man.
 - a. The image of God is the essence of man, and distinguishes him from the rest of creation.
2. How the fall affected the image of God in man.
 - a. The broad aspect—man still has moral faculties after the fall.
 - b. The narrow aspect—at the fall, man lost spiritual knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.
3. Dominion over the creatures.
 - a. Man is to serve as God’s vice-regent, with dominion over the world.
 - b. Jesus Christ fulfills that dominion.
4. Four creation ordinances:
 - a. Marriage,
 - b. Procreation,
 - c. Labor,
 - d. and Sabbath observance.

5. Summary: *There is a narrow aspect to the image of God—spiritual knowledge, righteousness, and holiness—which was lost at the fall of man, and it is regained in conversion. There’s a broad aspect to the image of God that refers to man’s rational, moral nature which is maintained after the fall, and that, as such—as the image of God—man exercises dominion over the creation.*

Questions:

1. What is the most accurate way to say that man is created in the image of God? Can we say that God’s image is in man? or is it more accurate to say that man *is* God’s image? Why is this distinction important?

2. Explain the broad aspect of man being the image of God. What are the faculties of the image of God that man retained after the fall? How does Scripture prove this? How does it apply to your life?

3. Explain the narrow aspect of man being the image of God. What was different about the image of God in man after the fall—what faculties were lost? How can man regain those faculties?

4. How is the Lord Jesus Christ the standard for the preeminent, perfect, beautiful display of what it is to be the image of God? How is the believer transformed into Christ’s image?

5. What are the implications to believers that man was given dominion over the creatures?

6. If man was given dominion over the creation, why doesn't it seem that way to us? What provision has God given to bring this dominion to fulfillment?

7. What are the four creation ordinances given to man as the image-bearer of God?

III. Polemical Exposition

1. Some diverse views within historical theology.
 - a. Socinians.
 - b. Roman Catholics.
 - c. Lutherans.
2. A contemporary issue—evolution.
 - a. Eliminates altogether the concept of man as the image of God.

Questions:

1. Regarding man as God's image-bearer, what errors have there been in historical theology? Explain the problem with each of them.

2. What is the fundamental error of evolution, as it relates to man being created in the image of God?

IV. Practical Exposition

1. Man's glory must be attached to likeness to God.
2. The preciousness of Christ.
3. People have inherent value as those made in God's image—we must make it known to the world.

Questions:

1. What role does the Holy Spirit play with regards to our great need to be attached to God's likeness?

2. Why is Christ so precious to us in the study of man being made in the image of God? Why do we need the knowledge of him, and to see him by faith as he is revealed in the Bible?

3. From this lecture, what great truth about man do believers need to proclaim to the world? How does it apply to our dealings with other men or women?

V. Self-Reflection

Have you noticed how these doctrines about man in God's image are actually founded on the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you yet a new creation on Christ? As Christians gaze upon the glory of the Lord in the mirror of the gospel, they are changed into his image. As Christians experience their union with Christ, beholding him by faith, and as the Holy Spirit works in them by means of progressive sanctification, they are transformed into Christ's image, from glory to glory. Have you seen the beginnings of true piety in your life? How does this help you in seeking spiritual growth and maturity?
