

# The Image of God and Christian Education

Genesis 2:4-25

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## I. The Centrality of Christian Education

## II. The Foundation of Education: The Imago Dei

<sup>26</sup>Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our *image*, according to Our *likeness*; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." <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. (Gen 1:26-27)



The foundational reason that we educate our children is because they have been made in the image of God. They have been created "to glorify God and enjoy Him forever" (WSC#1). First, they exist to glorify God, to point to His control, presence, and authority. Second, they exist to enjoy God forever. They are in \_\_\_\_\_ with God, in a binding relationship that contains both privileges and responsibilities. We were made for love and fidelity. We were not designed to live solitary or treacherous lives. Genesis 2 reveals that God created us with minds, consciences, and imaginations in order that we may fulfill our twofold calling. Education is the process of informing and awakening our minds, consciences, and imaginations that we may glorify and enjoy God more fully.

### A. Mind (cf. 2:7, 9, 10-14, 19-20)

First, God has created us as His image bearers with minds; we are *rational creatures*. We are not merely material creatures. We possess both flesh and spirit, body and soul. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (2:7).

### B. Conscience (cf. 2:15, 16-17, 25)

Second, God has created us *moral creatures*. Not only have we been created with *minds*, we have also been created with \_\_\_\_\_ – with the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, between *good* and *evil*. As human beings we are responsible for our actions. We are moral agents, shapers of history, and changers of events.

### C. Imagination (2:9, 18, 20, 23)

Finally, God has created us *aesthetic creatures* – *aesthetics* is the study of *beauty*. When God creates the garden, it is not merely a utilitarian haven, a *place of food*; it is also a *place of* \_\_\_\_\_ (cf. 2:9). God created us with an appreciation of *beauty*; we have *imaginations*. "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called *Woman*, because she was taken out of *Man*" (2:23). Adam speaks not just words, not just factual data, but poetry.

*Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God,  
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes,  
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries,  
And daub their natural faces unware.*

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

### III. The Object of Christian Education: The Golden Triad

#### A. Transcendentals and Receptors

Our *minds, consciences, and imaginations* are \_\_\_\_\_ that enable us, used rightly, to perceive and embrace *transcendentals* – the eternal realities that exist separate from our perception of them – realities such as truth, goodness, and beauty.

#### B. The Golden Triad

##### 1. Truth (cf. Ps 119:151, 160; Ex 34:6; Jn 14:6; 17:7; 2 Tim 3:15)

As a human being you have a *mind*, you are a rational being. Why has God given you a *mind*? In order that you might grasp the \_\_\_\_\_; that you might embrace what is *true* and reject what is *false*. *Truth* exists because God exists. God is *Truth*. God announces to Moses that He is “*abounding in... truth*” (Ex 34:6). And Jesus declares to His disciples, “*I am... the truth...*” (Jn 14:6).

##### 2. Goodness (cf. Ex 34:6; Is 5:20; Rom 2:4, 14; 1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 3:16-17)

As a human you have a *conscience*, you are a moral being. Why has God given you a *conscience*? In order that you might understand and embrace what is *good* and reject what is *evil*. “*Conscience is the built-in power of our minds to pass moral judgments on ourselves, approving or disapproving our actions, thoughts, and plans, and telling us, if what we have done is assessed as wrong, that we deserve to suffer for it.*” Your *conscience* enables you to grasp and embrace what is *good*. *Goodness* exists because God exists. God is \_\_\_\_\_. God revealed to Moses that He is “*abounding in goodness...*” (Ex 34:6 cf. Ps 119:68).

##### 3. Beauty (cf. Ex 28:2; Ps 19:10; 27:4; 29:2; 84:1; 90:17; 119:37; Zech 9:16-17)

As a human being, you have an *imagination*; you are an aesthetic being. Aesthetics is the study of \_\_\_\_\_. Why has God given you an *imagination*? That you might understand and embrace what is *beautiful* and lovely. Your *imagination* enables you to understand and embrace *Beauty*. *Beauty* exists because God exists. God is *Beautiful*. Moses teaches us to sing, “*Let the Beauty of the Lord our God be upon us*” (Ps 90:17). And David declares that his chief desire is to “ *dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord*” (27:4).

#### C. Think on These Things (Phil 4:8 cf. Pr 11:22; 25:11)

“*Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things*” (Phil 4:8).

### IV. Conclusion

“*The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection.*” John Milton (1608-1674)