

**Biblical Counseling**  
**Week 7 2025-2026**

ACBC Theology Exam –

9. Explain, using biblical categories, your understanding of the image of God in man

11. Describe the biblical understanding of manhood and womanhood from both an egalitarian and complementarian perspective. Explain which view you embrace and outline why you believe it to be the most biblical.

Genesis 1:26 –

*Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness”*

Genesis 2:7 –

*Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*

Genesis 9:6b –

*For in the image of God He made man.*

James 3:9 –

*With it (tongue) we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God*

1 Corinthians 11:3 –

*But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.*

- The image of God in man - A Biblical View of Man: An Accurate Anthropology  
What one believes about man shapes what we think about who we are, what happened, how can we fix it, and where we're going.

More importantly – what one thinks about man indicates what one thinks about God and creation.

## II. SMCC Doctrinal Statement About man (Anthropology)

- We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9).

- We teach that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11).

- We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence; incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death; became subject to the wrath of God; and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).

- We teach that because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Ps. 14:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

### III. Created in God's Image

- The material and immaterial parts of man are interwoven, but not static. The physical cannot change. One head, two hands, two legs, warm blooded etc. The normative human body has been designed by God. It has a life expectancy that may or may not exceed the average. We can expect no great changes in the physical from generation to generation.

- On the other hand, the immaterial part of man, while starting at a common beginning for all men, is subject to change; although not of its own volition. The natural inclination of the fallen individual is a physical body that is dying combined with a spiritual nature that is already dead (Eph. 2:1). The new birth is able to transform the immaterial part of man to a living, dynamic state contrary to its sinful inception.

- The human body, the material, was designed to have harmony with the immaterial. (Gen. 1:26). Sin corrupted both the material and immaterial parts of man and ushered in disharmony. That harmony is restored imperfectly through the new birth; a still fallen body but a new spirit. The harmony is perfected in glory when the new body is united with the new spirit, restoring the perfection of the garden.

- Original sin includes both guilt and pollution.

- Guilt is a judicial or legal concept describing one's relationship to the law—in this case, specifically to God's law. Guilt is the state of deserving condemnation or of being liable to punishment because the law has been violated. When we say that original sin includes guilt, we do not mean that each of us is considered personally responsible for what Adam did. You and I cannot be held directly responsible for something someone else has done. But the doctrine of original sin does mean that we are involved in the guilt of Adam's sin because he acted as our representative when he committed the first sin.

- Pollution, in distinction from guilt, is a moral concept; it has to do with

our moral condition rather than with our status before the law. We can define original pollution (the pollution involved in original sin) as the corruption of our nature that is the result of sin and produces sin. As a necessary implication of our involvement in Adam's guilt, all human beings are born in a state of corruption.

- Two aspects of original pollution: pervasive depravity and spiritual inability.

- Pervasive depravity, then, means that (1) the corruption of original sin extends to every aspect of human nature: to one's reason and will as well as to one's appetites and impulses; and (2) there is not present in man by nature love to God as the motivating principle of his life.

- Spiritual inability means two things: (1) the unregenerate person cannot do, say, or think that which totally meets with God's approval, and therefore totally fulfills God's law; and (2) the unregenerate person is unable apart from the special working of the Holy Spirit to change the basic direction of his or her life from sinful self-love to love for God. "Spiritual inability" is really only another way of describing the doctrine of "pervasive depravity," this time with an emphasis on the spiritual impotence of the will.[1]

Anthony Hoekema *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986)

#### IV. Original Sin in Man

Federalism and Seminalism are two theories having to do with original sin and how Adam's sin ultimately touches the rest of the human race. Neither term is used in Scripture but have been coined to try to explain the biblical data.

Federalism sees Adam as the representative head of all humanity. When Adam sinned, he sinned not only for himself but as the representative (federal head) of all humanity. His decision was binding upon all people of all time. In the same way, leaders of a government may enter into agreements with other nations, and those agreements are binding upon all the citizens, even though they had no direct input regarding the agreement and may even be unaware of it. Adam sinned, making himself and everyone he represented a sinner. Adam's guilt (not just his sinful nature) is imputed to every human being.

Seminalism sees Adam's sin as something that corrupted the human nature he passed on to his posterity, as the entire human race was genetically present in Adam. Adam's guilt is not passed on to his children, but his sinful tendencies are. His children, with their corrupted nature, readily join in Adam's rebellion at the first available opportunity and are therefore guilty of their own sin.

Both federalism and seminalism fall within Christian orthodoxy. Both views affirm the biblical doctrines of original sin and total depravity. Both sides would wholeheartedly agree that, outside of Christ, people are dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1).

Scripture condemns all people for their actual sin. However, humanity's problem is not only individual acts of sin, but also a nature that is wholly steeped in sin. Individual sins are simply the result of a sin nature that we inherited from Adam. Paul goes to great lengths in Romans 1 and 2 to make the case that all people are guilty before God because they have broken the law as it has been revealed to them. He does not charge them with Adam's sin.

<https://www.gotquestions.org/federalism-seminalism.html>

## V. A Biblical View of Man: An Accurate Anthropology

- Inaccurate anthropology: Abraham Maslow: man is basically good and with the continuing satisfaction of his self-needs/felt-needs he may achieve self-actualization and progress to greater levels – his anthropology and that shared by most of the world!

- An Accurate Anthropology - Louis Berkhof: “*According to Scripture the essence of man consists in this, that he is the image of God. As such he is distinguished from all other creatures and stands supreme as the head and crown of the entire creation. Scripture asserts that man was created in the image and after the likeness of God, Gen. 1:26,27; 9:6; Jas. 3:9, and speaks of man as being and as bearing the image of God*” I Cor. 11:7; 15:49. [https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/berkhof/systematic\\_theology.html#origin](https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/berkhof/systematic_theology.html#origin)

- Man was made in the image and likeness of God –  
- Image - the shadow or outline of a figure.  
- Likeness - the resemblance of that shadow to the figure - synonymous.  
- May be expressed as follows: “Let us make man in our image to be our likeness.” (Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 8:29).

VI. Original state of Man (Louis Berkhof *Systematic Theology*, Part II). Man was created in a state of relative perfection, a state of righteousness and holiness.

He was destined to reach a higher degree of perfection in the way of obedience - like a child, perfect in parts, but not yet in degree.

His condition was a preliminary and temporary one, which would either lead to greater perfection and glory or terminate in a fall.

He was by nature endowed with original righteousness which is the crowning glory of the image of God, and consequently lived in a state of positive holiness.

The loss of righteousness meant the loss of something that belonged to the nature of man in its ideal state. Man could lose it and still remain man, but he could not lose it and remain man in the ideal sense of the word. Man's loss of righteousness meant a deterioration and impairment of human nature.

The loss of this spiritual life spells spiritual death and also results in physical death.

Man was created immortal. This applies not only to the soul, but to the whole person of man; and therefore ... the soul was destined to have a continued existence.

As created by God, man did not bear within him the seeds of death and would not have died necessarily in virtue of the original constitution of his nature. Though the possibility of his

becoming a victim of death was not excluded, he was not liable to death as long as he did not sin.

Man's original immortality was not something purely negative and physical but was something positive and spiritual. It meant life in communion with God and the enjoyment of the favor of the Most High.

This is the fundamental conception of life in Scripture, just as death is primarily separation from God and subjection to His wrath.

## VII. The Results of the First Sin (Louis Berkhof *Systematic Theology*, Part II)

- Total depravity of human nature. Sin at once spread through the entire man, leaving no part of his nature untouched, but impacting every power and faculty of body and soul. Total depravity does not mean that man was at once as thoroughly depraved as it could possibly become (Gen. 6:5; Ps. 14:3; Rom. 7:18).

- Loss of communion with God. Man lost the image of God in the sense of original righteousness. He broke away from the real source of life and blessedness, and the result was a condition of spiritual death, Eph. 2:1,5,12; 4:18. Man remains in the image of God (Genesis 9:6), though a marred image.

- Spiritual and physical death resulted from the first sin. Man was doomed to return to the dust from which he was taken (Gen. 3:19). Paul tells us that by one man death entered the world and passed on to all men (Rom. 5:12) and that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

- Man was driven from paradise, because it represented the place of communion with God, and was a symbol of the fuller life and greater blessedness in store for man, if he continued steadfast. He was barred from the tree of life.

## VIII. A Biblical View of Man: An Accurate Anthropology. The basic biblical worldview as to man and to which biblical counseling is based is as follows:

- Man was created in God's image – Man is an image bearer! Created in God's image means we are able to communicate with God and with others; we have the ability to love, obey, and to serve God; and we are self-conscious and reasonably able to understand existence.

- Mankind is totally depraved – He is fallen, contaminated with sin and idolatry. Man was created in God's image to glorify God, but because of sin, he seeks to glorify himself

- On his own he cannot do good (Rom. 3:10-18).

- His heart is deceitfully wicked (Jer. 17:9-10).

- His goal in life is selfishness and only evil continually (Gen. 6:5).

- He is physically dying and psychologically confused.

- A sinner is alienated from God, and as a result, he will seek fulfillment from the world's system (John 2:15-17).

The implications:

- Christ will not be seen as the only solution to man's problems.

- People will try to provide substitutes that promise fulfillment.

- The focus is on dealing with felt needs instead of "real" needs

- Mankind needs to be reconnected by God's grace – new birth – born again. Man needs a Savior and only through Christ will he be reconnected to God, understand his life, receive healing, and be saved.

- Man is called to holiness and sanctification – the meaning of life is to walk in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord – in all respects to be pleasing to God (2 Cor. 5:9; Colossians 1:9-10)!

## IX. The Image Is Being Restored in Christ

God is restoring His image in us by conforming us to the image of Christ. It is through union with Christ that we are made like Him:

*For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers (Romans 8:29).*

*Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven (1 Corinthians 15:49).*

*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18).*

*You have put off the old self [literally “man”] with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator (Colossians 3:9-10).*

The Image Is Being Restored in Christ (cont.). The image of God is not just being restored in us, but we are also being made into the image of Jesus. We are being “conformed” to Jesus' image, “transformed . . . from one degree of glory to another.” And this is the work of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18).

All three persons of the Trinity involved in this process.

> We were created in the image of God.

> The Son took on human flesh and is thus the very image of God. Through union with Him, we as Christians are being conformed to His image, thus fulfilling the original design of God's creation.

> Accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Conforming to Christ's image takes place in this life through sanctification. We rule over creation through work and cultural advancement (Genesis 1:26-28), and we proclaim Christ's reign through discipleship and gospel proclamation (Matthew 28:18-20).

Complete restoration of God's image must await Christ's return:

*Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:2).*

## X. Image of God in man: Application to personal ministry and biblical counseling.

The image of God in man means that as we are specifically and deliberately created by God in His image and likeness, that we have a special place, purpose, and destiny in creation and eternity.

Sin did not destroy the image of God in man. Even after the fall, mankind is still made in God's image. All people still reflect, in some way, the dignity of the Lord, no matter how we have marred His image. Thus, our treatment of others reveals what we think of our Creator. If you have been cruel to another, confess and repent of your sin, and remember that if you are cruel to His image, you are sinning against God (Js 3:7–10).

It means that we are accountable to God, and responsible for creation and to one another, for our attitudes, our motivation, our thoughts, words, and deeds.

Jesus is the answer. He comes by faith, He justifies, He forgives, He cleanses, and He begins a reclamation project called sanctification that will end in the glory that God intended for human beings in the first place. Therefore, since we know that we were created in the image of God, our sin and corruption begs for an answer – Jesus Christ.

Being image bearers must order our decision-making, our speech, our conduct, our responses to one another and the circumstances we face.

Do we honor and glorify God and resemble His image in our thoughts, words, and deeds?

Do we understand and respond accordingly because we are made in God's image and because we are now progressively being conformed to the image of His Son reflect that image in our hearts, in thoughts, words, and deeds?

Bearing the image of God enables us to share some of God's spiritual and mental capacities.

Being made in God's image means, among other things, that we can understand His revelation, formulate plans, have fellowship with Him and one another, and reflect some of His attributes.

Therefore, the image of God in man means we have the capacity (justification and sanctification), the means (Scripture, Holy Spirit, one another), the power (Christ in us, Col. 1:26) to be overcomers by faith (1 Jn 5:4-5) of the encumbrances and the sin that entangles us (Heb. 12:1-2). In counseling and discipleship we want to help others understand what it means to be created in God's image and that we are being conformed to Christ's image in our sanctification. Our life now must glorify God as we are being conformed to His image and whatever does not glorify God must change. Because we are new creations in Christ, we have the ability through Christ in us to overcome the effects of the marring of the image and are no longer slaves to that marring effect. We have hope, victory, power to overcome effects of sin and suffering and to walk in the Spirit and light.

## XI. Summary. Describe the image of God in man.

- > Created in the image of God and remains a marred image bearer
- > Original state of perfection
- > Fall and the results of the fall – cursed, depravity, in need of redemption.

## Man's present condition?

- > Total depravity
- > Separated from God
- > Necessary for a Savior and redemption

- > Christian: redeemed, justified, adopted, positionally sanctified and currently in progressive sanctification, glorified.
- > Unbeliever: dead forever, separated from God, rejected God. Repressed truth of God.

Total Depravity of man - Why is it important to understand this doctrine in counseling?

- > Sin at once spread through the entire man, leaving no part of his nature untouched, but impacting every power and faculty of body and soul. Total depravity does not mean that man was at once as thoroughly depraved as it could possibly become and can become worse, but with redemption and imputed with Christ's righteousness can become better.

- > Explains what and why we do what we do and think and why we need a Savior.

XII. Psychology and Secular Philosophy. Unscriptural presuppositions and practices of certain schools of psychology

1. A faulty view of man.
2. Excuses sin and denies personal responsibility.
3. No fixed moral values: relativism.
  - a. Non-directive counseling (Rogers).
  - b. Sinful behaviors and desires legitimized.
  - c. Promotion of "socially acceptable" gratification of carnal appetites (ventilation).
  - d. Often attempts to relieve God given guilt by destroying conscience.
4. No place for God.

XIII. Tenets of humanistic methods of solving man's problems.

Humanism and Rationalism is the predominant secular philosophy.

Humanism is a philosophical and ethical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively, and generally prefers critical thinking and evidence (rationalism, empiricism) over acceptance of dogma or superstition.

XIV. Tenets of humanistic methods of solving man's problems.

XV. OUR LIVING HOPE – 1 Corinthians 15:39-58

XVI. Resources:

Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem.  
Biblical Doctrine by John MacArthur  
Moody Handbook of Theology by Paul Enns  
Theology of Christian Counseling by Jay Adams  
*Systematic Theology* by Louis Berkhof

ACBC Theology Exam Question # 11. Describe the biblical understanding of manhood and womanhood from both an egalitarian and complementarian perspective. Explain which view you embrace and outline why you believe it to be the most biblical.

I. The Bible teaches **COMPLEMENTARIANISM**.

Genesis 2: 18-24 – “a helper suitable for him”.

1 Corinthians 11:3 – “Headship”

Ephesians 5:22-33 – “Headship and Submission”

Equality in spirituality and personhood (Gen. 1:26-28, Gen. 2: 18-24; Gal. 3:25-29, 1 Peter 3:7)

Functional role differences in the home and in the church. (Genesis 2: 18-24; Proverbs 31:10-31, Ephesians 5:22-33, 1 Peter 3:1-7).

II. Complementarian relationship –

- Gender roles ordained by God; men and women created to complement one another. God's roles for husbands and wives are distinct and part of God's creative order.

- Gender roles are Christ-honoring:

- Men/husbands love and provide leadership to their wives and family

- Women/wives submit to their husbands and his leadership as the most suitable helper.

- Gender roles established by God are given to the church as men assume leadership over the church and women submit to male leadership.

- God-ordained and Christ-honoring male headship is not dominating or oppressive, but is sacrificial, loving, and servant leadership.

- Female submission is willing, voluntary, and not forced subjugation and is done as a picture of the church submitting to Christ.

- Equality in spirituality and personhood. 1 Peter 3:7 - spouses are joint heirs. Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

### III. EGALITARIANISM

- Worldly culture (sadly, in many churches now) hold to the position of "EGALITARIANISM".

- Egalitarianism holds that there are no gender distinctions as to marriage or gender roles or functions in the family or church.

- No one is the designated leader and all share in the leadership, or even more confusing no one leads at all as the couple claim both are equal at leading and both are equal in every way.

- Where there is no fixed leadership in the family (or any institution ) conflict and misdirection will eventually arise.

- Biblical marriage is not a 50/50 relationship. The closest is a 51/49 with the husband at 51% of leadership responsibility. This is not demeaning to the wife as it is God's design and intention.

### IV. Complementarian relationship is the biblically correct relationship (Genesis 1:18-24; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22-33).

## V. Role Differences: Application to personal ministry and biblical counseling.

Husbands and wives must know, understand, and apply the biblical command and direction for roles and relationships in their marriages.

God created the man for headship and leadership.

God created the woman as man's most suitable helper in submission as unto the Lord.

Together the husband and wife complement each other and fulfill God's design and intention for marriage and the husband and wife relationship.

Counseling must seek to develop or restore the complementarian relationship

Counseling husbands and wives to realize that fulfilling God's purpose for marriage results in a God glorifying marriage, rich in the blessing of sanctification and growing in unity, intimacy, and completion in their relationship.

Failure to carry this out results in disorder, resentment, negligence, and most importantly sinful disregard of God's command and sinful disregard of one another.