

3 But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. 4 **Their idols are silver and gold, The work of man's hands.** 5 They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They have eyes, but they cannot see; 6 They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell; 7 They have hands, but they cannot feel; They have feet, but they cannot walk; They cannot make a sound with their throat. 8 **Those who make them will become like them, Everyone who trusts in them.** NASB

See here how the “nations” are described as having *“god’s that are idols which are the work of man’s hands,”* dead lifeless things made by men. He says in verse 8, *“those who make them will become like them, everyone who trusts in them.”* See here that even the wicked become like what they worship, even if it is a dead and lifeless image made with their own hands. But notice here that the prophet told us where the glory and praise properly belonged, *“to thy name give glory, because of thy lovingkindness because of thy truth.”* Here we are told to worship God and give Him glory because He is worthy of our devoted worship. And there is also this element of **trust in God**. Not only do we value and worship Him, but **we earnestly trust in Him** to be our God and **provide** for us, **deliver** us, **heal** us and **meet all of our needs** and even our deepest spiritual needs. We were made as **receptors to experience and enjoy** the Goodness of God and also as **reflectors to shine forth His virtue** in our own being as we become like Him. See in these things that we ultimately begin to take on the nature of what we value, worship and trust in the most.

Jesus Must be Supreme in Our Affections

What do you love? What do you treasure? Of what can it be said about you that you long for and desire it above all other things in your life? Whatever that thing may be, it can be said that this is what you *worship*. That is because the word *worship* originates from the idea of “*ascribing worth*” or “*value*” to something. So then, that which you **worship** is that which you **value** or ascribe worth to, that which you **treasure** or **adore**. It is that which you **revere** or **honor**, that which you **venerate** or **idolize**, it is that which you **glorify** or consider to be highly **valuable**. Now if Christ is supremely valuable in reality, and there is truly nothing that even comes close to being as infinitely worthy of all glory and honor, worship and adoration as Him, it only stands to reason that to fail to give Him this proper place of honor in our hearts and affections is to be sorely mistaken and **self-deceived** in our **value system**. This is because He is the One who is worthy of Glory and honor!

Revelation 4:11 - 11 "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created." NASB
Revelation 5:12-14 – 12 Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." 13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." 14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped. NASB

If we love something more than Christ, we have **misplaced affections**. He is altogether lovely, therefore not to love Him is to have a **degraded mind**, and to throw contempt on the highest manifestation of human excellence and Divine love. This is why the Scripture pronounces a curse upon those who fail to love Christ.

1 Corinthians 16:22 - 22 If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha. NASB
This is to say if you do not love Christ, you are accursed already! In fact, the very state of being accursed is the state of not properly valuing that which is truly valuable. If we love and adore that which is wretched and worthless, we are then by virtue of this, wretched and worthless. If we truly love what is supremely lovely and virtuous and valuable, we will then become lovely and virtuous in ourselves, because we properly value what is *truly* virtuous. More than this, as we **trust in** and **rely upon Jesus**, our great God and King, **enjoying Him** and our daily

relationship with Him, it has a **transforming** affect that propels us with increasing intensity toward Christ's likeness. We live out this **union in Christ** that we have with Him.

Knowing this, we should be all the more **eager to worship** the Glorious Creator, **Jesus Christ!** Even Jesus Himself taught us that **our love for Him was to exceed all other loves** and affections in our lives.

Luke 14:25-27 - 25 Now great multitudes were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, 26 **"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.** 27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. NASB

The word **"hate"** here does not suggest positive antagonism but rather "to love less". Our love for Christ must be so strong that **all other love is like hatred in comparison** to it. In fact, we must hate **"our own lives"** and be willing to lose our lives and **"carry our own cross"** to follow Him. We must love Him more than our own very lives because He is more valuable than our very lives themselves. When we **trust** Him and **rely** upon Him and **enjoy** Him, following Him in obedience to His Lordship, we show forth the genuine character of our love for Him and living for Christ becomes our main life purpose. When we do this, we have **properly placed our affections** on that which is worthy of our love, and our trust in that place where it properly belongs, and we will then become like Him because we value His virtue and long to possess it more than anything else. As we truly love to follow Him and obey His commandments, we begin to live out His virtues and His character which is being created in us by the Holy Spirit. If you **treasure joy**, you will **seek to be joyful**. If you honor and **esteem justice**, you will **seek to be just** in all your affairs. If you esteem love and compassion as most valuable, then you will become loving and compassionate. If you **trust in, honor, esteem, venerate, treasure and glorify God** more than anything else, in all of His glorious virtue, then you will **become like Him**, because you seek to possess Him above all other things. Consider how loving, hungering and thirsting for God takes on a new meaning in this context.

Psalms 143:5-6 - 5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Thy doings; **I muse on the work of Thy hands.** 6 **I stretch out my hands to Thee; My soul longs for Thee**, as a parched land. NASB

The most loving and beneficial thing that God can command us is to treasure, esteem and love Him more than anything. This because **He is what is in reality most worthy of being loved**, and this causes us to become like Him because we seek His virtue and want to possess it more than anything else. Thus we see the reason why the greatest of all commandments is to love God! In other words **the highest of priorities for our lives is the love and honor of God**. It is imperative to understand that He must have **first place**, or **preeminence** in our hearts and affections. We must **love Him above** all other things.

Matthew 6:33 - 33 "But **seek first His kingdom and His righteousness**; and all these things shall be added to you. NASB

Matthew 22:36-38 - 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And He said to him, **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."** 38 **"This is the great and foremost commandment.** NASB

Philippians 2:12-16 - 12 So then, my beloved, **just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation** with fear and trembling; 13 **for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.** 14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing; 15 **that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach** in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, **among whom you appear as lights in the world,** 16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. NASB

Now as Christ holds **first place** in our affections, and as we live out the **obedience of faith** in Him, we will indeed become like Him, and with increasing intensity we will **bear His image**. We will in fact *“participate in the divine nature”* and **godliness**, or **true piety** will begin to define our character. In this we will be **reflectors of God’s very own glory** in which we will shine through us as *“lights in this world,”* the very purpose for which we were created.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

One last point to grasp in this whole idea of being **image bearers** as God’s purpose in our salvation is that this is the work of the Holy Spirit in us through regeneration and our ongoing practical sanctification.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - 17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. NASB

Not only were we created **generally** like God in our human nature in the **first creation with Adam**, but when we were powerfully **born again** by the **Holy Spirit** in **regeneration**, we were created more **specifically** like Him as a **new creation in Christ**. And now being **in Christ**, or having **union with Christ**, we have been fashioned like Him in such a way that His divine life and nature have been re-created in us (re-genesis...regeneration), delivering us from the power of sin and death under which we became slaves in the fall. In this new liberty from sin and death, God is powerfully working in us by the Holy Spirit to fashion us in His likeness so that we become **image bearers** in much greater degree and intensity. This process in us is what we call **practical** or **progressive sanctification**. This powerful sanctification by the Spirit is an essential part of salvation and the outworking of our **election** and **regeneration** in our everyday life.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 - 13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has **chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth**. NASB

1 Peter 1:1-2 - 1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **who are chosen 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit**, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure. NASB

Titus 3:5-7 - 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit**, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. NASB

Consider how the New Testament describes this **image bearing** as God’s very **purpose** in saving us. It speaks of us being *“conformed to the image of His Son”* as the chief reason for our **predestination, election** and **calling** in salvation, that we would be a people to the *“praise of the glory of His grace!”*

Romans 8:28-30 - 28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are **called according to His purpose**. 29 **For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; 30 and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. NASB

Ephesians 1:3-7 - 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places **in Christ**, 4 just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him**. In love 5 **He predestined us** to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 **to the praise of the glory of His grace**, which He freely bestowed on us **in the Beloved**. NASB

Ephesians 1:11-12 - 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been **predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will**, 12 **to the end** that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. NASB

Here, the salvation of the saints is seen to be *“predestined according to God’s purpose,”* but notice that this is not God’s highest purpose. Oh no, here it says that the predestination of salvation is *“to the end that we.....should be to the praise of His glory!”* And this purpose of God is being powerfully worked and fulfilled in us through our **union with Christ** by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament explicitly connects this **purpose in salvation** as the **work of the Holy Spirit** in causing us to **bear God’s image**, having already, past tense, been *“created like God”* in regeneration. As **new creations** in Christ, He has created us in His **image and likeness**, and we are now **becoming in practice** what we already **are in reality**, children of God fashioned after the image of our Father and His Son Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:45-49 - 45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a **life-giving spirit**. 46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; **then the spiritual**. 47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and **as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly**. 49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, **we shall also bear the image of the heavenly**. NASB

Ephesians 4:22-24 - 22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on **the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth**. NASB

Colossians 3:10-11 - 10 and have put on **the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him** 11 — a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. NASB

Consider how the Scripture speaks of our *“being transformed”* progressively into God’s image from *“glory to glory”* because we have been created like Him already.

2 Corinthians 3:18 - 8 But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit**. NASB

See in these Scriptures how the very **work of the Holy Spirit** in salvation is to not only **powerfully re-create** us in regeneration, but also to **powerfully transform** us in progressive sanctification, causing us to be conformed to the image of Christ practically throughout our life.

Glorification

When He is finished with the work of **progressive Sanctification**, the process of conforming us to His image practically, we shall ultimately take on His image in much fullness and be *“like Him”* at the resurrection, on the day of Glory! We call this **glorification**.

1 John 3:2-3 - 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, **when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is**. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. NASB

Philippians 3:20-21 - 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 **who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory**, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. NASB

1 Corinthians 15:50-54 - 50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed**, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed**. 53 **For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality**. 54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." NASB

This is the eternal state, to experience the **fullness of the glory of God** (as receptors) and to sing forth the praises of His glory as an overflow of the enjoyment of His Goodness (as reflectors).