



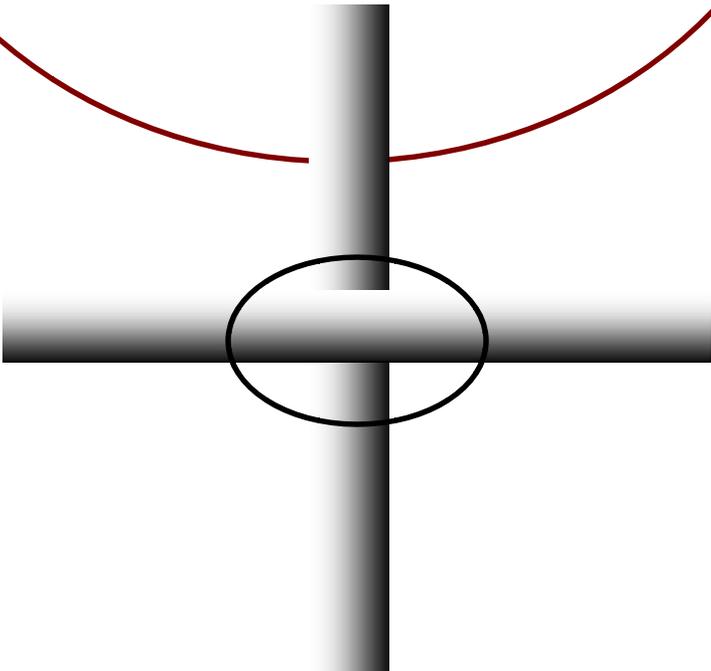
The Mystery of The  
*Looking*  
*Glass*

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# Introduction



Here's what the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth in the first century.

*“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” II Corinthians 3:18*

*“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.” II Corinthians 4:1-2*

What ministry is Paul talking about? It is this ministry of looking into the looking glass or mirror... “with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord”. This is a mystery.

# Seeing Yourself In The Looking Glass

What do you see when you look into the mirror? Is it that old man or woman that frowns, is grumpy and full of attitudes? Or is it the Glory of the Lord? Paul is telling the church folks that it is a ministry, in itself, to look into the looking glass and behold the glory of the Lord. It is a ministry to our own souls.

Paul goes on to say, “we are changed into the same image from glory to glory and it is the Spirit of the Lord that causes the changes... *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord” Let’s break this out into points.

1. When we look into a mirror, we should be seeing the Glory of the Lord.
2. When we do this, we are to come to the mirror with an “Open Face”, meaning with no veil over our face and free of any attitudes, so we can see the image of God.
3. Every time we look, we change (From Glory to Glory)...Each Glory experience changes us... more of Jesus and less of us.

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4. When we look into the glass, we see the same image over and over again...that of Jesus for it is the spirit that shows us...but that's not all.
  5. The Bible is the looking glass where we see Jesus and ourselves.

## **The Veil Uncovered**

Do You remember the account when Moses came down from the mountain with the 10-commandments? (The beginning of the Mosaic Law) His face was so bright with the glory of the Lord that the people had to cover his face. They could not look into it. Paul tells us that when we look into the looking glass, we look into the glory of the Lord without being blinded. We need no covering over our head.

There is a contrast between Law and grace and condemnation and forgiveness. The law was given to condemn sin and as a result brought death. Grace came by Jesus to provide reconciliation and life.

The implication is clear. We no longer have to fear death because God's grace, in and through Christ, has given us life.

# The Doctrine of Change

The scripture teaches the doctrine of change. Jesus doesn't change but we change into His image. We also see this doctrine in Paul's letter to the church at Rome

*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

**Romans 12:-1-2**

"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

(V.3) Not to think of ourselves is to come with an open face.

# You, Me And The Mirror

Beholding as in a glass is a reference to a looking glass or mirror. I believe that there are two thoughts here. The first is as a regular mirror but the second is, in my opinion, a metaphor for the Bible. It is a mirror for our souls where we see ourselves as we really are. Here are some scriptures that prove my point:

“All **we like sheep** have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” **Isaiah 53:6** **here we see ourselves as sheep that have lost their perspective.**

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” **Romans 3:23** If all have sinned, then **we are all sinners. This is revealed to us, who we are without Christ, as we look into the looking glass.**

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies **a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. **Romans 12:1** **We are buried**

**with Him in baptism and raised with Him in newness of Life.**

“Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is a new creature*: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” **II Corinthians 5:17** **A new creation is different than what we are now. We see the new creation we are becoming.**

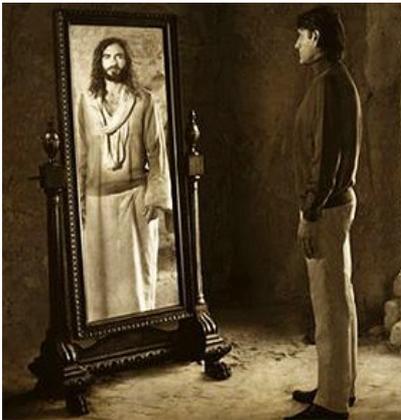
“And hast made us unto our God *kings and priests*: and we shall reign on the earth”... **Rev. 5:10** **A look at our destiny.**

“And the LORD shall **make thee the head, and not the tail**; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them: **Deut. 28-13** **We are promised to lead not follow if we obey the voice of the lord.**

I am sure you can find many more examples where the scriptures reflect back to us who we are with and without Christ. The point is...as we read the Bible, *we see ourselves in various stages of growth...from glory unto glory.* We are ever changing into the image of Christ. However, we do not want to be like the man that James spoke of in his letter to the church.

”For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholds himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was.” **James 1:23-24**

The changing you is dependant upon being a doer of the Word. If you just look into the looking glass and do not apply what you read, you forget it all about the manor of man that you were and what God wanted you to be.



## **Glory In The Looking Glass**

The more you read the Bible, the more you will see Jesus. As you see Him, you will also see His

Glory...that of the only begotten Son of God. He is like no other man in all of history. This is where you learn of Him and develop a relationship. This is where He will speak to your need and direct your steps.

Take a look into the looking glass. Here are a few things you will see regarding Jesus.

1. *The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. Psalm 23:1*

2. Jesus said to them, "***I am the bread of life***; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. "But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe. "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. ***John 6:36-51***

3. Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "***I am the Light of the world***"; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." ***John 8:12***

4. The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "***Behold, the Lamb of God***", who takes away the sin of the world! ***John 1:29***

5. Revelation 5:5: And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the ***Lion of the tribe of Judah***, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. ***Revelation 5:5***

Again, I am sure you will see other descriptions of Christ as you gaze into the looking glass. Just in these few examples, we have seen Jesus as **a Lion, A Lamb, The Light of the world, and our Shepherd.** We do not want to overlook Him as **our Savior.** *“For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”* **Romans 5:10 NIV** **There’s more...take a look and see.**

## **The Ever Changing You**

The beautiful picture that emerges in the looking glass, as you continually gaze into it is *an ever changing you.* It’s almost like a caterpillar that goes through metamorphosis to eventually become a new creature...the butterfly. From glory to glory, slow but steady, as we read and apply God’s Word, we are changed into the very image of Christ.

This is the mystery of the looking glass. People will see you and they will see God’s image. They will see His image growing brighter and brighter as you look into the looking glass.

The pattern of unrighteousness gives way to righteousness, not ours but the righteousness of Christ. *“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”* **II Corinthians 5:21**

The fallen nature of man, with its deeds of immorality, suddenly comes into conflict with the fruit of God’s Spirit that grow to maturity as we gaze into the looking glass. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”* **Galatians 5:22-24**

We now have a choice and the where-with-all to overcome the evil that resides inside of us. The old heart & spirit is taken away and replaced by. *“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”* **Ezekiel 36:26**

As a result of beholding God’s Glory in the looking glass (The Bible), we are "being transformed" "being changed" The verb is *metamorphoō*, "to change inwardly in fundamental character or condition, be changed, be

transformed." It is a compound verb, formed from *meta-*, "exchange, transfer, transmutation" + *morphoō*, "to form, shape." From this we get our English word "metamorphosis.

Paul is also using the looking glass to show the transformation from the Law to Grace. It eventually changes, as does its foundation upon which we stand. Our salvation now is in Jesus, not the Law of Moses. He made this clear in **Galatians 3:1-3** when he said...

*“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”*

Here in this one scripture, **II Corinthians 3:18**, we can see how God changed the foundation for salvation and how the believer changes into the image and likeness of God.

However, Salvation has always been by grace. The Law made manifest the true nature of man without God. We would never have know it was wrong to

steal unless the Law said it was wrong. It was a schoolmaster to show us our own depravity so we would call upon the grace of God to save us.

This is the reinstatement of God's original plan to make man in His image and likeness. **Genesis 1:26**

There are a lot more benefits that come to us as we gaze into the looking glass. These are just a few.

## **John Gills' Bible Commentary**

I came across John Gills' expository of The Bible, where I found this commentary. Listen to what he says. It's a little deep into theology but very interesting.

**But We All With Open Face,** We are not like Moses, who had a veil on his face; nor like the Jews, who have one on their hearts: "but we all"; not ministers and preachers of the Gospel only, but all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, greater or lesser believers, who are enlightened by the Spirit of God, and are converted to Christ: "with open face"; which may regard the object beheld, the glory of Christ unveiled, that has no veil on it, as Moses had on his face, when he delivered the law; or the persons beholding, who are rid of Jewish

darkness; the veil of the ceremonial law, and of natural darkness and blindness of mind; and so clearly and fully, comparatively speaking, ...

**Beholding As In A Glass;** Not of the law, but of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; not with the eyes of their bodies, but with the eyes of their understandings, with the eye of faith; which sight is spiritual, delightful, and very endearing; throws a veil over all other objects, and makes souls long to be with Christ: the object beheld is **the glory of the Lord;**

Jesus Christ: not the glory of his human nature, which lies in its union to the Son of God, and in its names which it has by virtue of it; and in its being the curious workmanship of the Spirit of God, and so is pure and holy, and free from all sin; and was outwardly beautiful and glorious, and is so at the right hand of God, where we see him by faith, crowned with glory and honour; and shall behold him with the eyes of our bodies, and which will be fashioned like to his glorious body; but this sight and change are not yet: rather the glory of his divine nature is meant, which is essential and underived.

The same with his Father's; is ineffable, and incomprehensible; it appears in the perfections he is possessed of, and in the worship given to him; it was manifested in the doctrines taught, and in the miracles

wrought by him; there were some breakings forth of this glory in his state of humiliation, and were beheld by the apostles, and other believers, who saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father. Though the glory of Christ as Mediator, being full of grace and truth, seems to be chiefly designed; this he has from God, and had it from everlasting; this he gives to his people, and is what makes him so glorious, lovely, and desirable in their eye: and whilst this delightful object is beheld by them, they are ....

**Changed Into The Same Image;** there was a divine image in man, in his first creation; this image was defaced by sin, and a different one took place; now in regeneration another distinct from them both is stamped, and this is the image of Christ; he himself is formed in the soul, his grace is wrought there; so that it is no wonder there is a likeness between them; which lies in righteousness and holiness, and shows itself in acts of grace, and a discharge of duty. The gradual motion of the change into this image is expressed by this phrase, ...

**From Glory To Glory:** not from the glory of the law to the glory of the Gospel; or from the glory of Moses to the glory of Christ; rather from the glory that is in Christ, to a glory derived in believers from him; or which seems most agreeable, from one degree of grace to another, grace here being signified by glory; or from

glory begun here to glory perfect hereafter; when this image will be completed, both in soul and body; and the saints will be as perfectly like to Christ, as they are capable of, and see him as he is: now the efficient cause of all this, "is the Spirit of the Lord".

It is he that takes off the veil from the heart, that we may, with open face unveiled, behold all this glory; it is he that regenerates, stamps the image of Christ, and conforms the soul to his likeness; it is he that gradually carries on the work of grace upon the soul, increases faith, enlarges the views of the glory of Christ, and the spiritual light, knowledge, and experience of the saints, and will perfect all that which concerns them; will quicken their mortal bodies, and make them like to Christ; and will for ever rest as a spirit of glory on them, both in soul and body: some read these words, ...

**By The Lord of The Spirit**, and understand them of Christ, others read them, "by the Lord the Spirit", as they very well may be rendered; and so are a proof of the true and proper deity of the Holy Spirit, who is the one Jehovah with the Father and the Son. The ancient Jews owned this; ``the Spirit of the living God, (say F11 they,) (arwbh wnyyh) , this is the Creator himself, from him all spirits are produced; blessed be he, and blessed be his name, because his name is he himself, for his name is Jehovah."

# The Image & Likeness of God

## A Snapshot Or Facsimile

If we are being changed into the image and likeness of God, just what does that mean? I found an article by Dick Staub of Relevant Magazine March 2003. He gives a good explanation.

All our lives we've heard that we're "made in the image of God." It's a nice thought, and probably one we've clung to when we need a reminder of our own value. But have you ever stopped to think about what it really *means*? "*Made in the image of God*" is an audacious claim—and one that probably carries some responsibility with it.

We all know we are not gods—though if we're honest, we know we often think we are the god of our own lives, even if we'd never admit it. The truth is, you are not God. But you are godlike.

Our confusion about whether or not we are God arises from our *godlikeness*. It's described in the first chapter of the Bible. **Genesis 1:26-27** reveals, "*Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in*

*our likeness' ... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."*

To be fully human is to fully reflect God's creative, spiritual, intelligent, communicative, relational, moral and purposeful capacities.

So, what *does* it mean to be created in God's image? The Hebrew root of the Latin phrase for image of God—*imago Dei*—means **image, shadow or likeness** of God. You are a **snapshot** or **facsimile** of God. At the very least this means humans occupy a higher place in the created order because we alone are imprinted with godlike characteristics.

Your godlikeness is the path to your greatest fulfillment. You will feel the greatest pleasure and wholeness when who God made you to be is fully developed and expressed.

Your godlikeness can also be a pitfall, because in our hubris we often confuse being like God with being God. Mystery writer Nevada Barr learned this after returning to faith from her long sojourn on the wild side, and concluded: "It was a number of years of crashing and burning before I made the

discovery that I was not God. Finally I realized that though I was not God, *I was of God.*"

## Godlike Aptitudes

But in what *way* are you an image of God? How are you godlike? Theologians have long debated this question, but the answer becomes clear when we read the description of God in Genesis 1 and then ask: If we could take a snapshot of God, what would we see and what would it reveal about humans created in God's image?

**First**, the truth about you is that you are creative because God is creative:

*"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).*

We know that God is creative with paint. Poets, writers, philosophers and lawyers make things with ideas and the compelling use of words. Doctors make people healthier; consultants make organizations better. Manufacturers make things with raw materials; chefs make things with fruits, vegetables, meats and spices. Every human has the capacity to make things, to create, because we are all made in the image of a creative God.

The **second** truth about you is that you are spiritual because God is Spirit: "*The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters*" (**Genesis 1:2**). Every human possesses spiritual aptitudes and capacities. We are more than the sum of our physical parts. Our spiritual nature, though unseen, is as real as our physical nature. Nurturing our spirit is as important as eating, drinking and exercising are to our physical body. . Every human makes things. Artists make things

The very essence of God is relational, and that essential quality has been imprinted on humans.

A **third** truth about you is that you communicate because God communicates: "God said, '*Let there be light*'" (**Genesis 1:3**). Anthropologists agree that the emergence of symbolic language—first spoken, then written—represents the sharpest break between animals and humans. The human ability to think and reason, to use language, symbols and art, far surpasses the abilities of any animals. This gift was bestowed when the communicative God's image was imprinted on us.

A **fourth** truth about you is that you are intelligent because God is intelligent: "In the beginning was the Word [*logos*, a Greek word meaning reason, or

logic and “*the Word was with God, and the Word was God*” (**John 1:1**). Logical sequential thought flows from the orderliness of God's mind. As a result, though we are not all intellectuals, we each possess a mind and a way of thinking and learning, so Jesus commanded us to love God with our minds (as well as our hearts and all our strength). Because of God's intelligent image imprinted on our lives, though we possess different kinds of intelligence, each of us is to develop our mental capacities to their fullest.

A **fifth** truth about you is that you are relational because God is relational: “*Let us make man in our image, in our likeness. ... It is not good for man to be alone*” (**Genesis 1:26, Genesis 2:18**). The phrase,

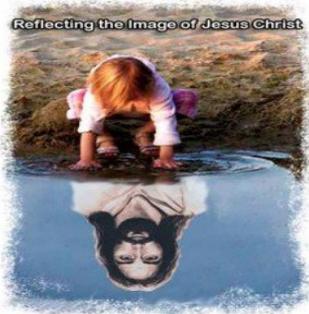
"Let us make man in our image" reveals an "us-ness" in the very nature of God. The very essence of God is relational, and that essential quality has been imprinted on humans. This capacity for a relationship with God extends to humans, which is why the Genesis story declares that God created Eve for Adam because "it is not good for man to be alone."

**NOTE:** All of these qualities are imprinted on

mankind and can easily be seen in our society through those who have applied themselves. However, we must not forget that the spiritual aspect that was once connected between man and God was broken by sin and is in need of restoration.

That is why Jesus came and why we now, with unveiled faces can gaze into the looking glass of God's Word and be changed by it from glory to glory by His Holy Spirit. Reading the Bible puts us on the right road where we can ever so slowly or ever so fast become more like Jesus until folks around us begin to see his reflection in us.

## The Making of A Man



I also thought I'd share an article from [Got/Questions.com](http://Got/Questions.com) on What It Means To Be Made In The Image of God. I like all of what they say and you will get a little more detail.

It should expand your overall perspective.

On the last day of creation, God said, “*Let us make man in our image, in our likeness*” (**Genesis 1:26**). Thus, He finished His work with a “personal touch.” God formed man from the dust and gave him life by sharing His own breath (**Genesis 2:7**). Accordingly, man is unique among all God’s creations, having both a material body and an immaterial soul/spirit.

Having the “image” or “likeness” of God means, in the simplest terms that we were made to resemble God. Adam did not resemble God in the sense of God’s having flesh and blood. Scripture says that “God is spirit” (**John 4:24**) and therefore exists without a human body. However, Adam’s body did mirror the life of God insofar as it was created in perfect health and was not subject to death.

The image of God refers to the immaterial part of man. It sets man apart from the animal world, fits him for the dominion God intended him to have over the earth (**Genesis 1:28**), and enables him to commune with his Maker. It is a likeness **mentally, morally, and socially.**

**Mentally**, man was created as a rational, volitional agent. In other words, man can reason and man can choose. This is a reflection of God’s intellect and freedom. Anytime someone invents a machine,

writes a book, paints a landscape, enjoys a symphony, calculates a sum, or names a pet, he or she is proclaiming the fact that we are made in God's image.

**Morally**, man was created in righteousness and perfect innocence, a reflection of God's holiness. God saw all He had made (mankind included) and called it "very good" (**Genesis 1:31**). Our conscience or "moral compass" is a vestige of that original state. Whenever someone writes a law, recoils from evil, praises good behavior, or feels guilty, he is confirming the fact that we are made in God's own image.

**Socially**, man was created for fellowship. This reflects God's triune nature and His love. In Eden, man's primary relationship was with God (**Genesis 3:8** implies fellowship with God), and God made the first woman because "*it is not good for the man to be alone*" (**Genesis 2:18**). Every time someone marries, makes a friend, hugs a child, or attends church, he is demonstrating the fact that we are made in the likeness of God.

Part of being made in God's image is that Adam had the capacity to make free choices. Although he was given a righteous nature, Adam made an evil choice to rebel against his Creator. In so doing,

Adam marred the image of God within himself, and he passed that damaged likeness on to all his descendants (**Romans 5:12**). Today, we still bear the image of God (**James 3:9**), but we also bear the scars of sin. Mentally, morally, socially, and physically, we show the effects of sin.

The good news is that when God redeems an individual, He begins to restore the original image of God, creating a “new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (**Ephesians 4:24**). That redemption is only available by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior from the sin that separates us from God (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). Through Christ, we are made new creations in the likeness of God (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).

This is all done gradually as we gaze into the looking glass of God’s Word.



## Conclusion

We can now see the glory of God. There is no veil obscuring our vision. As we look into the Bible, which is God's looking glass, it changes us. Our attitudes change. Our thinking really changes. Our actions become more like what God would do. We become that "*New creature*" spoken of in the scriptures.

*"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Corinthians 5:17*

Old things really pass away and new things take their place.

We end up seeing ourselves with a special anointing that brings the righteousness of God to our souls and sets our spirits free from the bondage of Sin. How great is that?

Now look in the mirror of God's Word. What do you see? You should be seeing Jesus. You should be seeing yourself as a "*New Creature*". You should not see "Old Things" because they are or have passed away, no longer to be remembered.