



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE IMAGE OF GOD FOR DEALING WITH THE POOR

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Importance of the Image of God

The Image of God is a foundational concept for ourselves and for how we view the poor – We need to see the poor as made in God's image

Genesis 1:26-27

“Then God said, Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth...God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.”

Our worth is connected to the worth of our creator

Genesis 9:5-6

“Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood will be shed, for in the image of God He made man.”

The image of God is present after the Fall

James 3:9

“With the tongue we bless our Lord and Father and with it we curse men who have been made in the likeness of God.”

The way we treat people is an indication of how we value God

C.S. Lewis

“There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal.”

The poorest and most unattractive person is made in the image of God; therefore, they must be treated with great worth, value, and dignity.

Fallen, Yet Redeemed

Some emphasize sinfulness without mentioning dignity and God's grace. Other emphasize dignity and self-worth without mentioning our sinfulness

I Corinthians 15: 9-10

“For I am the least of the apostles, and do not even deserve to be called an apostle...But by the grace of God, I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect.”

Don't mention sin without also mentioning God's grace and our dignity

I Timothy 1:16

Paul calls himself the “foremost of sinners” but also says, “yet for this reason I found mercy...that in me...Jesus Christ might demonstrate his perfect patience.”

No matter what we have done, God’s grace is not in vain, and we remain in the image of God. No matter how broken, the image of God remains, and God’s grace needs to be acknowledged -
This alters how we see the poor

The Poor Need to See Themselves as Made in God's Image

Brian Fikkert - When Helping Hurts

“Poor people typically talk in terms of shame, inferiority, powerlessness, humiliation, fear, hopelessness, depression, social isolation, and voiceless.”

Hope International in Rwanda:

“How do you define poverty?” Answers in order:

1. Poverty is an empty heart
2. Not knowing your strength and ability
3. Not able to make progress
4. Isolation
5. No hope or belief in yourself. Knowing you can't take care of your family

Note that money is only mentioned once. Traditional charity does not address problems. There is a negative cycle with traditional charity

Bob Lupton - Toxic Charity

“Give once and you elicit appreciation
Give twice and you create anticipation
Give three times and you create expectation
Give four times and it becomes entitlement
Give five times and you’ve established dependency”

Traditional charity can only be a temporary fix for the poor. We need to focus on the potential of using their God given gifts and talents.

We are made in the image of God to use our creativity to unfold the potential of the world around us.

Conclusion

1. We need to see the poor as made in the image of God
2. We need to help the poor to see themselves as made in the image of God and all that involves

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