
The Image of God

One of my most vivid images of God is of His patience. Through the Principle, Unificationists can quite easily imagine how long-suffering and tolerant He is. Yet we know that is not all there is to learn about this God of ours! The whole world of God is waiting for us, and by exploring it, we can uncover countless impressions of His semblance.

Nature itself gives us some aspects of the picture, allowing us to conjure up many impressions in our imagination, yet it is the faces of people throughout the world—from the ruggedness in the leathery faces of Himalayan mountain dwellers, to the youthful quality alive in the faces of Maori tribesmen, to the soulful expression on the faces of the starving children in Africa—that forms the most spectacular montage of the image of God. What do we usually think of? An old man with a beard that rivals the length of His walking stick? That is one image of God, but I don't believe it is a very accurate one. I feel that if we were to create a true and complete facsimile of our God, we would have to pull elements from a million different parts of this world, and something from each of the billions of people who comprise humanity.

Were we able to perceive God in tangible things, we would naturally become aware of God's sorrow by listening to the deep and soulful cries from the hearts of those in turmoil. Will we ever be able to hear a hearty and booming laugh from our God that portrays His joy rather than His misery? Can we sense Him near? If we come close enough to God, the bubbles of His effervescent personality may even tickle our noses! We have a great deal to study, and the world is our textbook. He *is* our unlimited reservoir, and He bids us to tap into Him.

No matter how buried it may be, all human beings have the desire to become god-like, to reflect the image of God. Anybody who wants to emulate a hero has to do a fair bit of studying, first discovering what the person looks like, and then what he or she *is* like. In order to become like God, we have to first determine what He looks like. How do you do that? Ask Him! He will no doubt tell you that He is unchanging, absolute, eternal, and unique. And He will probably encourage you to learn how to discover your own unique qualities. He will implore you to consider yourself as one absolutely irreplaceable cell of His body. He will tell you that you fit right in because you are unequalled. He will reiterate something you have heard before but sometimes find hard to believe: there is only one "you" in the whole cosmos. You are unparalleled, and that is precisely why He needs you!

Each one of us has great value to God. If those around you have told

you something different, why go by what your neighbor says? Realize that in the eyes of God, each one of us is unique. We are a part of Him that He can neither neglect nor ignore.

It pays for us to investigate God. It pays to start walking toward Him. It is to our benefit to find out who He is, as well as disclose some of the mysteries and the characteristics of His nature. It pays to unravel something about His image, and once we picture Him, it will profit us to walk the stony and narrow path leading up the steep mountain to God's palace. What we experience of God will then become clearer. We will see a much less distorted picture of Him, for that is when we will see God's true colors, and hear the refined strains of His voice. Life itself will become more glorious for us, because it is then that we will experience the pure love of God, and ourselves reflect more of the image of God.

If you feel a certain ecstasy as you pray to God and try to analyze why, you are sure to notice certain physical reactions. You might shake all over. Your whole spine might tingle. Your hair may even stand on end! But those are just effects. What actually goes on inside of you? While God is the cause of such phenomena, can any of us actually *see* God? With your physical eyes you see the *effect* of God—the image of God—but you cannot see your heart or emotions. Yet when that heart of yours is moved by some experience, the effect you feel is tremendous and beautiful. If any of us try to dissect an emotional response, we might wonder how great the source that causes this must be. If even the *effect* brings tears of joy and the sensation of wanting to embrace the whole world and wrap it in love, then we can't help but be curious about what it would be like to actually experience the *cause*—our God.

God is a God of heart and love, but in our experience, we know that He is also a God of law, order, and principle. We not only have an impression of God, but also have direct encounters with some of His traits. If we really desire a personal experience with God, we have to discipline ourselves. We have to master our physical body with our mind once we are cognizant of God's principles.

The essence of God is unconditional love. Even if a child turns out to be a criminal, his father and mother still love him; this attribute of love is

the nature of parenthood instilled by our Heavenly Parent. God Himself has never been able to do anything but to keep loving, waiting, and enduring the pain. He knows what kinds of images mankind hold of Him, but it must not be easy, for He longs to be recognized as our Parent. He knows that eventually we will feel that longing in the form of His love, and that we will ultimately learn to appreciate Him. He knows that inevitably the love He invested will be returned. The patience He displays is characteristic of His unconditional heart. Even if God had to wait a million years for His children to reach home, He would simply continue to love mankind, because tenacity and tolerance are also a part of His demeanor.

God is a mastermind. Not only is He the world's greatest architect, but also the greatest thinker and scientist. Perhaps that is an unusual concept of the Almighty, but just think about it for a moment. He had everything planned from the beginning. He made sure that each entity He created would eventually fulfill its purpose. For instance, when He created humanity, He made man and woman in such a way that assured that each would experience a perfect and full love. God designed the highest love a human being could share in the relationship between husband and wife, and among the members of a family. If we desire to discover some basic points about our God, we can uncover a great deal by observing His nature manifested in the ideal family.

The totality, of God's power and love can be found only when husband and wife are totally united with God as their center. Eventually this will culminate in their experience of the three basic types of love—passive, conjugal, and unconditional. Love itself is the image of God.

God is love. He originally purposed that the reservoir of each man would be similar and filled with His unconditional love. God, being invisible, "appears" and performs something mysterious within our hearts by using love. God is spirit, and He custom-tailored each of us with a spirit as well. We should fulfill our responsibility to learn how our spirit functions, and then master the fine points of communication between God's spirit and our own. Although that is the ideal, since the fall of man, most people are not even sure that they possess a spirit. We live life, but because we are spiritually blind, we constantly share it with Satan. Consequently, our spirit stays undeveloped instead of growing. We have to work on finding a remedy for this problem. Once we do, we will more easily be able to comprehend the

spiritual quality of God, and our spiritual ears will have the chance to hear His message. When Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear,"¹ he was not talking about something physical. He was urging mankind to develop a spiritual connection with God so that we could better represent His true nature.

We are made in God's image and we must mirror Him to the best of our ability, but we must realize that we will never be successful without Him.

Each of God's words has a golden ring to it; their divinity reverberates throughout creation. None of them is tinged with profanity or debased in any way. We must be tuned to God's channel, or as we attempt to listen to the impassioned voice of God, it is possible we will receive static and hear the tinny voice of Satan over the spiritual airwaves in our mind.

God is *always* in the subject position even though He sometimes allows us to assume the role of "subject" when we talk to Him. When a child talks to his father, the father still remains in the position of parent, even though he might listen to his child with a humble and patient attitude. That is the universal order. Whenever God speaks through you, you occupy the subject position. Even at the times we fulfill or temporarily assume the position of subject, we must be careful not to leave our proper position and become *subjective*. There is often a very big difference between the two. Our understanding of God's nature must be solid: He is our ultimate Parent and Guide, and we must seek harmony with Him—our Eternal.

If you engage in an intensive prayer life, you could nearly be guaranteed that many of your personal problems will either be solved or dissolved. Man has a basic curiosity and questions why certain things happen to him; prayer is one avenue that allows us to discover the answers. None of us will ever be able to intellectualize our findings and analyze God totally; He has the uncanny ability to dig deep within our heart and soul and either move those problems away or melt them with His love. The highest and greatest revelations that God so freely bestows upon us nearly always collide with existing logic and our common sense. There is often a division or dissension with what we hope to find and what we *do* find. The

main reason is that man looks linearly, while God has the ability to look around corners.

God is a jealous God. He is determined not to allow Satan to keep claim on what is rightfully His. He is a protective parent to us. His desire is not selfish, rather He wants to see His children and the whole universe enjoy the beauty of creation in totality, and relate with one another and Himself in true harmony. He is envious of how Satan has intervened with what was to have been His glorious family of man. He is like the shepherd who watches his sheep and goes after the wolf that has stalked and kidnapped its prey. That "wolf" is Satan, the one who abducted God's children.

Satan is wise to God's intentions. He can detect God's desire to regain control of the world. He knows all too well the true image of God that we sometimes fail to see. And he can even discern whenever God peeks around a barricade he erected with the intention of keeping us from learning more about our Heavenly Father.

What is God? He is the total essence of all beautiful things you hope for, strive for, long for, live for and expect to eventually achieve. That is God.