



[Genesis 1:26-28](#)

(26) And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. (27) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (28) And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

King James Version

As [God](#) created, it is extremely significant that of all He created, only one creation is in His image, mankind. This is important to the purpose God is working out. Also, it is significant that of all the creatures God created, only mankind is given dominion over anything else, animate or inanimate.

Verses 26 and 28 show the first inkling of man's awesome potential. We are in God's likeness and His image, and have been given dominion in order to fulfill that potential.

If one looked up the word "image" in a Hebrew dictionary, it would not be very satisfying, being a typical textbook definition. It merely means "a shadowing forth, a phantom, a sketch, an outline." It gives the impression of a mere shape, a stickman. However, it has another, more interesting definition that means "whatever makes a man remarkable or procures respect."

The word "likeness" is commonly thought by linguists to mean nothing more than an intensification of the word "image." Even though it is a different word, its meaning is very similar. Putting those two words together, the Hebrew clearly shows that we are remarkable, especially in comparison to all other life. We are in the image of God.

Though we are remarkable, we are merely an outline, a mere copy or representation.

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We are illusory compared to God, because He is the reality.

The word "image" deserves further examination. The word "image" could evoke different mental images depending upon one's perspective. Over the past several decades in the United States, "image" has acquired a deceptive application that obscures its true meaning. This application skews one's understanding, interfering with the meaning God intends.

For example, today, a politician hires a publication firm to create an image for him that the people will find acceptable, and, thus, vote him into office. If someone is trying to find employment, they dress a certain way to project a particular image for employers to perceive. Corporations also try very hard to find the right image before the public.

To an American, an "image" has subtly come to mean "the illusion of what something is presented to be" rather than "the essence of what it really is."

In Hebrew, the word translated "image" is not "a deceptive illusion." Rather, *image* means "the likeness of one subject expressed in another." This difference is important. It means, "the likeness of one subject, God, expressed in the other, man." The verse indirectly says that man is very much like God.

The Hebrew meaning is frequently used in English in reference to family resemblance or characteristics. We say that a child is the spitting image of his father or his mother, possibly referring to physical or social traits.

The "image" is no illusion; it is the reality. It is the family trait. It is the essence of reality.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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