

Video¹ Transcript

Agents of God's Image and Likeness

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Greetings, and welcome to this presentation² about *agents of God's image and likeness*.

In the beginning, God created us in His own *image and likeness*!³ By creating us after this manner, God made us:

- *agents* or *stewards* of His image and likeness,⁴ and thus
- *representatives* of His *character* and *reputation*.⁵

Our very existence, as all existence, reveals God's glory and honor. It speaks of:⁶

- His creative genius and the power of His abilities,
- His very nature and the uniqueness of His character and expression, and
- His intentions towards us and His purposes for our lives.

Because we represent God's image and likeness in this world, it matters to Him how we live our lives. This is why God has said He is a jealous God.⁷ How we use and treat God's image by our words and our actions (through our expressions and activities) are deeply personal matters to Him.⁸

God is love,⁹ and He created all of us—not just some of us—to partake of His love by partaking of the fruit of the tree of life.¹⁰ At the same time, He knows that if we use His image and gifts to live contrary to His purposes, we will end up harming and destroying ourselves and others through self-serving motivations and inventions.¹¹

Therefore, God proves our ways and tests our works.¹² He makes an assessment of us based on His eternal purposes and on our demonstrated response to His Spirit.¹³ He then rewards the faithful and endows them with eternal abilities and means by which they may honor His image in

¹ <https://youtu.be/5fCr6vkFMjI>

² This presentation is based on *Why be Thankful* (<https://hisworkmanship.net/why-be-thankful/>).

³ Genesis 1:27,29, Alma 12:112, Alma 13:44 with Isaiah 43:5-7, Isaiah 45:11-13,18, Mosiah 5:43-48, etc.

⁴ cf. Genesis 1:27-30 IV & Genesis 4:1 IV with Genesis 7:40 IV, D&C 28:9a-10d, D&C 36:7b, D&C 42:9c & Ether 1:80

⁵ cf. Matthew 5:15-18 & John 15:1-8 with Matthew 5:45-50 & Luke 6:20-36

⁶ Psalm 19:1-14 with Revelation 4:11 Romans 1:20; see also Genesis 6:66 IV with D&C 85:12a-f

⁷ Exodus 20:4-6 & Deuteronomy 5:8-10

⁸ Isaiah 43:7, Isaiah 48:11, etc.

⁹ I John 4:8,16 with I John 3:1-3 & I John 3:16

¹⁰ John 3:14-17 with I John 3:1-3

¹¹ e.g. Galatians 5:15-21 with II Peter 2:9-22 & II Timothy 3:12,13; cf. Psalm 106:6-43 & Daniel 9:4-19 with Jeremiah 18:11-13

¹² Jeremiah 17:10 & I Thessalonians 2:3,4 with Psalm 139:23,24

¹³ Matthew 25:1-47 & Galatians 6:7-9 with I Corinthians 15:41,42 with 3:13-17

ever greater ways.¹⁴

God evaluates us and our actions based on the standard of His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ¹⁵—who is His express image and His eternal Word.¹⁶ He then rewards the faithful with the Comforter, His Holy Ghost, by whom we may be filled with the love of God.¹⁷

Reading now from a medley of scriptures:

Romans 5:5 – *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

Hebrews 6:19 – *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast ...*

Romans 8:24 – *For we are saved by hope ...*

Because God is love, He will not force His way into our lives.¹⁸ To enter into His fellowship of love, we must answer His love with our love for Him and for each other.¹⁹ For, our Lord promises to love each person who loves Him and keeps His words.

Reading now from **John 14 (21,23)**:

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. ... If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

In practical, day-to-day terms, God cares about two very important aspects of our agency or stewardship of His image:

- How we represent His image by the way we live in this world, and
- How we view and treat His image as evidenced by the way we view and interact with each other.

These two expressions of our stewardship of His image and likeness form the basis of the two great commandments:²⁰

- The first great commandment—to love the Lord our God with our whole heart, soul, and mind—addresses how we represent His image by the way we live in this world, and
- The second great commandment—to love each other as ourselves—addresses how we view His image as evidenced by the way we view and treat each other.

God did not make us in His image so we would live separately from Him based on our inherited or given abilities and acquired skills. Rather, He made us to embody His countenance, His glory, by way of His Holy Spirit dwelling within us.²¹ That is, God made our body (collectively) to be the

¹⁴ Luke 16:1-13 & Matthew 25:1-47 with Revelation 22:12-14; see also Revelation 2:2-4, 2:9-10, 2:13-15, 2:19-20, 3:1-4, 3:8-10, & 3:15-19 with I Corinthians 3:12-18 & D&C 22:23b

¹⁵ Isaiah 7:14-16 with Matthew 2:6 & Matthew 25:1-47

¹⁶ e.g. I Peter 2:21-25, Ephesians 4:13, Philippians 3:14 (Matthew 5:45-50 & Luke 6:20-38 versus Romans 3:23); Hebrews 1:1-3 & Colossians 1:10-15 with John 1:1-18 (I John 1:1-5 with Matthew 5:15-18)

¹⁷ John 14:15-18 with Romans 5:5

¹⁸ Revelation 3:20 with John 14:21,23

¹⁹ I John 3:1-24, I John 4:1-21 & I John 5:1-21 with I John 1:1-10 & I John 2:1-17

²⁰ Matthew 22:34-39 & Mark 12:33-39 with II Nephi 1:122-125

²¹ Acts 1:1-8 & Acts 2:1-47 with Ephesians 2:19-22 & John 14:15-29

temple of His Holy Spirit.²²

More specifically, God created each of us to be members of the body of Christ so we might be made partakers of His glory,²³

- a glory that is shown perfectly through Jesus as the head of the body, which is His church;²⁴
- a glory by which the whole church is filled with God's eternal light and love.²⁵

The problem is we have all sinned, and being weighed down with sin, we have come short of God's glory.²⁶ In giving way to temptations, we disgrace His image and grieve His Holy Spirit.²⁷ We dishonor God's image because of carelessness and rebellion—which comes of exerting our wills against and contrary to His purposes and perfect will for our lives.²⁸

If we distance ourselves from Jesus, our lives fail to produce the fruit of His Spirit²⁹—which are an expression of His countenance and character.³⁰ In its place comes the fruits of our fallen nature—which are revealed in the self-centered and the vile things of this present world.³¹

But praise be to God for His unspeakable gift.³² In the gift of His Son, God has provided...

- a tried and precious way for us to be restored to His image and likeness;³³
- the only way by Whom we may have His image revealed in and through us each day.³⁴

How is this restoration of His image possible? In the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have the promise of a new birth, a spiritual birth with its attendant power.³⁵

- This new birth is the only way in which the image of God may be reinstated within us and expressed through us.³⁶
- It is the only way that we can fulfill our stewardship of being faithful agents of God's image.

Through the new birth given to us in Jesus Christ, we are brought back into our Lord's fellowship of His light and truth.³⁷

- To bring about this new birth, our Lord baptizes us with fire and the Holy Ghost.³⁸
- In His baptism, Jesus comes to dwell in us by faith unto the filling of our souls with His joy and unending purposes.³⁹

²² I Corinthians 6:19-20 & I Corinthians 12:3-31 with Ephesians 5:23 & Colossians 1:10-29

²³ Romans 8:1-17 with Colossians 1:27

²⁴ Colossians 1:9-29 & Ephesians 5:23 with I Corinthians 12:4-31

²⁵ II Corinthians 4:6,7 with Colossians 1:9-29 & Ephesians 4:8-16; cf. Genesis 7:23 with Acts 4:31,32 & IV Nephi 1:3,4

²⁶ cf. Romans 3:23 & Galatians 3:22 with Hebrews 12:1-3; e.g. II Nephi 3:30-66 with Psalm 51:1-19

²⁷ e.g. Isaiah 63:8-10 & Ephesians 4:22-32

²⁸ Hebrews 6:3-15 & Hebrews 10:24-39 with Hebrews 3:7-17 + Hebrews 4:1-16 & Psalm 106:6-48

²⁹ Matthew 12:37-39, Jude 1:17-19 & John 15:1,2,6 with Proverbs 18:1-13 & I Corinthians 1:17-31

³⁰ II Corinthians 3:17,18 & II Corinthians 4:5-7 with Matthew 5:15-18, John 14:12, Galatians 5:22-26 & Ephesians 5:9

³¹ Romans 1:22-25, Galatians 5:17-21, Ephesians, 4:17-19, Colossians 3:5-11, etc.

³² II Corinthians 9:15 with John 3:14-17

³³ II Corinthians 3:17,18 & Colossians 3:9,10 with Alma 3:27,28

³⁴ Ephesians 3:1-21+4:1-16 & John 14:6 with Galatians 4:6,7 & 5:13-26 (Colossians 3:1-17); esp. Romans 8:1-39

³⁵ II Corinthians 5:17-21, Hebrews 1:1-4 with John 1:11-16 & Alma 3:27-70; see also Genesis 6:57-65

³⁶ II Corinthians 4:5-7 & Ephesians 3:14-21 with Joel 2:12-32, Romans 5:1-21 & Romans 8:1-39

³⁷ I John 1:1-10, I John 2:3-17, I John 3:1-24, I John 4:1-18 & I John 5:1-12 with John 3:3-8

³⁸ Matthew 3:38,40, Mark 1:6, Luke 3:23 & John 1:28 with II Nephi 13:24-26, III Nephi 4:50, III Nephi 5:37,38, etc.

³⁹ Ephesians 3:14-21 & Romans 8:1-17 with Acts 2:1-47, Acts 4:19-35, I Peter 1:3-9, Mosiah 2:5,6, III Nephi 8:20, etc.

God not only created us in the beginning by His Son—who is His Word—He is able to recreate us in His image by this very same Word.⁴⁰ So equipped, we are then able to live as new creatures in Jesus Christ who bear the Father the fruit of His True Vine.

As the Word of God, Jesus Christ is the bread of heaven that feeds our souls,⁴¹ and He is the living water which quenches our thirst.⁴² He is the only one who has walked this earth who is capable enough and caring enough to save our souls and to sustain us throughout eternity.⁴³

Moreover, Jesus is the only one in whom and by whom we may become faithful stewards of God's character and reputation.⁴⁴ Thus, He is the only one by whom we can become what God intended us to be in the beginning when creating us in His own image and likeness.⁴⁵

This is why the gospel of Jesus Christ is such great news for the whole world.⁴⁶ As God's Word, Jesus was sent into the world by His heavenly Father to restore everlastingly this precious gift of His image in everyone who is willing to receive His Spirit of truth.⁴⁷

Is not this a most excellent reason to give thanks unto the Father for His unspeakable gift—His Son, His very Word?⁴⁸ In Jesus, the Father endows us with power to live abundant lives of grace towards Him and each other.⁴⁹

For everyone who is willing to receive Jesus Christ and abide in Him, there is therefore unspeakable meaning and purpose to life, both now and on into eternity. This meaning is, however, only realized by those who actually abide in Him by faith on His words and on His name.⁵⁰

Several questions yet remain for us to answer:

- Do we want to be like the God who created us in His image?
- Do we want to be like Him in light and love?
- Do we want to abide with Him in His kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost?

Those who choose to walk in the glory of God's light and love are rewarded richly with many opportunities to bear Him an abundance of the fruit of His Spirit...⁵¹

- Of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance;⁵²
- Of all goodness and righteousness, and truth.⁵³

This is the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news. Whosoever believes on His name and

⁴⁰ John 1:3 & Colossians 1:16,17 with Hebrews 1:1-4 & II Corinthians 5:17-21

⁴¹ John 6:29-63 with John 1:11-18 & Luke 4:4

⁴² John 4:15-17 & John 7:37-40

⁴³ Hebrews 4:15,16 with Ephesians 3:20,21, Hebrews 7:23,24, Jude 1:24,25, etc.

⁴⁴ II Peter 1:2-11 & Philippians 2:5-11 with Romans 15:5-7 & II Peter 1:17

⁴⁵ Hebrews 7:23,24 with I Peter 1:3-5 & Colossians 3:10

⁴⁶ Luke 2:10 & John 3:16,17 with Matthew 3:1-11 & Helaman 5:126

⁴⁷ II Corinthians 4:3-6 & John 1:11-16 (D&C 45:2b,c) with Colossians 3:10; cf. John 14:15-27 with John 16:13-15

⁴⁸ II Corinthians 9:15 & John 1:11-16 with John 3:16,17 & II Nephi 6:19-55 (Alma 18:11,12)

⁴⁹ John 1:11-18, Romans 1:16, I Corinthians 1:24, etc. with Luke 4:12-27 & John 14:1-6

⁵⁰ John 1:12 with II Nephi 6:83,84

⁵¹ II Corinthians 9:8-15

⁵² Galatians 5:22-25

⁵³ Ephesians 5:9

receives His Spirit of truth within themselves will not perish but will live productive lives in the kingdom of God.⁵⁴

Jesus, as Lord, has promised He will come again to reward each person according to their deeds done in the flesh.⁵⁵ So, as you consider your response to Him, please remember just how short this life is compared to the *duration* of eternity.⁵⁶ God did not intend for our lives in these earthen vessels to go on forever—and so they will not.

- He has limited this life to a time of choosing and preparing to meet Him.⁵⁷
- For, as it is written, it is given to man once to die and then the judgment.⁵⁸

So, how are you doing in your stewardship of God’s image and likeness? As God’s representative of His character and reputation, what are you doing or willing to do with this great treasure that you now hold? Do you shine the light of Christ, even when the journey is hard, or when the waves get rough?

As you contemplate these questions, remember to thank Jesus Christ for redeeming you and enabling you to shine the light of His Spirit in this dark world.⁵⁹ For He is the author and finisher of our faith,⁶⁰ and we are the workmanship of His hands.⁶¹

⁵⁴ John 1:11-18 & John 15:1-8 with Alma 15:68

⁵⁵ Matthew 16:30 with Revelation 22:11-13

⁵⁶ cf. I John 5:9-12 with Enos 1:37 & II Nephi 6:14-18

⁵⁷ Hebrews 3:7-19 + 4:1-16 with Alma 16:228-236

⁵⁸ Hebrews 9:27

⁵⁹ Matthew 5:15-18 with II Corinthians 9:8-15

⁶⁰ Hebrews 12:1-3

⁶¹ Ephesians 2:10