



## Week 5: Colossians 1:15a

**15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. **16** For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. **17** And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18** And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. **19** For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, **20** and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

### About This Week's Message – January 30, 2011

This week's message will consist of the first eight words of verse 15: "*He is the image of the invisible God*". We will explore what it means that Jesus imaged God perfectly. We will contrast it with the ways that we image God imperfectly as a broken mirror. Adam started out as a perfect image bearer, but that image/mirror was shattered by his sin and now man can only image God imperfectly.

*The following questions are the 1:10 Homework for the week of January 23, 2011.  
Comments in the grey boxes will not be included on the 1:10 Homework your group receives.*

### Getting Started

*This week's study is based on Colossians 1:15a.*

*Start by praying for the Holy Spirit to guide you.*

*Then read through Colossians 1:15-20 a few times before moving on.*

*With your group, you might want to begin by reading the passage aloud. Maybe you would have someone read beginning in v. 1 and read it imagining a group of people around them, the whole church, hanging on every word of instruction for them from Paul.*

*The following questions are just introductory discussion starters. Remember that throughout you don't have to cover every single question with your group. Let the Spirit lead!*

1. Have you ever been to a house of mirrors? Which ones did you like? Which did you hate?
2. How often do you look in a mirror each day? Why?
3. Give a brief recap or bullet list of a few things you've been learning in Colossians.

## Digging Deeper

1. **Read Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1-3; and 9:6.** One of the first things it says about mankind is that we are made in God's image. Why is this so important?

*Because every human being bears God image, they intrinsically have dignity, value, and worth. Unborn, elderly, infirm, handicapped, smart, dumb, etc... EVERYONE has value, dignity, and worth*

*One important distinction here is that when a person trusts Jesus Christ as savior, their "mirror" to image God is transformed and under repair so that they more accurately image God, specifically Jesus, and have a new identity rooted in Jesus Christ.*

*In summary, everyone mirrors and images God to some degree... that "mirror" or image is distorted and broken because of our sin... And only believers in Jesus Christ can begin to rightly image God as their identity is completely transformed in Jesus.*

*Romans 8:29 and Colossians 3:10 will be helpful here where Paul says Christians are being restored to the image of their Creator, namely the Son.*

2. Pastor Josh mentioned that learning to rightly image God in the way we live is the key to our joy. Why is this? How have you experienced this to be true?

***You were CREATED and DESIGNED to image God!!!** And just like a hammer works best when it's used to pound nails — the thing is was designed and created for — and a screw driver works best to turn screws (as opposed to using a screw driver to pound nails or a hammer to turn screws) — Our lives are most filled with joy and contentment when we live the way we were designed — to image and worship Jesus.*

3. **Colossians 1:15** says that Jesus is the image of the invisible God. In Jesus, we see the Father. Take some time to describe what you know of Jesus. Write a paragraph or just make a bullet list. How does he image the Father? If you're struggling, just read through Colossians and list everything you find that describes Jesus.

*Use the lists people create and their answers to the next question to spark discussion.*

4. Pick out two or three of the things you listed about Jesus. How do you live in those areas? How would God want you to live in those areas?

5. **Read 1 Corinthians 15:45-49.** Paul compares the man of dust (Adam) and the man of heaven (Jesus). In the space below, make a list of what it says about image of the man of dust on the left, and the image of the man of heaven on the right.

*Compare lists to spark discussion.*

**ONE VERY IMPORTANT DISTINCTION TO NOTE:**

*Everyone on earth and who has ever lived bears the image of the man of dust.*

*Only those redeemed by Jesus have that image restored and renewed into the image of the man of heaven.*

6. **Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Now read 1 Corinthians 15:49 again, Romans 8:29, and Colossians 3:10.** What does it mean, then, to say that anyone who is in Christ is a “new creation”?

7. In being God’s image bearers, every human being has intrinsic worth. It comes from who we are (image bearers), not what we do. How does affect our view of men and women?

*This could be a fireball... but it needs to be taught into.*

*On this issue, there are two options for churches to take... I'll do my best to give a brief, and probably rambling discussion of each...*

- 1) **EGALITARIANISM.** *This view contends that men and women are equal by virtue of being image bearers AND by virtue of their roles. In other words, Peter’s statement that women are the “weaker vessel” in 1 Peter 3:7 is somehow unrelated to gender roles and Paul’s teaching on the role of women in the church was only descriptive of 1<sup>st</sup> century culture, not prescriptive for the church throughout time. Under this view women can function—and are encouraged to function—in any and every same role that men can. Men and women can both function as the head of their home, and both can serve as pastor/elders in the church under this view. In reality, much of egalitarian thought has roots in feminism, rather than creation order and the teaching of the Bible. As a church we oppose this view.*

2) **COMPLEMENTARIANISM.** *This is the view we hold to as a church, and the clearest interpretation of Scripture. Men and women are absolutely equal by virtue of their status as image bearers of God. However, men and women are vastly different as well and function in different roles. Women are the weaker vessel as Peter says, but this DOES NOT indicate their value or equality with me. The problem is that we wrongly equate our worth and dignity with ROLE (what we do) instead of IDENTITY (who we are as God's image bearers). In saying women are a weaker vessel, it's like saying a wine goblet in a gourmet restaurant is a weaker vessel than a construction worker's thermos. Both have the equal value as vessels to drink liquid from, but the function very differently. Another analogy might be between a paper dollar bill and a dollar coin. Both the bill and the coin are equal in value, but each function and operate in different ways. Here the bill is the "weaker vessel" because it can be easily torn. In the view of Complementarianism, then, the two genders exist to complement each other express different nuances of God's character. They are 100% equal, but also very different in the roles they carry out. According to Scripture, the male is to be the head of the home, and head in the church. Basically this means that they man is to bear ultimate responsibility to love, protect, care for, and spoil his wife. In the church, Paul is clear that the offices of Pastor and Elder are restricted to qualified men, and not available to women, regardless of gifting. In our church context where our deacons generally function as elders, we currently restrict our office of deacon to men as well. Biblically speaking, however, I would content the biblical office of deacon or "servant" is available to women. I would argue that Marilyn, for instance, (our church secretary) is serving in the biblical role of deacon. The complementarian view is rooted in the creation order, as echoed by Paul.*

## Up Close

1. We likened our role as image bears to that of a mirror. But due to our sin, our mirror is cracked and doesn't image God perfectly anymore (like Jesus does). In your life, where are some of the "cracks" that by God's grace you need the Holy Spirit to change you and "mend your mirror"?

*Spending at least some time each week praying for each other will be huge in developing community and seeing growth in your group. Don't just skip over this. If you're starting a new group, it will probably be sparse at first, but set the pace early and establish prayer for each other as an important part of your time together.*

*Focus first on prayer for each other, but if you need additional ideas, prayer requests will be on the inserts each week after the 1:10 Homework.*