

## **Introduction to the 2018 Daily Meditations: Image and Likeness**

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Unedited Transcript

Good day, good friends. We are in an exciting adventure this year. We are going to try to examine in our daily meditations, the image and likeness of God in us and in all of creation. Now, you know that phrase is from the first chapter of Genesis where God speaking in the plural seemingly says let us create in our image male and female, let us create them, and so we struggled with that for many centuries, and we are going to try to unpackage that struggle in the course of this year. What does that mean that everything created, everything, not just humans, maybe humans are the most conscious part of creation, but not the only image in likeness of God, everything your eyes can see or have ever seen are somehow a partial reflection of the image of God. Now, I am going to offer you a metaphor. It might not work for some of you. Maybe your kids or maybe even you have a fidget spinner. They've become very popular in recent years, and for me, it's almost a perfect metaphor what I am saying, because when I am saying we are created in the image and likeness of God, you are created in an image of relationship if you look at it in static form, it's three. If you look at it in dynamic form, it's one. That's how we came up with the notion of Trinity. How can something be diverse as all of us creation is and yet how do we overcome that diversity and say in the final analysis it's more one than many. We say it of God here, and we say it of everything your eyes have ever seen.

So, what we are going to try to do in our meditations is try to look at that from many different angles, and here's why it's important. If we don't objectify everything as created in the image of God, you know, what happens? Human beings, and I have seen myself do it, we start picking and choosing. Well, that's created in the image of God, but that isn't. You have no choice in the matter. Everything, black and white, catholic and protestant, gay and straight, male and female, use whatever categories you want, Republican and Democrat, it's all created in the image of God. Now, you are saying, what then does likeness mean? Here's what the fathers of the church concluded already in the early centuries. Image was your objective unquestionable creation as a child of God or an image of God. Likeness was your personal appropriation of that. So, two might equally be and are equally be image of God. One to be very straightforward looks a lot more like Jesus than the other one does. He or she has become kind, forgiving, inclusive, accepting, patient, list all of the great virtues. So, image you have, likeness you grow in. That covers both ends of the spectrum and satisfies both good philosophy and good theology, but remember again, it's not that Father is planted within you, Son is planted within you, Spirit is planted within you to use the classic terms of God, but it's precisely this is planted within you. There is a dynamism toward growth and universality and infinite love that you can't get rid of. It just keeps spinning. It just keeps inviting inside of you faith, hope, and love, and whenever you touch upon those, you are touching upon your objective image as a creature of God or in the human case as a child of God, so you see why it's going to take us a whole year to talk about this largest of all mysteries. Thank you for trusting us.