



Week Two: Image Matters – Study Guide

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If you were building a structure to stand the test of time, how would you construct it? Look at the pyramids in Egypt, and compare them to a single-sloped lean-to made with whatever available wood was lying around. Of course, the pyramid gets the vote on longevity every time. Both have significant purpose, but have vastly different designs. When looking at our earthly bodies we can glean insight as to some intentions of our Creator. One thing for sure is that our bodies are very temporary, with our lifespan hovering somewhere around 80 years. Last week we took a look at image of God (and His eternal Spirit), and how we reflect that image from the inside out. But, the fact remains that while we are here on this Earth, our temporary bodies are part of how we move around, work, play, and express our thoughts. So, how does this all play out? How does the external image represent the internal? Week two of *Images* brings discovery to some unique purposes we have while here on Earth. Image matters.

Where Am I Today?

- 1) Before the invention of the automobile, people mostly walked as a means of transportation. Unless you had a horse or boat, you were on foot. Humans *were* the car! Is it hard to imagine your body as just a means of transportation for the person you really are on the inside?

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- 2) If you own a car, do you view your automobile more as an image statement, basic transportation, or a blend of both? It's funny how cars can send messages whether it's intentional or not. The same goes for our lives. As we walk around living life day by day, we send messages to those around us. Would you say that you try to manage your personal image, or do you tend to let it be whatever it is?

Into the Bible

- 3) Read **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**. What are our bodies referred to? The word price is mentioned in verse 20 to show that we were not just purchased, but that there was a specific requirement. What was the price? List your thoughts on the phrase "you are not your own."
- 4) The temple where the people of Israel would go to worship and offer up their sacrifices was at one time just a tent, also called "tabernacle." Google "the tabernacle of Moses" to view pictures of what it may have looked like. In the Bible, you can read all the details of how it came to be, the construction, and even the setup in Exodus chapters 35-40. Yes, they even had a setup team! Read **Exodus 40:34-35**. Who filled the tabernacle? Do you see any relationship to the following verses?
- a) **Romans 8:11**
- b) **1 Corinthians 3:16**

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- 5) Our earthly bodies are temporary. For those who are in the family of God, they will receive Heavenly bodies that are eternal. Along with the reassurance of this comes a longing for the believer in Christ. What is the longing? What is the goal?

Read **2 Corinthians 5:1-9**.

How Does This Apply?

- 6) We read that God gave so much detail to the creation of the tabernacle, and this gives great insight to our bodily temples today. The tabernacle was a mobile tent where Israel could go and find God. They could worship Him and offer up sacrifice and repentance. As an Israelite in that time, do you think the sight of that tabernacle gave them hope and reassurance? Do you think it was because of its beauty or more so because God was there? In likeness, can we give hope and reassurance to the outside world utilizing our bodily temples? Do you think it depends on how beautiful your temple is, or is it more of what it represents?
- 7) If image matters, let's talk about image control. This is complex in how many areas of our lives it affects, but we have been given the freedom and responsibility to manage our temple. We have the power to neglect our bodies physically. We can also neglect issues of the heart that can reflect out in our character. Both of these play some part in the capacity in which we will be able to introduce others to Jesus and make disciples. If you were given only one automobile, or one home, to last your entire life, would you change anything in how you treated it? Would you be ok with the stresses and limitations resulting from neglect? How can we best view good stewardship in the things God has given us? In our character? In our bodies? In our ministry?

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Prayer Focus

This series, **we are praying for people who are created in the image of God** around the world. Here is a specific way you can be praying this week:

Indifference in Eastern Europe

Pray for Christians in Eastern Europe as they work to introduce Jesus to their friends and neighbors, in countries where a history of oppression and an economy in depression causes indifference to the message of Jesus.

See www.covechurch.org/prayerfocus for links to further reading on this topic.

Continue Learning on Your Own

- 8) Read **Genesis 3:10-11** and **2 Corinthians 5:2-3**. What is the emphasis on being clothed versus being naked in these verses? What relationship do these earthly bodies have with sin?