

# Foundations of Bible Study

The background features a circular emblem with a brown and red color scheme. At the top center is a cross. Below it is a heart with a crown of thorns. At the bottom is an open book. The emblem is set against a solid brown background.

The Mind Behind the Bible

# Reinforcement

In a sense, reinforcement is the central principle of behavior....Beings that are not God by their very nature act in order to gain something when they act. There is no such thing as absolutely selfless behavior. People who are selfless find some kind of deep satisfaction in altruistic behavior even when altruism means suffering some kind of loss.

Egan, Gerard. The Skilled Helper. Second Edition. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1982.

# The Cross Points the Way

- The difference between God's love and our love:
  - I John 3:16, I John 4:9-12, Matt 5:44-48, John 17:23
  - Until we embrace the love of the voluntary poverty of the Incarnation and the love of the voluntary suffering of the Cross, we are not ready for the resurrection
- I Peter 1:15-16
  - Are we? If not, what are we waiting for?
  - We need to know what holiness is
    - It is not our natural goodness or homespun wisdom
- The linchpin scripture: Phili 2:3-8

# Loving for Eternity

The background of the slide features a large, faint, circular emblem. Inside the circle, there is a red heart with a crown of thorns around it. Above the heart is a gold cross. Below the heart is an open book with red pages. The entire emblem is set against a brown background.

- Will we still love when we have everything?
  - Heb 2:5-8, Rom 8:32
  - Ecc 2:10-11
- We must change to be fit for eternity
- We must change to love like God
  - Rom 5:5-8
  - John 17:26
  - II Pet 1:4

# To Live Eternally, We Must Live Like God

- Rom 5:2, 6:5, 8:17-18, 23, 29-30
- Phili 3:21
- Col 1:26-27
- I John 3:2
- Eph 3:19
- I Cor 15:37-54

# Divinization

Office of Readings, December 30 from a treatise on the Refutation of All Heresies by Saint Hippolytus, Book 10, chapters 33-34 (ca. 215 AD Hippolytus ← Irenaeus ← Polycarp ← John):

When we have come to know the true God, both our bodies and our souls will be immortal and incorruptible. We shall enter the kingdom of heaven, because while we lived on earth we acknowledged heaven's King. Friends of God and co-heirs with Christ, we shall be subject to no evil desires or inclinations, or to any affliction of body or soul, **for we shall have become divine.**

Whatever evil you may have suffered, being man, it is God that sent it to you, precisely because you are man; but equally, **when you have been deified, God has promised you a share in every one of his own attributes.** The saying Know yourself means therefore that we should recognise and acknowledge in ourselves the God who made us in his own image, for if we do this, we in turn will be recognised and acknowledged by our Maker.

**So let us not be at enmity with ourselves, but change our way of life without delay. For Christ who is God, exalted above all creation, has taken away man's sin and has re-fashioned our fallen nature. In the beginning God made man in his image and so gave proof of his love for us. If we obey his holy commands and learn to imitate his goodness, we shall be like him and he will honour us. God is not beggarly, and for the sake of his own glory he has given us a share in his divinity.**

# Divinization

Clement of Alexandria – no later than 215 AD – Completely different lineage of the Church

Stromata Book VII Chapter 10:

It [knowledge] leads us to the endless and perfect end, teaching us beforehand the future life that we shall lead, according to God, and with gods; after we are freed from all punishment and penalty which we undergo, in consequence of our sins, for salutary discipline. After which redemption the reward and the honours are assigned to those who have become perfect; when they have got done with purification, and ceased from all service, though it be holy service, and among saints. Then become pure in heart, and near to the Lord, there awaits them restoration to everlasting contemplation; and they are called by the appellation of gods, being destined to sit on thrones with the other gods that have been first put in their places by the Saviour.

N.B. the similarity to Heb 12:22-23

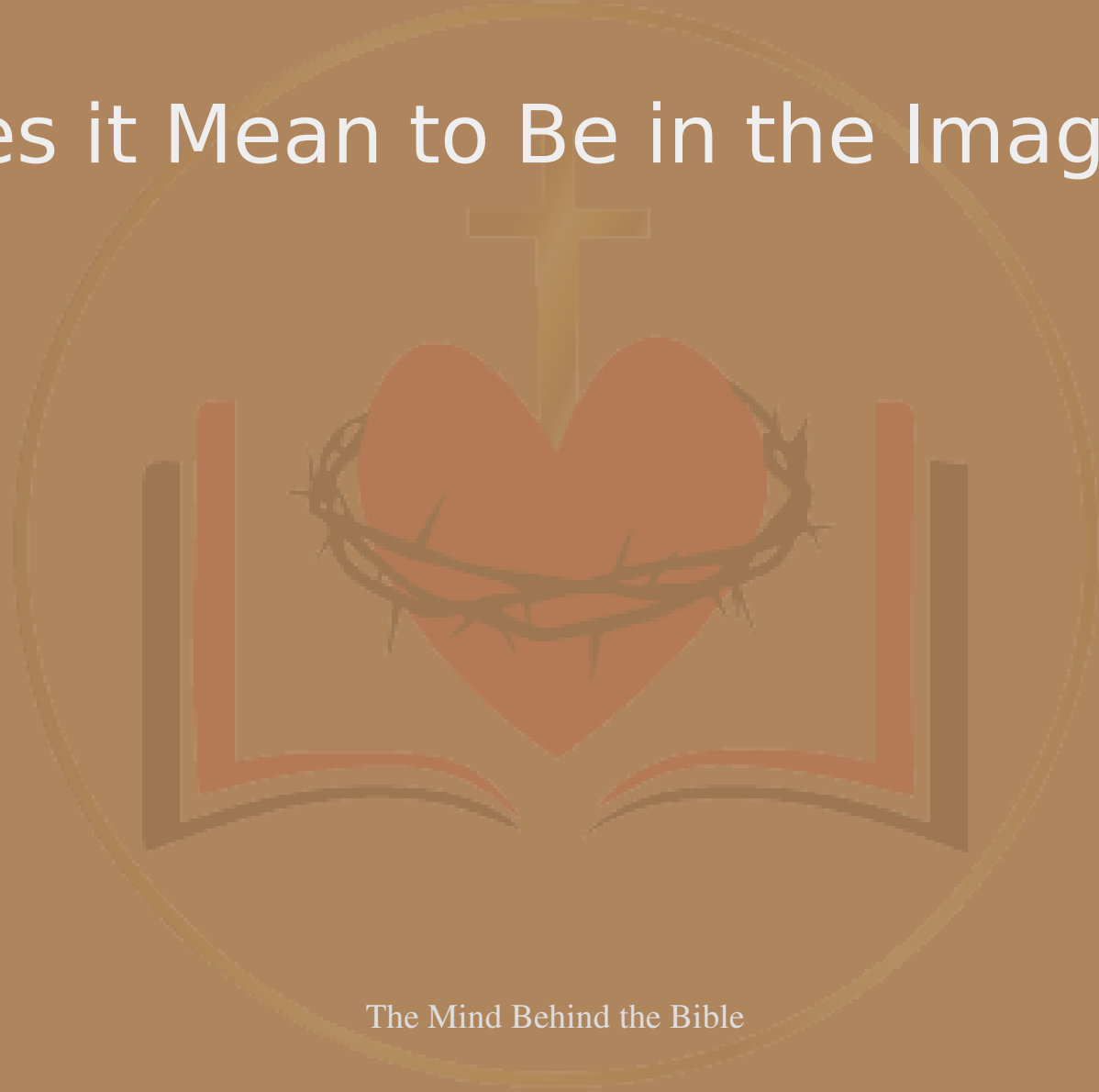
# The Image of God



- Gen 1:11-13, 21-25
- Note the poetic rhythm
- Gen 1:26-27
- The rhythm breaks



# What Does it Mean to Be in the Image of God?



# In the Image of God



- Moral dimension – choose to love
- Di-unity | Tri-unity
- Pro-creator of beings in the image of God
- Family | Trinity, Trinity = Love

# Being Born Again is Literal

- John 3:3-8
- John 1:12-13
- I Pet 1:23
- We must be like our Father – Matt 5:44-48, I John 3:9
- We must think, feel, act, and be like God
- I John 4:8 – God is Love
- What kind of love?
- Selfless love

# Practical Examples



- Christianity is ALWAYS taking the smallest piece of pie! (almost)
- Why do we brush our teeth?
- The end of the toilet paper roll

# Discouragement & Spiritual Adolescence

- Converts
- Cradle Christians
- What do we do now?
- Welcome to the starting line!