

Situation

A time for getting skinny...

So your clothes will sit well on you...

At the beach...

At a wedding...

At Easter...

NO!

1. God created us in His Image according to His Likeness

“Let Us make man in **Our image**, according to **Our likeness...**”

(Genesis 1:26)

A. **צֶלֶם** *ṣelem* = image = matter, structure, nature, logic

i. God the Father : Body of Man

ii. God the Word : Mind of Man

iii. God the Spirit : Spirit of Man

B. **דְּמוּת** *demūth* = likeness = energy, behavior, actions, choices

i. Love : Lust

Divine: charity, purity, free offering, self-sacrifice, faith, total risk-taker

World: lust, expectation of return, cost-benefit analysis, fear, risk-averse

ii. Peace : Violence

Divine: peaceful, kind, gentle, not forcing, not expecting, teaching, dignity

World: forceful, violent, kicking and screaming, jealous, prideful, indignant

2. God gave us freedom to make our own choices

A. Addictions (often low intensity and hard to detect)

B. Entertainment, self-absorbed pleasure, sex

C. Laziness, ignorance, forgetfulness

3. We made the wrong choices; God exiled us from Paradise

A. We adapted to carnal desires.

B. We started eating meat.

Fasting for Change

How can we change this situation?

How can we start making choices God would have us make?

First by seeing the image of God inside us.

Gal 5:22–23

2 Tim 3:1–5

Then by exercising self control.

- integrity
- bringing all your parts (soul, mind, body) into harmony

Why do I say “integrity?”

- Because God hates hypocrisy.
- Hypocrites do not practice what they preach.
- Hypocrites are two-faced, or three-faced!
- Hypocrisy is disintegration.
- We need integrity.

God hates hypocrites:

- “These people worship me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.”
- “Whitewashed tombs.”

1. Know yourself.

Do you have a spirit?

You *are* a spirit!

You *have* a mind and a body.

2. Control yourself.

Gal 5:22–23

2 Tim 3:1–5

Holy Spirit → Spirit → Mind → Body

3. Go back to God.

“Hear O Israel, the LORD your God, the LORD is ONE. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”

(Dt 6:5, 11:13, 11:22, 13:3, 19:9, 30:6; Mt 22:37; Mk 12:30; Lk 10:27)

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your **heart**. You shall teach them diligently to your **children**, and shall talk of them when you sit in your **house**, when you walk by the **way**, when you lie **down**, and when you rise **up**. You shall bind them as a sign on your **hand**, and they shall be as frontlets between your **eyes**. You shall write them on the **doorposts** of your house and on your **gates**.

(Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

4. Strive for God's ear.

“We fasted and entreated our God for this, and He answered our prayer.” (Ezra 8:23)
The Ninevites' fasting convinced God to change his mind! (Jonah 3:5–10)

Fasting for Preparation

1. Spiritual

A. Make choices (as God would)

And the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God live forever.

(1 John 2:17)

B. Turn from sins of commission

Do not incline my heart to any evil thing,
To practice wicked works
With men who work iniquity;
And do not let me eat of their delicacies.

(Psalm 140:4)

C. Turn from sins of omission

“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

“...By their fruits you will know them.”

(Matthew 7:19-20)

D. Practice the fruit of the Spirit

The fruit of the Spirit is:

love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

(Galatians 5:22-26)

2. Mental

A. Purify your intentions; purge your thoughts of worldly cares

Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts,
And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

(Psalm 50[51]:6)

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

(Ephesians 4:17-19)

Spirituality of Fasting

B. Get wisdom

“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”

(Matthew 4:4)

Get wisdom! Get understanding!

Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.

(Proverbs 4:5)

Wisdom is the principal thing;

Therefore get wisdom.

And in all your getting, get understanding.

(Proverbs 4:7)

C. “Come back to your senses.”

What am I doing?

What is the gain? What is the cost?

What happened to me?

Who am I?

Where did I come from?

Who is my Baba?

I am going back to Him!

Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

(John 14:23)

D. Renew your Mind

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

(Romans 12:2)

3. Physical

A. Do not practice the works of the flesh

The works of the flesh are evident, which are:

adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

(Galatians 5:19-21)

B. Mortify the fleshly desires

Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

(Galatians 5:24)

C. Consecrate yourself, Circumcise yourself

Let my prayer rise up before you
as incense.

Let the lifting up of my arms
be an evening sacrifice.

(Psalm 140)

When Moses held up his arms,
Israel prevailed.

When he let down his arms,
Amalek prevailed.

(Exodus 17:11)

Review

- 1. We are created in the Image of God**
- 2. We must choose to be in the Likeness of God**
- 3. Take a step, and God will meet you immediately**

βιβλιογραφικές αναφορές:

- Ο Αρσάνιος Ο Σοφός
- Ο Άγγελος Ο Πολυτοπος
- Ο Αντώνιος Ο Γλυκός