



IN HIS OWN LIKENESS

January 2016

When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them "Mankind" when they were created.

Genesis 5:1-2

Do you enjoy making things with your hands? Is doing your best to create beautiful things important to you? If so, my experience might speak to you. You might be able to identify.

In an effort to reduce our great amount of belongings before we move, my husband and I took four boxes of 16 x 20 black and white prints mounted on display board—many pounds—to the recycling depot. I did keep some of the ones I thought were worth saving, and yet some of those we threw away weren't that bad. It was a bit of a heart break to see all that work suffer such an end.

For thirty-five years or so I had worked long hours in the darkroom creating those prints, trying my best to make the quality as good as I could. I printed most negatives several

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times before I was happy with the results. Many earned awards in competitions. Yes, making beautiful pictures was, and is, an important part of my life.

But now my husband and I have so many thousands of photographs, we can't keep them all—prints, as well as a huge collection of slides—all made before the digital revolution.

As I threw the bundles onto the garbage heap, I thought to myself: Why did I create all these pictures? Of what use were those many hours spent in the darkroom now? What was it all for anyway? I've always made photographs because I liked the challenge of making the best pictures I could. But really . . . was this worth all that?

That afternoon my journalling reminded me of how God had made me into the creative person I was. He makes all of us in His likeness—creators like Himself.

God is the greatest creator of all, but does He suffer dilemmas like I do? Does *He* ever wonder what He did it all for? Did *He* ever get frustrated, thinking it all for naught? Does He, like me, long to share what He creates with those who enjoy His work? How does He feel when it isn't appreciated? And how does it feel when parts of His creation end up destroyed—because that does happen due to man's carelessness.

How overjoyed God must be when we stop to drink in the sight of beautiful fresh snow on the mountains. How good it must feel to Him to have an image of His handiwork painted onto a canvas by an appreciative artist. And how God must love the photographers who spend hours exploring the natural world He created, looking for wonders to capture with their cameras.

And that makes me think: When I made my photographs capturing all God showed me, God must have been pleased. He must have been happy to see me appreciate His work. He must have been glad when I shared with others all He showed me.

As I journalled, I came to see how, though at times I feel there is no value in my work, it *is* of value to God. When I show my photos, might people actually more fully appreciate the wonders of His creation?

Although I wasn't always aware, I can see that I actually did all this for God. . . . for His glory. Making photographs isn't a waste of time, even if some do occasionally have to go to make room for new ones.

The photos I had destroyed are part of my past. I should not grieve, because, after all, they weren't my best. I can see I need to continue my work. It's time to glorify God anew.

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