



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

Face Value: Four Features that Further Your Faith – Part 3

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**Main Idea** – In order to reflect God, the Gospel of Matthew teaches we should pursue excellence in everything we do.

### We were created in God's image

- God created us to be like Him; meaning that He put into us many of His attributes. **Genesis 1: 26a – Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness”**
- Because we were created in God's image, it is possible for us to reflect Him to others by our behavior. The Holy Spirit enables us to do this. **John 1:1-3, 14 – In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things that were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**
- The Bible helps us to identify God's attributes, so that we can focus on projecting those things.

### The Four Faces

- **Ezekiel 1:4-6, and 10, and Revelation 4:7-8** both present images of four faces that represent God's nature.
- What is represented by the lion face is expressed well in the Gospel of John. We are to be steadfast – like a lion – in our love for God. **Lamentations 3:22-23 – The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness (ESV)**
- What is represented by the human face is expressed well in the Gospel of Luke. As a physician, Luke was impressed by the many stories of how Jesus healed people. Jesus was a man, and Jesus cared about people.

### The Gospel of Matthew expresses the eagle face

- The eagle face symbolizes excellence. In our desire to reflect God, we should pursue excellence in our lives. If you want to pursue excellence, you must first pursue the Holy Spirit.
- When we pursue excellence and the Spirit, God will set us in places of favor. **Daniel 6:3 – Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and**

**satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. (NKJV)**

- In order to pursue the Spirit, put yourself in places where He is. Surround yourself, on a daily basis, with things that hold the Spirit (worship music, Bible study, prayer time, godly friends, the right environment, etc.)
- **2 Corinthians 3: 17-18 – Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (NKJV)**
- Pursue excellence because God is excellent. Give Him only your best effort.

### **God's contract with us expressed in Matthew**

- Matthew presented a genealogy of Jesus' lineage in 1:1-16. This lineage began with the person Abraham.
- Because Matthew's intended primary audience was his fellow Jews, he began Jesus' genealogy with Abraham -- the recognized father of their faith. Matthew wanted to show that Jesus was the promised Messiah of the Jewish people.
- God entered into a contract with Abraham that is still in place with us today.
- **Romans 4: 17-21 – (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed – God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. (NKJV)**
- Knowing this contract (covenant) is still true for us today, we carry the same faith and confidence as Abraham.
- Nothing is impossible when we are under contract (covenant) with God.

### **Three ways to grow in excellence**

1. Speak excellence
  - a. Proclaim things. Say them. Lift up praise and worship with thankfulness.
  - b. **Proverbs 18:21 – Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. (NKJV)**
  - c. **1 Peter 2:9 – But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into**

### **His marvelous light**

2. Imitate what is excellent
  - a. Even when you have not yet achieved excellence yourself, imitate things that are excellent.
  - b. Eventually, you will possess the attributes you are imitating.
  - c. **Ephesians 5:1 – Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.**
3. Pursue excellence
  - a. Achieving excellence is a process. It takes a conscious effort at doing the right things in the right order.
  - b. Notice the order of the items listed in the last portion of this passage. **2 Peter 1:3-7 – By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world’s corruption caused by human desires. In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God’s promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. (NLT)**

### **Reflect the face of the eagle**

- We want to reflect God’s glory so that others will be drawn to Him.
- We express our love for others through our pursuit of excellence. Pursuing excellence – doing everything we do to the best of our abilities – enables us to reflect the eagle face of God’s countenance.
- **Matthew 5: 14-16 –You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (ESV)**

## **Reflective Questions for Face Value, Part 3**

1. Think of something God created that you consider excellent. Now, think of something man has created that you consider excellent. Are you able to appreciate a characteristic about God through the manmade thing?
2. If it is possible to appreciate God's excellence through something man has constructed, how might you develop something within yourself that also reflects excellence to others?
3. Pastor Stephen said if we pursue excellence it will show that we love God and His creation, and it will draw people to Him. What did he mean by that?