



From Dust to Adam – Life, Breath, and the Image of God

Genesis 2:7 Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

God (as always) follows through on what He's promised. In Genesis 1:26, God said He would make mankind in His image. In Genesis 2:7, starting with Adam, that's exactly what He does.

The Breath-like Image of God

God is a breath-like being; so is Adam, so is Eve, and – this is important – so is each of us. The image that God blew into Adam passes from Adam into every human being that follows him. The original Hebrew of [Genesis 1:26](#) doesn't say God would make a man (Adam) in His image; it says God would make *mankind* in His image. Mankind refers to all of us. Every human being without exception bears the image of God.

When God Creates Adam

On the surface it looks straightforward enough: God forms the man, Adam, and brings him to life. But the words God uses to describe this event deserve more than a quick read. Five of the words in this verse refer to breath and two others imply breath. Add them up. Seven times God calls our attention to breath. One little verse. Seven references to breath. The breath-like God is making a breath-like Adam. Seven repetitions. We're intended to notice.

Look at the five explicit references to breath: God, breathed, nostrils, breath, and being. We've already seen God use the spirit-wind-breath words from [Genesis 1:2](#) and [John 4:24](#) to connect Himself with breath. Now we read that this breath-like God breathed a sustained, strong stream of air into the man's nostrils (the place where Adam breathes). The miracle continues. A particular short puff of air, a breath, turns Adam into a living being. How does being relate to breathing? Being comes from a word that means "to take a breath."

Now look at the two places where breath is implied: the breath of life, and a living being. This connection may not seem so clear – how does life imply breath? You may not have thought about it, but you already assume a connection between the two: only living things breathe.

Can God's Image Be Lost?

God is a *living* breath-like being. So is Adam, at least initially. When Adam ignores God's warning, the image of God persists, but the *life* leaves. Unbelievers, though they lack God's vibrancy, still carry His dignity. Believers who waste the life within them also still carry God's dignity. Whether God's life is absent, unused, or distorted, God's image never disappears. God treats every image-bearer with respect. We imitate Him when we do the same.

Each of us, whether or not we've asked God to enter us, bears the image of God and should be treated with the same respect we owe to God.

Explore Your Own Beliefs and Behaviors

- Think of someone whom you disrespect. Does knowing that this person is made in God's image change your attitude?
- Does knowing that you are made in God's image change your attitude towards yourself?

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