



SABBATH 37—SEPTEMBER 14, 2024

## Fully Restored

**Romans 8:29—“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”**

**T**he human being was formed in the likeness of God, so his nature was in harmony with the will of God. His mind was capable of understanding divine things. The affections were pure, and the appetites and passions were under the control of reason. With sin, the divine likeness was tarnished and nearly erased.

Some time ago, the janitor of an art museum found an old painting in a waste room. Because the painting was decayed, dirty, and unrecognizable, the janitor was just about to take it to the trash. But then the museum director decided to take one last look at it. Indeed, the painting looked useless, he thought. Nevertheless, he decided to give it a chance and took it to a restorer who specialized in old paintings to have it renovated. The restorer worked with perseverance and devotion until the work was completed. His work was so perfect that many who had previously seen the painting wondered if it was indeed the same. The secret of such perfection was uncovered: the signature indicated that the restorer was the artist's son.

Sin marred the character of the human beings, the masterpiece of divine creation. But Jesus, the Son of the Supreme Artist, came to restore the image of the Creator in us. Biblical teachings on faithfulness are intended to help us in the process of developing our character. It's not about returning tithes and offerings, and neither is it about the kind of food we eat. The point is how our characters are shaped.

Faithfulness helps us grow spiritually. When a Christian tithes regularly and systematically, self-denial is promoted and selfishness is removed from the heart. Thus, the act of tithing becomes a blessing, as it helps the believer to grow spiritually.

Selfishness is an abomination in God's eyes, as it takes away love, benevolence, and compassion for others. Only faithfulness can help us to overcome selfishness. As Ellen G. White said, “Constant, self-denying benevolence is God's remedy for the cankering sins of selfishness and covetousness” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 548).

**Appeal:** The process of divine restoration lasts a lifetime, but you must allow it to begin. Ask the Lord today to guide your decisions and actions so that you may realize that you are being transformed into the image of His Son.

