

JEN WILKIN



10 WAYS GOD CALLS US TO REFLECT
HIS CHARACTER

“*In His Image* is an invitation to become like the God we worship, to see his characteristics become true of us, the people he has created and redeemed. Jen Wilkin’s work provides a solid and accessible overview of a crucial part of Christian theology. Any believer who reads this book will benefit from its truth.”

Trevin Wax, Bible and Reference Publisher, LifeWay Christian Resources;
author, *This Is Our Time: Everyday Myths in Light of the Gospel*

“I have one big problem with this book: people will assume it’s only for women. This couldn’t be further from the truth! God has given Jen Wilkin the gift of making big truths easily understandable, which is great news for a person of average intelligence like myself. All who desire to increase their knowledge of and passion for God should read this book. All who desire to grow in holiness and be conformed to the image of God need to add this to their library. I highly recommend it.”

Stephen Altrogge, author, *Untamable God*; creator, The Blazing Center

“A. W. Tozer famously said that what we think about God is the most important and most formative thing about us. Jen Wilkin shows us how the best answers to what we should do are found in what we become, and what we become is determined by our view of God. There is no more important subject matter, and few authors are as capable at communicating such deep truth in simple, engaging ways as Jen Wilkin is.”

J. D. Greear, Pastor, The Summit Church, Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina;
author, *Not God Enough* and *Stop Asking Jesus into Your Heart*

“*In His Image* is packed full of theological insight, pastoral wisdom, real-life application, and plenty of self-deprecation. Along with its predecessor, *None Like Him*, it is essential reading for understanding what God is like and what it looks like for us to live in light of that.”

Sam Allberry, Apologist, Ravi Zacharias International Ministries;
Editor, The Gospel Coalition; author, *Is God Anti-Gay?* and *Why Bother with Church?*

“This book is for every woman who stresses over her decisions, constantly wondering whether or not she’s in God’s will. Jen Wilkin graciously turns these questions upside down by encouraging us to know and behold the character of God, allowing that to inform and transform our actions as image bearers. *In His Image* presents a biblical and practical explanation of God’s communicable attributes that anyone can grasp, enjoy, and apply!”

Emily Jensen, Cofounder, Risen Motherhood; Cohost, *Risen Motherhood* podcast

*“Who should I be? This is a question many of us don’t explore, at least not that explicitly, and yet the answer to this question is essential to everything about us as Christians. Jen Wilkin helps answer this question in her outstanding book *In His Image*. Wilkin takes us through God’s communicable attributes, teaching us how we can reflect our Creator God. Her careful study of God’s Word and theology makes *In His Image* a must-read.”*

Trillia Newbell, author, *God’s Very Good Idea; Enjoy; and United*

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10 Ways God Calls Us to Reflect His Character

Jen Wilkin

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In memory of R. C. Sproul,
who taught profound truth in plain speech,
and who dignified everyday disciples as capable theologians.

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Introduction

Asking the Better Question

If you've ever said, "I just want to know God's will for my life," this book is for you. If you've ever gazed at the trajectory of your life and wondered if you were headed down the right path or off a cliff, keep reading. By the time you finish these pages, I hope you will never have to question what God's will is for you again. Or, at least, not the way you may have asked it in the past.

It's a uniquely Christian musing, this question of God's will. Those who have never called on the name of Jesus Christ are not the least concerned with discovering its answer. It reveals a believer's awareness that, to be a follower of Christ, not every option is open to me: whatever the way forward, it is not wide but narrow. God has a will for my life, and based on my unsuccessful history of trying to follow the way that seems right unto man, I had better do my best to discern what that will is.

But that discernment piece is tricky. When we reflect on what our lives were like apart from Christ, we tend to focus on the poor decisions we made and their ensuing consequences. How we spent our time, our money, and our efforts plays before us like a blooper reel, but instead of making us laugh it forces us to whisper, "Never again." Before we believed, we did what felt right or

what seemed rational to our darkened minds. But now we know our feelings deceive us and our self-serving logic betrays us. No worries, though. Now we have a direct line to God. We'll just ask him what we should do.

Without meaning to, we can begin to regard our relationship with God primarily as a means toward better decision-making. We can slip into a conception of God as a cosmic Dear Abby, a benevolent advice columnist who fields our toughest questions about relationships and circumstances. Because we do not trust our judgment, we ask him who we should marry or which job we should take. We ask him where to spend our money or which neighborhood to move into. "What should I do next? Keep me away from the cliff, Lord. Keep me on the narrow path."

These are not terrible kinds of questions to ask God. To some extent, they demonstrate a desire to answer the question "What is God's will for my life?" They show a commendable desire to honor God in our daily doings. But they don't get to the heart of what it means to follow God's will for our lives. If we want our lives to align with God's will, we will need to ask a better question than "What should I do?"

We Christians tend to pool our concern around the decisions we face. If I pick *A* when I should have picked *B*, then all is lost. If I pick *B*, all will be well. But if Scripture teaches us anything, it is this: God is always more concerned with the decision-maker than he is with the decision itself. Take, for example, Simon Peter. When faced with decision *A* (deny Christ) or decision *B* (acknowledge him), Peter failed famously. But it is not his poor decision-making that defines him. Rather, it is the faithfulness of God to restore him. Peter's story serves to remind us that, no matter the quality of our choices, all is never lost.

This makes sense when we pause to consider that no decision

we could ever make could separate us from the love of God in Christ. God can use the outcome of any decision for his glory and for our good. That is reassuring. Peter was faced with two choices—one of which was clearly unwise. But often we must choose between two options that appear either equally wise or equally unwise. Often the answer to the question “What should I do?” could go either way.

Which brings us to the better question. For the believer wanting to know God’s will for her life, the first question to pose is not “What should I do?” but “Who should I be?”

Perhaps you’ve tried to use the Bible to answer the question “What should I do?” Facing a difficult decision, perhaps you’ve meditated for hours on a psalm or a story in the Gospels, asking God to show you how it speaks to your current dilemma. Perhaps you’ve known the frustration of hearing silence, or worse, of acting on a hunch or “leading” only to find later that you apparently had not heard the Lord’s will. I know that process better than I’d like to admit, and I also know the shame that accompanies it—the sense that I’m tone-deaf to the Holy Spirit, that I’m terrible at discovering God’s will.

But God does not hide his will from his children. As an earthly parent, I do not tell my kids, “There is a way to please me. Let’s see if you can figure out what it is.” If I do not conceal my will from my earthly children, how much more our heavenly Father? His will does not need discovering. It is in plain sight. To see it we need to start asking the question that deals with his primary concern. We need to ask, “Who should I be?”

Of course, the questions “What should I do?” and “Who should I be?” are not unrelated. But the order in which we ask them matters. If we focus on our actions without addressing our hearts, we may end up merely as better behaved lovers of self.

Think about it. What good is it for me to choose the right job if I'm still consumed with selfishness? What good is it for me to choose the right home or spouse if I'm still eaten up with covetousness? What does it profit me to make the right choice if I'm still the wrong person? A lost person can make "good choices." But only a person indwelt by the Holy Spirit can make a good choice for the purpose of glorifying God.

The hope of the gospel in our sanctification is not simply that we would make better choices, but that we would *become better people*. This is the hope that caused John Newton to pen, "I once was lost but now am found, was blind, but now I see." It is what inspires the apostle Paul to speak of believers "being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor. 3:18). The gospel teaches us that the grace that is ours through Christ is, by the work of the Spirit, transforming us increasingly into someone better.

But not just anyone better. The gospel begins transforming us into who we should have been. It *re-images* us. Want to know what it should have been like to be human? Look to the only human who never sinned.

Formed and Marked

Wandering through an antique store fifteen years ago, I came across a small, pleasantly shaped ceramic green vase. Green is my favorite color, so I decided to purchase it for its asking price of ten dollars. Turning it over, I found the name "McCoy" in upraised letters on its base. A little research revealed I had made a good purchase—my little McCoy pottery vase was worth four times what I had paid. But I loved it simply because it brought me pleasure to see it filled with flowers from my garden, perched on my entryway table. Form and function in harmony.

But fifteen years ago, I had four small children living in my home. One fateful day, my little vase found its way onto the tile floor. It shattered, though not completely beyond repair. Sadder than I wanted to admit, I pieced it back together with superglue, but its days of holding water and flowers were officially over. Today, it sits on a bookshelf in my living room. It still says McCoy on the bottom and still holds a form that declares its beauty and purpose, but its ability to do what it was created to do is now limited. And the closer you stand to it, the more evident its cracks. I couldn't get ten dollars for it today if I tried, but I still love it, broken or not.

We are like that cracked vase in some important ways. Think back to that rhythmic retelling of the creation story in Genesis 1. For five days, we hear God say, "Let there be . . ." and whatever he declares is instantly so, and is good. Light and darkness, land, sea, skies, and all manner of plants and animals take their orderly place at his bidding. On the sixth day of creation, the rhythm of the narrative noticeably breaks. "Let there be" becomes "Let us make." The creation account becomes wonderfully personal and pointed. And wonderfully poetic:

God created humankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them,
male and female he created them. (Gen. 1:27 NET)

God created humankind and stamped us with his mark. He created us to bear his image, to be his representatives in our working and playing and worship. Form and function in harmony. Even after the shattering catastrophe of Genesis 3, we still bear his image, though we no longer work, play, or worship as we were intended. We still hold value to him—every human life. We are cracked vessels, designed to display beauty but leaking at every

fissure. But God redeems his image bearers by sending his Son to be the perfect image bearer. Christ is “the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature” (Heb. 1:3). And for every cracked vessel being miraculously restored by grace, he is the answer to the better question, “Who should I be?”

What is God’s will for your life? Put simply, that you would be like Christ. “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (Rom. 8:29). God’s will is that the cracks in the image we bear be repaired so that we represent him as we were created to do, so that we grow to look more and more like our brother, Christ, in whom form and function displayed themselves flawlessly. “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation” (Col. 1:15). As such, he serves as both our model and our guide: “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). And as the apostle John points out, “Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked” (1 John 2:6).

If we want to look like him, we will walk as he walked.

A Path Narrow and Safe

I once climbed a mesa in New Mexico whose top had been the home of Native Americans for many centuries. Because there was no water source at the top of the mesa, its inhabitants made daily trips down to the valley to carry up the water they needed to survive. The result is a footpath worn into the rock, a continuous channel, five inches deep, that loops its way around the steep cliff face, just wide enough to place one foot in front of the other. It requires great concentration to keep your balance

on this narrow path, but there is no question that you are on the safest route of ascent.

This is what it means to follow in the steps of Christ. Whatever the way forward, it is not wide but narrow. Asking the question “Who should I be?” means asking for the first place to set our foot to the narrow path. With every step forward, we increasingly “put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (Col. 3:10). Yes, the will of God is the narrow path for those who walk it. But we need not wander aimlessly, as those with no sense of where his will would have us place our next step, in danger of straying off a cliff. We simply walk in the steps of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

So this is a book that intends to, once and for all, answer the question of God’s will for our lives. It intends to illuminate the narrow path for those of us who have grown forgetful of its existence or have wondered if it can be found. The narrow path is not hidden. Like the ascent to the top of the mesa, the faithful feet of many saints have worn it deep, their eyes fixed on the founder and perfecter of their faith who walked it before them. It shows itself to those who have learned to ask, “Who should I be?” and to look to the person of Christ for their answer. It shows itself to those whose deepest desire and dearest delight is to be remade—in his image—one carefully placed step at a time.

God Most Holy

Repetition is the mother of learning.

Roman proverb

“Mom, my head is pounding and I have to go to class. I drank a glass of water.”

“Mom, I’m feeling so anxious about my exam. Will you pray for me? I drank a glass of water.”

Two texts, received from two different college-age Wilkins on two different days in the same week. To someone not familiar with our family, these messages from the now-flown baby birds to the mama bird back at the nest are probably part self-explanatory and part weird. But to my kids, they make perfect sense. For their whole lives, a report of any ailment has been answered with the suggestion, “Try drinking a glass of water.”

I’ve been teased by my kids a fair amount for this home remedy advice. They joke that if they were to text me that they have lost a limb, I would advise them to hydrate.

So imagine my glee as I sat watching the evening news, my youngest child seated to my right, and heard a doctor report that the best first step for headaches and other common discomforts is . . . you guessed it. The look on Calvin's face indicated that he had drawn the correct conclusion: there would be no living with me now. Luckily for him, he graduates this year. Perhaps by the time he leaves the nest, I will have received my honorary medical degree from the proper authorities.

“Try drinking a glass of water” is just one of many phrases etched into the psyches of my kids. Parents repeat things. Lots of things. Especially to small children. When we would leave the kids with a sitter, my last words were always, “Be ye kind one to another!” Before they could play at a friend's house, the standard question was, “Is your room clean?” And at bedtime, “Have you brushed your teeth?”

We repeat what we want others to remember. And we learn what we hear repeated.

As my children got older, they didn't wait for the reminder. A request to go to a friend's house would begin with, “Mom, my room is clean and I finished my homework.” Because repetition had done its work.

It's no wonder that the repository of the greatest wisdom on earth utilizes this tool with regularity. By paying attention to what the Bible repeats, we gain an understanding of what it most wants us to learn and remember.

Who Is God?

My explicitly stated intention for this book is that we learn to identify God's will for our lives.

Our inclination is to discern God's will by asking, “What should I do?” But God's will concerns itself primarily with who

we are, and only secondarily with what we do. By changing the question and asking, “Who should I be?” we see that God’s will is not concealed from us in his Word, but is plainly revealed.

The Bible plainly answers the question “Who should I be?” with “Be like Jesus Christ, who perfectly images God in human form.” God’s will for our lives is that we conform to the image of Christ, whose incarnation shows us humanity perfectly conformed to the image of God. In this book, we will consider how we can demonstrate a resemblance to our Maker. But since the Bible’s answer to “Who should I be?” is “Be like the very image of God,” we must ask, “Who is God?”

Theologians have mined the Scriptures for centuries to answer this question. Stephen Charnock, Arthur Pink, A. W. Tozer, and R. C. Sproul have all explored the limitless character of God to my great benefit, and to lengths that I am not competent to go.¹ Any systematic theology text lists and explores God’s attributes. But I hope in these pages to take the lofty view of God presented elsewhere and ask a further question: “How should the knowledge that God is _____ change the way I live?”

I have elsewhere explored the implications of ten of God’s *incommunicable attributes* that could fill that blank, those traits that are true of God alone.² Only God is infinite, incomprehensible, self-existent, eternal, immutable, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, and sovereign. When we strive to become like him in any of these traits, we set ourselves up as his rival. Human beings created to *bear the image of God* aspire instead to *become like God*. We reach for those attributes that are only true of God, those suited only to a limitless being. Rather than worship and trust in the omniscience of God, we desire omniscience for ourselves. Rather than celebrate and revere his omnipotence, we

seek omnipotence in our own spheres of influence. Rather than rest in the immutability of God, we point to our own calcified sin patterns and declare ourselves unchanging and unchangeable. Like our father Adam and our mother Eve, we long for that which is only intended for God, rejecting our God-given limits and craving the limitlessness we foolishly believe we are capable of wielding and entitled to possess.

To crave an incommunicable attribute is to listen to the Serpent's lure, "You shall be like God." It is the natural inclination of the sinful heart, but as those who have been given a new heart with new desires, we must learn to crave different attributes, those appropriate to a limited being, those that describe the abundant life Jesus came to give to us.

We call these God's *communicable attributes*, those of his traits that can become true of us, as well. God is holy, loving, just, good, merciful, gracious, faithful, truthful, patient, and wise. When we talk about being "conformed to the image of Christ," this is the list we are describing. It is this list I intend to explore, ten attributes that show us how to reflect who God is as Christ did. The more gracious I become, for example, the more I reflect Christ, who perfectly images God.

But where should such a reflection begin? What should be the first thing that comes into my mind when I think about God?³ Is there even a right answer? I would argue that there is. We just have to lend an ear to the mother of learning—repetition.

First Things First

If it's true that we repeat what is most important, one attribute of God emerges clearly as belonging at the top of the list: holiness. Holiness can be defined as the sum of all moral excellency, "the antithesis of all moral blemish or defilement."⁴ It carries

the ideas of being set apart, sacred, separate, of possessing utter purity of character.

Following the rule of repetition, the Bible wants our first thought about God to be that he is holy. The word *holy* appears almost seven hundred times in the Bible. Its verb form, *sanctify*, appears an additional two hundred times. Those mentions of *holy* in all its forms are related to things and people and places, but its ties to God himself are striking. No other attribute is joined to the name of God with greater frequency than holiness. Twenty-nine times the Bible mentions his “holy name.” He is called the “Holy One of Israel” twenty-five times in the book of Isaiah alone.

God’s holiness, his utter purity of character, is what distinguishes him from all other rivals:

Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?

Who is like you, majestic in holiness,
awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders. (Ex. 15:11)

There is none holy like the LORD:

for there is none besides you;
there is no rock like our God. (1 Sam. 2:2)

The gods of Egypt and Canaan, of Greece and Rome, among their other limitations, made no claims of possessing utter purity of character. The chronicles of their exploits read more like a reality TV show than a sacred text, compelling the devout to gaze voyeuristically on their lurid antics. But the God of Israel possesses a holiness so blinding that no one can look on him and live, a moral purity so devastating that not even the sinless angelic beings who inhabit his immediate presence can bear to look upon him, instead shielding their gaze with their wings:

and day and night they never cease to say,

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,
who was and is and is to come!” (Rev 4:8; cf.
Isa. 6:3)

I am no expert on angelic beings, but it seems likely that the *first thing* that comes to mind when they think about God is revealed in the *one thing* they repeat without ceasing: holy, holy, holy.

Here is a repetition particularly worthy of our attention. The rabbis commonly employed twofold repetition to emphasize a point, and we see Jesus employ the same technique in his own teaching with phrases like “Truly, Truly I say to you” and “Many will say to me ‘Lord, Lord.’” R. C. Sproul writes,

Only once in sacred Scripture is an attribute of God elevated to the third degree. Only once is a characteristic of God mentioned three times in succession. The Bible says that God is holy, holy, holy. Not that He is merely holy, or even holy, holy. He is holy, holy, holy. The Bible never says that God is love, love, love; or mercy, mercy, mercy; or wrath, wrath, wrath; or justice, justice, justice. It does say that he is holy, holy, holy, that the whole earth is full of His glory.⁵

We repeat what we most want remembered, what is most important, and what is most easily forgotten. The people of God can grow forgetful of what the Bible extols as God’s highest attribute, choosing instead to emphasize another in its place. Some churches focus on repeating almost exclusively that he is loving. Some repeat almost exclusively that he is just. The first thing that comes to our minds when we think about God can sometimes be more heavily influenced by our background than by the Bible itself. Even though the Bible repeats God’s

holiness, our churches may avoid doing so. If the utter purity of God makes the angels avert their gaze, preaching holiness may not be a crowd pleaser. Better to go with an emphasis on love so everyone feels welcome, or better to go with an emphasis on justice so everyone behaves.

God deserves our worship for both his love and his justice. But his love and his justice are imbued with and defined by his holiness—he does not merely love; he loves out of utter purity of character. He does not merely act justly; he acts justly out of utter purity of character. If we emphasize any of his attributes above or apart from his holiness, we fashion him after our own imagining or for our own ends. His love becomes love on human terms, rather than a holy love. His justice becomes justice on human terms, rather than a holy justice.

When we apprehend his holiness, we are changed by the revelation. The knowledge of God and the knowledge of self always go hand in hand. We see ourselves differently because we have seen God as he is. And we understand our calling, to reflect God as Christ did, in a new way.

Holy as He Is Holy

I would expect the first thing we should think about God to be incommunicable—something characteristic of only the Almighty—but it's not. Holiness is an attribute of God that we can reflect. Take a minute to marvel at that thought.

Holiness permeates the entire Christian calling. It lies at the very center of the gospel. We are not merely saved *from depravity*; we are saved *to holiness*. Conversion entails consecration.

The Bible presents holiness as both given to us and asked of us. It says, “In Christ, you are made holy. Now be holy.”

Hebrews 10:10 assures us that “we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (NIV). What a blessed truth! Christ’s sacrifice grants us positional holiness before God. We are set apart as his children. Nothing can remove our positional holiness. Yet, the Bible describes not just positional holiness but also practical holiness.

Here again, repetition serves as our teacher. The Old Testament speaks of holiness as an imperative, and it does so repeatedly:

For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and *be holy, for I am holy*. . . . For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore *be holy, for I am holy*. (Lev. 11:44–45)

Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, *You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy*. (Lev. 19:2)

Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and *be holy, for I am the LORD your God*. (Lev. 20:7)

You shall *be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy* and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine. (Lev. 20:26)

We might be tempted to dismiss these instructions as just one more weird part of a weird Old Testament book, no longer applying to those under the new covenant. But the New Testament finds these words echoed on the lips of Jesus himself in the Sermon on the Mount. He deconstructs the Old Testament laws on murder, adultery, divorce, oaths, retaliation, and treatment of enemies, pointing to a deeper obedience of not merely outward actions but also inward motives. Herein lies the righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees. What summary

statement does he choose to conclude his point? “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48).

It is a statement so jarring that we may be tempted to think he uses it for its shock value. Surely this is just Jesus using hyperbole. But it doesn’t sound like a certain listener seated at his feet on that mountainside took it as such. Some thirty years later, Peter writes to a group of fledgling believers: “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Pet. 1:14–16).

Peter repeats what had been repeated to him. Do not be conformed to who you were. Be re-formed to who you should be. Be holy as God is holy.

If you are still wondering what God’s will is for your life, allow the apostle Paul to remove any lingering confusion: “For this is the will of God, your sanctification. . . . For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness” (1 Thess. 4:3, 7).

Simply put, God’s will for your life is that you be holy. That you live a life of set-apartness. That, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you strive for utter purity of character (Heb. 12:14). Every admonition contained in all of Scripture can be reduced to this. Every warning, every law, every encouragement bows to this overarching purpose. Every story of every figure in every corner of every book of the Bible is chanting this call. Be holy, for he is holy.

Chasing Holiness

Because our conversion affects our consecration, those who receive positional holiness will be compelled to pursue practical holiness. As theologian Jerry Bridges notes, “True salvation brings with it a desire to be made holy.”⁶

Growing in holiness means growing in our hatred of sin. But reflecting the character of God involves more than just casting off the garment of our old ways. It entails putting on the garment of our new inheritance. Growing in holiness means growing into being loving, just, good, merciful, gracious, faithful, truthful, patient, and wise. It means learning to think, speak, and act like Christ every hour of every day that God grants us to walk this earth as the redeemed.

A few years ago, I visited Detroit in early January to see my brother. I thought I had packed warm clothes, but when the plane touched down to a temperature of -2°F, I quickly learned that no matter what I had packed, I would have been unprepared. This Texan didn't own clothes for subzero temperatures. My brother enjoyed gently teasing me about my accent, my thin jacket, my absent scarf and hat, and my inadequate footwear. Unaccustomed to living with snow, I constantly forgot to remove my shoes upon entering the house.

When my brother moved to Detroit from Texas thirty years ago, no doubt he showed up as ill-prepared and odd-fitting as I had. But over time he learned to put off his old Texas clothes and accent and habits and to put on those that matched his new status as a Michigander. He acclimated to his new environment.

Holiness is like that. It is a process of acclimation, by which we learn to behave like the children of God and not like the children of wrath. The more we clothe ourselves in newness of life, the more incongruous we will feel in our old environments and the more at home we will feel with the redeemed. Our separateness will become increasingly evident to those among whom we once walked. Our conversion will affect consecration, a holiness that we need, certainly, but also a holiness that we want above all else.

For this is the will of God, our sanctification.

Note: At the end of each chapter you will find verses, questions, and a prayer prompt to help you remember and apply what you have read. Consider keeping a journal in which you copy or paraphrase each of the verses for meditation, noting what each adds to your understanding of the attribute covered in the chapter. Then journal your answers to the questions, as well as a prayer of response.

Verses for Meditation

Leviticus 19:2

Job 34:10

Isaiah 47:4

Habakkuk 1:13

Matthew 5:48

Hebrews 12:14

Questions for Reflection

1. How have you regarded God's will for your life primarily as "What to do" versus "Who to be"? Think of a current key decision you are facing. Are your prayer requests limited to specific outcomes? Do your prayers exclude a simple request to be sanctified? How might you change your prayers about that key decision?

2. Describe a time in your life when you experienced an acute awareness of sin. What was the cause of your awareness? What was the result?

In His Image

3. Think of the holiest person you have ever known. What was his or her motive for right behavior?

4. How should a desire to grow in holiness impact our relationship with God positively? How should it impact our relationships with others positively? Give a specific example of each.

Pray

Write a prayer to God asking him to show you your sin in contrast to his holiness. Ask him to build in you a hatred for all things unholy, so that you can better reflect his true nature. Thank him that you have been made positionally holy in Christ, and are being made practically holy by the power of the Spirit.

Sometimes we ask *What is God's will for my life?* when we should really be asking *Who should I be?* The Bible has an answer: *Be like the very image of God.*

By exploring ten characteristics of who *God* is—holy, loving, just, good, merciful, gracious, faithful, patient, truthful, and wise—this book helps us understand who God intends for *us* to be. Through Christ, the perfect reflection of the image of God, we will discover how God's own attributes impact how we live, leading to freedom and purpose as we follow his will and are conformed to his image.

"This work provides a solid and accessible overview of a crucial part of Christian theology. Any believer who reads this book will benefit from its truth."

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"There is no more important subject matter, and few authors are as capable at communicating such deep truth in simple, engaging ways as Jen Wilkin is."

J. D. GREEAR, author, *Not God Enough* and *Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Heart*

"This book is for everyone who stresses over her decisions. Wilkin turns these questions upside down by encouraging us to behold the character of God, allowing that to inform and transform our actions as image bearers."

EMILY JENSEN, Cofounder, Risen Motherhood

JEN WILKIN is an author and Bible teacher. She has a background in women's ministry, and has organized and led studies for women in home, church, and parachurch contexts. She is the author of *Women of the Word* and *None Like Him*.

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