

Chapter 21: The Creation of Man: Why Did God create us? How did God make us like himself? How can we please him in everyday living? (437)

The pinnacle of God's creative activity is the creation of human beings, both male and female, to be more like him than anything else he has made.

- A) The use of the Word *Man* to Refer to the Human Race
 1. The usage of the term *man* has Scriptural warrant (Gen 5:1-2)
 2. The Hebrew term translated "Man" is אָדָם (*adam*), the same term used for the name of Adam and the same term used as of man in distinction from woman. (Gen. 2:22, 25; Gen. 3:12; Ecd. 7:28)
 3. Therefore the practice of using the same term to refer (1) to male human beings and (2) to the human race generally is a practice that originated with God himself, and we should not find that objectionable.
 4. Gen. 5:2 specifically describes God's activity of choosing a name that would apply to the human race as a whole.
 5. The fact that God did not choose to call the human race "woman," but "man," probably has some significance for understanding God's original plan for men and women.
- B) Why Was Man Created?
 1. God did not need to create man, yet he created us for his own glory. (John 17:5; John 17:24; Isa. 43:7; Eph. 1:11-12; 1 Cor. 10:31)
 Objection: is it wrong for God to seek glory for himself?
 Answer:
 2. What is our purpose in life?
 - a) God created us to glorify him (see above) and to find enjoyment in him (John 10:10; Psa 16:11; Psa 84:1-2, 10)
 - b) When we begin to appreciate the nature of God as the infinitely perfect Creator who deserves all praise, then our hearts will not rest until we give him glory with all of our "heart...soul...mind, and...strength" (Mark 12:30).
- C) Man in the Image of God
 1. The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God and represents God.
 - a) The more that we know about God and man the more similarities we will recognize, and the more fully we will understand what Scripture means when it says that man is in the image of God. (Gen 2:26, Gen. 5:3)
 2. The Fall: God's Image is Distorted but Not Lost (Gen. 9:6, James 3:9)
 - a) After the fall we are still like God, but His image is distorted in us.
 - b) Humans, therefore, are a useful but still inadequate picture of God's character
 3. Through redemption in Christ we experience a progressive recovering of more of God's image. (Col. 3:10)
 - a) We are changed into more of His likeness in our thinking (Col. 3:10)
 - b) And in our lives and character (Rom 8:29, 2Cor 3:18)
 4. At Christ's return we will experience the complete restoration of God's image. (1Cor. 15:49)
 - a) The purpose of God in creating man in his image was completely realized in the person of Jesus Christ. (2Cor. 4:4, Col. 1:15, 1John 3:2)
 5. We are like God in a number of aspects...
 - a) Moral Aspects:
 - i. We are morally accountable before God.
 - ii. We have an inner sense of right and wrong that sets us apart from animals (who respond from fear of punishment or hope of reward)
 - iii. We can reflect his likeness through righteous behavior (though, by contrast, we show *unlikeness* to God when we sin)
 - b) Spiritual Aspects:
 - i. We have immaterial spirits and can act in significant ways in the realm of the immaterial, spiritual realm
 - ii. We have a spiritual life that enables us to relate to God as persons, to pray, praise him, and to hear him speaking his words to us
 - iii. We have immortality
 - c) Mental Aspects:
 - i. We can think logically and with reason, problem solve (e.g., no history of canine theology)
 - ii. We can use complex, abstract language
 - iii. We have an awareness of the distant future (Ecc. 3:11)

- iv. We are creative in areas such as art, music, literature, and scientific and technological inventiveness.
- v. We have complex emotions
- d) Relational Aspects:
 - i. We reflect the nature of God in marriage in the fact that as men and women we have equality in importance and difference in roles from the time that God created us
 - ii. We have been given the right to rule creation (Gen. 1:26, Gen. 1:28, Psalm 8:6-8)
- e) Physical aspects:
 - i. We must be careful not to think that our physical bodies imply that God has a physical body (John 4:24, Ex. 20:4)
 - ii. Yet almost everything we do is done by use of our physical bodies—thinking, moral judgments, prayer, praise, sight, smell, hearing, etc.
 - iii. Our physical bodies display something of God's character. They also enable us to bear and raise human beings who are like ourselves.
 - iv. The ways in which we are like God can be enhanced (e.g., our moral behavior can reflect more and more of God's character through study of the Scriptures and prayer) (2Cor. 7:1, 1Pet. 1:16)
- 6. As bearers of God's image, we have great dignity.
 - a) We are more like God than any other created thing.
 - b) This has profound implications for our conduct toward others (the mentally ill, elderly people, unborn children, etc., deserve equal dignity and rights)

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. According to Scripture, what should be the major purpose of your life? If you consider the major commitments or goals of your life at the present time (with respect to friendships, marriage, education, job, use of money, church relationships, etc.), are you acting as though your goal were the one that Scripture specifies? Or do you have some other goals that you have acted upon (perhaps without consciously deciding to do so)? As you think about the pattern of most of your days, do you think that God delights in you and rejoices over you?
2. How does it make you feel to think that you, as a human being, are more like God than any other creature in the universe? How does that knowledge make you want to act?

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