

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

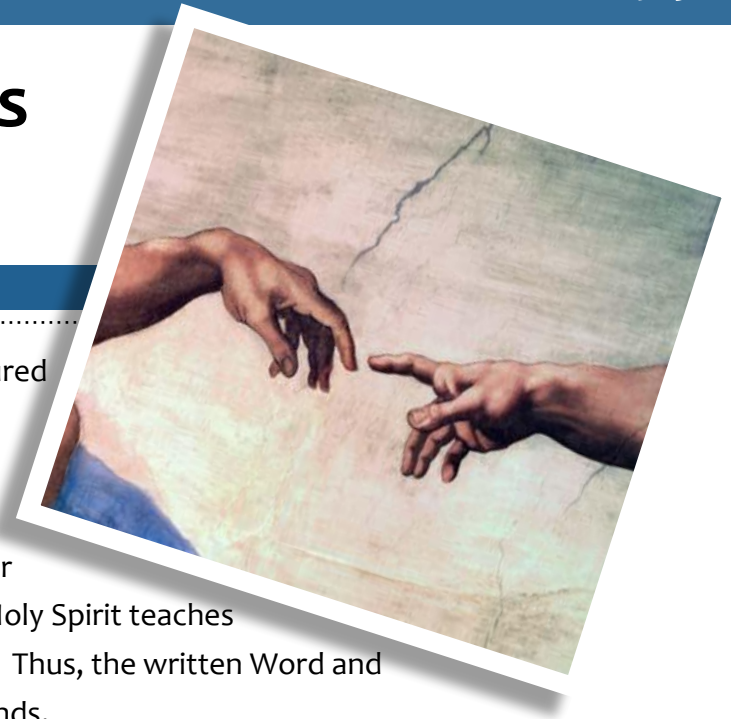
I Thessalonians 5:23

God's Design of Humans

Theme: Discovering who I am

Review

God originally breathed special words to humans then assured those words were handed down to us in the Bible we have today. It is necessary to have translations into our native languages; Jesus' own ministry proves that. Some translations are better than others, but in spite of minor variations, reliable translations are the Word of God. The Holy Spirit teaches us from our Bible and imparts true spiritual understanding. Thus, the written Word and the Spirit assure that truth gets from God's mind to our minds.



Bible Truth

Introduction

God designed and created humans to be unique in all of creation. Since we were designed and created by Him, it is only logical to listen to what He has to say and learn of His plans for us. Understanding who we are from the Bible is an exciting journey of self-discovery. We will see it is not our greatness or importance that makes God love us; He loves us because that is His nature—He is love. Not only does God love us, but He has a special plan for us. Knowing that plan is what makes the Christian life rewarding.

God's General Creation

Humans are a group of created beings on a small planet in a common galaxy (a collection of billions of stars and planets in one huge system in space). Yet

the more scientists discover the more they find there had to be incredible preparations made before our creation in order for us to survive. It turns out the universe is not a place where life can easily exist, so unless special preparations were made there could be no life. For example, our planet may be small but it is precisely located in the only area in our galaxy where life can exist, and that area is rather small. The more we discover the more we see there was an Intelligence beyond our understanding guiding the design of the universe. Not only did God make incredible preparations to prepare an earthly home for us, but He also had a special plan in mind for humans before He even began creation. Knowing His overall design of humans and His plan for us will help us in our discovery of who we are.

You Are a Special Creation

The Bible clearly states that humans (and each individual) are unique in all of creation. Nothing else is said to have been created in God's image; that is what makes us so unusual (Gen. 1:27). Male and female were both created in His image. Being created in His image means humans were created without sin, had the ability to make choices, were given a mind to reason/think, could understand spiritual things, and etc.

An important point of being created in God's image is that we are composed of three parts: a body, a soul, and a spirit. The Apostle Paul acknowledges this by saying, **"...and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"** (1 Thes. 5:23b). Just as God is three persons in one, we have three distinct parts. Understanding those parts helps us understand who we are. In the next lesson we will see that God has a special plan for each of our three parts.

Discuss the three parts of each person. It seems we humans cannot truly understand ourselves if we have no clue as to what our parts are or the Designer's plan for us.

The importance of our three parts cannot be over emphasized. In the very first chapter of the Bible, God reveals how unique humans are in all of creation. In Genesis 1, the word "created" is used on days one, five, and six. God is not careless with words, so we must pay attention to how He uses them in the Bible. Some believe God specifically used that word on those days to teach us about our world and ourselves.

The word "create" means to bring something into existence, out of nothing, by the very word of God; He spoke and it became a reality. Thus, it is argued God

uses the word "created" (Genesis 1) only when He brings something into existence that did not exist before that time. On day one, He spoke and all the **physical stuff** of our universe came into existence; this is all the material, atomic matter, energy, light, dark matter/energy. **"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"** (Gen. 1:1). God spoke and all the things that can be seen, felt, or sensed in some way came into existence.

On days two, three, and four, He formed and fashioned what He had created on day one and made our universe habitable. Then on day five He used the word "created" again because now God was moving into the unseen world. He created something altogether new--something that had never existed. **"So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, ..."** (Gen 1:21a). He created animals and He gave them a **soul**; it was the soul which was altogether new. The soul is that part of animals that makes them aware of themselves and others. This self-awareness includes the need to protect their young and the desire to fight to survive. We also have a soul. A human's soul is composed of a person's mind, emotion(s), and personality. The difference between the human soul and that of an animal is the human soul is eternal, an animal's is not (when an animal dies, so does its soul; the human soul lives forever even after the body dies).

Then on day six God uses the word "created" again for the final act of creation. This time it is used in connection with humans. **"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them"** (Gen. 1:27). On day six, God created humans with something altogether new, something that did not exist before, and which He spoke into existence.

Discussion: By creation day six the atoms of which we are composed were already created and God had created souls. Humans have something else, a spirit, but what is so unique about the spirit that God uses the word create again?

On day six, God created the **human spirit**—something that never before existed. The human spirit is unique because it is the part of us that knows there is a God and desires to have a relationship with Him. So we humans are composed of three parts: body, soul, and spirit (1 Thes. 5:23), just as God is triune (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) (2 Cor. 13:14). We are the only creatures that know about God and care to have a relationship with Him.

Here is a summary of how you were designed and created:

Body – your physical body; composed of the stuff of the universe.

Soul – your self-awareness; composed of emotions, desires, personality, etc., (often called the mind).

Spirit – your God-awareness; composed of conscience, faith, character, etc., (often called the heart).

It is our spirit that makes us truly human. Our human spirit is not the Holy Spirit, but that part of us, wherever located, that has an awareness of God. No evolutionary theory can begin to answer how the soul or spirit evolved. Evolution only addresses, and inadequately, the body part of humans; but that is

likely the simplest part of who we really are. God alone knows our inner design and what our essential parts are; it is all nicely explained in Genesis 1.

In the Bible, the human soul is often called the mind and the human spirit is called the heart. The soul and spirit are separate parts, but they work together very closely. Do not feel badly if you have trouble understanding all this. Very often we cannot distinguish between our soul and spirit since they are so similar. However, God and His Word can distinguish between them (Heb. 4:12), so He knows what is truly in our hearts and minds.

Complications in Paradise

Since we were created in God's image, we are free to make some of our own choices. This freedom means we were not created as robots that will do just as we are programmed to do. To be genuine, love and obedience have to come as a personal choice not as a result of being made to do it. It would not be true love or obedience if we were only doing what God programmed us to do. So we see two sides of our freedom to make choices. We can use it to decide to love and obey Him or decide not to. When we do decide to love Him, it comes from our spirit (heart) and God honors that. However, it is our ability to make choices that gets us into a lot of trouble; that is what caused Adam, Eve, and each of us to sin.

Discuss: How could God value our love and obedience if He programmed them into us?

Life Applications

We have not gotten very deeply into this subject yet, and we have not studied His overall plan. The next lesson will uncover more of His design and plan for us which will help us better understand who we are. For the present time, the following information from the Bible will help you grow in spiritual understanding and your discovery of who you are.

1. Recognize the hole. All people know there is a God even though they may not admit it. **"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse"** (Rom. 1:20). In every person there is the basic knowledge that God exists and to deny that truth creates a void in a person's life. That void is like a hole in the inner core of a person's life and it screams, "Something is missing." That hole results in people wondering if this life is all there is since life seems so pointless. They can use their free will to resist the Lord for many years, but sometimes the emptiness in their lives becomes painfully obvious to them. That hole can only be filled by God. It is the love of God, the forgiveness in Jesus Christ, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit within us that fill that emptiness the moment we believe in Jesus Christ.

Praise the Lord for each of you that has placed your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That faith is the most important thing in anyone's life, but God is not done with you. In the next lesson, you will see He wants to renew your mind to make it more like His. He also has a plan for your body which will ultimately be changed into a new glorified body like His when He comes again.

2. Be still and know. Everyone knows they have a spiritual need, but some deny it and try to avoid the issue. The unsaved can bury their thoughts in the things of this world or refuse to believe in Him because they want to do things their own way. Some have been deceived into thinking they are good and their good outweighs their bad. Some just want to be left alone. Some will not allow the Lord to speak to their hearts; they are saying, "no God." So in order to not think about spiritual things, they get involved in all sorts of activities to keep their minds busy. Christians can also get caught in this trap of constantly having their minds occupied with the things of this world. For teens this means always trying to be with friends, constantly bombarding the mind with music, trying to escape by playing video games, or doing anything to occupy their minds. These things are not wrong in moderation, but become a serious problem when used to deny time for the Lord. A person does not allow the Lord to speak to his/her spirit when the mind is occupied, and He desperately wants to reach each person's mind and heart.

Psalms 46:10 says, **"Be still, and know that I am God; ..."** this verse is teaching that at some point we all have to just clear our minds of the things of life, whether good or bad, and allow our hearts/minds to just think about eternal things. That is what being "still" means. This is how the Lord uses the Word to speak to our hearts and change our lives.

Each of us has to be diligent, or work very hard, to not always have his/her mind occupied with the things of this world, **"... that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, ..."** (1 Thes. 4:11a). This means that God can best speak to you when you are

not occupied with music, games, work, sports, homework, friends, or other people's business. That is why the godly men and women of the Bible had quiet times in their lives; times when they could study the Word, pray, and think about the things of the Lord. This is the time for just you and the Lord.

Discuss: Please discuss how a teen can make time in his/her life to be quiet before the Lord (to quiet your mind and have an uninterrupted time with the Lord).

3. Commit to Him. Please commit your life to the Lord including having a quiet time with the Lord each day. A quiet time means reading the Bible (learning what

He has to say to you), praying (expressing your heart to Him), and thinking about the things of the Lord. The Bible says, "**Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass**" (Psa. 37:5). God will not speak to you in a voice you can hear, but His spirit will communicate with your spirit. The Holy Spirit and the Lord will help you understand the Bible and spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:13-14). The Lord will support you and help you through the trials of this life. His will and direction for your life will become clearer as you spend time with Him. It is important to be still/quiet before the Lord so that He can speak to your heart.

Take 2 Heart

Summary

The Bible clearly teaches that God created each human with three parts: body, soul, and spirit. The answer to "Who am I?" is partially found in the fact we are a created being with these three distinct parts. Our spirit is what makes us truly human and separates us from the animal world. No other creature has a spirit. It is the part of us that is aware there is a God and knows we need to have a relationship with Him (God-awareness). We may be special because we have a spirit, but we all are sinners and sin broke the close bond that originally existed between humans and God. Restoring that relationship is the primary subject of the Bible and of great importance as we discover who we are.

Gospel

The Bible says, "**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us**" (Rom. 5: 8). Knowing we would use our free will to sin, God planned ahead to make sure our relationship with Him could be restored. We can be

made one with Him (perfect agreement) and have a perfectly restored relationship merely by placing our faith in Him. This restored relationship is referred to as "salvation or being saved." We are saved by His grace (unmerited favor, Eph. 2:8), through faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation results in the hole, the emptiness in our lives, being filled and hope restored.

Encouragement

You are a special creation by God. He appreciates and will honor the time you spend with Him; helping you with the problems you face every day. You may be made fun of for being a Christian, but you will have an inner confidence knowing you are saved and His child. Thank you for determining in your heart that you will have a quiet time with the Lord each day. This is how a person grows in Christ and becomes more and more like Him. Please pray about this and the Lord will surely bless you in ways that you cannot even imagine. The life of a teen committed to Christ is an awesome thing. How thankful we are for the teen that trusts in the Lord.