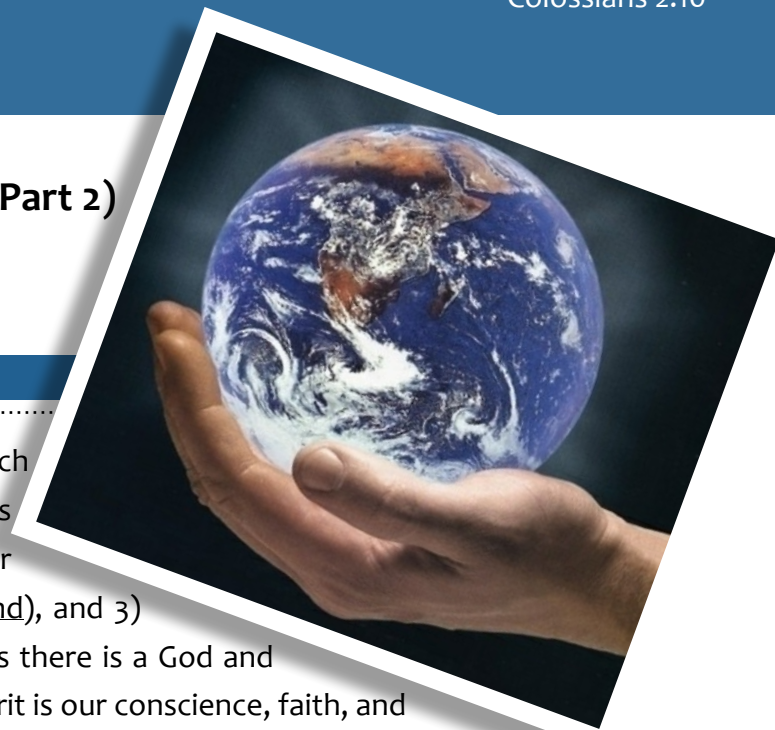


God's Design of Humans (Part 2)

Theme: Discovering more of who I am

Review

The Bible teaches that God designed and created each human with three parts: 1) Body—the physical part of us composed of the material of the universe, 2) Soul—our emotions, desires, personality, etc. (often called the mind), and 3) Spirit—that part of us (often called the heart) that knows there is a God and desires a relationship with Him (God-awareness). Our spirit is our conscience, faith, and awareness of God. Our spirit is what makes us truly human and separates us from the animal world. No other creature has a spirit. However, we are all 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.



Bible Truth

Introduction

Now that we know how God designed us we also need to discuss what His general plan is for our lives. After studying His general plan, we need to know more about the differences between males and females. We also need to consider those who have severe handicaps. How does such a handicap fit into God's design and plan?

God's Plan for Each Part of Us

Each of our three parts (or aspects) has specific functions and needs; thankfully, God has a plan for each aspect according to His knowledge as the Creator. The Creator developed the plan for each of these aspects long before He created Adam. He knew our ability to make free choices would lead us astray

and alter our original relationship with Him. Due to sin, our entire being (body, soul, and spirit) needs to be restored.

- **God's plan for our Spirit is Salvation:** Our human spirit is alive, but it is so badly damaged and helpless that we are powerless to do anything to help ourselves. We are considered spiritually dead and headed for Hell. Our relationship with God has been broken; thus, something has to be done to reestablish a right relationship with God so that we can be spiritually alive. Salvation occurs when we trust in Christ as our Savior; we become saved and our relationship with God is made perfect. Salvation makes us a new creature, a re-creation, a new person spiritually (Col 2:13). **"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,**

he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). We become a new person, that is, we are made new (using a Gospel term, "born again" Jn. 3:3). At the time of belief, we immediately are united with Christ (1 Cor. 12:12, 27) and a perfect relationship with God is reestablished (Col. 1:28; 2 Tim. 3:17).

Salvation pertains to our spirit--not our body and soul. Salvation results from having faith in Christ which we can choose to do based upon the free will God gave us. **Salvation is instantaneous.** That means it occurs the second we believe; not something we slowly acquire over time. It is also **complete** the moment we believe (nothing more can be done to make it better or more complete). God's grace saves us based upon having faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8-9; Col. 2:10). Upon being saved, we are **sealed by God** which means we can never lose our salvation (Eph. 4:30).

- **God's Plan for our Soul is Transformation:** Once we are saved, the Lord is not done with us. Now He has a plan for our soul (mind) and that is to transform it. Transformation means "a change in form." The mind we now have has to undergo a change in form; it must be transformed. This is a **life-long process** that never ends as the Holy Spirit in us works to make us more like Christ.

We cannot save ourselves so God does it all; we cannot transform our minds either, but God requires our cooperation in this process. Romans 12:2 says, **"...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..."** His plan for our minds is to day by day make them more like His, thereby transforming our entire lives. He will do the transforming, but we must take part in it by obeying the Word, living by faith, acting like a new creation, etc. (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). Transformation is needed so that we have a new mind

to go along with our new spiritual nature. It changes how we think, our desires, our beliefs in right and wrong, and establishes His values in our lives. Transformation teaches us how to live with others in a godly manner, for example, being humble and kind to all people. You cannot excuse poor behavior by saying, "That is how God made me." God wants to change you so that you are more like Christ.

Since we have a part in transformation, we need a lot of instruction. A survey of the Pauline Epistles (Romans through Philemon) revealed there are twice as many verses dealing with transformational issues as salvation. The number of verses indicates we need a lot of instruction from the Lord.

- **God's Plan for our Body is Glorification:** God's plan is to give us a glorified body (completely transformed) much like His. It will be entirely changed and perfect, but this occurs when we are taken to Heaven. **"...who will transform our lowly body that it maybe conformed to His glorious body..."** (Phil. 3:21). While on earth, He does not promise to change our bodies (He may give earthly assistance for disease or illness). It goes like this, "If an unsaved person has an accident and loses a finger and then later is saved, will the Lord give the person a new finger?" No, this person will have to go through life with one missing. We will all have lives with less than perfect bodies--some more imperfect than others. At the Lord's return (Rapture), the believer will be given a new, perfect body to match his/her perfect soul and spirit.

Discussion: Discuss the plans God has for our three aspects. Do they make sense to you? (The goal of this discussion is to make sure students understand this topic. If they do not or if it does not make sense to them, then some review is needed.)

Life Applications

Difference Between Males and Females

Males and females have the same three parts and God's plan for them is the same. As you know, God clearly created males and females physically different (body). That difference is intended by God and is what attracts one sex to the other. The spirit of both sexes is the same and equal before God (Gal. 3:28); this is true for all races and all people. However, there does seem to be a difference in how male and female minds work. Even though they may work differently, God's plan for transformation of the mind applies equally to both sexes.

You no doubt have observed that males and females often think very differently. It seems the two sexes process information in different ways. A male and a female can hear someone say something, but what they recall may be very different based upon the way they process information. It must be made clear some females and males think very much the same, which is perfectly fine; we are only considering generalized cases here.

Male brains tend to be slightly larger (~10%) than female brains. However, female brains are more folded and tend to have more connections between the left and right halves. The fact male brains are larger is probably the result of being slightly larger physically (thus more cranial space). The more folds in female brains makes up for the slightly smaller size so there is no difference in raw intelligence.

The true difference between males and females is not in raw intelligence or ability but in how they think. It is often taught that any differences in how males and females think are due to nurture (how one is raised), not due to our design; this conveniently gets God out

of the picture. It is clear the differences were intended by God and are due to His design. Please note, men and women think differently, but that does not make one right and the other wrong or one better than the other; **God wants both types of thought.**

When a child is in the womb and again at puberty, there are certain sex hormones that cause a different physical effect upon the brain. If a fetus is exposed to testosterone (a male hormone), one part/side of the brain develops more than the other. For females it seems other hormones develop other areas. It is this early-life hormone exposure (mostly when in the womb) that influences whether a brain is more typically female or male.

It boils down to this: our brains seem “hardwired” (predetermined to function a certain way) while still in the womb. Females seem more designed for bonding and empathy (to sense other’s feelings); males for understanding how things work and building. Males tend to be more specialized for spatial skills (the abstract), math, and science while females tend to excel in reading, language, and verbal skills. Throughout history females generally cared for the young; wouldn’t someone with empathy and bonding skills be best for that? Males were bigger and stronger designed to build things and protect the family. Would you want a protector that empathizes with a home invader or someone that puts feelings aside and does what has to be done? We should not underestimate the wisdom of God as displayed in our design.

Understanding this basic difference between females and males will help you understand why the two sexes react very differently to the same event.

Understanding this will help you build better relationships with others, and this knowledge is of great value when you get married and need to understand why your spouse thinks so differently (1 Pt. 3:7). Interestingly, our Lord seemed to possess both types of thought.

Discussion: Give an example in your life in which females and males thought differently. Can this be good? (Teacher: let the students talk freely, make sure there are no terrible misunderstandings or ridicule; if so, please see how you can help clarify things.)

When Things Go Wrong

At times things go wrong with our original design. Animals and humans can be subjected to unwanted changes that result in mental and physical handicaps from birth. These changes may be from disease, accidents, harmful things in our environment (drugs, chemicals, radiation...). So a baby can be born with a mental or physical handicap through no fault of his/her own. It all seems so unfair. Just as with the finger we discussed before, such a person will generally have to go through life with this problem. God may not intervene to the point of making everything right. He may give health workers the knowledge to tremendously help such a person, and in some cases the problem can be reduced. Be sure of one thing, they are dearly loved of God and He looks at their spirit, not the physical or mental limitations.

What You Can Do

Please be the champion (friend, supporter, ally) of those less fortunate than yourself; seek ways to be their true friend and companion (Col. 3:12). **"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all"** (1 Thes. 5:14). They need to know

God is with them and you are their true friend. God knows their handicaps and limitations and does not expect of them what they cannot do; neither should we. He can use them for His glory whether it is through prayer, praise, or having others see the Holy Spirit in them. They may be the means by which God helps you develop true compassion. Often the non-complaining life of such a person, in spite of circumstances, is a witness to the grace of God.

Recall God's strength is made perfect in our weakness. The Lord told the Apostle Paul, **"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness... that the power of Christ may rest upon me"** (2 Cor. 12:9). In Heaven all physical and mental disabilities will be gone since we will have a glorified body. We will also learn how the "unfair" life of a disabled person may have actually been used in a remarkable way for the sake of others without knowing it; one sacrificing for the good of others.

Please pray daily many times; prayers can be short and simple, but they help you stay in touch with the Lord. Praying, along with following what you know is right from the Bible, will help you live in a way that the Lord can transform your mind. Then the desire to do some of the wrong things will slowly fade away because He is at work in your mind. As He changes you from the inside (in your mind), you will want to start doing things that you never dreamed before, things that you used to think were weird. As you grow in Christ, it would be good to ask the Lord to help you find ways to be a friend of a person that is handicapped, ill, disadvantaged, or "picked on" by others.

Activity: Talk about ways the class can help encourage and support a disadvantaged person(s). Discuss being a true friend versus making a "show" of being good.

Take 2 Heart

Summary

A Christian can say, “God designed and created me with a body, soul, and spirit. Sin destroyed my relationship with God. When I believed in Jesus Christ, I was saved by God’s grace and that has restored my relationship with Him. I am a person that is being transformed daily to renew my mind by the power of the Holy Spirit working within me. One day I will have a glorified body like His. My life is being lived for the Lord in spite of problems and circumstances. I am highly loved by God who looks at my heart and not my outward appearance. He is using me in mighty ways, regardless of sickness or handicap, to bring honor to Him. In fact, it may be my weakness that best glorifies God--the Lord is my strength and my salvation.”

Gospel

The Bible says, **“and ye are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power”** (Col. 2:10). When you believe in Christ’s death for your sins, the innocent dying for the guilty, you will be saved. It all happens in the blink of an eye. Salvation restores a right relationship with God. Salvation results in the emptiness in your life (that feeling that something is missing) being filled. Sin can be thought of as creating a huge hole in your heart; when you are saved, the

Lord comes into your life and fills that hole. The salvation you get when you believe is complete and perfect; there is nothing more you can do to make it better or to lose it. You can have confidence you are forgiven and on the way to Heaven which will erase fear and give you peace.

Encouragement

After you are saved, God is not out to punish you or take back His salvation when you sin. Every sin you would ever commit was forgiven when you trusted in Him; He knew of all your future sins when He saved you. The issue of salvation is settled once and for all; a believer is sealed (like a letter sealed in an envelope, it can’t fall out). Knowing how wonderful the Lord is makes us want to live up to His expectations. The Lord loves the time you spend with Him and the ways you try to obey and honor Him. Thank you for determining in your heart that you will follow the Word of God and try to live in a way that honors Him. Some day in Heaven you may find that your life touched hundreds or thousands of other people in a remarkable way, and you never knew it. A person that lives a faithful life will certainly touch the hearts of many people in unknown ways.