



Weekly Devotional

A large, solid red heart graphic that serves as a background for the main title text.

YOU & Me

Relationships in
a Modern World

A photograph of two hands, one from the left and one from the right, positioned to form a heart shape. The hands are light-skinned and the background is a bright blue sky with white clouds.

January 16 - 20, 2012

Questions & Prayers

From Genesis 1:26-2:25

1. What does it mean to you personally that you are made in God's image? What does it mean specifically in regard to your own body, your own mind, and your own spirit?
2. What do you feel are the most important ways to carry out God's instructions to mankind in verse 28?
3. From what you see in this chapter, what conclusions can you make about God's intended purpose for human beings?
4. Look at Matthew 19:3-6 and Ephesians 5:28-33. How would you say Jesus and Paul interpret the teaching in Genesis 2:24 about marriage?

From 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

5. If it is true that you "become what you think," then what are the most important thoughts from this chapter to plant firmly in your mind?
6. In Psalm 119:45, the psalmist says to God, "I will walk at liberty, for I seek Thy precepts." As you think about the "precept" or command given at the beginning of verse 18, in what ways can you see it offering true freedom and liberty to a Christian?
7. Look at the command in the last verse of this chapter. If you asked Paul, "How exactly does a person bring glory or honor to God with his body?" how do you think Paul would answer?

Monday: Pray for the marriages in our church family.

Tuesday: Pray for single people as they struggle and desire to be in relationship with someone.

Wednesday: Pray for strong families and for the youth and children at Glenkirk.

Thursday: Pray for those out of work and those struggling to make ends meet. Pray especially for those with cancer.

Friday: Pray for Pastor Adam as he prepares for God's new call on his life and for the church he will be going to in Pomona.



Monday

Genesis 1:26-31, Galatians 5:22-23



Theologians love to spend hours pondering the details. In this case, volumes have been written about Genesis 1:26. What does it mean to be made in the image and likeness of God? Two separate Hebrews words are used, and yet they are generally translated into English using the same words: image or likeness. Generally, the words are interchangeable; but since they are used together here, something distinct is being taught.

To be created in the “image” of God is to be created “structurally” like Him. Genesis is teaching that we are not like the animals—we are distinctly different; we are in the “image” of God. We can think, retain knowledge, create, and have a will that plans and produces something long-lasting. In fact, we are commanded to “subdue” the earth and rule over the animals.

To be created in the “likeness” of God is to be created “morally” like Him. We were created with His heart, His love, His glory. The qualities in Jesus of mercy, grace, servanthood, and forgiveness were apart of our original creation. It is this attribute that was severely damaged in the Fall. We no longer bear the “likeness” of God.

After the cross and resurrection, Jesus sent His Holy Spirit upon us that we might be “re-created” into the “likeness” of God. We are again able to take on the “moral” qualities of God or, as Paul referred to them, the “fruit of the Spirit.” To be in the “image and likeness” of God is to rule not in power and selfishness but as God does with love, dying to self and privilege, that others might become who they were created to be.

In fact, part of being in the “image and likeness” of God is to restore others and enable others to fulfill their God-given potential. It is to worry more about others than oneself. The question becomes: Am I using my “image” in the ways of the world, which yield destruction, or am I using my “image” in the “likeness” of God, bringing about a new creation?

Tuesday

Genesis 1:26-31, Deuteronomy 6:4, Acts 17:1-11



As New Testament readers, we look at Genesis 1:26 with a fresh understanding as to its meaning. In this verse the little pronoun “us” is used. What does it mean? In fact, throughout this passage and in Deuteronomy, God is referred to in the plural (something that is not evident in our English translations).

Those who are “stuck” reading the text in the context it was originally written, or who do not believe in Jesus, understand the “us” to refer either to the angels or to a royal “I,” as a queen or king might use in making a pronouncement. But it is from passages like this that Paul (after his conversion) was able to proclaim that Jesus was indeed Lord, the eternal existing Son of God, when he reexamined the Scriptures and taught from them about Jesus. It is from passages like this that we begin to understand that God exists as “Three in One.”

This understanding of God is central to our current series. God exists in relationship. Everything that God does, He does in relationship. Part of being in the “likeness of God” is to understand this and live out of relationship ourselves. But this is so counter to our “individualistic” society. Our mantras, the sayings we are most comfortable with, are: “I want to be me,” “I can do it myself,” or “Mine.”

So from the very beginning as God created man, “He created them male and female.” In chapter 2 of Genesis, this gets underlined strongly when God pronounces: “It is not good for man to be alone.” But here is the question: Are you going it alone? When we are first in relationship with another person, our thoughts are almost always for the other. The first sign of human sinfulness and broken relationship is when our thoughts turn from the other person to ourselves. Are you trying to do it yourself? Or are you seeking to partner with others? Doing and viewing everything out of a sense of community seems counterintuitive, but most of God’s ways seem counterintuitive in a fallen world.

Wednesday



Genesis 2

It is important to note that we were not created for leisure. The Garden of Eden might seem like the ideal vacation spot, but it was not a place where Adam and Eve sat around all day. In fact, it is just the opposite. Part of being in the “image” of God is to find fulfillment, not in leisure but in work. One of the problems with our world today is that we seek to find meaning in leisure; coming up short, we find ourselves depressed. And one of the reasons many non-Christians are not impressed with heaven is because they do not relish the thought of sitting around for eternity singing. The good news is that we won’t be. We will be working, but our work will be rewarding and filled with meaning.

In chapter 2 we learn more about our creation. In this case, we are told that what makes us distinct from the created world is the “breath of God,” the Spirit of God within us. And then God took part of Adam and “made” Eve. When Eve was made, something was taken from Adam so that only in relationship could he again be whole. Adam was to rule over creation, but nowhere in Scripture does it say that he was to “rule over” or “power over” Eve. In fact, Scripture says just the opposite— they were to be partners existing as God exists in the trinity with such a oneness that, though distinct, they acted as one. Henry M. Morris states, “The thought evidently is to stress that woman was made neither from Adam’s head (suggesting superiority to him) nor from his feet (suggesting inferiority), but from his side, indicating equality and companionship” (Genesis: God’s Word for the Biblically Inept, Joyce Gibson, p. 32).

Chapter 2 ends with the emphasis on Man and Woman leaving the home of their parents and becoming “one.” It also states that they were naked and not ashamed. They were able to be completely open, transparent, and vulnerable to one another. If there is a oneness and an openness in the trinity as a model to us, are our relationships living up to that ideal? What can you do to move closer to God’s desire for your relationships?

Thursday

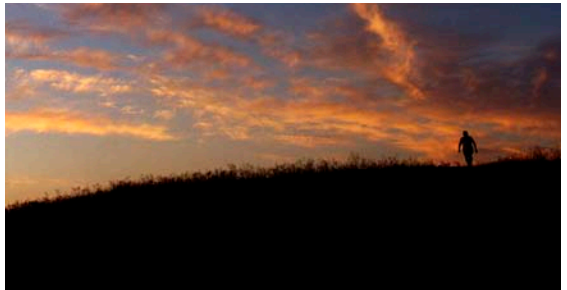
1 Corinthians 6:12-20

The Corinthian church had more than its share of problems. Being a port city, it was known for its immorality; and that immorality found its way into the church. What is worse is that in the early church there were those who defended their freedom of expression on the grounds that they were forgiven, so what they did no longer mattered. Others believed that the body and spirit were so separate that what one did with the physical body (because it would decay) was of little consequence; only the spiritual side of man lasted into eternity. This view later became known as the false teaching of Gnosticism. Paul wants us to understand that we are not saved by keeping a legalistic list of do's and don'ts, but being saved calls us into a new way of living.

Many people today make a similar argument as those in Paul's day did with regards to sex. Sex is a God-ordained appetite that should be enjoyed; thus, anything is permissible. Paul will tell us that there are two problems with this attitude. One is that whereas food passes through the body, what we do in the realm of our sexuality stays with us (such as pictures within our minds). And two, because the Holy Spirit is within us, what we do with our bodies has a direct bearing on Jesus.

Sexual immorality is a more serious sin because it destroys the very foundations upon which God's order of life and relationships are built. Not only does sexual immorality cause someone to use others for one's personal gratification, but it destroys the whole concept of covenant relationship. God wants us to be able to build our lives upon a foundation of trust in order that we might be free to be ourselves and be vulnerable. God has made a covenant with us, one He will never break. He wants us to learn to make similar covenants with one another.

For many of us, sexual immorality might not be a problem, but are we able to hold others accountable in the midst of their temptations? Are we able to explain to a young person or a single individual the need to remain celibate outside of the covenant of marriage? Do we practice "soft" forms of immorality through the books we read or the pictures we look at?



Friday

1 Corinthians 6:19-20



On the day Jesus died on the cross, the curtain in the temple that separated the Holy of Holies (the place where God was said to dwell) from the rest of the temple was torn from top to bottom. It is as if God reached down from heaven and tore it down. On Pentecost Day with the coming of the Holy Spirit, it became evident that God no longer dwelled in temples made of human hands; now His dwelling was in those who belonged to Him. Remember the old story about the little boy who is about to have heart surgery and cautions his doctor because God is inside his heart. I believe that God made sure people understood this truth by completely destroying the temple in 70AD. And in Revelation 21 we are told that with the coming of the City of God, there will not be a temple because God personally dwells within the city. In fact, neither will there be the sun or moon because God's presence gives all the light we will ever need.

But what does it mean for me to be the "temple of God"? What does my body and my life say about God? Paul lets us know in this passage that though things might be permissible to us, they are not necessarily right for us. In fact, because Jesus died for me, paying a price for my life, I am no longer my own. I belong to Him. Do others see that by looking at me? If I belong to Jesus, I need to make sure that there is nothing that has power over me. Does something have power over you? Maybe the answer does not involve illicit sex, but maybe it involves food, or the computer, or a particular hobby, or a need for money, relationships or security. What controls you? You might ask God to show you. If my life belongs to Jesus, then I really do not have the right to abuse it in a way that would shorten its duration in anyway, whether through lack of exercise, obesity, or eating unhealthy food.

It has been said that we are the only Bible some people will ever read. We might add that when people look at us, they see God. What picture of God are we showing them?



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