



Becoming a Disciple

Part 1

Dr. Douglas Peake

INTRODUCTION

“Christianity, in its purest form, is nothing more than seeing Jesus. The Christian life, in its purest form, is nothing more than imitating Him who we see. To see His majesty and to imitate Him, that is the sum of Christianity.” - Max Lucado

What is it that you are truly seeking in life? I’m not asking rhetorically either. Take a moment, look up from the page, and ask yourself this simple question: What do I really want?

You see, I want you to be a disciple. But not just any disciple. I want you to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Until you know what you truly want in life, then being a disciple will make no sense to you because discipleship is following Jesus Christ. It is wanting to know everything about Him, not for the sake of knowledge but for the sake of imitating Him.

Mark 8:35 says, “Whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses His life for My sake and the gospel’s shall save it.” Being a disciple is about life. It’s not about money, position, power, sex, or politics. It’s about life. And until you ask yourself what you want from your life, you won’t understand the significance of being a disciple.

Discipleship is developing a deep love for Jesus Christ, learning all there is to know about Him so that you can be like Him in every way. If this is not your goal, then to be a disciple will frustrate you more than excite you.

I don’t want you to be frustrated.

Only those who have searched themselves for the answer to this deeply profound question can understand the true nature of being a disciple.

What I desire for you is to develop a deep understanding of all

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that Jesus Christ has in store for you. I believe that the ultimate goal of life can be found in the simple truth following Jesus Christ as His disciple.

A commitment to this study will stretch you, make you uncomfortable at times, and challenge you. But it is imperative for you to come to a deep knowledge of Christ all on your own. You cannot know Him through someone else's eyes. You must know and follow Him yourself.

Therefore, consider the commitment you are making as a life-changing commitment. Consider it with all the depth and sincerity that you can muster because whoever loses his life for His sake shall save it.

Dr. Douglas Peake

DISCIPLESHIP COVENANT

This is the promise that you are giving to God. Please read it carefully and pray about it. When you are ready, sign it.

THE GOAL:

I want to reach beyond the average life. I am not satisfied with the status quo. I will pursue an intimate relationship with God my Father, Jesus Christ my Savior, and The Holy Spirit.

THE METHOD:

I will meet once a week for one hour with a small group in order that we may hold one another accountable to doing basic spiritual disciplines.

THE COMMITMENT:

I will make the discipleship time each week a priority and make every effort possible to be there. To be absent is to say that my brothers or sisters are not important to me. If all else fails and I cannot be present, I will inform the discipler.

THE DISCIPLINES:

Scripture Memory: Each week there will be a verse to memorize. I shall do so faithfully.

Quiet times: I will commit to four QTS a week. Each QT will consist of three elements:

- The Lectio Divina - To read the scripture until God speaks to me in a divine way.
- Prayer - I will spend time in communication with my Father.
- I will review my memory verses.

DISCIPLESHIP GROUP:

Coming together to be accountable for the disciplines is a discipline in and of itself. We will spend time discussing what God is doing in our lives and seeking answers to issues that we are struggling with.

Discipleship Covenant

THE VOW:

I will submit myself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. I commit myself to spiritual growth through discipleship. I take my commitment seriously. I will commit to confidentiality within the discipleship group. In six months I will seek out at

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

*Please keep this covenant in the front of your notebook as a reminder of your commitment to God.

LESSON 1 - BE LIKE CHRIST

I WANT TO KNOW HIM

My life can be summed up in one statement: I want to know Jesus Christ. John 12:21 quotes the disciples saying, “Sir, we would like to see Jesus.” Make this your life’s passion. Spend this first week in prayer on what it is that you will see in this study. What secrets will be uncovered, what treasures will you find, what truths will you discover about yourself? Think on these things and pray. The lessons are always split into four sections. Each section is to be done in one day. You will complete a week’s study or one lesson in four days. This is to remain consistent with the discipline of four quiet times a week. Spend this week focusing on prayer in your four quiet times.

SECTION 1

I. Read Mark 8:34-38. Spend time in prayer over what the Lord has said. Write below some thoughts or things you prayed about.

SECTION 2

I. Read Matthew 7:21-27. Spend some time in prayer on what the Lord has said. Write below some thoughts or things you prayed about.

SECTION 3

I. Read Matthew 16:24-28. Spend some time in prayer on what the Lord has said. Write below some thoughts or things you prayed about.

SECTION 4

I. Read Luke 14:25-35. Spend some time in prayer on what the Lord has said. Write below some thought or things you have prayed about.

SUMMARY

The goal of discipleship is to be like Christ. By reading His actual words and then communicating with Him about what He said should make a profound impact on you. Are you beginning to see Him as He truly is? Having a clear vision is the first step in knowing Him and becoming like Him. Now you will study the scriptures each week to begin to clear your vision. As you turn your eyes upon Him, you will find that the things of earth will grow strangely dim.

LESSON 2 - CHRISTIANITY

JUST WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY ALL ABOUT?

The Interpersonal Character of Christianity. In other words, God's Personhood or His personal attributes are seen in Creation, the greatest commandments, the central person of the Bible, and the goal of Christianity.

SECTION I - NUMERO UNO

If you could pick just one word to describe Christianity, what would it be? Rules? Ethics? Christ? Faith? People? Love? Relationship? Now that you are a Christian, it is important to understand the one element in life that all of Christianity revolves around. The wellspring or source of all that a Christian lives for. In this world of modern religion, it is easy to view Christianity as a highly developed code of ethics, an alternative philosophical system, or possibly moral indoctrination. Yet ultimately, it is none of these. Let us embark upon the path of truth to discover all that Christianity is and ever was meant to be.

THE CENTRAL ELEMENT OF TRUTH IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS TO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH CHRIST.

I. The Interpersonal or Relational Aspect of Christianity as seen in creation: God's personhood is proven in creation

A. Read Genesis 1:1-3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20.

- Who created the heavens and the earth?
 - _____
What significance is there in knowing who created the universe?
-

Lesson 2- Christianity

- In verse 1 what did God create the heavens and the earth from?
-

- How did God create things? vs. 6, 9, 11, etc.
-

- What significance is there in the way God created the universe as opposed to just blinking His eyes or waving a wand?
-

God, who is a person, created the universe. This shows us that the impersonal, cold, material universe is secondary to a personal God. The universe, seemingly cold and meaningless, actually has meaning and purpose because it was created by a person. It was created by God, not out of Him. It was spoken into existence, not a result of cause and effect. You see, a person created the world through personal means, i.e., by speaking and from nothing. Therefore, the essence of creation (why it was created) is an expression of personhood (God's personhood) just like a painting is an expression of the artist who painted it.

B. Read Romans 1:20. Write below what this verse is saying to you.

SUMMARY

Point #1: In creation, it is evident that God created the world from a personal perspective. The record of the creation of the world by God was to show that His ultimate goal was to base Christianity upon interpersonal criteria.

SECTION 2 - WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

Let us now explore themes in Christianity that are most prevalent; that is, things that are referred to in the Bible as being the most

important.

I. The First and Second Great Commandments.

A. Read Matthew 22:34-40. These are the two greatest commandments according to Jesus Christ.

What is the central element in each commandment?

Please note that the first commandment is vertical (God to man), the second is horizontal (person to person). This vertical and horizontal relationship encompasses all of our relationships.

The first and second great commandments are based solely upon love.

B. What things is love more important than in Christianity? Read I Corinthians 13:1-3.

List: _____

Love is more important than supernatural

C. What is the most central? Read Ephesians 3:19. Love surpasses

_____.

Read 1 Cor. 8:1 Knowledge _____
love_____.

Knowledge does not replace love; in other words, education does not eliminate the need for spirituality. Knowledge is not less than love. Love is more important because it makes up for our lack of knowledge.

D. What language is most prevalent in the New Testament? Read Galatians 5:22-23. Terms such as love, joy, peace, grace, faith, trust, heart, mercy, and reconciliation are all interpersonal terms.

SUMMARY

Point #2: The greatest commandments are based upon love, the most important frame of reference for spiritual gifts is love, the final frame of reference is love, and the most prevalent language of the Christian faith revolves around relational or interpersonal terminology. Therefore, Christianity is based upon relational characteristics.

SECTION 3 - WHO IS CHRISTIANITY?

Christianity is a person, from which its name, Christianity, is derived. Simply put, it means, "one who follows Christ." Christianity is Jesus Christ.

I. Read the following and finish the statements.

Acts 8:35 preaching about _____

Colossians 2:6 receiving _____

Ephesians 4:20 learning _____

Romans 13:12-14 putting on _____

1 Cor. 2:2 knowing nothing but _____

1 Cor. 3:10-15 the foundation is _____

John 14:6 Who is the way, the truth and the life?

Read John 3:16-18.

- God sent His son because He _____ the world.

- God sent His son to _____ the world.

God, who is personal, sent His own Son, as a so that we might be saved. All of these elements point to the fact that the most central aspect of Christianity is the person of Christ; it is centered on Him. This shows us the nature of Christianity.

SUMMARY

Point #3: Christianity is based upon Jesus Christ. A Christian is a person who has a relationship with Jesus Christ and follows His teachings.

SECTION 4 - THE GOAL OF CHRISTIANITY

This last week we have looked from where Christianity started, what Christianity is, and who Christianity is. Now, let us look at what Christianity does.

I. Reconciliation with God. Read 2 Cor. 5:14-20.

Answer the following:

- What does it mean to reconcile?

- In verse 18 who reconciled who?

- Through whom did He reconcile us?

- What ministry do we now have?

Isn't it interesting that we (Persons) were reconciled to a person (God) through a person (Jesus Christ) and now we have the ministry of reconciliation (which is restoring broken relationships). This is the essence of Christianity in the world today.

FINAL SUMMARY

Lesson 2- Christianity

The point of the study for this week is simple. The essence of Christianity is having a relationship with God. If we could pick just one word to describe Christianity, it would be “relationship.” Something so simple and yet so complex. This is the reality of all that the faith revolves around: having a relationship with God through Christ. It is evident in the creation of the universe. It is evident in the fact that the center of Christianity revolves around the person of Jesus Christ. It is evident in that all the major concepts, issues, and the language of scripture revolve around personal or relational characteristics. It is evident in that the goal of Christianity is to restore a broken relationship between God and man.

You may think that this conclusion is somewhat simplistic, but let me tell you it is backed by some of the strongest theological evidence ever put forth in scripture. Christianity is a relationship with God.

In the complex world of spiritual growth, let us never forget this simple truth: the greatest goal of the Christian is to love God. Now is the time to ask yourself, will you love Him more tomorrow than you loved Him today?

LESSON 3 - WHAT IS THE NATURE OF OUR CALLING?

We are called to be disciples. Last week we studied the central truth regarding Christianity. This truth becomes most evident in the study of what we, as Christians, are called to be. Remember this truth as we study discipleship and what it is all about.

SECTION 1: WHAT IS OUR CALLING?

Sarah was a beautiful girl. She was young, early twenties, with golden blond hair framing her nearly perfectly featured face. She had large, deep blue eyes, a trait pointing to her obvious Swedish heritage. She was thin and very athletic.

Sarah came forward in church to ask for prayer. Her face showed the lines of someone weary from a deep struggle. She came to the altar to find rest. Looking for a woman counselor she grabbed the first one that caught her eye. A woman in her forties who was attractive, with short brown hair and dark brown eyes. "Please pray for me." she asked the woman in a soft trembling voice.

The woman noticed she was upset. "What do you need prayer for?" The woman asked softly and openly, inviting Sarah to share.

Sarah began slowly but soon, like the opening of a flood gate, she spilled her heart out before the woman. "I became a Christian when I was 14, at a camp. I believed in Jesus then as I do now. But I have always pretty much done what I wanted, followed my own path you might say. Well, a couple of years ago I started living with this guy. I never thought that what I was doing was wrong. You know, it's up to us to decide what is right and wrong for ourselves. But a few weeks ago he moved out because he found another girl. I am so hurt. I really loved this guy. I never really read the Bible and I didn't go to church that often, but why would God let this happen to me?"

The pain that is evident in Sarah's life comes from misdirection.

Lesson 3- What is the Nature of Our Calling

What she believed is not necessarily reality or truth. Pain and frustration in life are a result of not knowing what is expected of us, It is crucial that we know exactly what our calling is. One of the most frustrating aspects of working in a job is not knowing what is exactly required of you. The essence of Christianity is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Therefore, it is crucial that we understand what Jesus Christ calls us to be in the framework of this relationship.

I. What exactly does Jesus Christ call us to be?

A. Read Romans 10:9-10. What are the two main elements that are discussed in this scripture?

B. Read Acts 2:38. What are the two main elements discussed in this scripture?

*These scriptures obviously deal with how we become saved.

C. Read Luke 5:27-28. What did Christ call Matthew to do?

D. Matthew 28:18-20. What are the Disciples called to do? How are the concepts found in the Romans 10:9-10 and Acts 2:38 passage different from the concepts found in Luke 5:27-28? What are we, as Christian called to be?

SECTION 2: WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

I. Characteristics of a Disciple.

Read Mark 8:34-36. There are four characteristics of a Disciple listed by Christ.

Becoming a Disciple- Part 1

A. Denying one's self. What does it mean to deny yourself?

What does it mean to take up your cross?

C. Following Christ. What does it mean to follow Christ?

D. Losing your life for His sake. What does it mean to give your life to His cause?

*What does God promise to those who meet these criteria?

Think about this concept: Everyone, at some point in time, must come to the realization that there is a distinct possibility they could be wasting their life pursuing things that ultimately will never bring satisfaction. Disciples are people who have thought about this very issue and concluded that they do not wish to waste their lives but to save them.

SECTION 3: DISCIPLES AND OBEDIENCE.

A. Read Luke 5:1-11

- In verse 5 did Peter want to let down his nets?

- Was he obedient in spite of his feelings?

- What happened because he was obedient?

B. Why are Disciples obedient?

Lesson 3- What is the Nature of Our Calling

- Read John 14: 15,24 Why are disciples obedient?
-

- Read John 14:31. Christ was an example of obedience. Why was He obedient?

C. Rewards of Obedience.

- Read John 14:21, 15:10, I John 2:5, Luke 11:28 and I Peter 1:22. What are the rewards for obedience?

- Are the rewards worth the price? Why?
-

D. Read Hebrews 5:8-9. How are obedience and salvation linked together?

A relationship requires giving (obedience). The deeper the with love, the more you desire to give. Remember, obedience is something you give, not something that is taken from you. Consider the possibility of what you are willing to give to may deepen your relationship with God.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

To be a disciple is to be involved in a relationship with God on a long-term basis. This is important to understanding the nature of how we, as people, grow. We grow the most in the context of a relationship. Review the last three sections of this week's lesson and write below your thoughts on what discipleship really is and what kind of relational qualities it has. Please note anything that stands out to you or strikes you as being important.

LESSON 4 - THE NATURE OF GOD

Over the next five weeks, we are going to be studying the nature of God. Understanding the nature of God is important to having a relationship with Him because the more you know about Him, the deeper the relationship you can have with Him. It is like when you first started dating a person, you wanted to spend all your time with that person so you could learn everything there was to know about them. It is the same way with God. The more you know about Him, the deeper and stronger your relationship with Him. Now, some have said that it is impossible to know God. This may be true, but it is possible, by searching the scriptures, to know some things about Him.

SECTION 1: GOD IS...?

1. God is love.

A. Read 1 John 4:7-18.

1. In verses 7-8, 12 answer the following:

- What is God?

- Where does love come from?

- How do we know God?

- If you love, how are you born of God?

B. Love is not empirically proven but it does exist.

1. How do you know love exists? What proof is there?

2. Read vs, 9-10 How do we know God loves us?

Lesson 4- The Nature of God

From the beginning of Christianity, the argument for the existence of God has rested solely upon this proposition: That God is like the wind. You can't see the wind, smell it, or touch it, but you can see, smell, and feel the effects of it. In the same manner, you can't see, smell, or touch God, but you know He is there because of the effect that He has had on your life and on the lives of countless others.

POINT 1

God is love, and we know this because of what He has done in this world. In other words, we see the effects of His actions, and His actions point to His nature of love.

SECTION 2: GOD ACTS OUT OF LOVE

I. Why God does what He does.

A. Read John 3:16-17.

- What motivated God to send His son?

- What purpose did God wish to achieve through this?

B. Read Ephesians 2:1-7.

- Why would God want to save us if we were like those in verses 1-3?

C. Read Romans 5:6-8.

- By dying for people who don't really deserve it, what did God demonstrate?

POINT 2

It is evident that God has acted in history for a specific reason. His action is not random or because He was interested in playing with us, but His action was based on a clear, specific reason: He loves us.

SECTION 3: GOD IS RELATIONAL IN NATURE

1. The Trinity

A. Read John 14:8-11.

- How do you see and know the Father?

- How are the Father and the Son connected?

- They are separate, but one; unified, but individuals; different, but equal.

B. Read John 14:18-21,

- How are we connected to the Father?

- Do we lose our individuality when we become the son and “in” the Father?

- Why not?

SUMMARY

God is very relational in nature. The usage of the word “in” is to illustrate an intimate relationship between Father and son as well as between us and the son. We see how God is relational in nature in this scripture text. Please note: Relationships are based on love.

Section 4: If God is love and He only acts out of love and He is a relational being, it is obvious for us to conclude that the nature of God is love.

I. Read Ephesians 5:22-30

The most symbolic representation of a relationship between us (the church) and God (Christ) is the marriage relationship between a man and a woman. This is because the marriage relationship is the

Lesson 4- The Nature of God

most intimate one we are familiar with.

Spend a few moments brainstorming and list below any parallels between your relationship with God through Christ and a marriage relationship between a man and a woman.

Do you look at your relationship with Him in this manner?
Write below your thoughts.

LESSON 5 - NATURE OF GOD 2

Last week we studied the relational nature of God. In other words, that God is relational in His very nature and that this relational aspect of His nature is based upon love. This week we are going to study God's holiness. It is important to remember that God's holiness must be understood in light of His relational nature.

SECTION 1: WHAT IS HOLINESS

Holiness:

A. Let us take some time to consider Holiness. In the space below, write words that describe Holiness to you.

B. Read Isaiah 6:1-7.

- What does it mean, "the train of His robe filled the temple?"

- Why did the seraphs cover themselves with four of their wings instead of using all six to fly?

- Why was Isaiah so afraid of seeing the glory of God?

SUMMARY:

Holiness is perfection, like a diamond with no flaws. And like a diamond with no flaws, holiness carries with itself a sense of strength and power. For a gemologist to cut a diamond, he must create a flaw to cut it; otherwise, it would be too strong to cut. Similarly, a flawless God is a God of purity and strength.

SECTION 2: ONLY GOD IS HOLY

God's Holy Nature:

Lesson 5- The Nature of God 2

A. Read Psalms 99, Exodus 15:11, Psalms 93:5, Psalms 77:13, Isaiah 5:19, 24, 12:6, 43:14-15, and Revelation 4:8.

B. Why is it important to understand that God is a Holy God?

C. Do any other belief systems on the earth recognize the Holiness of God?

SUMMARY:

Very few, if any, belief systems other than Christianity support the notion that God is Holy or perfect. It is crucial for us to know and understand God's holiness because His holiness is a part of who and what He is. Consequently, His holiness affects our relationship with Him.

SECTION 3: BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

God's separation from us:

A. Read Romans 6:23 and Romans 3:23.

- What are the wages of sin?

- Who sins?

- God is obviously separate from us, a broken relationship exists between God and man.

B. Now read Isaiah 6:1-7, especially verses 5-7.

Knowing that God's holiness is all-consuming, is it an act of anger or an act of love that we are separated from God?

SUMMARY:

Understanding that God, being holy and perfect, consumes all

imperfection that comes into His presence is difficult. Simply because if He allowed imperfection in His presence, He would no longer be perfect and holy. Consequently, we would be consumed if we entered into His presence. Being consumed is not good for relationship building. It is important to know that God, in His love, separated Himself from us so that we would not be consumed and that He could create a way for us to re-establish a relationship with Him.

SECTION 4: HOLINESS AND RELATIONSHIP

God is holy and wants us in a relationship:

A. Read Ephesians 2:1-7.

- Did God leave us separated from Him because of our sin?

- Why did He provide a way to restore the broken relationship?

B. Now read Hebrews 13:5-6.

- Why can we trust in God?

- How do we know that He will never leave us or forsake us?

C. How is God's Holiness related to His capacity to have a relationship with us?

SUMMARY:

The potential for an intimate relationship with God is great because He is holy, and therefore, pure in His desire for us and unchanging in all His ways. Consequently, we can always depend upon Him to be in a relationship with us.

Lesson 5- The Nature of God 2

LESSON 6 - THE NATURE OF GOD 3

Once again, we are studying the nature of God. Let us continually remind ourselves that all of the attributes or qualities that we study about God must be seen in light of or in the context of His relational nature; that is, all of His other character traits must be seen through the window of His love. Last week we studied how God's holiness is crucial to His ability to offer us unconditional love, everlasting and forever understanding. Let us now look into the mystery of how being just and merciful are also an intricate part of Him being a relational God.

SECTION 1: GOD IS PERFECT

As we study God's perfectness, we will begin to see how powerful His love and holiness truly are.

A. God is perfect.

- How do we know God is perfect? Read Isaiah 40:28, James 1:13, 17. God is not subject to external standards, He is the standard.
- Now read Matthew 5:48. The only goal that God can give us is a perfect goal. Therefore, He must also be perfect. This is a relatively easy attribute of God to understand. Write below some thoughts that you might have concerning the perfectness of God.
- Your thoughts:

SECTION 2: GOD NEVER CHANGES

This is very important to understand, particularly in regard to God's love. His love is always there, never wavering, never fading. We

can always depend on Him.

A. God's being never changes.

- Read Hebrews 6:13-18 and 13:8
- His purpose stays the same, His nature stays the same but He adapts to the changes in man. How does God react to a sinner? How does God react to a believer?
- God still makes free decisions. Read Genesis 6:6. Did God make a mistake in creating man?

Please consider this point: God's unchangeableness is seen in His changing towards a changed person. He is always fair. To those who reject Him, He gives wrath, to those who accept Him, He gives abundant love and joy. There will always be right and wrong. Consequently, there is only one way to God, the way He has determined.

SECTION 3: GOD'S JUSTICE

The concept of justice is simple: it means fairness. It seems that God is just in that He is always fair. He punishes the wrongdoer and rewards the righteous. However, it gets a little more complicated than this when we begin to consider that God is also loving and very forgiving.

A. God is just.

- Read the following references: Psalms 51:4, 72:2, 75:2, John 8:15-16.
- In these references who is doing the judging?

- By what criteria is God making His judgments?

It is important to understand that God is the only person able to judge in a just manner. In other words, He knows all of the facts and He is perfect, therefore there is no personal bias involved in His judgments. They are what we would call just.

B. God is just because He loves us. Please consider the notion that God is just because He has a deep love for us. Let us explore.

- Why is it important for us to be honest with ourselves concerning the things we do to others, especially in dealing with guilty feelings?

- The fact that God is just affects us personally because God is always honest with us. How is God being honest with us?

SUMMARY

He will not allow us to carry guilt feelings over situations that, if we were truly honest with ourselves, we would know we cannot effect or change. You see, a just God is also a loving God. His justness frees us from the burdens we carry.

SECTION 4: GOD'S MERCY

Today let us look at God's mercy. This is directly related to God being just. His mercy is conditional. This means that His mercy is granted to anyone who is repentant. Therefore, His mercy is conditional.

A. What is mercy?

- Your reflections:

Lesson 6- The Nature of God 3

(Mercy example story involving Johnny, his father, and the act of mercy omitted for brevity, but should be included in your Word document.)

Consider all of the things that you have done in your past and think about what you deserve from God. Write below what He is giving you in comparison to what you deserve. I think that you will like mercy as much as Johnny.

- Your reflections:

LESSON 7 - THE NATURE OF GOD 4

This is the final section in our study of the nature of God. The immensity of who God is and all that He does. Yet, I hope that we have at least begun to explore the beauty of all that He is and what He has done for us. Finally, let us explore some aspects of God that may seem somewhat abstract but nonetheless important to know in our growing relationship with Him.

SECTION 1: GOD IS OMNIPRESENCE

I. God is everywhere.

This concept deals mainly with the fact that God is everywhere at all times. There is no point in time or space that is not without God's presence. It is as if time and space were a glass filled with water in a pool of water. God is the water. He is in the glass and outside the glass and surrounds that glass and is not limited to the confines of the glass. God is omnipresent.

A. Read Hebrews 4:13.

- What is hidden from God?
-

B. Read Psalms 139:1-14. Record below some of the thoughts in the Psalm that strike you concerning the omnipresence of God.

- He is not limited by space.

SUMMARY

God is not limited by time.

Therefore, He has the power to have an intimate relationship with every individual that seeks Him. He is not limited to one location or one person at a time. He can give His undivided attention

to all who seek Him. His omnipresence is important to know when considering God's relational capacities.

SECTION 2: GOD IS OMNISCIENT

Have you ever wondered how much God has to know for Him to know all things?

A. Read Psalms 147:5, Isaiah 40:11-13.

- God knows everything. There is nothing that can measure what He knows. God has knowledge of:

1. Psalm 147:5
2. Hebrews 4:13
3. 1 John 3:20

B. Read Genesis 6:6.

- Is this an apparent contradiction to God's knowing everything?
-

- We know that God knew man was going to sin (Ephesians 1:4 and following). Yet He still grieved it, like we know that our parents are going to die yet we still grieve when they do.

SUMMARY

God does know everything, and He needs to know a lot to know everything there is to know. His omniscience is tied to His omnipresence. He is everywhere at all times; therefore, He has the ability to know all things.

SECTION 3: GOD IS OMNIPOTENT

Becoming a Disciple- Part 1

Omnipotence is the idea that God can do all things. This is important because it means that God is consistent with all that He is. In other words, there is nothing that restricts God; therefore, He is able to keep all of His promises.

I. All things are possible to God.

A. Read Psalms 115:3, Psalms 62:11-12, and Mark 14:36.

- What does God have the power to do?
-

B. Does God have limitations? Read Hebrews 6:18, Titus 1:2, and 1 Timothy 2:13. Please list His limitations:

- Please note: God does have limitations. However, these limitations are self-imposed. In other words, because God is perfect, He is all-knowing (omniscient), He is everywhere (omnipresent), He is the only one who can limit Himself. He does not act contrary to His nature or purpose. God cannot lie, and He cannot deny Himself.

SECTION 4: GOD IS...

God simply is. There is no beginning to Him, there is no end. There is nothing by which we can measure Him. He is all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere. The question that we must now ask is, “What is so important about knowing this about God?”

I. Intimate Relationships are stronger relationships.

A. Spouse vs. the gas station attendant.

- List below reasons why a relationship with a spouse is stronger than a relationship with a gas station attendant.
-

B. Now that you know God better, how does this knowledge help you in having a stronger relationship with Him?

SUMMARY

List Below all of the attributes of God from the last four lessons.

Which of these attributes strike you as the most important?
Why?

Please remember that all of these attributes are crucial for us to understand in growing closer to God. Each and every one of them must be seen in light of God's purpose; that is, His desire to reconcile us back to Himself. God will never act inconsistent with His nature or purpose. Therefore, we must understand how judgment and holiness fit with grace and love.

LESSON 8 - THE PURPOSE OF MAN

Who am I? And where am I going? Questions that I believe we have all asked ourselves many times. These are the big questions. They only seem to hit us when we can no longer occupy ourselves with worldly things. They come when we finally realize that there has got to be a lot more to this world than just existing; there has to be a purpose. I don't know about you, but one thing I definitely want in this life is a purpose. Purpose is like seasoning; it flavors everything you do. It gives your life a sense of direction, a sense of being a part of something bigger than yourself, it gives you perspective. People without perspective are wrapped too tight, holding on to the little things, things that don't matter in the long run. I want to be able to enjoy what this world has to offer, not be enslaved to it. Purpose gives me the freedom to enjoy. Let's study where purpose comes from and what it is.

SECTION 1: GOD'S DELIGHT

God has a purpose for His creation. This purpose comes from who He is. His purpose is directly tied to who He is. Therefore, God made man in the way He did because He had a purpose. God made man simply because He delighted in making him. People like to be creative, just like God. They enjoy making things just for the sake of making them. There is fulfillment in being creative. God created man because He delighted in it.

I. God created man.

- Read Genesis 1.

A. What did God say after He created man?

B. In the structure of Genesis 1, what significance is there to the creation of man being listed last and the most space given to this creation?

C. In Genesis 2, the world centers around mankind. What does this say about God's viewpoint concerning our importance to Him?

D. Only man is created in the image of God. How is this different from the rest of creation?

- God must really have enjoyed creating us. We are the center of His creation, He gives more space to describe how He created us more than anything else, He lists us last as His greatest achievement, He even created us in His image. No wonder God has such a great purpose for His people.

SECTION 2: GOD'S GRACE

The reason God delighted so much in creating us is because He now has someone to shower His grace. Besides creating us to delight in, He created us as someone to receive delight; that is, He created us so that He could show His goodness to us, to give us fellowship, and give us meaning and purpose. This is similar to a poet. Even though the poet finds fulfillment in the very writing of poetry, he does not do it simply for himself. Likewise, the heavens declare the glory of God to us (Psalms 19:1). God created us so that He could share Himself with us (Genesis 3:8).

I. Meaning and purpose.

- Read Mark 3:14.

A. God creating us is like Christ calling the disciples. For what two reasons did Christ call the disciples?

Becoming a Disciple- Part 1

- For us, there is delight in experiencing fellowship and sensing purpose. By making us so that we are blessed through fellowship and sensing purpose, God provides an outlet (us) for His tendency as a person to show grace. In other words, God loves to give so much He needs someone to give to. Everyone experiences this “common grace” of creation.

B. In what way is God’s desire to create man comparable to a couple’s desire to have children?

C. Is there any sense in which God’s creating man ends up putting some limitations on Himself?

D. If there are such “limitations,” what does the fact that God created us anyway say about Him?

- Read Genesis 1:26, 28.

E. Why did God create us to be the caretakers of His creation? (note Psalms 8)

- It would seem that God really loves us. He showers us with His grace, He created us to be receivers of His grace, and He even chose to create us knowing that He would have to deal with us gently. God’s pretty cool.

SECTION 3: GOD’S GLORY

Creating man for fellowship and stewardship results in God’s glory because we thank and praise God for these previous graces. Paul makes a threefold statement of this pattern in Ephesians 1:3-14 when he says that God “foreordained us to adoption as sons through Jesus

Lesson 8- The Purpose of Man

Christ to Himself according to the (a) good pleasure of His will, (b) to the praise of glory of His grace (c) which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”

I. Why did God create us?

A. God’s reason for creating us is our purpose in Life. Why did God create us?

B. How do we avoid the notion that God is really self-centered if He created us for His own glory?

C. From our perspective, why is it best to focus on God’s glory as the most important reason for being created?

SECTION 4: MAN’S MEANINGFULNESS

There are two main dimensions to life: existence and hope. Existence includes all the aspects of our present situation - our vertical and horizontal relationships, our activities in those relationships, and our nature through which we experience what goes on around us and in us. Hope stresses the forward movement of life (Hebrews 11:1) that grows out of the existence process and outside contributions that God brings into history. Together these two aspects of living set up the context that provides for meaningful living.

I. The worth we receive from relationships.

- Read Proverbs 27:17 and 1 Cor. 15:33.

A. Explain below how your relationships define who you are as a person:

Becoming a Disciple- Part 1

- Which relationships are good and why is this?

- Do you have any relationships that work against your sense of self-worth - possibly because they use you?

- Is it true that people who have rejected a relationship with God, their creator, and left the purpose that He has for them have lost the basis for their own self-worth? Please explain why.

LESSON 9 - THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.’” (Genesis 1:26) And then man was created. Have you ever wondered what it means to be created in the very image of God? How am I like Him?

My purpose determines my nature. In other words, whatever I live and die for is what makes me who I am. The purpose of something determines how it is made. Ask any engineer and he will tell you. First decide what the purpose is and then design.

Last week we studied that our meaning comes from relationships and that our purpose is to be in relationship with God. The most basic thing we can say about ourselves is what God said about us first: “Let Us make man in Our image.” This statement reflects the interpersonal nature of God Himself: Us. Consequently, we can say that the image of God in us is our interpersonal capacity or our capacity to have relationships. We were created by God for fellowship with God and others.

SECTION 1: GOD’S IMAGE IS RELATIONAL

I. What kinds of capacities do we (persons) possess that non-personal things (i.e., chairs, cars, things) possess? List below:

II. Reading Genesis chapter one and using common knowledge, list below things that show how animals and people differ. What kinds of things separate us from animals?

III. What difference does it make in the way a person feels about themselves if they know that their very being resembles what is above (God) than what is below (animals)?

IV. Can you put into words the difference it makes in the way you feel about yourself, knowing that by His creation you share significant characteristics with God?

SECTION 2: GOD'S IMAGE IS RESPONSIBLE

We have the capacity, as people, to take responsibility. Right from the very beginning, we were given responsibility: we were to exercise responsibility over the creation God placed us in (Gen. 1:26-28). The commission that God gave us is directly related to the statement about being created in His image. In other words, to be created in God's image is to be responsible.

1. Read Genesis 1:28, 2:5, 3:22, and 2:16.

A. What did God specifically command man to take responsibility for?

B. How does this original commission to the human race fit in with the current concern about ecology and the environment?

C. Besides the original "dominion mandate" in Genesis 1:28, what other commissions and responsibilities has God given to His people?

Lesson 9- The Image of God in Man

II. Read Genesis 9:1-7. After God destroyed mankind, He made a covenant (the rainbow) with the survivors at the same time He commended men not to kill other men because they are created in the image of God.

A. What significance is there in God making an agreement or covenant with mankind?

B. What is the connection between interpersonal qualities (the image of God) and responsibility?

SECTION 3: WE ARE ETHICAL

In the beginning, God gave man two commandments, one positive and the other negative. People were to exercise dominion over the plant and animal kingdoms (Gen. 1:26-30; 2:5-9). They were not to eat from the “tree of knowledge” (Gen. 2:16-17). By making these commands and prohibitions, God put Adam and Eve in what we call a “moral matrix.” They were in a setting where right and wrong applied. The tree of knowledge corresponds with the principle of free will. Adam and Eve used free will to disobey God’s injunction not to eat from the tree, and thereby they became immoral or unethical beings.

We are in a moral circumstance as well. We have received a revelation (the Bible) that specifies certain responsibilities and certain prohibitions. Just like Adam and Eve, when we sin, we become self-conscious. What that means is that Adam and Eve were ashamed and tried to hide from God. When we sin, we experience a sense of guilt and shame. This corresponds to the unique capacity of humans to blush, a characteristic only attributed to humans. Our natural reaction to a situation in which we could be seen as having done something wrong is to cover it up or put the blame on someone or something else. Guilt and self-consciousness are interpersonal qualities. In other words, mankind is the only creation with the capacity to

Becoming a Disciple- Part 1

be moral or unmoral. This is because we were created in the image of God and we are persons. Ethical being relates interpersonal capacity to being in the image and likeness of God.

I. What ethical and moral expectancies do we have that correspond to the commandments and prohibitions given to Adam and Eve?

II. Do you think that we can succeed at overriding our innate sense of ethical responsibility, self-consciousness, conscience, guilt, and the like?

III. How do we deal with the fact of moral imperfection so that it does not destroy us or drive us in on ourselves?

IV. What are some ways that people try to deal with guilt in their lives that don't work?

SECTION 4: WE ARE COMMUNICATIVE

The final characteristic that we inherited from God when we were created in His image is the capacity to communicate. Communication is at the very foundation of interpersonal relationships. In the beginning, God revealed Himself to mankind. God “said” to man or spoke to man; His will was not just genetically passed on to us. When Satan approached Eve, he played on mankind’s ability to be influenced by words. Influence contrasts with force as the way one person affects another person’s behavior. Language communication is unique to interpersonal relationships in keeping with the fact that it derives from rational capacity. Ultimately this set of abilities fits into the general idea that the image of God in man is His interpersonal capacity.

Lesson 9- The Image of God in Man

1. How can we use our communicating ability to enhance our interpersonal relationship with God?

2. What does our interpersonal nature and our communicative ability imply about how we are to have fulfillment and happiness in life?

3. Why was it not good that man should be alone? (Gen. 2:18)



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