

Who Are We? What do we believe about Human Beings?

Notes

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Human Nature, seen even in infants, is two fold and contradictory!

1. Humans can be generous, loving and giving, even self-sacrificing. Where did the good stuff inside us come from?
2. We are also capable of demanding, self-seeking determination to have life on our own terms and make our own rules. What caused this rebellious nature?
Who are we really?

I. We are Made in the Image of God

Genesis 1:26-27

"Then God said, 'Let us make humans in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule...' So God created human beings in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them."

"In his own image..." There is the key to the glimpses we get of godliness and rationality in human beings. The Imago Dei is Latin for Image of God.

Theologian Thomas Aquinas (1200s)- the Imago Dei exists in a our intellect- reason.

John Calvin picked up on St. Augustine's metaphor- We reflect God's image just as a mirror reflects images. *"For although God's glory shines forth in the outer man, yet there is no doubt that the proper seat of his image is in the soul."*

John Wesley, theologian and founder of Methodism- God's image in man consists In his nature, his soul. He said *"The soul is a spirit, an intelligent, immortal spirit, an active spirit, herein resembling God, the Father of spirits, and the soul of the world.... God's image upon man consists in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness."*

II. We are Given an Opportunity to Choose

Genesis 2:8-17- A choice is built into creation, so that we are not puppets, but can freely choose to trust and love God.

Josh McDowell writes in The Unshakeable Truth:

"In the pristine perfection of the Garden, God offered Adam and Eve a tangible way of expressing their unselfish love and trust in him. He gave them a command not to eat of a certain fruit. And so there it was; they had a choice to make, a voluntary choice to believe God was acting unselfishly and had their best interest at heart, or that he was selfishly keeping something good from them. In this simple choice Adam and Eve were being asked to demonstrate they trusted that God was good and that he would not selfishly withhold things from them."

To choose otherwise would be to destroy the loving relationship established between God and humans. And to sever that relationship meant becoming unplugged from the only true source of love and life itself. That, of course, would result in a disastrous outcome.

So there was a risk within God's masterly plan to create humans in his image and likeness. The risk was that they could choose to reject such a relationship. Authentic love cannot be forced."

Genesis 3 describes what happened when the first humans had a choice in front of them...
To trust God or not to trust...

III. We are Irrevocably Lost and Marred by our Choice

Genesis 3:8-10- *"Toward evening they heard the LORD God walking about in the garden, so they hid themselves among the trees. The LORD God called to Adam, 'Where are you?' He replied, 'I heard you, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked'".*

John Calvin- The mirror was essentially shattered by "The Fall". The Imago Dei is like an object that has been badly burned – it does not cease to exist, but it lies in the form of ash and dust, unrecognizable, bearing no resemblance of its former self.

John Wesley saw the pursuit of the sanctification, available through the Holy Spirit *after* salvation through Christ, as the source of the restoration of the Imago Dei in the life of the Christian.

Genesis 3:23-24- consequences for humanity

Romans 8:20-22- consequences for all of creation

"When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned" Romans 5:12

"The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus" Romans 6:23
"While we were totally powerless, Christ died for the ungodly." (Romans 5:6)

IV. God Has Made Another Choice Available: Deliverance Through Christ

Romans 7:15-24- Describes our wretched condition apart from Christ

Romans 7: 25- Deliverance from this dilemma & this body of death is through Jesus Christ.

You can be free.