

Ethics and the Christian Life (2)

Creation - Created in God's Image

Introduction

- A. Ethics and the Christian life are intimately related. All failure to recognize the ethical foundations for life in the attributes of God's will result in confusion and frustration in the Christian life.
- B. No one thinks or lives in a priority vacuum. We all have reasons for our beliefs and actions. One important facet of ethical responsibility and spiritual commitment has to do with the willingness to examine the content of those beliefs and priorities which motivate us in our daily life.
- C. In this regard the Biblical concept of creation is important. We were created by God -- not by an evolutionary force. We were created by choice, for a purpose, we are important to God, and our daily life can have meaning and value.

I. The Biblical statement: Mankind was created in the image of God, Genesis 1:26, 27; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10

- A. We were created as a person with all the rights, honors and privileges that accompany personality.
- B. We were created with the character and abilities related to righteousness, holiness and knowledge.

II. The Biblical Explanation:

- A. God created us as persons. This sets the pattern for how God regards us and how we are to regard ourselves. We have the privilege to know, to be heard, to feel, to have an opinion, to develop our potentiality, to assume responsibility, to do meaningful tasks and to enjoy life. We may not treat ourselves as a thing, or as unimportant, or as irresponsible. God holds us responsible as persons. It is God's will that we be fulfilled as persons. Isaiah 43:1-21
- B. God created us as spiritual persons. We were created so we could know God and walk in fellowship with Him, understand spiritual truths and perform spiritual functions. We are sacred people. We may not treat ourselves as though our basic functions and fulfillment were the sensual or the physical. I Cor. 2:15
- C. God created us as rational persons. We have the ability to know truth, draw conclusions, develop principles, integrate areas of life and thought under a single perspective, and interpret life correctly through an understanding of divine revelation. God holds us responsible for what we should know. Isaiah 55
- D. God created us as emotional persons. We have the ability to know and express such feelings as love, hate, fear, courage, joy, grief, etc. In themselves such feelings are good and may be used to glorify God. God made us to feel deeply about things both good and bad. Matthew 22:34-40.

- E. God created us as volitional persons. One of our greatest abilities is that of choices. It is important that we recognize this ability and choose to obey God in decisions of faith, love and hope. The ability to choose must not be confused with the feeling of inability. We do not need emotional assurance to make correct decisions of faith. Romans 6:11-13.
- F. God created us as moral persons. We are taught that God has written His laws on our hearts. We have a consciousness of right and wrong. Because of creation no one is completely amoral. The content of our morality may be wrong but we all live with a recognition of morality. Romans 2:14,15
- G. God created us to be His representatives. We were given dominion over the earth and told to dress and keep it (Genesis 2:15). WE have the ability to glorify God by causing the world to develop its potentiality. In this world we are called to be God's prophets, priests and kings. Exodus 19:5,6; I Peter 2:9
- H. God creates us to glorify Himself. This is the divinely established goal for man and his abilities. As crated in God's image we have the ability to live in harmony with His attributes and to accomplish his will. Isaiah 43:7,21

III. The Biblical Meaning:

- A. We were crated as a person with an unlimited potential for goodness.
- B. We were crated as a person with an unlimited potential for creativity.
- C. We were crated as a person with an unlimited potential for fulfillment.
- D. We were crated as a person with an unlimited potential for fellowship.

IV. The Biblical Application:

- A. As believers we may not contradict our creation in how we treat ourselves or how we treat one another. We have self-worth and value. This is not established by our heritage, abilities or circumstances. It is established by our creation. God has chosen to crate us and He has created us with ability and for a purpose.
- B. We must recognize the priority of the "spiritual" in our daily life. We were crated by God to life in harmony with Him and to manifest His attributes of truth, love and holiness in our daily life. As "spiritual" people that is where our fulfillment must begin. Isaiah 43:7,21; Romans 7:22; I Corinthians 4:16; Ephesians 3:16
- C. Fulfillment is therefore a "by-product" which grows our of a living relationship with God as manifested in daily obedience. Our "re-creation" in the new birth makes such a life possible. One important facet of this fulfillment is known as the "joy of the Lord." John 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; Romans 14:17; 15:13; Galatians 5:22; I John 1:4
- D. Ethical responsibility and spiritual commitment must therefore begin with the recognition that God is my Creator and that I am His creation. The Biblical principles and promises which accompany this relation must be accepted and implemented. When we life as though we were our own authority and that our life belonged to ourselves we are violating that fundamental facet of divine revelation and reality. Isaiah 43:1,7,21