

Ethics and the Christian Life(3)

The Fall - The Image of God Defaced

Introduction

- A. It is staggering to the imagination to realize that we have been created in the image of God, created to have fellowship with Him, to be divinely enabled to represent Him, and to be able to live and serve for the glory of God.
- B. When we look at the world about us and ourselves, we cry out, "What has happened to us?" We are not the way God made us. We are creatures of sickness and death, selfishness and sensuality, hatred and violence, covetousness and rebellion, weakness and pride -- and yet conscious of a lost greatness and sensing a deep loneliness.
- C. The answer to our cry is found in the Bible. We are fallen people. We have turned away from our Creator and Father. We have rejected He Who is the very source of life itself and we see the evidence of our death in every area of our existence.

I. The Biblical Statement:

- A. The Scripture: Ephesians 4:17-19
- B. The human mind and vocabulary is totally inadequate to describe the loss we have brought upon ourselves in the Fall. We have rejected the only One Who is Fountain of Life and every good thing. We have torn God from the center of our life and placed ourselves there. Now, as sinners, we are the authority, the motivation and the goal for all our activity. Nothing can be worse than having what we all demand -- our own way.

II. The Biblical Explanation:

A. We are now creatures of death.

1. We are alienated from God.

- a. Condemnation with its conviction, Romans 2:14,15.
- b. Depravity with its inability, Ephesians 2:1-3,12.
- c. Enmity with his rebellion, Romans 8:7.
- d. Meaninglessness with its idolatry, Ephesians 5:3-6.
- e. Ignorance with its perversion, Ephesians 4:18,19.
- f. Separation with its enslavement, John 8:34,44.

2. We are alienated from mankind.

- a. Scripture: Romans 1:29-31; I Corinthians 3:3; James 3:14-16; Titus 3:3
- b. In the place of love and trust there is discord, suspicion, jealousy, and hatred.

3. We are alienated from ourselves.

- a. Scripture: Philipians 2:21; Romans 1:31; II Timothy 3:2-4; Titus 3:3
- b. Instead of loving and accepting ourselves we now vacillate between making ourselves an idol through self-love or an enemy through hatred.

B. The consequences of the Fall are evident in all the areas of our existence.

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| 1. The obsession of lust, John 8:34. | 5. Guilt, I Cor. 11:27, James 2:10. |
| 2. Spiritual defilement, Mark 7:1-23. | 6. Change of Character, Jer. 17:1. |
| 3. Enslavement, I Timothy 3:6,7. | 7. Hardening of the heart, Hebrews 3:8 |
| 4. Deception, I Corinthians 3:18 | 8. Death, Romans 6:23; 8:5; James 1:15 |

III. The Biblical Meaning:

A. Our present condition.

1. There has been a tragic reversal:

- a. Unlimited potential for goodness . . . for sinfulness.
- b. Unlimited potential for creativity . . . for inability.
- c. Unlimited potential for fulfillment . . . for unfulfillment.
- d. Unlimited potential for fellowship . . . for alienation.

2. The Fall has programmed us with its consequences.

- a. We seem to have a deep hidden memory of what we could have been.
- b. We have been deceived by sin and have been led by Satan to believe that God has rejected us! The truth is -- we have rejected God.
- c. We now interpret ourselves and all of life on the basis of error.

We believe that we are rejected by God, parents, mankind and we reject ourselves.

We believe, therefore, that we are inferior. We see evidence by comparison

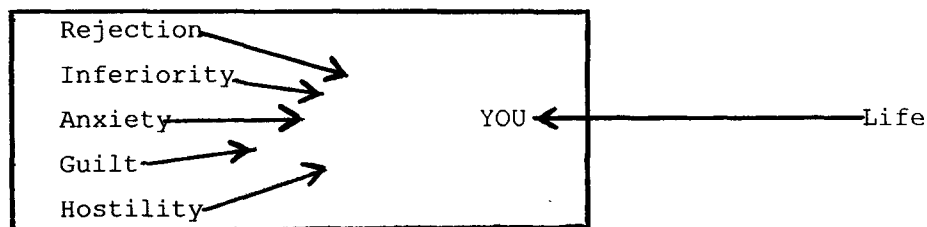
We believe, therefore, that we will not succeed, and accept anxiety.

We believe, therefore, that something is wrong with us, we accept guilt.

We believe we cannot succeed, in spite of hard work, and accept hostility

B. Our present experience.

1. We interpret ourselves and life on the basis of error.



2. The results of this experience are evident among us.

Frustration	Unfulfillment
Confusion	Covetousness
Bitterness	Hopelessness

IV. The Biblical Application: Due to the kind of person we are, and the false interpretation of life, ethical responsibility and spiritual commitment are now impossible. We have lost control of ourselves and are enslaved to error, to the world, to Satan, and to ourselves.