

Toward A Biblical Understanding of Ourselves and Our World
Gen. 1:26,27; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19; 6:10-18

Introduction

- A. The Biblical promise is clear: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," John 8:32
- B. When one wants to be free, and works hard at it, and the measure of freedom you seek does not come – such a verse will appear condemning and confusing.
- C. It is important to keep in mind that there may be many more facets to both our problems and solutions than we are willing at first to grant.
- D. The following statements are intended to point to some of these facets. Each area designated may involve complicated issues – simply because of our profound depths, complexity, and the issues related to spirituality.

I. We are spiritual people living in a spiritual world.

- A. Our spirituality is primarily the kind of a person we are by creation. God created us as a person in His image.

- 1. We are not primarily body, mind; emotions, will or a social creature.
- 2. We are primarily spirit – created by God to love Him, honor Him, worship Him, serve Him, and enjoy Him.
- 3. To live out of harmony with who we are is self-destructive.

- B. We live in a spiritual world.

- 1. This world was created by God. It is His person, will, plan, and Word, that determines the character of the world, its values, and power.
- 2. Although the inhabitants of this world have sinned and fallen away from God – and are under judgment with the world – God still rules His creation, He is in charge, and is fulfilling His plan through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ.
- 3. The distinction we usually make of a spiritual world and a natural world (what we see and experience all about us) is an artificial distinction. The terms "natural" as in "natural law" as simply our human and fallen ways of describing our world. God is active in all facets of our lives and our world. From the viewpoint of His activity and truth and value and issues of life.

II. Our problems and their solutions are therefore primarily spiritual.

- A. By the use of the term "spiritual" I refer to the root (ultimate cause and character) of both our problems and their solutions.

- 1. A sore back may be due to not knowing how to lift, trying to lift too much, failure to maintain good muscle tone or care for an injury, inheriting a bad back from your ancestors or having curses pronounced upon you or your ancestors. Each of these are related to what I mean by "spiritual."

2. A "spiritual" solution to the problem may be learning the truth about how to lift, what one can safely lift, how to maintain body tone, care for injuries, and how to cancel ancestral curses. And in each of these areas confession, prayer, and faith would be applicable. Each of these are rather equal "spiritually."
3. By this explanation I am not trying to dilute "spirituality" but attempting to show how all of life must be understood spiritually.

B. In seeking to understand our problems we may not overlook the effects of:

1. Our personal sin (I Peter 1:14)
2. Our ancestral sin (I Peter 1:17,18)
3. The influence of sinful culture (I John 2:15,16)
4. The influence of sinful people (I Cor. 5:6; II Cor. 6:14-17)
5. The workings of wicked spirits (Eph. 6:10-12)
6. Our relationship with God (I Cor. 5:17)
7. The plan of God (Col. 1:18)
8. Our personal responsibility regarding truth and obedience (II Cor. 5:10)

C. In seeking to understand the solutions to our problems we must recognize:

1. That we are spiritual people (Gen. 1:27)
2. That we are created by God to fulfill His plan to honor Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:18)
3. That we are now redeemed (II Cor. 5:17)
4. That we have the ability to exercise faith, love, and hope (I Thess. 1)
5. That the victory of Jesus Christ over sin, the world, and Satan has been given us, and we are responsible to appropriate it (Eph. 1:16-23)
6. Have the blueprint for life in the Bible (John 17:14)
7. Have been called to live in fellowship with God (I Cor. 1:9)
8. Have been given the Holy Spirit to guide and empower us (John 14:16; Acts 1:8)
9. And have an inexhaustible source of grace and power available to us through prayer and obedience (II Cor. 9:8; Phil. 4:13,19)

Conclusion

- A. In such a check-list as this a number of important items have probably been left out.
- B. It is necessary that we face ourselves with the world-view of the Bible and not allow ourselves to settle for a weakened and cheapened view of life that is influenced by naturalism and humanism.

Victor M. Matthews