



We Are Children of God

July 20, 2014

Thought For The Week

I recently observed several young men who attracted attention to themselves because of their extreme styles of dress and (lack of) grooming. One made a revealing remark when he said, "I'm trying to find out who I really am." It reminded me of a song we used to sing in my childhood "I Am a Child of God." Such contrasting thoughts emphasize the importance of knowing that we are "literally children of God". We are dual beings. Each soul is comprised of body and spirit, both of which emanate from God. A firm understanding of body and spirit will shape our thoughts and deeds for good. Over the next two weeks we will discuss the make-up of us as Children of God. We begin:

The Body

The marvel of our physical bodies is often overlooked. Who has not encountered feelings of low self-esteem because of physique or appearance? Many people wish their bodies could be more to their liking. Some with naturally straight hair want it curly. Others with curly hair want it straight. Occasionally some ladies, believing that "gentlemen prefer blonds," become "decided blonds."

Your body, whatever its natural gifts, is a magnificent creation of God. It is a tabernacle of flesh—a temple for your spirit. A study of your body attests to its divine design. Its formation begins with the union of two reproductive cells, one from the mother and one from the father. Together, these two cells contain all of the new individual's hereditary information, stored in a space so small it cannot be seen by the naked eye. Twenty-three chromosomes from each parent unite in one new cell. These chromosomes contain thousands of genes, which determine all of the physical characteristics of the unborn person. Approximately 22 days after these two cells unite, a little heart begins to beat. At 26 days, blood begins to circulate. Cells multiply and divide. Some become eyes that see; others become ears that hear.

Each organ is a wondrous gift from God. The eye has a self-focusing lens. Nerves and muscles control two separate eyes to make a single three-dimensional image. The eyes are connected to the brain, which records the sights seen. No cords or batteries are needed.

Each ear is connected to compact equipment designed to convert sound waves into audible tones. An eardrum serves as a diaphragm. Minute ossicles amplify sound vibrations and transmit a signal via nerves to the brain, which senses and remembers the sounds.

The heart is an incredible pump. It has four delicate valves that control the direction of blood flow. These valves open and close more than 100,000 times a day—36 million times a year. Yet, unless altered by disease, they are able to withstand this stress almost indefinitely. No man-made material developed to date can be flexed so frequently and so long without breaking.

Each day an adult heart pumps enough fluid to fill a 2,000-gallon tank. This work is equivalent to lifting a grown man to the top of the Empire State Building while expending only about four watts of energy. At the crest of the heart is an electrical generator that transmits energy down special lines, causing myriads of muscle fibers to work together.

Other attributes of the body are equally amazing, though less evident. For example, backup is

provided. Each paired organ has instant backup available from the other of the pair. Two routes of blood supply nourish single organs, such as the brain, the heart, and the liver. This design protects the organ if harm should come to any one channel.

Think of the body's system of self-defense. To protect it from harm, the body perceives pain. In response to infection, it generates antibodies. They not only help to combat the immediate problem, but they persist to strengthen resistance to infection in the future. One day my attention was directed to some three-year-old children who had lapped up water from a street gutter. The number of germs they ingested must have been incalculable, but not one of those youngsters became ill. As soon as that dirty drink reached each little stomach, its hydrochloric acid went to work to treat the water and protect the life of the child.

The skin provides protection. It also warns against injuries that excessive heat or cold might cause. It even sends signals that indicate trouble elsewhere. With fever, the skin perspires. When you are frightened, it pales. When you are embarrassed, it blushes.

The body repairs itself. Broken bones mend and become strong once again. Skin lacerations heal themselves. A leak in the circulation can seal itself.

The body renews its own outdated cells. The average red blood cell, for instance, lives about 120 days. Then a newly regenerated cell replaces it.

The body regulates its own vital ingredients. Essential elements and chemical constituents are adjusted continuously. And regardless of wide fluctuations in temperature of the environment, the temperature of the body is carefully controlled within narrow bounds.

If these qualities of normal function, defense, repair, regeneration, and regulation were to prevail in perpetuity, life here would continue without limit. Mercifully, our Creator provided for aging and other processes, which ultimately result in physical death. We often think of death as untimely or tragic. But death, like birth, is part of life. Scripture tells us "it was not expedient that man should be reclaimed from this temporal death, for that would destroy the great plan of happiness." To return to God is a joy for those who love Him.

When death claims an individual in the prime of life, we take comfort in knowing that the very laws, which do not allow life to persist here, are the same laws that will be implemented at the time of the Resurrection, when the body will be endowed with immortality.

Next week we explore, "Our Spirit, Physical Limitations & Personal Behaviors"

Happy Birthday Barb (7/22) & Ann (7/24)

Prayer for Peace



O God, the people are hungry for your Word and your Spirit.. Fill us with grace to make those Words and that Spirit live this day, in this very moment..

O God, your people are hungry for food, both physical and spiritual. Help us to become better stewards, so that all may benefit from the abundance you have provided.

O God, your people are hungry for justice. Help those in authority, in all countries and all institutions, to govern wisely for the benefit of all. With others across the world, we especially ask this on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Columbia on this day.

O God, your people are hungry for peace. Teach all people that there is more to bind nations together

than to drive them apart, and that there is no place in your realm for war and intolerance.

Teach us of your peace we humbly pray, in Jesus' name, Amen



Stewardship Thought For The Week

In the Gospel, Jesus charges his followers to “make disciples of all nations.” What exactly is going on here? What is this Great Commission anyway? Good stewards know they are directed to share what they exercise stewardship over: their life of faith in Christ Jesus. They know Jesus didn't direct them to go to church and to keep quiet about it; or to go out into the neighborhood, workplace or marketplace and just be nice.

Christ's Good News is meant to be shared. Many people in our communities don't know about Jesus Christ. Does that bother us? Do we care? Do we realize we are supposed to do something about it?