

What God Wants To Do With You #4

He Wants You To Reflect His Image
By Bill Denton

INTRODUCTION

A. Today we will close this series of sermons on "What God Wants To Do With You"

1. I have to wonder if someone isn't thinking, "Wait a minute! I thought we were going find out something about God's will for our lives."
 - a. I would suggest that we have
 - b. We have talked about the fact that God wants several things to happen
 - 1) He wants you to know him – the first step toward understanding God and knowing his will for your life
 - 2) He wants you to love him – this is the single most important motivator causing us to seek God and obey his will
 - 3) He wants you to trust him – this is the heart of faith, a trust that allows us to depend on God, and willingly yield to him
2. Somebody else might be thinking, "Hold it! I thought we were going to talk about the details of life so I could know exactly what God wants me to do from one day to the next
 - a. I would suggest that we have
 - b. in talking about knowing God, loving God, and trusting God, we have really addressed the things that form the foundation of all the details of life
 - c. you don't really need for me to discuss detail, you really need for me to give you the essential elements of life's foundation so you can build your own details

B. Still, there is one more part of this broad topic that demands our attention today, that tells Us more about what God wants to do with us

1. He wants you to reflect His image – in other words, he really wants to create in you what he intended from the very beginning
2. Sin ruined God's creation
 - a. human life in this sinful world is nothing like what God originally intended for it to be
 - b. guilt, shame, sorrow, and all the warped ways of human life that followed the entrance of sin into the world is totally different from God's original intent
3. Ultimately, what God wants to do with you is to reverse the whole problem
 - a. he does not want you to be unlike him
 - b. he wants you to be like him
 - c. that is the point of this lesson

C. In many ways, this is the lesson that most addresses our questions about God's specific will

1. I still won't deal with the minute details of life, but in principle I will talk about things will tell you precisely what God wants to do with you every single day
2. If you understand this discussion, you will clearly know what God wants to do with you

I. IN THE BEGINNING AND AT THE END

A. Genesis 1:26-31

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, " Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." 29 Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; 30 and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so. 31 God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. NASU

1. There is something important about the beginning of human existence that is sometimes overlooked
 - a. man was created in the image of God
 - 1) we're not talking about a physical image – it's not that we were created to look like God in our appearance
 - 2) we were made in the image of God to reflect his own person, in the character of our lives, pure and sinless
 - 3) when Adam and Eve walked with God in the garden, there existed a relationship and a fellowship based on the fact that human life was like the God who created it
 - b. this "image of God" concept was obviously important to understanding the value of human life and the precious nature of life
 - 1) Genesis 5:1-2
 - 1 This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created. NASU
 - a) not just "the book of generations," not just "in the day God created man"
 - b) rather – in the day when God created man, in the image of God
 - 2) Genesis 9:6
 - 6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man. NASU
 - a) there is a reason for prohibiting killing another man
 - b) that reason relates directly to the fact that the man was created in the image of God
 - c) killing is the ultimate disrespect and devaluing of a person and by extension it disrespects and devalues the God in whose image the one killed is created

3) James 3:8-9

8 But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God;
NASU

- a) James' concern is with the evil tongue
- b) look at the illustration he uses – the tongue blesses the Lord and turns around and curses men
- c) this is very heart of the inconsistency – the man was made in the likeness of God
- d) evil ignores, discounts, and denies this fundamental fact, that we are created in God's image

B. We need to realize that the ultimate destiny of man is to bear the image of God

1. Romans 8:28-30 (Paul, talking about our ultimate destiny)

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. NASU

- a. both the foreknowledge and predestination of God relate to one goal: our being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ
- b. we are destined to reflect, not the fallen image of sin-stained humanity who has been separated from its God, and whose life is damaged and twisted and ruined – instead we are ultimately to reflect the image that we were created to bear – the image of God, through his Son Jesus Christ

2. 1 Corinthians 15:46-49 (Paul talking about the resurrection from the dead)

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. 47 The first man is from the earth, earthly; the second man is from heaven. 48 As is the earthly, so also are those who are earthly; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we will also bear the image of the heavenly. NASU

- a. man's destiny in the resurrection is to bear the image of something heavenly
- b. the obvious contrast is between the life we live now and the life we will live after the resurrection
- c. ultimately, we will bear the image we were always created to bear – the image of God

C. So, whether you are talking about man's beginning or man's goal of eternal life, you cannot Get away from this idea that we were created in God's image

1. It is an essential element in man's relationship with God

2. It is a necessary factor to man's fellowship with God

3. It is part of the explanation of both man's beginning and his ultimate end (goal)

II. THE NECESSARY DISCUSSION: WHAT ABOUT RIGHT NOW?

A. Illustration

1. A former university student named Forbes Robinson, died of pneumonia when he was but 21 years of age. He was a young man with great faith, and he had a passion for taking Christ to others. He wrote the following to one of his friends:
2. "I want you to be one of the best men who ever lived, to see Christ and to reveal Christ to other men. This is the burden of my prayers.

"My whole being goes out in passionate entreaty to God that he will give me what I ask, and I am sure that he will, because the request is after his own heart (Romans 8:28–29). I do not pray that you may succeed in life or get on in the world. I seldom even pray that I may see you oftener in this or any other land. I seldom pray that you may love me better, much as I crave this.

"But I do ask, I do implore, that Christ may be formed in you, that you may be made not in an image suggested by my imagination, but in the image of God; that you may realize not my ideal, but his ideal—however much my ideal may be real to me, however little I may recognize his when God creates it in you. I hate the thought that out of love for me you should accept my presentation, my feeble ideas of Christ. I want God to reveal his Son to you independently of me.

"I want God to give you a firsthand knowledge of him whom I'm only beginning to see. Sometimes, more selfish thoughts may intrude, but this represents the main current of my prayers, and if this idea is to be won from heaven by importunity, by ceaseless begging, I think I shall have it for you."¹

B. What does God want to do with you -- right now?

1. Do you think it's possible we often overlook God's real desire for us
 - a. when you think about what God wants to do with you, is it possible that your mind begins to stir thoughts that aren't really God's concern
 - b. not that God isn't concerned with the details of your life, but rather that we have a focus and interest on details to the extent that we forget the big picture?
2. I really think we want answers to the question about what God wants to do with us that miss the whole point
 - a. we want to know if God wants us to have a certain job, or if he wants us to have our own business, or if he wants us to pursue a particular career
 - b. we want to know if God wants us to live here, or there, or somewhere else
 - c. we want to know if God wants us to marry this person or that person, or if he wants us to stay single for the rest of our lives.
 - d. we want to know if God wants us to wear these clothes, have that hobby, run around with these friends, develop that habit, or own those things
 - e. and the reason we can't seem to understand what God wants to do with us may be that we don't pay attention to the fundamental purpose of God

¹*Discipleship Journal* : Issue 1. 1999 (electronic ed.). The Navigators/NavPress: Colorado Springs

C. I'm about to tell you what God wants to do with you, right now, in the details of your life

1. When I reveal this to you, it will probably have one of a handful of effects and you will respond in a corresponding handful of ways
 - a. you may not like what I have to say at all
 - b. you may think I've short-changed you and that surely there is more to it than what I say
 - c. you might have your eyes opened to see something that suddenly makes all the confusing details become clear
 - d. I don't know how you will respond to what I'm about to tell you, but I know that what I'm about to say is precisely what God wants to do with you
2. God wants to help you bear his image so that your life will reflect his
 - a. in short – God wants you to be learning to be like him in the way you live
 - b. he wants you to be holy – that's the foundational intent of God for your life, that you be like his Son, Jesus, learning to overcome temptations and sin to live a life that is good and pure, positive and righteous
3. Consider the following verses

a. Romans 12:1-2

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. NASU

b. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. NASU

c. Ephesians 4:17-24

17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. 20 But you did not learn Christ in this way, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. NASU

d. 1 Peter 1:13-16

13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." NASU

e. 1 Peter 2:9-10

9 But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY. NASU

D. Once you understand what God wants to do with you, the specifics take on a new priority

1. God may well want you to have a particular job, but whether or not you ever figure what the job is, I know what kind of person you ought to be and how you ought to do that job
 - a. a person seeking after holiness and wanting to reflect the image of God simply cannot work at some jobs because they are in direct conflict with what God wants to do with you
 - b. otherwise, maybe God gives you a fairly open field in the job market
2. God may have some ideas about lots of other details of your life, but regardless what they are, every detail ought to help you to better reflect the image of God
 - a. in the clothes you wear – do they make you look more godly or less?
 - b. in the places you go or the entertainment you enjoy – are you more godly there or less
 - c. in the hobbies of your life, or the friends you hang around with, or the activities in which you involve yourself – are you reflecting God's image or something different?

CONCLUSION

- A. It may be true that many people don't really want to know what God wants to do with them
 1. Knowing what he wants may a direct contradiction to what you want
 2. You're going to have to decide which is more important
- B. What I know is that God wants you to bear his image – every detail builds on that foundation
- C. Invitation