

Exploring the Nature of God (God, Our Father)

Introduction:

- I. We are spending our time this week exploring the nature of God. In our first lesson of this series, we examined Genesis chapter One and discovered God as our Creator. Now in this lesson, we want to move on to Genesis chapters two and three and see God, not just as our Creator, but as our Father.

- II. We see this first by the introduction of another name for God. In Genesis one God was referred to as Elohim. In Genesis two we see God being referred to by a Hebrew word which we transliterate as Yahweh. Now, in most of your English Bibles that word will be translated LORD in capital letters, but whenever you see that in your Bibles, whenever you see LORD with capital letters, the Hebrew word Yahweh is behind it.

Now, it is significant that God is referred to as Yahweh in chapter two. Why? It is significant because Yahweh is a more personal term than the word Elohim. In fact, Yahweh is God's personal name (**Ex. 3:13-16**). In truth, God is referred to by many different terms in the Bible. As we have seen, sometimes the word Elohim is used in reference to God, but did you know that the same term is used in references to idols.

Gen 35:2

Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods (Elohim) that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments:

Sometimes the Hebrew word *Adōn*, which is translated "Lord" in our English Bibles, is a reference to God and sometimes it is a reference to man.

Gen 45:8

So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord (Adōn) of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Ps 8:9

O Lord our Lord (Adōn), how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

But hear me now: the word Yahweh is never used of men. The word Yahweh never used of idols. Yahweh is always, always, always a reference to God. Why? It is His personal name. Now again, what is the significance that this name is introduced in chapter two of Genesis? It is because chapter two begins to reveal the special place of man in God's creation. Chapter two is not just a repeat of chapter one. Chapter one outlines God's creation of the universe and

everything in it, including man. Chapter two gives us more details about the creation of man, and is in fact a chapter, along with chapter three, that is all about man. Man is picked out of all of God's creation and placed on center stage. Genesis chapters two and three is about man and his relationship to God. Now all the sudden you can see the significance of the name Yahweh being introduced. In chapter one it is Elohim, a term used 32 times in 31 verses. Why? The emphasis is on God's relationship to the universe and His overall creation. In chapters two and three the name Yahweh Elohim is used 20 times. Why? Because the emphasis now shifts to man and God's special relationship with him. God is not just our Creator, He is our Father. And if God is our Father, then we are His children and that implies at least two things—we have a special relationship with God and we have a special responsibility to God. Let's examine these two truths.

Lesson:

I. Our Special Relationship with God.

When it comes to man, God's unmatched, creative power is on full display. Gen. 2:7 says,

Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

The word *formed* is from the Hebrew word *yatsar* and means to form, fashion or frame (Thayer). Strong tells us that it means to squeeze into shape or to mold into form like a potter (Strong). Who did the forming? It wasn't evolutionary developments that happened by chance. It was God. And from what were we formed? Did we come from monkeys or baboons? No! God formed us of dust from the ground and then He animated man by breathing into His nostrils the breath of life. Ladies and gentlemen, this is the unwavering testimony of scripture.

Job 33:4, 6

The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life...6 Behold, I am toward God as you are; I too was pinched off from a piece of clay.

The point of it is this: we are God's creation. Our present form, that is, the physical makeup of the human body comes right from the mind of God. And while the Bible doesn't get too scientific when it comes to our bodies, the complexity of our bodies declares emphatically, that there is a God. Think about our physical make-up for just a second. The human brain is such that the most complicated computers on earth are simplistic compared to it. The human circulatory system is such that all other circulation schemes in the world pale in comparison to it. The human eye is such that the most sophisticated telescopes ever made can only hope to emulate it. Did you know that the human body consists, not only of

206 bones, but also of over ten trillion cells and 60,000 miles of blood vessels? No wonder the David said to our Creator, *"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.."* (Psa. 139:14). When we consider the human body, we understand why David said in another place, *"The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'"* (Psa. 14:1). The word fool there means senseless and without question, the person, I don't care how many PhDs he has earned or how many books he has written; it doesn't matter to me how popular he may be in scientific circles, the person who denies that there is design behind the human body, and therefore there must be a Designer, is not using good sense.

Now, having said all that, it is not the wonder of our human bodies, nor even the fact that God formed us from the dust of the ground by nothing more than the power of His Word that reveals our special relationship to Him. So then, what does reveal man's special relationship with God?

A. God created man with a special spirit.

As we saw in chapter one, God created us in His own image and after His likeness (**Gen. 1:26**). That means that God created us with a spirit that is eternal so that He can spend the rest of eternity with man. It means that God has created us with rationality above that of all other creatures. God created us with imagination and creativity and with the intellectual ability to serve and worship Him. Why? Because God wants to sustain a relationship with man that is unknown to anything else in existence. Truly God is our God and the fact that we are created in His image allows us to know it. Listen: God is the God of all trees, but they don't know it. God is the God of all the planets and stars of the universe, but they don't know it. God is the God of all living beings, that is, of all the birds that fly in the air and the fish that swim in the sea; God is the God over all the animal that roam the earth, but none of them know it. Only man has the ability to know and understand who God is and what God wants. This, ladies and gentlemen, points emphatically to a special relationship between God and man.

B. God cared for man with proper provisions.

If there is one thing we can be sure about as human beings, it is that we serve a God who cares for us and about us. Sadly, man may not always care about God; man may not always be mindful of God, but God is always mindful about man. Isn't that a mind-boggling truth? God constantly has us on His mind. You may get preoccupied with the trivial things of life and forget about God, but God has you on His mind. You may become bogged down with everyday living and allow God to drift from your thoughts, but God has you on His mind. You may find yourself tied up with friends and family, work and worries so that you fail to remember God, but God remembers you. Listen to me: God has you on His mind.

Job 7:17

What is man, that you make so much of him, and that you set your heart on him,

Ps 8:4

What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

Ps 144:3

O Lord, what is man that you regard him, or the son of man that you think of him?

David was literally at a loss of understanding as to why God, in all His greatness and glory and grandiosity, would be so mindful of man, but in truth He is. God is mindful of man so He cares for us with proper provisions and treats us like a Father treats his children. Don't we see this at the very beginning of man's creation?

1. God gave man a special place of abode (Gen. 2:8-9).

The indication from this text is that God made a special place just for man. Notice that this garden was planted by God after man was created. Now we know from the creation account that God had already created trees to bear fruit. He did that on the third day. So when the text says in Gen. 2 that the trees of the garden were pleasant to the sight and good for food, there is the indication that these trees were especially beautiful and that the fruit of the trees were especially delectable and delicious. Notice that every reference to the garden of Eden in the Bible, whether they be figurative or not, indicates that it was a place of paradise.

Gen 13:10

*And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley **was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord...***

Ezek 28:13

You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering...On the day that you were created they were prepared.

Ezek 31:16

*"I made the nations quake at the sound of its fall when I made it go down to Sheol with those who go down to the pit; and all the **well-watered trees of Eden**, the choicest and best of Lebanon, were comforted in the earth beneath.*

So God makes a special place for man to dwell. Why? We are never told why God placed man in a wonderful place of paradise, we just know that He did. However, can we not deduce from this that God had, and continues to have, a special love for man?

2. God, gave man a special opportunity for eternal life (Gen. 2:9).

In the midst of this beautiful garden, God placed a special tree. The Bible calls it the tree of life and it had the special power to produce eternal life for anyone who would eat from it (**Gen. 3:22**). Why did God want man to live forever? Because He is the Father of man and doesn't want His special relationship with His children to ever cease. So God created a tree that could produce eternal life and He placed it in the midst of the garden, i.e., in place that was obvious and eye-catching. God didn't try to hide the tree. God didn't make contact with the tree near impossible. God placed the tree in a prominent position so that man could have ready access to it. God gave man every opportunity to choose life over death. God gave man every opportunity to choose His presence over alienation and eternity with Him over separation. God gave man every opportunity to choose righteousness over unrighteousness and obedience over disobedience. Why? Because as a Father God loves man and wants man to succeed and live forever. And let me tell you something else. God not only gave man the best opportunity by placing the tree in the midst of the garden, He also revealed His will in plain language so that man would have no doubt as to what to do and not to do. In other words, God gave man a law and He made that law perfectly understandable (**Gen. 3:1-3**).

Now listen to me: these things have never changed. God still wants to spend eternal life with His children, and the fact is, just like in the beginning, God has provided us with a tree of life and He has given us a law that can be easily understood. It is interesting that while we study about the creation of man and the special relationship that he sustains with his Creator, that it doesn't take man long to become a rebellious child (**Gen. 3:6**). The encouraging thing here is that in this very chapter where Adam and Eve introduced the sin into the world that was destined to pass unto all men, God set forth a promise of a redeemer (**vers. 14-15**). Verse 15 has been called the "the first Gospel" because it is the first announcement of the coming Redeemer. It points to the cross where Jesus, the seed of woman, would bruise the head of the old serpent, i.e., the Devil. Let me ask you, ladies and gentlemen, is there anything that shouts more loudly about the love of God than the cross of Calvary? The answer is no.

1 John 4:10

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

2 Tim 1:10

And which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

How did Jesus abolish death and restore immortality? He did it by dying on the cross. The cross is our new “tree of life.” Do you know what is interesting? How the word tree is used in the New Testament. There are two Greek words for tree—dendron and xulon. Dendron is the Greek word that refers to a living, growing trees like fruit trees. Xulon is the Greek word that simply describes timber in the form of staves and clubs and so on. In other words xulon is the word for dead wood, while dendron describes living trees. Now here’s the interesting thing about this. What word would you expect to find in passages that refer to the cross of Christ upon which He was hung? Well, we know that Jesus wasn’t placed on a growing, living tree so the word should consistently be xulon, right? Well, such is the case.

Acts 5:30

The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. (xulon)

Now, follow me. In the garden of Eden, what kind of tree was the tree of life? It was a fruit tree, right? So then, references to it in the New Testament should use the word dendron, the Greek word for living, growing trees. But, and here’s the interesting thing, every reference to the tree of life in the New Testament uses the word xulon instead of dendron, the word for dead timber (**Rev. 2:7; Rev. 22:2, 14, 19**). Yes, the cross is our tree of life. Now, here is the point of all this: if the tree of life in the garden of Eden demonstrated the love of God and the special relationship He had with man, what does our new tree of life demonstrate? It demonstrates exactly the same thing, only to an even greater degree. This tree of life cost God the suffering of His Son. This tree of life cost Jesus pain and agony, but upon it He bruised the head of Satan and paved the way for our entrance into heaven. God has again provided man with eternal life and in doing so demonstrated again His special love for and relationship with man.

3. God gave man a special home (Gen. 2:18-24).

As we observed earlier, on the sixth day of creation, God created man and placed him in the garden. Now make no mistake about it, everything that God created was good and it was announced as such in the creation account. However, when God made man, he did so in two stages. He made the male first and then paused. But man without woman was incomplete. God said, *"It is not good for man to be alone"* (2:18). Why is it not good for man to be alone, that is without the woman? It is because without the woman, man is incomplete, unfinished and unfulfilled. Man needs woman to be complete. Man needs woman to be finished. Man needs woman to be fulfilled and without her he is deficient and lonely. Yes, Adam had a place to stay without woman but that wasn't enough. He had a house, sort of speak, but he didn't have a home. It reminds me of the old Luther Vandross song entitled, "A House Is Not a Home." Listen to it.

A chair is still a chair, even when there's no one sittin' there
But a chair is not a house and a house is not a home
When there's no one there to hold you tight
And no one there you can kiss goodnight

Listen to me: Adam had a house, but without woman he didn't have a home and so he was incomplete. But God had a plan and in fact this was God's plan from the beginning, He just wasn't finished yet. How do I know. Because in the creation account, the records says so.

Gen 1:27

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

From the start God's plan was that mankind would consist of male and female. So woman wasn't an afterthought. Woman was not something that God needed to create in order to fix His mistake in the creation of man. God had in his mind exactly what He wanted in the creation of man and it consisted of two genders, a male and a female. Why didn't He just create both of them at the same time? We are not told, but one thing that was accomplished by creating them separately was the revealing to man how important woman is. And God continued to teach this lesson to man (vers. 19-20). By bringing all the animals before Adam, God was showing him that he needed something special in order to be complete and satisfied and fulfilled. In order to turn his house into a home, man needed a suitable partner. Listen to these other translations of verse 20.

Gen 2:20

So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. NKJV

Gen 2:20

He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him. NLT

Gen 2:20

And the man called names to all the cattle, and to fowl of the heavens, and to every beast of the field; and to man hath not been found an helper — as his counterpart. YLT

This, ladies and gentlemen, is what man really needed—a counterpart. Do you know what a counterpart is? “A duplicate; a thing that fits another perfectly; something that completes or compliments; one remarkably similar to another.” **Merriam-Webster Dictionary.**

Listen to me: the woman was created as man’s counterpart, his *other half* if you will, so that she could meet what he really needed. And what man really needed was a comparable being with which to share his life. You see man was created with the need of friendship and companionship; the need to love and to be loved; the need to understand and to be understood. Man, in other words was created as a social being whose real needs could only be meant by another being of the same kind. A being who could give him the intimate relationship and spiritual fellowship for which he was made. A being that could turn his house into a home, and God, because of his special relationship with man, provided what man needed and Adam immediately recognized it (**vers. 21-23**).

What we are reading about in Gen. 2, of course, is God introducing marriage. God, in creating the institution of marriage, was providing man with something that he desperately needed, i.e., a home.

So, man has a special relationship with God. Why? Because God is our Father and as such He has provided us with some special things. He has provided us with a special and unique spirit that has been created in His image. He has provided for us not just a physical place of abode here on earth, that is a house; He has providing us with all that we need to have a happy home. And most important of all, He has provided us with the hope of an eternal life in heaven. Yes man is special to God. He is our Father and He treats us in every way like His children.

II. Our Special Responsibility to God.

If God is our Father, and He is, that means that as children we have a special responsibility to God. What kind of children does God want us to be? Peter gives us the answer. God wants us to be obedient children. Listen to him:

1 Peter 1:14-16

As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." NKJV

A. First, we have a responsibility to avoid conforming to the world.

Listen: man is recidivistic by nature. How often does the ex-drunkard start drinking again? How often does the reformed thief start stealing again? And how often does a converted Christian go back to a world of sin? I'm afraid it happens altogether too often. But we don't have to experience a spiritual relapse back into sin. We don't have to conform to our old way of living. We can with determination and dedication make up in our minds that we will walk in the newness of life. After all we are new creatures, aren't we? Paul said so!

2 Cor 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

In Christ we aim at new targets and live by new tenets. In Christ we walk a new road and travel a new route. In Christ we move forward with new fortitude and move on with a new attitude. Why? Because we are new creatures in Christ where old things are passed away and all things become new. We used to be selfish, but now we are selfless. We used to be self-centered, but now we are self-denying. But still we are recidivist beings and must do all we can to avoid falling back into our old habits. What must we do to avoid fashioning ourselves according to our former lust? We must avoid former people, places and pastimes (**2 Cor. 6:14-18; Gen. 3:1-3**).

B. Second, we have a responsibility to live holy lives.

To be holy is to be sanctified or set apart and devoted to God. All true Christians are holy, for Isaiah once said that the way of Christ would be "the way of holiness." But now, there are two ways in which we are holy. There is positional holiness and then there is progressive holiness. We became holy positionally when we obeyed the gospel of Christ. This is something that God did for us the moment we came out of the waters of

baptism. When we obeyed the gospel we were moved positionally from outside of Christ to inside of Christ. We were moved from the darkness of the world into God's marvelous light. We were moved from the land of the lost to the country of Christianity and it all happened by God's sanctifying power. But now that we have been made holy by God, it is our responsibility to maintain that holiness by living holy lives (**2 Cor. 7:1; Rom. 6:20-22**). If we are the kind of obedient children that God wants us to be, then we are habitually holy. Every day we live holy. Everywhere we go we live holy. Everything we do, we do it with holiness. Peter said, "*...be ye holy in all manner of conversation.*"

Someone says, "but we are surrounded by sin." Yes, but our hearts and minds are set apart. People around you may cuss and curse, but you don't because you are set apart. People around you may dance, drink and be defiant, but you don't and you are not because you are set apart. People around you break the law and bend the rules, but you don't because you are set apart. People around you may partake in reveling and riotous living, but you do not because you have been set apart. You see as Christians it doesn't matter what is going on in this sinful world, we have been separated, set apart and sanctified and as children of God who sustain a special relationship with Him, our responsibility is to maintain that holiness. We must as Christians walk in the light (**1 Jn. 1:5-7**).

If light in this text refers to the perfect purity of God, then darkness refers to all that is morally polluted and impure. Anything that is sinful, morally or doctrinally, falls into the realm of darkness. Anything that is contrary to God's will or opposed to God's word falls into the realm of darkness. Anything that is ungodly, unholy, unrighteous or unclean falls into the realm of darkness. Every form of fornication and every type of transgression falls into the realm of darkness. Every look that is lustful and every brand of bad behavior falls into the realm of darkness and John says if we walk in darkness, we can have no fellowship with God. We may still be children of God but we have lost our fellowship with Him for God is light and in Him there is no darkness. So then, our responsibility is to avoid the darkness and walk in the light. To walk in the light is the opposite of walking in darkness. To walk in the light is to live a life that consists of habitual holiness and relentless righteousness. It is a life that is characterized by commitment and marked by morality. It is a life that regularly transcends the traps of the devil and overcomes the obstacles that he sets in our path. In short, walking in the light is to live a life that is directed towards God because God is light and He is our heavenly Father and we sustain a special responsibility towards Him as a result.

C. Third, we have a responsibility to honor our Father.

In all things we must give God the respect and the reverence that He deserves. We must honor God as any good son would his father (**Mal. 1:6-9**). Listen when we give God second best, we are not honoring God as our Father. When we are ashamed to announce the greatness of God to a skeptical and defiant society, we are not honoring God as our Father. When we put own will before God's will in any walk of life, we are not honoring God as our Father.

When we are at work when we are so supposed to be, but use the slightest excuse to skip worshipping God, we are not giving God honor.

When we show up on time to secular events, but show up late when it times to serve God, we are not giving God honor.

When we wear our best clothes to a wedding of a friend but appear before God in casual attire, we are not giving God honor.

Do you get the point in all this. Let's give God the honor that a good Father deserves. Let's always respect and reverence that He deserves by honoring Him in all things. After all, He is our Father and we have, not just a special relationship with Him, but we also have special responsibilities that we must meet.

Conclusion:

Aren't you glad to have such a wonder Father? God has shown in so many ways that He is always mindful of us. Let's give Him the same amount of thought time and consideration as we sojourned in this life.