

PART 2

# Mankind's dignity and value

*According to Humanism, mankind is the highest form of life. That is why humanistic organizations use so much money to save and help people. But according to Christianity, mankind does not receive its dignity or value from being the highest form of life. Rather it is having been created in the image of God that confers mankind's special status.*

**I**N GENESIS 9:6 IT SAYS "WHOMEVER SHEDS MAN'S BLOOD, BY MAN HIS blood shall be shed: For in the image of God He made man."

God said this to Noah. Apparently, before the flood, capital punishment was not allowed. God did not execute Cain after he had murdered Abel; instead, Cain was marked and had to live with the fact that everyone would know that he had killed his brother.

But after the flood, God made a covenant with Noah, which was somewhat different to the one with Adam. Before the flood, Man apparently was vegetarian and all animals were tame. Now it became permissible for Man to kill and eat animals, the animals turned wild, and capital punishment was introduced and enforced. Murder or killing Man was looked upon as a capital offence because Man was created in the image of God, but killing animals was allowed and not a capital offence. There is a major difference between killing a human being and an animal. Man being in the image of God gives him dignity and value above all other creatures. Man alone has this special role and relationship with God. ☐

# The man and the woman together are the image of God

*In Genesis 1:27 it says that God made mankind, man and woman, in His own image. Every man and woman is a reflection of God and therefore the image of God. But a major role of being the image of God is to reproduce and make God's future children, which is only possible when the man and woman unite.*

**H**AVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY GOD CREATED EVE IN A DIFFERENT way to the man? When God created Adam, he formed him from the dust of the ground. God could have done the same with Eve, but He didn't. She was made from a part of the man, from one of Adam's ribs (Genesis 2:22).

There is a reason why the creation of Eve is explained this way in Genesis chapter 2. It shows that the wife is a part of the husband and that together they are one unit in the image and likeness of God. Together they were to take care of and rule over God's creation and reproduce (Genesis 1:28). The man was not complete without the woman, nor the woman without the man.

This explains why marriage is holy, because it is uniting of the man and the woman together in order to bring into the world future sons and daughters of God. This is something the angels could not do; they cannot reproduce.

God created Adam directly, but now the ability and indeed responsibility to produce new humans rests with men and women. It's up to us to reproduce and to care for and train and teach His future children. This is a major responsibility for the husband and wife.

In Genesis 2 it says that God made Adam a helper in his wife Eve. Some people think the word "helper" simply means "assistant", such as washing his clothes, cooking his food, etc. But the ancient understanding of the Hebrew word for "helper" is much more than this. As an example, the word was also used in a military context: When Abraham fought to free his nephew Lot, who had been taken captive, he was Lot's "helper". Abraham's relevant characteristic was a display of loyalty—he was even willing to fight for his nephew. So the word for "helper" may be understood to mean someone who is loyal and serving, even humble and meek in demeanour like Abraham, but also strong, outspoken and even willing to defend, protect and "fight". In the case of Eve, against her husband's enemies. □

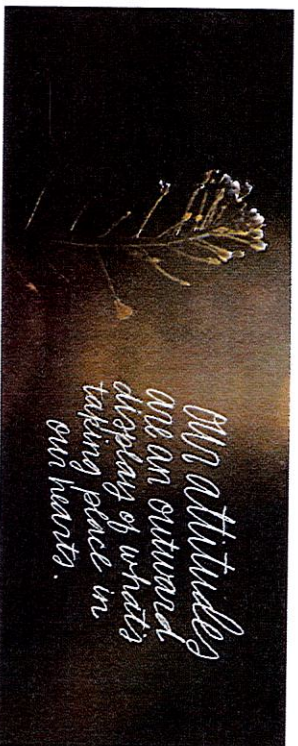




# Man is the head of the woman

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 11:3 "Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man; and the head of Christ is God."

ON EVERY TEAM THERE MUST BE ONE WHO HAS OR TAKES responsibility for what the team does. This is also true in a marriage. But this verse says more than that each mate has his or her responsibility. The Greek word "kephale" can be translated "head" or "source". Even in English we can say the "head of the Nile", meaning the starting point or source of the river. With this understanding of the Greek word for "head," Paul is saying that the source of the man is his Creator Jesus Christ. And the source of woman is man, because the woman came out of the man. And the



source of Jesus Christ is God the Father, since Jesus came out of the Father (John 8:42).

Notice Paul refers to the creation account in 1 Corinthians 11:8: "For man is not from woman, but woman from man". It's true that the woman was created second and for the sake of the man's aloneness (Genesis 2:18). However, it's also true that neither man nor woman is independent of the other, for as woman came from man, so men are born of women and everything comes from God (1 Corinthians 11-12).

In the marriage the man and the woman are to submit and serve one another as Christ served the church (Ephesians 5:21-33). The man and the woman stand equal before the face of God, but with different important roles in the marriage. The man has been assigned the role of responsibility in the marriage team. The woman is said to be the glory of the man in 1 Corinthians 11:7, while Jesus Christ is the glory of the Father (Hebrews 1:3). He is the brightness (effulgence, radiation) of God's glory. Therefore, the woman is the outpouring/ brightness/ glory of the man. The woman came out of the man, and one of her roles in the marriage team is to be the glory of her husband, as Jesus Christ is the glory of the Father. □



Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded forth and came from (Greek: came out of) God: nor have I come of myself, but he sent me."

John 8:42



# The development of the character of God

*"God is love," (Greek "agape") John writes in 1 John 4:8. This love is God's main quality of His character and describes His relationship to everyone and everything that He has created.*

**G**OD DESIRES TO GIVE US HIS LOVE AND CHARACTER THROUGH the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will supplement our character with God's. Galatians 5:22 describes the fruit of the Holy Spirit which God desires to give to you. *"The fruit of the Spirit is love (agape), joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith (faithfulness), gentleness and self-control."* Notice that it says *"fruit"* and not *"fruits"*. This is correctly translated from the Greek which seems to imply that the fruit of God's Holy Spirit is love (agape) and the following words describe this love.

The word "love" has lost its meaning today, with most people thinking it describes sexual love or always being nice. In Greek there are four words for the different aspects of love: *Eros*, describing physical, sexual love; *philo*, describing love to a limited group of people, from which we derive the meaning "brotherly love"; and *storge*, describing natural love, as the love of a woman for her child. But it is the fourth word, *agape*, that Paul uses in Galatians.

When the Jews produced the Septuagint translation from the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek around 250 BC, they

used *agape* to describe God's love, and this practice continued in the Greek New Testament. The best definition for *agape* is unconditional love and doing what is best for the other person in the long run. It is this *agape* love, God's love, we are to show others, not our own human love.

Christians are on a character development program. We are to develop God's character by letting God's Holy Spirit supplement our character. God's Holy Spirit transforms and renews our mind (Romans 12:2) so that we can understand what is right and discern the will of God. God is forming our character to be his image, like a potter forms clay (Isaiah 64:8).

The Holy Spirit helps us to manage, forgive and grow from our experiences and trials in life. We are to become more and more like God in character in how we act and think. Being His image, we reflect God's love to others; this is how others can experience the love of God. The love we are to show to others is not our love, but the love of God we receive through the Holy Spirit.

It is when we have the Holy Spirit and let it supplement and change our character that we become the complete image of God. ☐

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS  
*Love, Joy, Peace,*  
LONGSUFFERING,  
*Gentleness, Goodness, Faith,*  
Meekness, *Temperance;*  
AGAINST SUCH THERE IS NO LAW.  
GALATIANS 5:22-23



# The master potter

*"O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay, and you the potter, we are the work of your hand."*

**G**OD IS THE MASTER POTTER AND WE ARE THE CLAY. THE CLAY itself is of little value, but the finished vessel may be of great use and value. The potter has to form the clay with his own hands, and burn it in the furnace at the right heat for the right length of time. It requires time for the potter to form and burn the clay object to make the finished product.

The same is the case with God making us into His image. It requires time, life experiences and trials to harden us and make the finished product. He forms us into his image by letting the Holy Spirit bear fruit in our lives, transforming our character. The major fruit of the Holy Spirit is love (*agape*), which is the major characteristic of God's nature (1 John 4:8).

God is a relational being and love (*agape*) defines His relationship with all life in the Universe. Mankind, being the image of God, is also a relational being. Relationships are important to us. The longest research project ever conducted at Harvard University was a quest to find out what true success in life is and what is important to us. They concluded that it is not wealth, status or profession, but good personal relationships.

It is through relationships that our personality and character can develop and mature. It is through our relationship with God that He can form His image in us. He is the master potter

forming us with the help of His Holy Spirit and through our experiences and trials in life. By virtue of being His image others should experience God's love through us. As God's image, we are to be a reflection of His character and love. Therefore, we need to give God access to our hearts and minds, to form and change us so that we can have good, healthy and positive relationships with others, where our reactions are predictable. It is being loving, predictable and reliable that creates a safe environment in our relationships.

Good personal relationships are characterized by love (*agape*), openness, honesty and being willing to be vulnerable. Jesus was an example of all of these qualities in His relationship with mankind. He showed us how to be the image of God. Jesus showed His vulnerability and human weakness through His suffering and brutal crucifixion. He became weak for us.

We sometimes avoid close relationships, but then we are missing an important purpose in life. We are created to be relational like God is, and have a close relationship both with God and our fellow human beings. This is an important part of our purpose for being and we must invest time in communion with God and others to develop a good relationship. It takes time and effort to develop and maintain good personal relationships. The same is true in regard to our relationship with God. It takes time and experience to develop in the image of God.

No one can be the image of God in complete solitude; it is in our relations with others that we function as the image of God.



This is why other people are so important in our lives. The image of God should be a reflection of His love, joy and hope for mankind. □