



by Virginia Arnold

But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.

~ I Thessalonians 5:21-22

Restoring God's Image

- A. In Genesis we get insight into the purposes that God had for man before sin entered the world.
 - 1. God created man **in His similitude** to bear His perfect image for His glory. He called that creation good.
 - a. Made man with intelligence and the ability to rule – characteristics unique to man (Genesis 2:20).

Then God said, "Let Us make man in our image and let them rule over . . . every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

~ Genesis 1:26
 - b. Made man to communicate with his Maker (Genesis 2:16; 3:8).
 - c. Made man with the capacity to choose (Genesis 3:6).

2. God created male and female **to subdue** (have dominion over) His creation.
 - a. Made man to work six days and rest the seventh (Exodus 31:16-17).

The LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

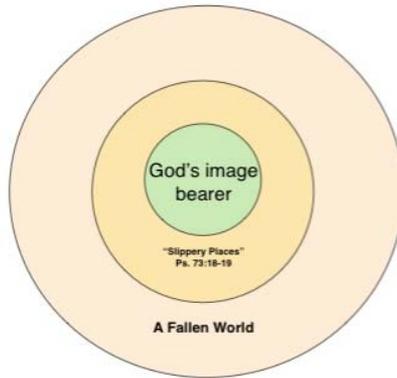
~ Genesis 2:15

- b. Made male and female to be fruitful, multiply, and rear offspring that would bear God's image (Genesis 1:27).
3. God created man, the creature, **to submit** to His creator
 - a. Made man to submit in His dominion duties to His Sovereign creator
 - b. Made man to submit to God's prohibitions – even in a perfect creation.

From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.

~ Genesis 2:17

- B. When God's image in man was distorted by the fall God provided the means for restoring that image.
 1. God would give sinful man **the Living Word** to redeem him from the fall and reconcile him to a holy God (Genesis 3:15; John 1:1-3).
 2. God would give sinful man **the written Word** to reveal Himself and His purposes so that man could be conformed to His image (John 20:31, I John 5:13, Romans 12:2, II Corinthians 3:18).



- C. In Scripture God reveals the purposes for His law.
1. Protection: To give man protection in a fallen world (Romans 2:14-15).
 2. Justification: To serve as a schoolmaster (tutor) to bring men to Christ (Galatians 3:24-27).
 3. Sanctification: To serve as a mirror to display man's failings in the light of God's perfection (II Corinthians 3:18).
 4. Demonstration: to display to man God's infinite love for His people (Deuteronomy 7:6-8, Deuteronomy 14:2, I Peter 2:9-10).
 5. Glorification: To fulfill God's purpose – that His people would ultimately be made holy and blameless and His name would be glorified (Ephesians 1:3-6).
- D. In both the Old and New Testament we observe God warning His people of the dangers of sin while reassuring them of His love and purpose for them.
1. The Israelites were warned as they received the law (Exodus 19:3-6), and as they conquered enemy nations (Deuteronomy 7).
 2. Man's response to God's warnings and declaration of love is often rejection.
 - a. Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1-6)
 - b. Nation of Israel (Judges 1:28; 2:1)
 - c. Abraham and Lot – two men but only one righteous vision (Genesis 13:10-17).

Restoring God's Image in our Children by Training Their Minds and Wills

- A. By **training their minds** to think God's thoughts as they are exposed to books and media.
1. **Develop** a love for God-honoring books in your children (Colossians 3:1-3, Philippians 4:8).
 - a. Read early and often to your children until they love being read to and then love to read for themselves.
 - b. Translate the stories you read through the filter of God's Word.
 2. **Determine** the kinds of books you will use in the process of restoring the image of God in your child.
 - a. You can carefully choose from different categories of books: Bible storybooks, missionary stories, character building books, and secular books (Hebrews 5:12-14).
 - b. Sources: Recommended book and media lists on MCBC website, BJU Press website, our church's LMPG library and bookstore.
 3. **Discern** the content of books (DVD's, CD's) as being godly/ungodly – profitable/ unprofitable.
 4. Ask yourself questions about the content of books and media.

- Does it contain wicked texts, philosophies, or illustrations? (Psalm 101:3)
- If there is evil in the story (Ex. a villain) is it disdained? Is the evil excessive? (Isaiah 5:20)
- Does it make sin look appealing or funny or encourage tolerance of sin?
- Does it glamorize or make idols of ungodly people?
- Does it justify doing things that are morally wrong?
- Does it teach filthy words and? Does it plant seeds of temptation and discontent?
- Are the heroes in the story honorable?
- Does the story's resolution reward good and punish evil? Does it honor wisdom and denounce foolishness?
- Does it engender doubts about God and His Word?
- Does it mock sin and make righteous people or people in authority look ridiculous?

5. Train your children to think God's thoughts as they are exposed to electronic media (TV, movies, video games, internet). These resources should be subjected to the same Biblical criteria as books (Philippians 4:8, I Thessalonians 5:21-22, Matthew 5:8). Additional consideration must be given to the media content in the areas of worldly music, violence, and sensual imagery.

*Set your **affection** on things above, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:2, KJV).*

. . . I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart. I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not fasten its grip on me. A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will know no evil (Psalm 101:2-4).

- a. Evaluate the **quality of the content**. Will it contribute to the restoration of God's image in my life and the lives of my children?
- b. Evaluate the **quantity** of the exposure and the impact that extensive media exposure can have on my family. Even good movies can steal our time, replace our priorities, and enslave our affections.
 - 1) Has media (movies, TV, video games, internet surfing, facebook) replaced more important things in our lives: time in the Scriptures and prayer, time interacting with family and others, ministry in our church, time pursuing more profitable endeavors like reading, outreach, education, music, physical fitness? Has media consumed our affections?
 - 2) Have other Biblical priorities become dull in our affections in comparison to our involvement with electronic media?

- B. By **training their will** according to God's commands: respect for authority, a polite and selfless response toward others, and a willingness to work.
1. By teaching them to **submit and give honor (due weight) and respect to the authorities in their lives**: their parents (Exodus 20:12), their elders (Leviticus 19:32), government officials (Romans 13:1), school officials (Colossians 3:22, Titus 2:9), church leaders (Hebrews 13:17).
 - a. Teach them to make gracious requests – not demands – of those in authority over them (Proverbs 15:23; 16:23; 25:11).
 - b. Make them conscious of the biblical spirit of servitude. (Philippians 2:4-7)
 2. By training them to **be polite and gracious with all people** – never arrogant or condescending. Train them to use appropriate manners and courteous words (Ex. thank you, please, I'm sorry, excuse me) in conversations, social interaction, and as guests in other people's homes (Philippians 2:3).
 3. By teaching them to **work and endure hardness** (Exodus 20:9, Proverbs 14:23, Ecclesiastes 9:10, Ephesians 4:28, II Thessalonians 3:12).
 - a. From the time they are infants they must learn the necessity and priority of work.
 - b. The time for work excludes the time for play.
 - c. "*Taking dominion*" or "*subduing*" (Genesis 1:28) necessitates a daily schedule. A schedule places priorities on our tasks and facilitates our work with others.
 - d. Teach your boys to endure pressure and discomfort in their work: finish the job on time, go the extra mile, endure disappointment and pain with self control, work cheerfully. Teach them to do yard work and heavy outside work with diligence and pride.

- e. Teach your daughters to work with diligence in the home. Teach them the skills of cooking, cleaning, and home improvement that will make them good keepers at home. Teach them to be thrifty, persevering, content, and happy in their God-given role.
- f. Use athletics to serve as a tool to teach hard work, endurance, and self-control (1 Timothy 4:8)
 - 1) Benefits of athletics – children can learn discipline, self-control, teamwork, concentration, endurance, stamina, initiative. They can learn to win with humility and lose with dignity. Exercise of the body promotes good health, bodily strength, confidence, and recreation.
 - 2) Dangers of athletics – Competitive sports can also fuel arrogance, pride, anger, wrong priorities, the idolizing of ungodly sport heroes, excessive preoccupation and loss of profitable time, an excessive spirit of competition, and lack of self control

Conclusion

- Parental goals for children should be aligned with God's original purposes for mankind: to bear God's image for His glory while submitting their wills in obedience to His commands
- Every effort should be given to seeing God's image restored in our children beginning with their justification and ending with their sanctification. Pray that God will do the work in their hearts
- God's commands are His expression of love for us and serve for our good and His eternal glory.
- Are you in the process of restoring the image?

Resources

Hughes, Kent and Barbara. *Disciplines of A Godly Family* (Chapter 9, "Manners").

Martin, Albert. *How Not to Foul Up the Training of Your Children* (MP3). 40 instructive messages on numerous aspects of child rearing.

Tripp, Tedd and Margy. *Instructing a Child's Heart*
List of Recommended Children's Books by Stephanie Heimann that can be downloaded from our website.

List of Recommended Videos. A very limited list that can be downloaded from our website.

Chanski, Mark. *Womanly Dominion*. A very comprehensive, Biblical presentation of God's role for woman. It includes four chapters on childrearing

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