

7. OUR NEED FOR SIGNIFICANCE OR WORTH

“The individual person needs to have a sense of his/her own value and significance.” ALFRED ADLER

Perhaps nothing can be more psychologically fatal to an individual than losing his/her sense of personal worth and value. Every person needs to feel significant. But in today’s society, technology increasingly pushes us into an impersonal world of lost identity.

It seems that all of us experience feelings of inferiority and dependency from earliest infancy on as we seek to establish a sense of personal worth. A problem with self – image can cause us to anticipate rejection from others, to exhibit hostility, arrogance or other unacceptable behavior.

Knowing we are made in the image of God provides a solid foundation for the whole doctrine of human rights and the sacredness of human life. Jesus constantly affirmed the dignity and worth of the disrespected and neglected members of his first-century society – women, children, lepers, Gentiles etc.

However, if we are merely collections of molecules in a meaningless cosmos, why should we have any inherent or essential rights? As political scientist John H. Hallowell put it: “Having lost sight of the fact that God created all men in his image...the modern world has no basis for believing that all men are equal. We are left without any rational means of defending the belief of individual equality.”

Are people merely products of nature along with birds, bears and butterflies? Are we made in the image of God? If not, what’s the difference between a child and a chicken? God created persons to be loved and things to be used. Much of the abuse and violence in today’s society, is caused by reversing these priorities. People are being viewed as disposable commodities to be used for selfish gratification. As Mother Teresa once asked, “If everyone could see the image of God in his/her neighbor, do you think we would still need tanks and generals?”

Made in God's image, no wonder we feel like orphans without Him. Orphans can feel terribly lost and lonely until they find a parent. Our world today is filled with spiritual orphans who, because they cannot endure being alone, turn to idols and addictions – cruel masters and synthetic substitutes.

And all the while, our true Father waits for us with open arms. And when we find our hearts' true home in Him, life takes on a new meaning. More than a social insurance number or a cog in a corporate wheel, we discover new value, without depending on a successful career, an impressive salary, skin color or family background etc.

God says to each one of us, *“You were made in my image and you are infinitely precious in my sight. By a free act of your will you can become a child of the Sovereign King and Creator of the universe.”*

