

#1 THE DOCTRINE OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

30 PRACTICAL DOCTRINES YOU NEED TO KNOW | DR. RANDY WHITE

WHO YOU ARE AS A PERSON

- Genesis 1:26-31 is the bedrock for understanding personal identity.
 - Man was created in the **image** and the **likeness** of God.
 - The Hebrew word for **image** is most often used in terms of idols, and is a physical representation of something else (see 1 Sam. 6:5).
 - Some attempt has been made to define the difference between image and likeness, but they appear to be interchangeable.
 - The words imply both *physical likeness* and *spiritual qualities* – compare Genesis 5:1 and 5:3.
 - While many would push back on man being in God's *physical* image, there is nothing in the word or its usage that prohibits such.
 - Is Donald Duck this the image of a man or a duck? If I showed a picture of Donald Duck and asked, "What is this?" what would you say? In reality, it is neither man nor duck. Is man *in the image and likeness of God* or is he not?
 - I believe that the reason that idols were prohibited (Ex. 20:4) is because *man is the image* of God and nothing else will substitute.
 - Man was created with **dominion** over all the created order.
 - Every effort to reduce man's role to be equal with other aspects of the created order is an offense to God and man.
 - Man was created **male and female** (Gen. 1:27) and to **be fruitful and multiply** (v. 28).
- Mankind *looks like God*, has *authority* like God, and also has a *spirit* like God.
 - God created man, **and man became a living soul** (Gen. 2:7).
 - You do not have a full understanding of yourself if you do not understand the two fundamental differences between man and animal: Man alone is in God's image, and man alone has a soul.
- Mankind was prohibited from eating of the tree of the **knowledge of good and evil** (Gen. 2:17) with the punishment of *certain death*.
 - When Adam ate of this tree, the process of death began, and God delivered an unforeseen *curse* on man, woman, the serpent, and the earth. This curse affects life on earth to this day.
 - One of the biggest effects of Adam's sin is a *separation from God*.

- At the first sin, man *did not* lose the *image* nor *likeness* of God, he lost the *fellowship* with God.
- Common doctrinal teaching is that man received a "sin nature" when Adam sinned. However, there is nothing in the Bible that tells us that our *nature* is any different than when Adam was in the Garden.
 - We lost *the tree of life* and thus will die.
 - We experienced the "joy" of sin and the "sting" of sin and began to live with *conscience* (the ability to use the scientific method for behavioral choices).
 - The idea of a *sin nature* comes from Calvinistic "Total Depravity" teaching.

WHO YOU ARE AS A CHRISTIAN

- If you are a Christian, you are "in Christ," and all your personal flaws are hidden in Him.
- Being in Christ, you are **complete in Christ** and should avoid **philosophy and vain deceit** which teaches otherwise (Col. 2:8-10).
- Your *completeness* does not come from relationships, possessions, achievements, knowledge, sacrifice, or service. It comes in Christ!

WHO YOU ARE AS A NON-CHRISTIAN

- If you are not a believer, you are *created in God's image* but *separated from God* which makes you *long for completion*.
- While life can be rich and full, it cannot be complete because it will always have separation from the One in whose image you were made.

FALSE RELIGIOUS AND PSEUDO-RELIGIOUS IDEAS OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

- The idea that you are part of the *animal kingdom*.
- The idea that you are a *sinner* rather than a *person who sins*.
- The idea that you are a *servant to creation*.
- The idea that you can take *any path* to reconnect with your Maker.
- The idea that you are so *depraved* that you cannot be saved.