

ONE LARGE GROUP

PRAYER:

PURPOSE: Provide an overview of what the Bible says about: God, man, marriage, and parenting

ASSUMPTIONS:

- God exists & He is sovereign (He is alive & active)
- God’s Word is truth (God revealed the Bible for our benefit & guidance)
- The Bible is all we need to understand our world, and live to please god. This allows us to help our families, neighbors, and country

THEME: “Two Paths”

- Every day we decide to either obey God or disobey (honor God or self?)
- There are consequences to each path

LESSON 10 REVIEW:

- General objective of godly training: love God & love people
- How to use the Bible to teach children about sex (lives of David & Joesph)

OBJECTIVES OF LESSON 11:

- Show God’s imprint on the family structure
- Reinforce the importance of family
- Demonstrate the roles of each member of the family

Note: The Truth Project is a 13-hour Christian worldview DVD series produced by Focus on the Family. It shows that God’s Word is truth and that the Bible practically impacts every area of life. Hour #7 (Sociology) pertains mainly to the family. The family structure is not arbitrary, but was designed by God to reflect the relationship existing in the Trinity for all of eternity. This DVD reinforces many of the themes covered during the prior ten weeks. Most of the participants are strongly impacted by this DVD.

SMALL GROUPS:

Prayer:

DVD Discussion:

Initiate discussion of the DVD by asking the questions suggested by FOF.

The Following Materials Were Taken From The Truth Project Website (outline, themes, questions).

I. Introduction - The God of Order

- A. Ps 19 - “The heavens declare the glory of God...”.
- B. Job 12 - “But ask the animals, and they will teach you...”.
- C. Listening to a chicken egg - The exquisite design and intricacy seen in a chicken egg.
- D. Scriptural emphasis of order - Job 25:1, 1 Cor 14:33, Ja 3:16.

II. Social Order - The Divine Imprint

- A. “It is not good” - Gen 2:18 - Why was it “not good” for man to be alone?
- B. Triune structure stamped upon Social Order
 - 1. God - Father, Son, Holy Spirit.
 - 2. Family - Husband, Wife, Children.
 - 3. Church - Christ, Leaders, Flock.
 - 4. Our World - Three realms - Physical, Spiritual, and Social.
- C. Relationships, Roles, Authority, Submission and Unity within social spheres.

III. Importance of Relationships

- A. What happened at the fall? - Relationships were severed and damaged - between God & man, man & man, and man & creation.
- B. Aloneness - “It is not good for man to be alone” - Aloneness is contrary to God’s nature; in all eternity, there had never been aloneness before.
- C. God’s design of social institutions and social laws.
- D. Intimate Three - God’s design for unity, intimacy, oneness - Family, Church, God and Man.

IV. Family & Church

- A. Eph 5 - Roles and relationships of members in these spheres – Authority, Submission, Oneness.
- B. Love and Respect between husband and wife.
- C. Honor between children and parents, flock and church leaders.

V. Conclusion - Pathologies of the Family.

- A. Divorce - Mal 2:16 - “I hate divorce...”.
- B. Lack of respect - 1 Pe 3:7 - “...so that nothing will hinder your prayers...”.

Themes

We begin where we left off in Tour 5: with the voice of nature making loud and unmistakable statements about the nature and character of God. “Ask the animals, and they will teach you,” says Job, “and the birds of the air, and they will tell you” (Job 12:7-8). In this case, order is one of the overwhelming messages with which creation bombards us. From the atom to the solar system, from photosynthesis to the cleansing tides, from the human body to the design of a chicken egg - everywhere we look we see obvious indications of purposeful design in the things God has made. This, of course, is a serious problem for those who argue that the universe is the product of “random, mindless forces.”

The same element of order is apparent in the social systems God has instituted. Dr. Tackett lays out six that he sees in Scripture: family, labor, church, state, community, and the relationship between man and his Maker. But the order we detect in this area is not simply an expression of the Lord’s creative design. Instead, it flows out of His very nature. It is a reflection of who He is. As Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Triune God embodies in Himself the ultimate resolution of the old philosophical problem of “the one and the many.” He exemplifies diversity within unity and the answer to why it is “not good for man to be alone” is bound up in the Triune Essence. Relationship, union, communion, intimacy, fellowship, love, and community - these things have existed from all eternity within the economy of the Godhead. Accordingly, they serve as the basis for the smooth and ordered functioning of creation. It is for this very reason, Dr. Tackett argues, that basic social institutions such as marriage, family, and church have come under such heavy attack in our day: just as the world, the flesh, and the devil hate the Creator with a fervent and undying hatred, so they inevitably stand opposed to the social order that bears the imprint of His divine nature.

As this tour unfolds, the principles of order and relationship will be examined specifically as we find them manifested in three of the social systems designed by God: the family, the church, and the union between God and man (“The intimate Three”). During the course of this discussion, Dr. Tackett will explain how the threefold Trinitarian pattern is reflected in and fundamental to the internal functioning of each of these spheres. Special attention will be given to the subject of the family and some of the pathologies associated with disregard for the divine plan in this crucial area of human life.

Points to Watch For

Statements from video interviewees poignantly highlight the pain, confusion, and deep emotional reactions connected with almost any examination of family life and family-related issues. Similar emotions are almost certain to arise during group discussion. The video segments also present a broad range of popular definitions of “family,” a subject that has the potential to stir up equally diversified reactions from group participants. In addition, Dr. Tackett and his students fearlessly broach the often troublesome topic of authority and submission within the context of marriage, the church, and other aspects of God’s social design.

1. What did they see on the tour? Here are some of the key items:

- * The heavens, the skies, the animals, the birds, the earth, the fish are all declaring and teaching us about the glory of God and the work of His hands;
- * Listening to a chicken egg;
- * God is a God of order, not disorder;
- * The problem of order, order baffles the blind;
- * Physical systems and social systems are both designed by God;
- * The Divine Pause: “It is not good”, pragmatic/ethical?: Triune nature of God;
- * The Divine image stamped upon social order;
- * It’s all about relationships; one = aloneness; two = relationship and intimacy; three = community and fellowship; aloneness is contrary to God’s nature;
- * The six social systems: family, labor, church, state, community, relationship man & God
- * The intimate three;
- * Authority, submission and unity within the Trinity;
- * Authority, submission and unity within the family and church;
- * Responsibilities of husbands and wives, love and respect;
- * The cultural attack upon the family;
- * The serious view God has of breaking His design.

2. What point was Dr. Tackett making with the chicken egg?

God’s creation is not only one filled with marvel, but delicate order, consisting of many “systems”. The chicken egg can be seen as one of those incredible “systems”, each of which contains precise elements that work together to fulfill the overall purpose of the system. So, too, will we find the social systems that God has created.

3. What did Dr. Tackett call the “Divine Pause”? Why?

This was the “pause” in which God made the statement that it was not good for man to be alone. He then finished the creation by making Eve for Adam.

4. In Genesis 2:18, God declares that “it is not good for man to be alone.” What does Dr. Tackett mean when he says that this is an ethical rather than a qualitative statement? How does this assertion become important to our entire discussion of the social order?

Aloneness is bad in an ethical sense because it contradicts the nature of God, who is three-in-one: God Himself exists in community and relationship; man, who is made in His image, is supposed to do the same. This concept forms the basis of a true, God-centered understanding of the social sphere. To go against God’s social design is to deny His character.

5. What do theologians and philosophers mean when they talk about the “Natural Law?”

The term “Natural Law” refers to an unwritten ethical and moral law which is built into creation and human nature. In effect, this “law” is the stamp or imprint of God’s essential nature or character upon the things He has made (Romans 1:20). The important point to make in this connection is that social institutions such as marriage and the family are not just a matter of cultural convention. Instead, their shape, form, and function are determined by the “Natural Law” which is rooted in the Trinitarian nature of God.

6. Dr. Tackett claims to see “threes” wherever he looks in creation or in the human social order. How is this “Trinitarian” pattern evident in the structure and relationships of family, church, and the union between God and man?

The Father-Son-Spirit is revealed in the family as “husband-wife-child:” in the church as “Christ-leaders-flock:” and in the God-man relationship as “Abba-Lord-man who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit.” In addition, similar configurations of authority, submission, nurture, and honor are manifested in each of these spheres: for example, Christ loves the church as a man loves his wife; the wife submits to her husband as the church submits to its Lord; children honor their parents as Christians honor their appointed leaders; and so on.

7. In Malachi 2:16, God says that He “hates divorce.” Why does Dr. Tackett maintain that this is not simply a practical or pragmatic statement? What light does the principle contained in this verse cast on all of the pathologies associated with the family? With human life as a whole?

Just as the unity, communion, love, and intimacy of marriage are rooted organically in the essence and character of God Himself, so the violent breaking of this bond in divorce is something more than an unfortunate blip in the lives of two individuals - it is an offense against the divine nature and the foundations upon which the entire creation is built. It is a reminder of the fact that “sin” can be defined very basically as a breakdown in relationships, whether between God and man, man and wife, or man and his neighbor.

8. Discuss some practical examples of the intensity of the Cosmic Battle (truth vs. lie) as it is being played out in the realm of the social order in our day. How are people in contemporary society manifesting their unwillingness to acknowledge the obvious and look upon the face of God in this area? What should our response be to this situation?

This can be an opportunity to review some of the family-related pathologies discussed by Dr. Tackett during the course of this lesson: abdication of male responsibility, radical feminism, “rights of the child,” pornography, abuse, homosexuality, and the redefinition of the family. Our response, like God’s should be one of grief, compassion, and renewed willingness to reach out with the healing message of God’s plan for the social order.