

The Doctrine of Interaction
Lesson 15

The Issue: Either temporal conditions (all of them) are relative to, and under the power of, God and Eternal Reality --or they are not. Human appraisal cannot be allowed to be totally operational when interacting with the fields of matter, energy and information. For good reason: Human appraisal leaves too much out.

Underlying Assumptions as Expressed in Everyday Terms:

- 1) Human intelligence was created by God; and therefore it can be used to evaluate everything and should be used to evaluate everything.
- 2) Many terms from the Bible, such as sin, atonement, and redemption, are outdated. We now know much more about the psychology of such things and must use more neutral language so as not to appear judgmental.
- 3) We live in a complicated society. It is irresponsible to think that societal and relationship problems can be “fixed” by one person or one way of thinking.

The Generalization: (in continuation of the previous lesson) A believer must depend in an overt – even drastic – way upon incommensurables, in his or her interaction with matter, energy and information.

The Scripture Passage: Psalm 25:16 – 21

The Lesson: In this passage we see A REVEALED WAY OF THINKING. This way of thinking appears in the following number of principles:

1) RELATION TO GOD IS EFFICACIOUS IN THE WORLD OF MATTER AND ENERGY.

- a) “Turn to me,” “be gracious to me” v.16
- b) “Free me from my anguish” v.17
- c) The leverage is in God and NOT in the quantifiable
- d) Therefore we seek a way of thinking that shifts the leverage away from matter and energy to the eternal.

2) **GOD AND REVELATION MAKE MATERIAL REALITY RELATIVE**

- a) “Look upon my affliction and distress” v.18
- b) All temporal conditions are seen in relativity to the eternal absolutes.
- c) The temporal conditions are diminished in influence.
- d) Absolute reality, in addition, diminishes the supposed power and explanatory ability of quantification.

3) **HUMAN PERSONAL BEHAVIOR IS NOT JUDGED SOCIOLOGICALLY, CULTURALLY NOR HISTORICALLY BUT BY ABSOLUTES**

- a) “Take away my sin” v.18
- b) The category of “sin” must not be removed from history, nor as the critical analysis of behavior (such a removal would be what postmodernism, for instance, would advocate.)
- c) Man is not capable of removing the problem. Unless the problem is correctly understood, then there can be no solution.
- d) Without sin as a proper category of human thought all analysis, understanding and contemplation of behavior are dangerously flawed!
- e) He who does not acknowledge sin makes himself vulnerable to the danger of succumbing to it unknowingly. So the problem is not just with what human appraisal offers—but as much, with what it leaves out!

4) **THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF GOD IS INTEGRAL TO HUMAN CIRCUMSTANCE**

- a) “See how” - “ my enemies have increased” – “how fiercely they hate me” v.19
- b) This psalm reminds us that human appraisal is not the only one operational.
- c) Beyond human appraisal, a superior way of thinking depends on the operational consciousness of God.
- d) This forces a realization. The human mind is inherently and undeniably limited, but the mind of God is the supreme point of reference.

e) We and our situations become issues or points of focus in the mind of God, just as the situation of David was of great importance to Him.

f) Our minds can with confidence and peace defer their concerns to the consciousness of God! We do not have to worry, obsess nor fixate.

5) **ANTICIPATION OF NON-NATURAL INTERVENTION**

a) “Guard my life” – “rescue me” – “let me not be put to shame” v.20

b) The personal circumstances of an individual are subject to specific kind of constraints--constraints not of the material world of matter and energy.

c) These constraints in their force, power and influence are of an incommensurable nature: They can't be measured or assessed by earthly means. However, such incommensurability with the material does not empty the non-natural of power-- unless it happens in our thinking.

d) We should look for help from the transcendent, all-powerful Source of the modification of circumstance.

6) **FINALIZATION OF THINKING**

a) “I take refuge in You” v.20, “my hope is in you” v.21

b) Once thinking is finalized by seeking refuge in a God's safety, then there is no retreat. By an act of personal will, we withdraw to the unseen reality.

c) It is not just that we believe that the unseen is there-- it *is* literally there.

d) With this unseen reality there is a protection that is as real as the threat of the danger.

e) There is a way of thinking that makes peculiar pronouncements. This way of thinking acknowledges and declares God and His power as parts of reality.

f) On the other hand, there are some ways of thinking that vacate the reality, character and power of God from a situation. But we do not think in that way. Our way of thinking does not and cannot make God real. What it does do is to FINALIZE our confidence in Him.

7) **THE MENTAL CEILING**

a) “May integrity and uprightness protect me” v.21

- b) We have a choice as to where we put a kind of mental ceiling.
- c) We have to decide what to reach for.
- d) This way of thinking draws lines, makes distinctions, and puts limits.
- e) There is a difference between “integrity” and “uprightness,” and corruption.
- f) Integrity and uprightness are not social standards.
- g) There are three types of values. The first is consensus values, which are arrived at by general agreement in the society and then institutionalized.
- h) Contended values, a second type, are one’s own values that are helped into existence by such practices as “values clarification” in public schools.
- i) But in contrast to these two, integrity and uprightness are revealed and believed-- and then they are forced on the external world by a believer.

Questions for Discussion

- 1) Recall the major events in the life of David. To what extent was his relationship with God efficacious in the events of his life? Can you think of an instance in his life when his material circumstances reflected a separation from God?
- 2) Explain in your own words: “Absolute reality diminishes the supposed power and explanatory ability of quantification.” How was this borne out in the story of Gideon in Judges chapter 7?
- 3) What do you see in Jeremiah 6:10-19 that illustrates a situation in which God’s word and standards were not the absolute for judgment in a society? How does David’s view of sin contrast with this?
- 4) Give examples from this psalm that demonstrate that David believed God was actively aware of his situation.
- 5) To what degree can you honestly say that you expect the non-natural intervention of God in the matters that you pray about? What is the situation right now in your life or in the lives of loved ones, which is most troubling to you? How have your prayers about this situation reflected—or not reflected-- an expectation of the non-natural intervention of God in the situation?
- 6) In the situation you addressed in question number 5, what statements could you make that would “finalize” your confidence in God? (If you are not comfortable with sharing a personal situation, make a “finalizing” statement about your

confidence in God to deal with our nation's leaders or another more "global" situation.)

- 7) What does the setting of limits have to do with the concept of integrity? How does corruption reflect a lack of limits? Can you give an example from the life of a Biblical character that illustrates corruption's relationship to a lack of limits?
- 8) What is the difference between consensus values and contended values? Give examples of each from your own youth. To what extent has your maturity as a Christian involved re-evaluating-- and perhaps even changing-- your previous values in view of what you've learned from the Bible?

