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A Sanctuary for God

- by Lavena Crooks

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:12).

Comparing our bodies with the Tabernacle and recognizing that we are the “temples of the Lord,” let us also consider the authority under which we are all placed. Paul told us, “I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God... If a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering” (I Cor. 11:3, 15).

Paul was in no way intimating that his principle was for the Corinthians only; it was a universal principle laid down by God.

We are all aware of the fact that some types of skin diseases may give a woman no alternative to cutting her hair. The point is that a woman’s hair is not to be cut just to please herself or anyone else. The woman who professes to be a Christian, yet rebels against long (uncut) hair, which is given to her for her glory and a symbol of the divinely established lines of authority, is not only dishonoring her husband, but the Head of the entire Body, Christ himself. This is contradictory, for He is the very one whom she has professed to have enthroned in the center of her being. We do not have the right to decide which of God’s laws or instructions we are to keep. We are to follow Him totally in all His instructions for our lives.

In essence, a woman who chooses to cut her hair for other than medical reasons is indicating a desire to change roles. Short hair is a symbol of superiority of roles (not persons), conferred on the male. Matthew Henry says, “The order in which divine wisdom has placed persons and things is best and fittest: to endeavor to amend it is to destroy all order, and introduce confusion.”

God has not changed His mind about the order, or role, of man and woman. A woman’s hair is her glory, her praise, her honor, her distinction, and her splendor. It is not a matter of having more or less “glory,” the choice being left to the individual. It is a matter of coming under the Lordship of

Christ and the chain of authority which He has established.

The more time we spend in the Holy of Holies, the greater will be our understanding of God’s authority and will, and the greater our desire to follow His code of ethics, morally and spiritually, in all manner of dress and behavior. This will include accepting our role as women by not removing the symbol of glory and authority.

The Scriptures also teach us much more about our lifestyle. Paul instructed us, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1). A Christian should be characterized by a willingness to work for the Lord and walk in obedience to Him.

Proverbs 31 gives us a very concise picture of the holy woman. Someone has said, “A virtuous woman is one of inspiring principle, who has command of her own spirit and knows how to work with other people. She is industrious and of moral excellence.”

The virtuous woman edifies and builds up her husband and children, and they call her “blessed,” for she teaches them the way of righteousness. She is industrious, frugal, and thrifty, but not stingy.

She is not a busybody in other people’s affairs. She is

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discreet in her conversation, not overly talkative, or critical, and she speaks with prudence and wisdom. The law of kindness rules her speech. She is careful what she feeds her mind, for out of her heart are the “issues of life.” She spends time with the Word, which teaches her wisdom and kindness and puts a commanding power in all she says.

She is priceless in herself, because of the glory within. Thus she has no need of pearls, or gold, or make-up, or gaudy apparel. The beauty of her soul is all the decoration she needs. Her heart is the sanctuary of the Triune God!

We are given clear warning about changing from godly guidelines for living to living by the world’s criteria. We are told in Deuteronomy 27:17, “Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor’s landmark.” A warning was also given in Proverbs, “Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set” (22:28).

Dr. Noel Scott, in speaking of the importance of those “landmarks,” pointed out that they were for three specific reasons: to indicate boundaries, to determine ownership, and to ensure an inheritance for the next generation.

Unless we stay spiritually alert, it is difficult to notice the shifting of the landmarks of holy living in all areas of our lifestyle. While it is true that we cannot say from a specific verse of Scripture just how long skirts or sleeves should be, one thing has been obvious through the years, once a person who has been taught a modest code of dress begins compromising – shortening her skirts, easing her sleeves up a little at a time, using a little makeup or jewelry, or catering to the whims of the fashion industry – she almost never finds a stopping place.

Not only are the standards of modesty adjusted to fit the world, but other areas are as well – music, entertainment, literature, and keeping of the Lord’s day. The entire behavior is modified to accommodate the world’s view of morality. By word or action we tell our children, the Body of Christ, and the community what we think of our God-given heritage.

When we take church attendance lightly, disregard prayer meeting, forsake the family altar, neglect private devotions, violate the sacredness of Sunday, shift our standards of conduct to match the world, and allow bitterness, unforgiveness, gossip, and criticism to characterize our lives,

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women; nothing could be farther from the truth. One glimpse at the favorable mention of women in the letters of Paul (who is often vilified by feminists as a woman-hating bachelor) is all that is necessary to dispel such notions. Not only is such talk a calumny against God, it is an attack on the inspiration of Scripture. The problem Bible-believing shepherds have is not with women; it is with women in the eldership and other role relationships that God Himself established.

we are flaunting our disregard for God’s Laws. We are destroying the ancient landmarks.

God knew we needed boundaries and guidelines. “Ask for the old paths, where is the good way” (Jer. 6:16). And “make them known to [your] children: that the generation to come might know them. . . that they might set their hope in God, and . . . keep his commandments” (Ps. 78:5-7).

Neither traditions nor landmarks are valuable just because they are old, but because they were given by God, passed on to us by men of faith and godly character, and supported by the written Word. Someone has said, “God did not send Moses back with ten suggestions. Nor were His principles given as ‘good ideas.’ They are unchangeable and immutable.”

We know the tragedy of the Israelites. “The glory is departed!” Eli cried when the Ark of the Lord was taken. Persistent disobedience had brought tragedy. The landmarks had been removed when God’s chosen people embraced the traditions of the heathen, and they lost their inheritance.

God’s Word still speaks clearly today, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy” (I Cor. 3:16, 17).

Someone once said, “There is something worse than a sneak attack from the enemy. He is in our midst. He has infiltrated our camp, and many can no longer tell an enemy from a friend, truth from error.”

Our landmarks are not just slowly eroding. There is a mighty flood-tide sweeping them away. Laymen are crumbling, pressuring their pastors. Pastors are succumbing, misleading their sheep. But let us cry with Isaiah, “Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people” (62:10).

Let us take inventory of our lives and make sure that we continue to “cherish the glory.” Our lives and the lives of the next generation depend upon our faithfulness to keep the glory of God on and in us.

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So, then, there is much to be done to stem the onrushing tide of feminism in the church. And it is up to elder-shepherds to rein in straying sheep who, in disregard for the Scriptures, are turning each one to his (should I have said “her?”) own way. Elder, has feminism crept into your congregation? If so, what are you doing to counteract it? Anything?

-taken from *The Use of the Rod and the Staff*

Using the Staff with the Distaff

- by Jay E. Adams

That there are those within the evangelical church today who advocate feminism is one of the saddest (and clearest) evidences of the erosion of biblical faith due to modern cultural impact. It has gone so far that “Christian” publishing houses are now helping destroy the English language by enforcing gender neutral words and phrases. Such grammatically horrendous constructions as “Each one must think about their responsibility” are found everywhere today. Clearly, *each one* and *their* do not correspond. But we see this kind of thing appearing all over, simply in order to avoid saying such things as “Each one must think about *his* responsibility.” The “his” already is neutral in such sentences, but those who want to promote feminism are bent on eliminating it, since (obviously) the word “his” also has a masculine reference.

That Christian publishing companies have yielded to such nonsense plainly evidences the extent to which contemporary cultural influences have made inroads into the Church. Eldershepherds ought to resist all such foolish concessions to that influence by urging their flock to recognize what is happening and refusing to purchase volumes that give credence to neutralizing the language by destroying it.

Not only have books been “sanitized” so as not to use the hated word “his,” but even the Bible itself has been tampered with. Consider the following verses taken at random from the *New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)*:

For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters... (Galatians 5:13)

My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression... (Galatians 6:1)

The original Greek of Galatians 5:13 is “brothers,” not “brothers and sisters.” The words “and sisters” are simply added! In Galatians 6:1, the Greek also reads “brothers;” not “my friends.” What liberties are taken with the Word of God!

To “correct” the Scriptures in such fashion, so as to conform to feminist ideology (and this sort of thing will be found throughout the NRSV) is not only presumptuous, it is also dangerous. Remember the Lord’s words of warning: “To all who hear the words of the prophecy of this scroll I testify this: If anybody adds to them God will add to him the plagues that are written in this scroll” (Revelation 22:18). And, seemingly heedless of this warning, the very next verse in the NRSV reads “*that person’s* share” in which “*that person’s*” is substituted for the Greek, “*his* part.” This problem is not only

a difficulty with the NRSV; more “conservative” versions have also been affected.

Of course, in addition, the pressure has been rising from feminists within the evangelical church to ordain women as elders the way that the mainline liberal denominations do. To do so, however, is a direct violation of such passages as I Timothy 2:12: “I don’t permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man but to remain silent.” The basic function of all elders is to rule (“exercise authority over”) and teach. It is perfectly plain, therefore, that by these words Paul was forbidding the ordination of women to the eldership.

“But that was a cultural thing,” someone insists. As a matter of fact, it wasn’t. Paul cites two bases for this decision: creation and the fall (v.13, 14). No two events in world history were less culturally conditioned! God and the garden, along with man in his perfect state prior to the fall, constituted the only culture involved.

There is, then, every sort of specious argument raised to justify the ordination of women. For instance, Galatians 3:28 is torn from its context in order to do service to the feminist cause. It reads, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; you are all one in Christ Jesus.” The passage does not say that gender is eliminated in reference to office. The passage has nothing to say about office. Paul is talking about how one is saved. All are equal before God regardless of race, social status or gender when it comes to becoming “God’s sons” (v.26). Such desperate attempts on the part of “evangelical” feminists ought to be abandoned. They should be honest enough to recognize what the Bible teaches and submit to it – or admit that they simply do not accept it. In this respect, the liberals are much more forthright.

Not only are there women preachers in the mainline liberal churches, the same phenomenon has been found in the Pentecostal, Holiness and black churches for years. This failure to follow biblical teachings has passed over into a number of charismatic congregations of our day. Their influence, in many ways, including influence in this matter, more and more has affected the evangelical church.

Shepherds, you must hold the line – or, where it has already sagged, reestablish the line – against all the intrusion of feminist thinking that has weakened the church and misrepresented the Word of God. It is not that Christian leaders are anti-

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The Demise of Absolutes

- by Glenn E. Auker

The demise of absolutes? Impossible! An absolute cannot change or die. If something passes out of existence, it is changing and therefore is not an absolute.

Heading the list of absolutes are two foundational verities. God is absolute. "For I am the Lord, I change not" (Malachi 3:6). The Bible is absolute. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89).

What has changed is man's view of absolutes. Society has gradually abandoned one absolute after another until little truth is embraced. Situation ethics has become the order of the day, undermining some basic pinions of civilization.

This loss of a sense of absolutes did not begin in our generation. Satan has been seeking to undermine a sense of absolutes ever since he said to Eve, "Yea, hath God said...?" In the last several centuries, his attack on absolutes has intensified. Philosophers teach that all facts are relative and therefore deny the existence of right and wrong. Evolutionists have sought to remove God from Creation, therefore denying any responsibility to God. Higher critics, claiming that the Bible contains many errors, have actually denied the inerrancy of the Word.

These are some of Satan's chief attacks against absolutes. As a result, man has increasingly departed from the understanding that truth is absolute and has increasingly embraced situation ethics. Many courts of the land, many colleges and schools of the nation, and many churches are teaching and are making decisions on the premise that truth is relative. Its effect is seen in the morals and the lifestyles of society as one principle after another is compromised by human reasoning.

No, the absolutes are not dying. Rather, man is departing from absolute truths and is heaping up wrath against himself. Although the excesses of this departure from absolutes may not be an immediate threat to us, we too can begin to allow our defense of the absolutes to weaken. What are some ways this can happen?

1. *Turning to the philosophies of men, rather than to the Word of God, for our answers.*

To question the plain truths of the Word places us on dangerous ground. Such questioning would not weaken the Word, but it would rather weaken our stand in the Word and lead us down the road to perdition.

2. *Developing a spiritual appreciation for those who are teaching the Word but are not applying it.*

The greatest threat presently is hardly to be found among our ministers or our Sunday school teachers; it is sooner found in our bookshelves. It can easily filter in through commentaries and through "Christian" books about marriage and psychology. Although some help is available from other books, we must ever evaluate these by the Bible.

3. *Exchanging the Biblical principles of child rearing for the philosophies of man.*

The philosophy that children need to be allowed to express themselves has become the established philosophy of many in authority and is now often enforced as law. May we not become apologetic regarding Biblical child discipline or be swayed by the world's methods of persuasion, but rather continue raising our families according to the Word.

4. *Compromising our convictions regarding the sanctity of marriage.*

It is easy to see the downward spiral of society's compromises on the sanctity of marriage. We need to go beyond condemning the extremes of the world and maintain a clear line on how we relate to divorced and remarried acquaintances.

No, the absolutes are not changing or dying, for absolutes are eternal verities. The believer may not drift from these absolutes. Rather, he must ever remain firmly grounded on the absolutes found in the Word in order to escape spiritual demise.

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Eastern Mennonite Testimony



What Are We Singing?

- by Leonard Sankey

The specific instructions of Paul relating to the song of the Christian – both personal and corporate – are these:

“Be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always...” Ephesians 5:18-20.

“Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” Colossians 2:16.

It appears that the song of the Christian is supposed to be, first of all, a song of the heart. From the heart, then, comes the song to and from the lips, melody to the Lord, the thankful attitude, the grace-full spirit.

But where does the song start? William Barclay cites A.C. Welch as beginning a sermon on this passage by saying, “You’ve got to fill a man with something.” The pagan world finds its happiness in being filled with wine, pleasures, position, and financial success. The Christian finds his or her joy in being filled with the Spirit.

It is not enough that we be initially filled with the Spirit, but that we “be continually being filled with the Spirit.” This is an imperative – not an elective; this is essential – not optional. Just as emphatic as the command to “be not” filled with wine, is the necessity to “be” filled with the Holy Spirit. There is no other way for the Christian to grow in grace and Christlikeness except for the spiritual fullness brought about by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

It is out of that blessed fullness that the song arises. Ros Price (*The Epistle to the Ephesians*, Wiley/Price) asks the question, **“Why, then, do Christians sing?”** and answers his question with three reasons, “(1) As an offering to God of our worship and praise. (2) As a witness to others of what the Lord has done for our souls. (3) As a means of personal edification by delighting oneself in the Lord.”

Later, Dr. Price proposes a second question: **“What kinds of songs do Christians sing?”** Psalms, he notes, are songs designed to be sung with instrumental accompaniment, or one of the sacred poems from the book of *Psalms*, or a song written after the model of the Psalms. We sometimes “sing” in using passages from the Psalms in congregational responsive readings.

Hymns: The word originally carried a pagan meaning as it was used for songs sung in praise of heathen deities. Among church folk, however, the word is generally understood to mean songs which are sung in praise of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Sometimes, Dr. Price comments, patriotic songs are designated as hymns.

Spiritual Songs: These are songs that are spiritual in nature, thought and intent, and can cover the full gamut of

personal experience and testimony. They may teach Biblical doctrines, express saintly resolve, and anticipate Divine blessings.

So, what songs are we singing? Our people should be singing songs that fit within the scope of Biblical parameters. Let the theme of our songs be (1) praise, adoration, and worship to God, (2) expressive of our joy in the Lord and gratitude to Him, (3) spiritually sensitive, i.e., songs that really have something to say... correct in doctrine, Biblically-oriented, of high quality grammatically and poetically. Also, (4) let the accompanying music actually enhance the song rather than distract the attention of the audience. Sometimes, recording projects and public “performances” are filled with so much “bombast” as to leave the listener weary from trying to discern the message of the song.

Admittedly, I am a traditionalist. I appreciate the older hymns and gospel songs, and am chary (“*discreetly cautious; hesitant and vigilant about dangers and risks*”) about much of the contemporary music scene. (Not that we who are older have a lot to boast about in such “standards” from our childhood like, “Do Lord, O, do Lord, O Do remember me... way beyond the blue”!) But much that passes for “Christian” entertainment today is nothing more than entertainment... and I’m not sure how much entertainment and amusement the Spirit-filled person needs.

The older songs may appear stodgy and difficult to moderns who want only either the toe-tapping, emotion-raising rhythms; or the syrupy, sentimental, “hands-in-the-air, swing-and-sway-with-the-music, arms-aflailing” type of chorus. But, I am assured of this: for the future of the holiness movement, for the preservation of the legacy of “who we are,” for correct instruction in doctrine, experience, and practice – our work at learning and singing some of the older songs will be amply repaid. And, conversely, our addiction to the “lighter” musical material will eventually come back to haunt us.

One additional word of warning: we put ourselves and our children at risk by making heroes out of “Christian” entertainers and performers who are far removed from us doctrinally and experientially, and whose personal appearance often violates every scriptural principle relating to adornment and attire; and whose overall approach to music and choice of songs is so spiritually careless as to infect the listener with a spiritual casualness that will ultimately be disastrous.

If the philosopher of another day who commented: “I would rather write the music of a nation than its laws,” was right, then we must understand that music has a tremendous

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The Evolution of Sexual Sin

- by Steve Viars

We live in a sex-crazed culture. In a recent year, U.S. News and World Report stated that the pornography industry took in more than eight billion dollars, which was “more than all revenues generated by rock and country music, more than America spent on Broadway productions, theatre, ballet, jazz and classical music combined.” Playboy’s website alone receives five million hits every day. The Log-On Data Corporation reports that there are 72,000 sexually explicit sites on the Internet, with an estimated 266 new porn sites added every day.

The effect of pornography on related social trends is also a concern. It is estimated that one in three girls and one in seven boys will be sexually molested before the age of 18. Some statistics suggest that a typical child molester will abuse more than 360 victims over the course of his lifetime, and that he will be able to abuse 30-60 children before he is ever caught for the first time. In a study of convicted child molesters, 77% of those who molested boys and 87% of those who molested girls said they were regular users of hard-core pornography.

One more stat that should really get our attention as ministry leaders is that according to Focus on the Family, one out of seven calls received at their phone counseling services for pastors involves internet pornography.

James 1:14-15 cites three principles to help God’s people win the battle with sexual sin. *“But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.”*

I. Learn that Sexual Sin is a Process that Begins Long Before the Act.

The overall point of the text is that sexual sin involves several specific and identifiable steps. The source of temptation is our lusts, from the Greek word *epithumia*. Biblical counselors would be wise to learn all we can about this particular biblical concept.

God has made us as desiring beings. This is a key to understanding human motivation. Part of the counseling process is helping men and women determine the desires of their hearts, especially in situations when they regularly

displease God. Two questions I often ask in counseling are, “What did you want so badly that you were willing to sin in order to get it?” and “What did you want so badly that you were willing to sin when you did not get it?” Fundamentally, this is an issue of idolatry because a person’s desires reveal their functional god.

Of course, some might object that it is impossible to control their desires. That is a key theological point that needs to be challenged. Kittle’s Theological Dictionary of the New Testament explains that *epithumia* is “a motion of the will.” In other words, we choose what we want.

James also explains in this passage that if we do not control our desires with biblical truth, they have the power to entice us and draw us away. The picture here is of a fish that has been caught or an animal that has been trapped. Some might be uncomfortable with humans being referred to as if they were animals since we have been made in the image of God. But I believe we need to recognize that human beings have the ability to live vastly different than animals only if they choose in the power of God to do so. The other side of the equation is, if human beings choose to reject God and His Word, many of their corresponding lifestyle choices will absolutely enslave them. They will feel powerless, addicted, much like an animal that has been trapped.

The next step in this process is an act of sin. It is interesting and sobering to note that James switches metaphors at this point. Uncontrolled desires give birth to a sinful action. That does not mean that the preceding desires were neutral or acceptable, but now sinful deeds are being birthed by a sinful heart.

The overall point is that our counselees will never get to a better place in this area of life until they understand that sexual sin is a process that begins long before the act.

II. Learn to, in the Power of God, Stop Sexual Sin Where it Starts.

One of the implications of knowing this process is to identify the specific lust or desire of the heart that led to the behavior. People sin sexually for a variety of different reasons, and we must not treat them with a cookie-cutter

approach. Some of the garden-variety lusts that lead to sexual sin include:

A. Lust for immediate gratification...

Sexual sin, especially when it is internet pornography, prostitution, or marital infidelity, makes a person feel a particular way without having to go through all the hard relational work. The person wants the pleasure that comes with sexual release without having to go through the relational effort involved in building a godly marriage.

B. Lust for approval of man.

In sexual sin, on a heart level the person is the big man on campus, the best looking person on the beach, the most attractive person in the office. Such persons imagine others fawning over them sexually in ways that would never occur in real life. This is probably why people involved in pornography often become violent, because the real people in their lives don't treat them the way the people in their fantasies do. Ultimately, it is the sin of pride, a gross form of self-love that desires to be the center of the drama, the hero of the play.

C. Lust for control.

In sexual sin, the person is in charge of everything and everyone. There are no questions or challenges. They are starring in the movie, directing the movie, and viewing it as well.

D. Lust to be god.

This person wants a life where there are no consequences, no cause and effect, no rules. It is the moral equivalent of Outback Steakhouse: no rules, just order what you want. This person believes they can think and do what they desire, no holds barred.

Once these desires are identified, it is time to put them to death. The impact of the gospel in the ongoing

life of the believer is not only a message of life and resurrection – it is also a message of death and crucifixion. This stems from a true hatred of sin, not only the sin of illicit sexual actions but also of illicit sexual thoughts.

The next implication of understanding the process is to choose desires that honor God. The steps James describes can be reversed – demonstrating one's love for Christ by choosing desires in one's sexual life that honor Him.

III. Be Convinced that the Consequences for Failing to Stop this Process are Severe.

James completes the metaphor by describing a stillbirth: "*when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.*" Men and women trapped in sexual sin suffer the spiritual death of being estranged from God.

There is also the death of relationships. Recently one of my counselees learned that her husband had been involved in internet pornography. She described the slow death of their marriage in words like these: "I knew that something was wrong, but I always thought it was me. I believed that if I would lose more weight or if I would try harder to please him, things would be better. I am so angry, hurt, confused, and disappointed to find out that all this time he's had a mistress."

Of course, the good news is that "*where sin abounded, grace did much more abound* (Romans 5:20). Each follower of Christ can learn "*how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor...*" (I Thessalonians 4:4). God told us about the process so that we could reverse it at the earliest possible moment.

Seeing Christians do so is exactly what our sex-crazed culture needs.

-taken from The Biblical Counselor, August 2004



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impact on those who listen to it, and sing it. We are reaping the harvest, in our American culture, of the Rock generation. It is a generation raised on themes of rebellion, rejection of traditional values, scorn for parental and societal authority, debasement of sexual mores, and spoofing things like honesty, integrity, keeping promises, and the sanctity of life, marriage, and the home. Lamentably, all the legislation the Congress may pass cannot overcome the influence of a nation's music.

Thus, the music the holiness people sing will impact us for spiritual good and the preservation of our heritage; or, we may sell our holiness legacy for "a mess of musical

pottage."

Paul's inspired writings, in addition to the whole "tenor" of scripture regarding music, will be safe guidelines for those filled with the Spirit.

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Editor's note: *This article comes from the pen of a brother in the Pentecostal-Holiness movement, which we normally view as emotional and open to the contemporary excesses. It is instructive to note caution from that quarter.*

Is Man a “Higher” Animal?

- by John D. Morris

Frequently we see the statement that man is an advanced animal, implying he is higher on the evolutionary tree than the others. Let’s examine this claim.

Remember that evolution holds that simple forms of life spontaneously arose from non-life. Through mutation and natural selection they increased in complexity to multi-cellular animals to invertebrates to vertebrate fish. Next, some evolved into amphibians, then reptiles, then birds, and mammals. The standard view of evolution considers each stage more “advanced,” or more complex than its predecessors until finally man arrives. In reality, however, all animals, living or fossil, are unthinkably complex. Each shows interdependence of functioning parts, each with a marvelous purpose to achieve. Even a single cell is more complex than a super computer. There is no such thing as simple life. If it’s alive—it’s complex.

Consider the “lowly” insect—pick one. As you study it, you’ll discover an undreamed of complexity. Or the extinct arthropod, the trilobite sporting a powerful eye with a complex lens, equally as advanced as any today.

Or consider various mammals—from the whale with an intricate language, to the appreciation of beauty among some primates—animals exhibit amazing abilities.

Similar traits or organs or abilities are also found in man, although our sight is not as good as the hawk’s, our hearing is not as good as a dog’s, etc. Each has its own niche to fill.

Yet man is different. His “higher” characteristics have more to do with his intelligence, his ability to plan and consider the future, and ability to express emotions. Animal instincts and habits are remarkable, but something sets man apart.

We find this difference explained in the record provided by the Creator of man and the animals. In Genesis One we see that the fish, the birds, the creeping things, the cattle, the beasts of the field, and the beasts of the earth were all created “after their kinds.” But when God created man, He created him “after His own image.” We often have similar DNA to the animals, similar body parts, similar functions, similar consciousness, similar blood, but the comparison disappears when man’s eternal spirit is considered. The animals have nothing like this. Something about man adequately reflects God’s nature in a way that the animals don’t share.

God created man with the wonderful ability to reason and comprehend abstract thoughts. He alone can speak in a language which communicates his inner yearnings. Most importantly, man can truly love and respond to love, most particularly the love of God. He can recognize his own

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sinfulness, repent of it, and appreciate God’s gracious solution to his sin problem. He can respond to God’s love by choosing a life pleasing to Him. Animals, regardless of their cranial capacity, know nothing of this.

Man is qualitatively superior to the animals in many important ways. But he is also quantitatively distinct from all animals.

No, man is *not* a higher animal. Man is not an animal at all. He is the very image of God, and nothing less.

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