

People Needs

I've never agreed with the whole "Everything I needed to know, I learned in Kindergarten" mentality. Unless your kindergarten experience was VERY different from mine (with all due respect and appreciation to Mrs. Banks!), if it was the "be all" and "end all" of your instruction, you're probably grossly undereducated.

Neither do I believe that everything we need to know *spiritually* can be gleaned from "the Garden" (of Eden) or "the beginning" (the book or first chapters of Genesis). This is not meant to in any way undermine the importance of what *can be* learned from the opening chapters of the Bible. But, the word "Genesis" refers to *beginnings* or *origins*, and as vital as this part of man's story obviously is, it is not "the whole story," but the *beginning*. However...

If we pay attention, we may learn some valuable lessons about life, God, and ourselves from Eden. This is especially true with regard to what we can glean about "basic human needs." Therefore, **People Need:**

- **People- specifically, and generally.** Though God said specifically of Adam, "*It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him*" in Genesis 2:18, it is also generally true that humans were created to be social creatures. Along with collective worship, one of the things I've heard more brethren say more than anything else is that they miss each other. This is as it should be- at least from the standpoint that if we didn't miss one another, our "fellowship" with, "devotion" to, and "love" and "preference" for each other wasn't and isn't as it should be, cf. Romans 9-13! God created us (generally) and Christians (specifically) to be inter-dependent members of the same "body"- of humanity (generally) and Christianity (specifically) 1Corinthians 12:12-25. If nothing else, "social distancing" as taught us just how much we need and depend on one another.
- **Employment- something to do.** God, who spoke "light" into existence on Day 1 but didn't create the Sun, Moon, and stars until Day 4, didn't need a "gardener"- but Adam needed something to do. He needed to be engaged and employed. He needed to be productive. We all do. The "sluggard" and "lazy" are oft-fired upon targets in the book of wisdom, Proverbs (see Proverbs 6:9-9; 10:26; 12:27; 15:19; 19:15; 26:13-16 for example). It's easy to fall into the trap of idleness, but it has many other dangerous habits attached- like "gossip" and generally minding everyone's business but your own, 1Timothy 5:13; 1Thessalonians 3:11; or even "gluttony" or other "evils," Titus 1:12. But when we're busy with something to do, hopefully like gainful employment, we can more easily avoid these associated entrapments, cf. 1Thessalonians 4:11-12 and 2Thessalonians 3:12. As always, God knew and knows what is best for us because He created us. And He created us to "work"- both to feed ourselves and our families, and within His kingdom.
- **God- fellowship with the Almighty.** This aspect can perhaps be discerned more readily by its loss (in a "I didn't know how much I needed it until I didn't have it" kind of way). Note carefully Genesis 3:8's beginning, "*And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day...*" Regardless of the interpretation you derive from this line- whether they heard the sound of *God walking*, or they heard the sound of God while *they were walking* (translations vary),

they could discern the very presence of God audibly. So intimate was their fellowship with Him that they could not only “feel” but also “hear” His proximity! What a beautifully powerful and poignant portrait! And how tragic when it was when they, clearly because of transgression, were driven out and away from the life-sustaining presence of God, Genesis 2:22-24. We all need to “see,” “hear,” and “feel” (and “speak to”) God in our lives! Even more than humanity was created to be dependent upon one another, we were made to be supremely dependent upon our Creator and Sustainer. And sadly, we are indeed “lost” in a hopelessly dead and doomed world with Him.

While a pandemic and “social distancing” can separate us from other people, and can limit or even eliminate our employment, they cannot banish us from the presence of God... unless we acquiesce. Think about it, won't you? Stay safe. Stay in contact with one another. Stay productive. And most importantly, stay in fellowship with God!

(Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)