

God In The Image of Man

Proverbs 23:7

7) For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he...

Matthew 15:11

11) Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

Academics in the field of human behavior inform us that our words form languages. Language consequently influences imagination. Imagination is the birthplace of thought. Furthermore, imagination when arranged into a proper or coherent structure, disciplines thought. Disciplined thoughts whether good or evil, ultimately find their habitation in the conscience of a man. We, therefore, arrive at the understanding that our thoughts will subsequently, and eventually, become who we truly are.

Solomon listing his 30 edicts of wisdom reveals this very principle in his ninth submission found in Proverbs 23:7 - "For as he thinketh in his heart so *is* he." The inner workings of a man's thought process along with his ongoing "thought-life" have an inestimable impact on his very nature. While our environment plays a vital role in our experiences in life and consequently experience impresses upon the conscience, we must, more importantly, realize that our conscience is formed by more than a man's experiences in life, but rather his response to these experiences. How he responds rather than what has actually happened to him will emphatically determine the character of that man. No man is totally responsible for every single event, or everything that happens to him, but all men can control their responses to these things. Our response is decided by our conscience. A healthy conscience holds men accountable for proper responses. How do I cultivate a healthy conscience? Through the continual regeneration of a submitted mind that processes our thoughts.

Paul teaches us in Romans 5:1-5 that we can access and enjoy the glory of God in our life through faith and hope no matter our current environment or any experiences that would challenge us otherwise. The tribulations that ultimately produce our experiences can strengthen us if our response is correct. One can only respond correctly if one is thinking correctly.

So, we gird up the loins or reproductive aspects of our mind, ie. our thought-life. We cast down vain imaginations. We put on the helmet of salvation to foster a saved mind. We hide more of His words in our hearts to build a safe refuge from potential sin.

We cultivate the ability to move beyond “negative” experiences by forgetting those things which are behind us and continually press towards the higher marks or higher standards of living discovered in Christ Jesus. This type of process and much more help eliminate spiritual stagnation along with cultivating the renewed mind needed to become transformed into the image of Christ.

As the initial opening paragraph of this article revealed, there is an interconnected and orderly process of events leading up to the forming of one’s conscience. For the conscience to be defiled towards God this process has to be reversed or perverted to turn one from God.

Idolatry in its most basic form is the projecting of an image of God based on one’s thoughts of God. The 10 commandments reveal a distinction between two of the commands found in Exodus chapter 20:3-4. At first glance, the two prohibitions appear synonymous, but be sure while they are interrelated, they are indeed not identical: 3) Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4) Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth.

Verse 3 is clear; another god is an affront to God Himself. Jehovah takes it very personal. This is revealed in the phrase “before me.” Verse 3 primarily involves God Himself.

For another god to be formed there was a prior action or process that occurred. This procedural movement was spiritual in context. Before God could be offended by another god, man was first found offended in his imagination.

Verse 4 affects primarily the individual; thou shalt not make “unto thee...” Idolatry begins in the minds of men. Through his vain imagination, man first begins to re-image God to become what man wants God to be rather than what God says He is. God warns in verse 3 to not place before Him any other god. Before man arrives at that place however there is an equally dangerous realm, he must first engage in. God consequently warns in verse 4 of how another god is created. The prohibition in verse 4 was an attempt to not only reveal to man how other gods are created - in the imagination, but to never allow your imagination to go as far as to create another god and then ultimately shove it in Jehovah’s face.

God was not concerned with the Hebrews replacing Him with another god but rather God was teaching them that He would not compete with another image or ideal of Himself no matter how heavenly or spiritual they thought another image might be. No other gods “before me.” He was placing borders and boundaries on their thought life. No other image of God other than what He would eventually reveal unto them in the Law was acceptable.

(For a reminder, please read the very first paragraph of this article before proceeding.)

Herein is the first step of the perversion of a man who once knew God. The entire process first illustrated above and that influences the conscience must change. (See also Romans 1.)

- 1) The words of man change by changing the words of God. Man subsequently changes his language and definitions when describing God.
- 2) The results are a new imagination or image of God in his mind that previously did not exist.
- 3) This new image of God results in a new “thought-life” surrounding God and His economy.
- 4) Once these thoughts are placed in their new structure and order (which makes perfect sense to the perverted mind) a new image of both the church and God is born. These new thoughts find a newly rebuilt home deep within the conscience.

Then that which cometh out of the mouth defileth the man.

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