

May 1st, 2016

VIDEO: -OLOGY INTRO

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INTRODUCTION

Good Morning! Welcome to Fox Valley Christian Church!

We are digging into the ologies of the Christian faith. We are looking at what we believe and why.

We have looked at Bibliology, the study of God's Word and Theology, the study of God's Nature and Works and last week we looked at the invisible creation - Angelology, the study of Angels. This week we are going to look at the visible creation, man or mankind.

I just want to remind you that the intent of this series, the intent of looking at the ologies, the studies of Christian Faith, what we believe ... is that we want you to be sure of what exactly it is that you believe. When someone says who is God? I want you to know what you are saying and not just parrot back words that you kind of maybe understand.

We also know that there are a lot of false doctrines, false beliefs, false gospels out there. If your belief is not grounded in knowledge and faith, then you will be easily swayed. You will not even realize when you have stepped into a belief that is

false, dangerously false. Or you are not equipped to lead someone who has been misled to see the truth. (ex. I know a lot of people that see Jehovah's Witnesses and try to make the conversation quick and go, because they know that they don't want to get in a Bible turning conversation with them. Or, they encourage them and commend them for the work they are doing and the boldness they are showing, not realizing that what is being shared is a false gospel.)

It is our goal that you are better equipped for all opportunities to give witness to who God is and what we believe.

It is our goal to create students that become teachers, because we are on a mission to make God known.

It is our goal to strengthen you and build you up so that you can be prepared to face any temptations or false gospels head on.

NATURE OF MAN

First we are going to look at man in the same way that we looked at God and that we looked at Angels. We are going to begin by looking at the Nature of Man. Now there are 3 different views on this. Some would say that your personal view on this doesn't really matter, I will tell you it does. Why?

Because if we are not careful, how we view humanity could put a wedge between us and God. How we view humanity could open us up to believing false gospels. So, there are 3 different views on the nature of man.

1. Monistic View: Man is One

The first view is the Monistic View that says man is one. I have said this in previous weeks, I just want to reiterate it. I don't care if you remember the name of the view ... I want you to understand the differences in the views and I want you to know why you believe what you believe.

So, the Monistic View, which says man is one. One what? Well that depends. There are materialistic monists and metaphysical monists?

Materialistic Monists believe that man is only physical or that man is made up of body only. This is a widespread view. If there is no God, and there is no spiritual reality, then man is just made up of physical stuff.

You can believe in God and be a Materialistic Monist. **Jehovah's Witnesses** and **Seventh Day Adventists** are examples of groups that believe in God, but also only believe in the physical makeup of human existence. This argument that man is body only is an important aspect of their argument that there is no hell or eternal punishment.

This view that man is body only must be rejected as serious false doctrine, because it is contrary to the biblical doctrine of soul ... that we will talk about in a minute.

Metaphysical Monists believe that the material stuff that we believe that we see, feel, touch, etc is not real. In reality the only things that exists is our spiritual stuff. Instead of we are body only, Metaphysical Monists believe that we are spirit only.

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An example of this is Christian Science, the founder of **Christian Science** wrote, “Man is not matter, he is not made up of brain, blood, bones and other material elements ... Matter and mind are opposites hence both cannot be real ... Spirit and all things spiritual are real.” Other examples of this belief are found in the **New Age Movement** and **Hinduism**.

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Both Materialistic Monism and Metaphysical Monism are false doctrines, therefore dangerous for our relationship with God.

2. Trichotomy: Man is Three

This view says that man is composed of three separate parts; Body, a mortal perishable animal soul (which is where our passion comes from), and an immortal rational soul (which is where our reason comes from.)

This view believes that there is a distinction between soul and spirit. The one is mortal and the other is immortal.

This not a serious and dangerous false doctrine, like monism, but it is false nonetheless. Any distinction between soul and spirit is speculation.

3. Dualism, Dichotomy, Duality

The third view, which is the view that we believe, is called dualism, duality, or dichotomy. This view says that man is composed of two parts body and soul/spirit.

So what does the Bible say about dualism:

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16

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¹⁶So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

PSALM 31:9

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⁹Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief; my soul and my body also.

ISAIAH 10:18

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¹⁸The glory of his forest and of his fruitful land the Lord will destroy, both soul and body, and it will be as when a sick man wastes away.

REVELATION 6:9

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⁹When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.

I have over 50 scriptures that show the duality of man; body and spirit/soul. The Bible consistently represents man as a duality of spiritual substance and physical substance.

Not all views of dualism are biblical. There are pagan views that say that man is physical and spiritual. The physical part of man is negative or evil and the spiritual part is inherently eternal and trying to free itself from the physical. Several of these believe that the spiritual element isn't just immortal, but that it is actually divine. So man is two parts, but the spiritual is the only part that matters.

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WHAT IS MAN?

So what is man? If we believe in the dualistic nature of man, what is man? And how do we view those distinct parts?

1. Man is body

It is not enough to say that man has a body, man is body. Part of our very identity is our body. The idea that body is accidental, alien, degrading, an evil bad part ... this idea is just not Biblical.

When God creates everything including humanity, body and soul together, God looks at His creation and says, "it is good." God does not say, "It's good, well except for the body." God calls all of His creation good.

- Our physical bodies allow us to relate to the rest of the material creation, to the physical world that we are in.
- Our physical bodies were created free of corruption, free of sin, free of disease, free of ailments.
- Sin corrupted our bodies

- Our physical bodies are in need of redemption, just as our souls are.

PHILIPPIANS 3:20-21

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²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

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²¹who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

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2. Man is spirit

Man is also spirit. Our spiritual make-up is not visible or measurable, but it is part of who we are. The spirit is just as much created as our body is. When and how this happens is not specifically laid out for us in the Bible. Some speculate that individual souls exist prior to conception, some speculate that the individual soul is somehow passed along to the child by the parents. Others believe that God creates the individual soul out of nothing for each new person at the time of conception. We are not told exactly how this works.

What we know is that the soul is created, just as the body is created. The soul is not self-existent. The soul is a creation.

It is easy for us to see our body as finite and limited because we can see and feel the limits. We can identify what physical limits we have. But where we see disagreement is in the finiteness of our spirit, of our soul.

Some believe that our soul is not finite and limited, but by its very nature it is eternal. Some even believe that by its very nature it is divine. **Hinduism** is an example of this belief. But scripture clearly tells us that all things were created by God and our soul is included in that. Our soul is a creation, therefore it is limited and definitely not divine.

Some believe that our soul is finite and limited but it has the ability to become divine. **Mormonism** is an example of this belief system. They believe the salvation process leads to our soul becoming divine. I agree that we become like God in love and in holiness through the redemption process, but a finite creature cannot become infinite. We cannot become God.

Our souls are created and are therefore finite and limited. They are not eternal by nature. Because of this, Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists believe that hell is not real. If we accept Christ we inherit eternal life, but if we deny Him we merely cease to exist. The problem with this is that scripture clearly lays out for us eternal salvation and eternal punishment. (We will talk more about this in future weeks) What you need to understand is that our souls have an eternal aspect. It is not an eternal aspect that exists outside of God and God merely has

to work with it. It is an eternal aspect that exists because that is how our Creator has designed them.

Our spirit is eternal, not because it is inherently eternal, but because it is part of God's plan and His will.

3. Man is body and spirit

So man is body and spirit, man is body and soul. The two were created by God intentionally and the two are integral part of what make us.

Sin and salvation involve the whole person, body and soul. Sin has dire consequences for both body and soul. Salvation begins with the regeneration of the spirit or spiritual resurrection and continues in the process of sanctification (becoming holy). The full redemption of the body and spirit is completed in the day of bodily resurrection.

CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

Man, body and soul, is an intentional creation. But, we are not just a creation, but we are a unique creation because we have been created in the image of God.

GENESIS 1:26-27

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²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

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And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

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²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

We have been created in the image, in the likeness, of God. We, by creation, represent something of the very likeness of God. God has given us specific capabilities and attributes that reflect His likeness.

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1. Personal Consciousness – Self-aware and aware of others. This allows us to be in relationships with others.
2. Intellectual Capacity – The ability to think, to reason, to plan, to understand.
3. Language – This is our ability to communicate with one another.
4. Volitional Capacity – The ability to freely choose, to determine. This is our God given capacity for free will.
5. Moral Capacity – The ability to know and understand right from wrong.
6. Creative Capacity – The ability to invent and create. This is also the ability to appreciate what has been created. To see its beauty. To marvel at its complexity.
7. Emotions – Joy, sorrow, grief, elation

Not only has God created us in His image, but by creating us with these different capacities He has allowed us to be in relationship with Him. Each of these capacities allow us to be in relationship with our Creator and they deepen our relationship with God.

Our **personal consciousness** allows us to know God, it allows us to know our Creator.

Our **intellectual capacity** is such that we are able to have true knowledge of God.

Our capacity for **language** allows us to communicate with God.

Our **volitional capacity** allows us to choose God.

Our **moral capacity** makes us responsible to God for our choices.

Our **creative capacity** allows us to be in awe of God and His creation and to give Him glory because of it and through our own creations.

Our **emotional capacity** allows us to experience joy and sorrow with our Creator, in His presence.

We are unique creations, created in the image of God. Created with both body and soul, created with body and spirit.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

1. Your purpose can be found in how you were created

You were created in the image of God, so that you could know Him. So that you could be in relationship with Him. So that you could be in awe of Him. So that you could give praise to Him.

You were also created in the image of God, so that you could enjoy His creation. So that you could experience His goodness.

2. Your value (inside and out) can be found in how you were created

You have been created uniquely. You have been created intentionally. God specifically choose to create you. Therefore, you are precious to God. You are important to God.

- Your value does not come from anything that you do.
- Your value does not come from how you look.
- Your value does not come from your physical or intellectual abilities.

Your value is found in God. In the infinite God who created you because that was His desire and His plan. He created you so that He could be in relationship with you. You are important to God.

Your value is both internal and external.

Our outside, our physical body, is a creation of God. It is a good creation. We may not see the value in our external creation, in our bodies ... because culture says this, or media says this, or whatever that influence is. But the creator of the universe intentionally created you body and soul.

So I urge you to take care of both your body and your soul.

When we begin to devalue our physical bodies, we begin to degrade our physical bodies.

When we begin to devalue our spirit, our spirit begins to deteriorate.

There are so many things in the Bible that God cautions us from, urges us away from, declares sin because of the way they impact our physical bodies and our soul.

- No sex outside of marriage ... why? Because this is a physical intimacy that can leave both physical and spiritual wounds if done outside of marriage.
- Do not murder ... why? Because the physical body is important to God.
- Do not worry ... our anxiety and stress plays such a toll on our physical body. This is the balance of physical and spiritual weighing on each other.

God wants us to take care of both our body and our soul. He wants us to value both our body and our soul.

3. Because everyone is created in God's image, it is our mission and our desire to lead people to know God.

Because you are important to God, you are important to us. All humans being have been created with the same value. We have been created in the likeness of God.

We sin, which is against the nature of God, which is against His likeness. This sin does not cheapen us or devalue the fact that we were intentionally created. It does not lessen the fact that God choose to create us in His image. Even the worst sinner is still valuable to God.

Therefore, since we seek God's will and God's desire, and it is God's desire to be in relationship with His creation ... it is our mission and our desire to lead people to know God. To lead people to accept salvation. To lead people to their redeemer.

If you don't know your Creator and if you want to. I want to invite you to give your life to knowing Him. To seeking Him. To being in relationship with Him. I want to invite you to acknowledge your desire to know Him today through public baptism. To invite Him to begin working in you, to redeem you.

PRAY

COMMUNION MEDITATION

Something here

OFFERTORY – DAVE AND CHRISTY HALL (EVA, FELICITY, GABE, AND HENRY)

IMAGE OF DAVE AND CHRISTY HERE

This is a letter that Dave and Christy wrote recapping where they have been and where they are going.

We've been here for six months. We'd like to review what we're doing here in North Africa.

Where do we live? Our target country—which we call “Liberty”—is unstable (no established government or rule of law). We currently live across its border, where an estimated 2 million displaced people seek refuge. Still, we hope to move to Liberty in 18 months (very tentative), which depends on a variety of geopolitical factors.

Both Liberty and the country next door are almost entirely Muslim. No indigenous church exists in Liberty (only about 40 believers). Our city of 200,000 only has one local believer.

We serve on a team with two other families and two single females (total: 8 adults; 10 children). Our mission is to initiate a disciple-making movement among people from Liberty. We pray for 16,000 house churches there. (Dave coaches Shujea to start a movement in this country. They met with two men who then became followers of Jesus, the first of two large cities. Dave disciples Shujea, who disciples them. However, while we react to opportunities in this country, our focus is still Liberty.)

Our team has goals towards a disciple-making movement among people from Liberty:

- **Pray**. Only God can start movements. We pray together for two hours weekly. And we track different prayer efforts.
- **Develop Skills**. We’re a new team. Most are learning Arabic (30 hours/week). And we study best practices for movements.
- **Outreach**. We have spiritual talks every day with a new person from Liberty. We track this goal—366 for 2016, and

we're currently on track. We meet them in public settings (clinics, coffee shops, etc.). We ask them to start Discovery Bible Studies—hoping for four in 2016.

- **Thrive**. *Monthly, we reflect/adjust how to cope with cross-cultural challenges. Most missionaries don't survive two years, but we hope to sustain long-term ministry.*

PRAY AND TAKE THE COMMUNION