

Human As God Intended

By Bob Mumford

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I am but a beast before thee, Lord.
Great poet-king, I thank thee for the word.
Leave not thy son half-made in beastly guise—
Less than a man, with more than human cries—
An unshaped thing in which thyself cries out!
Finish me, Father; now I am but a doubt;
Oh, make thy moaning thing for joy to reap and
shout!

George MacDonald (1994). *Diary of an Old Soul*, "Nineteen,"
Augsburg Fortress Publishing House. P. 35.

Capacity to Be Known

*What is man, that You remember him? Or
the son of man, that You are concerned about
him? (Heb. 2:6).*

Our human personality is who we are by God's intentional creative act. He created us in the image of His Son. It is through the new birth that we receive Father's gift of *reconstituting* our personality to that which He originally intended. This man or woman is what I call *human as God intended*, allowing us to know and be known by Father. Until our personality becomes reconstituted, we are dead or more accurately described by the Apostle Paul as *dead while yet living* (see 1 Tim. 5:6). We are, for whatever reason, dead to ourselves and others while we are still living and breathing. Apart from the new birth, we *cannot* (Greek *ou dunatos*) have the capacity for the following:

- ✦ We cannot *know* ourselves; consequently, we must create our own *persona* or image.
- ✦ We cannot *be known* by others because that requires transparency.
- ✦ We cannot mature and function in covenantal faithfulness with others, which involves growing up.
- ✦ We cannot *know* the Father because we are lacking the *Agape* of God's own person.

✦ We are incapacitated in our ability to allow Father to *know* us (see 1 Cor. 8:3)

This takes us to a well-known verse that has been distorted, abused, and misused: “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness” (Matt. 7:23). The context of this verse is religious activity without the *capacity* to know and be known. For whatever reason, they failed to do what Father expected or accomplish what He had instructed. In the absence of knowing and being known, we are *incapable* of assessing and embracing Father’s desire and purpose. When we do not have the capacity to know and be known relationally, everything we do becomes programmatic and/or self-assertive. *Knowing and being known* then, becomes a matter of deep assessment and lasting significance. The Kingdom is totally relational, so knowing and being known is far more central and pivotal than we may have understood.

It is very possible and increasingly probable for a couple to be married for many years and yet not know or be known by each other. Intimacy is threatening, so we have learned to function and accomplish our responsibilities without allowing anyone to really know us. Intimacy is based on relational *transparency* and few things are as rare and personally expensive as that. Jesus was very transparent and gave us an insight into His personality when He said, “If it were not so, I

would have told you” (John 14:2). He was showing us His human side with this personally caring statement. While the misperceptions as to who He was and what He was seeking to accomplish increased in complexity and were compounded by religious confusion, the frank and unguarded manner in which He spoke was intended to give assurance when there simply was none to be had.

The Kingdom is purely relational, so the following sets of relational *knowing* come into view:

Me knowing myself
Me knowing you
You knowing me
Father knowing me
Me knowing the Father

The inability or absence of the God-given capacity to know and be known may be due to the outright ugly fact that there may not be a person or personality to know or be known. When we are *dead* in trespass and sin, the personality is an empty lot. The lights may be on, but there is no one home. Someone or something has *stolen* our personality, and there is only one spiritual thief—the one who came to rob, kill, and destroy. It is increasingly self-evident that our society is producing children who are not only incapable of *knowing* but equally incapable of *being known*. For a parent to suddenly realize that they don’t know their child can be a painful and traumatic

experience. It may also be entirely possible that the loss of the capacity of knowing and being known could be the essential difference between *performance* and *heart obedience*.

The Living Dead

*Even when we were dead in our transgressions
(Eph. 2:5).*

Death is the absence of *Agape*. Most of us think of eternal life as an unending period of time in another place. We put an *eros* spin on it by defining it as being with Christ in eternity forever. However, eternal life has more to do with being rooted out of *this* present evil age (see Eph. 1:4).

Paul wrote about two widows, one who fixed her hope on God and another who gave herself to wanton pleasure and was dead even while she lived (see 1 Tim. 5:5-6). One was a giver, the other a picture of the living dead. It is possible to die at 55 years old but be buried at 75 years old—this describes the walking dead. When we turn in on ourselves and become takers, the *eros* prison becomes so intense that it snuffs the eternal life out of us. However, the Eternal Seed of *Agape* remains imperishable giving us freedom and an abundant life as Jesus stated in John 10:10, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

Because we were born with a total absence of *Agape* and were dead in our transgressions, the new birth is a necessity. John 5:42 says, “I know you, you don’t have the *Agape* of God in you.” As a result, we always act for ourselves and end up as a predator or a parasite, a taker rather than a giver. The absence of *Agape* signifies the absence of governed desires; therefore, we are, religious or not, capable of animal-like behavior. Paul identified this in Galatians 5:15, “But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.”

Paul understood what it meant to be the living dead when he wrote “for once you were darkness” (Eph. 5:8). Note that this says you did not *have* darkness, you *were* darkness. Romans describes darkness in very accurate terms. Keep in mind that the following words were written to Christians.

²⁰For ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature and attributes, that is, His eternal power and divinity, have been made intelligible and clearly discernible in and through the things that have been made (His handiworks). So [men] are without excuse [altogether without any defense or justification], ²¹because when they knew and recognized Him as God, they did not honor and glorify Him as God or give Him thanks.

But instead they became futile and godless in their thinking [with vain imaginings, foolish reasoning, and stupid speculations] and their senseless minds were darkened. ²²Claiming to be wise, they became fools [professing to be smart, they made simpletons of themselves]. ²³And by them the glory and majesty and excellence of the immortal God were exchanged for and represented by images, resembling mortal man and birds and beasts and reptiles. ²⁴Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their [own] hearts to sexual impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves [abandoning them to the degrading power of sin], ²⁵Because they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed forever! Amen (so be it). ²⁶For this reason God gave them over and abandoned them to vile affections and degrading passions. For their women exchanged their natural function for an unnatural and abnormal one, ²⁷And the men also turned from natural relations with women and were set ablaze (burning out, consumed) with lust for one another—men committing shameful acts with men and suffering in their own bodies and personalities the inevitable consequences and penalty of their wrong-doing and going astray, which

was [their] fitting retribution. ²⁸And so, since they did not see fit to acknowledge God or approve of Him or consider Him worth the knowing, God gave them over to a base and condemned mind to do things not proper or decent but loathsome, ²⁹Until they were filled (permeated and saturated) with every kind of unrighteousness, iniquity, grasping and covetous greed, and malice. [They were] full of envy and jealousy, murder, strife, deceit and treachery, ill will and cruel ways. [They were] secret backbiters and gossipers, ³⁰Slanderers, hateful to and hating God, full of insolence, arrogance, [and] boasting; inventors of new forms of evil, disobedient and undutiful to parents. ³¹[They were] without understanding, conscienceless and faithless, heartless and loveless [and] merciless. ³²Though they are fully aware of God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them themselves but approve and applaud others who practice them (Rom. 1:20-32).

This description of the powers of darkness is both accurate and frightening. Among other sins, it includes dark hearts, foolishness, greed, envy, strife, murder, deceit, gossiping, slander, malice, hate, arrogant, boastful, disobedience, without understanding, unloving, and unmerciful. These

are all *behavioral*, and every one of us has done them. This is what Paul was talking about when he said that we are dead in our trespasses and sins (see Eph. 2:1-2). It is evident that the uncomplicated act of receiving Christ does not break all of the forces and manifestation of darkness in the new believer. These forces are fueled by principalities and powers that in Greek are called *arches* meaning origin, first cause, or root of things.

Five Arches

There are five powerful *arches* in this fallen world of ours, and each is designed to diminish, destroy, or severely damage our *person/personality*. The five *arches* take authority, energy, and fruitfulness from the Eternal Seed. It is one or some combination of the five ruling *arches* that has left us *incapable* of knowing or being known. The end result of being enslaved or ruled by an *arche* is an increased incapacity, paralysis, or death to our *humanness*. When ruled by the authority of an *arche*, we actually cease or decrease behaving like persons created in God's image and move incrementally and inexorably toward animal and beastly conduct. When this happens, something exceedingly precious has been lost or put to death.

We have to be set free from systems to be able to minister to those in them. This is what God was doing with Paul when he sent him to the back side of the mountain for 14 years! Paul was in a

man-made system and had to be set free so that he could set others free. When Paul was struck on the Damascus road he said,:

*I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads." So I said, "Who are You, Lord?" And He said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. **I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me**" (Acts 26:14-18).*

It took 14 years to set Paul free! Finally, he said, "The gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it*, but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12). Shortly afterwards he went back to the apostles in

Jerusalem and had the confrontation with Peter about systems versus kingdom. His journey back into the system cost Paul many hardships, but it was worth it to see people set free into the real gospel.

There are five major systems that need to be broken in us to be set free to be ambassadors of the kingdom to those who are still stuck in them:

Natural Family. “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:26). Natural family in the fallen world has given us such things as mind games, deception, betrayal, incest, abandonment, brutality, physical and verbal abuse, distorted values, and injury to our person/personality in its process of being formed. Consequently, we are *incapacitated* to know or be known. Luke is not talking about hating the person, but not allowing any strong ties bind us to a system. We must break free and be loyal to the truth, not someone else’s belief system. Family is a vital concept to God. God’s promise to Abraham that “*in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed*” (Acts 3:25) has large and even cosmic significance, but we must break the *arche* of natural family to walk in it.

Culture/Tradition. “You have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition” (Matt. 15:6). Churches live by many

traditional doctrines that people must abide by to get into heaven or avoid hell. God’s reformations are about breaking traditions and establishing truth. In the Jewish culture, the Sabbath was a major stronghold. Jesus happened to be at the pool in Bethesda on the Sabbath when He found a man who had been ill for 38 years and asked him if he wanted to be well. Jesus then told him to pick up his pallet and walk. When the Jews saw this they told the man it was not permissible to carry his pallet on the Sabbath. “For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. But He answered them, ‘My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working’” (John 5:16–17). There is not a demon in hell that can touch the Word of God, but “for the sake of your tradition (the rules handed down by your forefathers), you have set aside the Word of God [depriving it of force and authority and making it of no effect]” (Matt. 15:6 AMP). There are powerful traditions in every culture. Think about the strength of Southern, Muslim, Italian, Hindu, Catholic, or African traditions. To be free, we must follow Paul’s instructions in Colossians 2:8: “See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.”

Economics/Money. “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stand by and be devoted to the one and despise and be against the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (deceitful riches, money, possessions, or whatever is trusted in)” (Matt. 6:24 AMP). One of the greatest struggles in life is the stronghold of finance. Money is a god-like force. It is a system with a heart of greed that distorts personalities. When the *arche* of money rules us, we become workaholics because we never have enough. This *arche* begins to rule our work life, family life, and social life. It forces us into buying things on credit that we can’t afford. It makes people keep up with the Joneses. It causes businessmen to defraud one another. Romans 13:8 (AMP), “Keep out of debt and owe no man anything, except to love one another.” When we are walking free from the *arche* of money, we can trust Father to provide for us. “When I sent you out without money belt and bag and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?” They said, “No, nothing” (Luke 22:35). Kingdom ministry cannot be done for financial reward.

Politics/Tribal Loyalty. “It’s necessary to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29 TM). This is not just politics of human governments, but politics in church, business, clubs, and every other institution. Human beings have an innate need to identify with a tribe. When part of a larger

group such as being an American, people narrow their tribal identity down to being a New Yorker, African, or Italian. Think of the tribal loyalty among the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Catholics. In education it is what school your MBA is from. Social clubs can be just as intensely tribal—think of the power of the Harley nation. Tribal loyalty happens in sports every day—from High School football to the NFL. Popular television shows like “Survivor” are built on tribal loyalty conflicts. There is intense political and tribal loyalty over issues such as the war, the economy, abortion, and drunk driving. Media headlines ask whether armloads of cash from our government will buy tribal loyalty in the Middle East. As we have seen on numerous occasions, when tribal loyalty is crossed, it can lead to violence. As Kingdom citizens, our tribal loyalty must be to God as our Father; we cannot allow this *arche* to rule us. We are part of His tribe, and His agenda is our priority.

Religion/Cultic Loyalty.

Here’s the situation. Earlier, before certain persons had come from James, Peter regularly ate with the non-Jews. But when that conservative group came from Jerusalem, he cautiously pulled back and put as much distance as he could manage between himself and his non-Jewish friends. That’s how

fearful he was of the conservative Jewish clique that's been pushing the old system of circumcision. Unfortunately, the rest of the Jews in the Antioch church joined in that hypocrisy so that even Barnabas was swept along in the charade. (Gal. 2:12–13 TM).

Religion is an arche that distorts everything and everyone. God is not interested in religion; He is interested in His Kingdom. The bondage of religion is well-documented. The book of Hebrews is about not going back to the old religious system. This is what happened to James. He was walking in Kingdom freedom until he allowed himself to come under the religious arche of the “conservative group from Jerusalem.” When we are not going back to religion, we are free to go to those still caught in it to help them get free. Only free men can free others. It seems to be God’s intent to grow us up so that we can be ambassadors with governmental authority. We must be cut loose from the apron strings of mother (church/religion) to move into what Father wants of us—that is Kingdom living in *Agape*. James learned from this lesson and later describes undefiled religion:

Anyone who sets himself up as “religious” by talking a good game is self-deceived. This kind of religion is hot air and only hot air.

Real religion, the kind that passes muster before God the Father, is this: Reach out to the homeless and loveless in their plight, and guard against corruption from the godless world (Jam. 1:26–27 TM).

None of the five *arches* held Jesus. He was free from all of these. Each or any combination of these five can totally appropriate or distort our personality so that we actually become like that which is idolatrous in our life. The end result is that we do not know who we really are, so we lack the ability to know others and ultimately know God and His eternal Kingdom purpose. All five *arches* have one purpose: to prevent us from knowing and experiencing the freedom of Christ taking us to His Father.

Jesus did not come to correct Judaism; He came to say that the religious arche was broken and that the New Jerusalem had arrived. Judaism (the church) was our mother and it is hard to have the cord cut. Every baby cries after leaving the womb. There is no temple in the New Jerusalem because God is the center (see the characteristics of the New Jerusalem in Rev. 22-23). The Kingdom is God-initiated from above; it is not man-made and cannot be controlled. Jesus did not talk to Nicodemus about hell but said you have to be born from above. If we don’t receive our direction from above, we create our own guidance system

and our ambassadorial commission is taken away. We are not sent to hell; we are still His children, but we have to have a course correction back to the Kingdom before we can be sent out as ambassadors again. This commission as ambassador of the kingdom is the most valuable purpose we have. Don't give up your commission for family ties, traditions, money, politics, or religion!

Every genuine personality resents and rebels against performance while, at the same time, craving or pursuing that which is authentic, even if it is expensive and culturally offensive. While teaching at San Quentin State Prison I learned that more than 40% of the inmates claimed an authentic born again experience yet were captive to lifestyles that were in bondage to the five *arches*. A commanding, controlling assertion of one or some combination of the parasitic arches has the *deadening* effect of:

- ✦ Turning our personality inward, moving us toward an *eros* prison
- ✦ Tendency toward animal activity, i.e., food and sex
- ✦ Distorting our personality toward falsification, bullying, or intimidation
- ✦ Stunting our mental, emotional, and spiritual growth
- ✦ Becoming successful without being real or authentic

- ✦ Twisting, distorting, and perverting most or all of our normal expressions of love, money, anger, friendship, etc.

We can be a believer, yet be bound and ruled by the world system and its five *arches* from which Jesus has died to set us free (see John 18:36).

The Lesson of Nicodemus

Now there was a certain man among the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler (a leader, an authority) among the Jews, ²Who came to Jesus at night and said to Him, Rabbi, we know and are certain that You have come from God [as] a Teacher; for no one can do these signs (these wonderworks, these miracles—and produce the proofs) that You do unless God is with him. ³Jesus answered him, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that unless a person is born again (anew, from above), he cannot ever see (know, be acquainted with, and experience) the kingdom of God. ⁴Nicodemus said to Him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter his mother's womb again and be born? ⁵Jesus answered, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, unless a man is born of water and [even] the Spirit, he cannot [ever] enter the kingdom of God (John 3:1–5 AMP).

Nicodemus was captured by a dead and dying system, and his personality seemed to have been dying along with it. The only way to life and freedom, Jesus instructed, was for Nicodemus to experience a new birth, which comes down from above. It is only new birth that offers any hope. Rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic does not bring *internal* solutions. The system in which Nicodemus was ruled could not offer this man a new beginning. It is the new birth that offers the opportunity to know and be known, giving us the freedom to move like the wind with the Spirit.

For Nicodemus to be recaptured by the religious system (see Gal. 1:4; Gal. 5) from which he was set free was clearly *double indemnity*—the end was worse than the beginning! Like the Jews and Gentiles of Romans 1, we *exchange* God's glory for something we *prefer*. In Romans 1:23, Paul said they "exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures." Paul's summary is clear: all have sinned and come short of God's glory. Nicodemus experienced this suggesting he experienced something quite radical. Nicodemus, who was a covenant person, remained outside of that City, the New Jerusalem, whose maker was God. Natural Jerusalem had been notified as being *finished*, and Nicodemus could see Jesus doing things that demonstrated and implied that the

City from *above* was now functioning. Jesus tried to explain the basis for the New Birth—why we *must* be born from above because Christ was the new beginning, bringing forth the new creation (see 2 Cor. 5:17). This caused Nicodemus some serious thought and re-examination of the issues, but he was unable to understand.

Nicodemus was in desperate need of the coming of *Agape* for him to have the freedom necessary to follow Jesus to places like the Samaritan woman at the well. His *arche* of religion simply would not allow him to do so because the Jews had always viewed the Samaritans as less than dogs. Nicodemus had to *receive* something from heaven and the New Jerusalem in order to walk in freedom (see Acts 26:17-18). He had to break free of the *arche* in which he was trapped because it determined his perception and conduct. In order to follow this Jesus, He had to be born from above. The Kingdom from above *requires* us to know *Agape*, walk in freedom, and abide with Father.

Tribulation & Arches

Strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

The word *tribulation* means to be made narrow by pressure. Father uses it as an instrument to prevent us from yielding to the five *arches* that seek to capture and own us in ways that defy and impinge upon the Lordship of Christ. Yielding our love and intimacy to one or several of the five *arches* can be described as an *eros* shift and is the primary cause of entire civilizations having failed and disappeared. Tribulation is part of the *entrance* to the Kingdom dimension. Tribulation, often in the form of crisis, gives us the needed motivation to break the ruling forces of the five *arches* moving us, inexorably, toward Kingdom freedom. “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery” (Gal. 5:1). It is, after all, only when we have known, enjoyed, and are able to communicate freedom that we have freedom to give to others. In Romans 8:19–21 Paul was clear that our mission is to bring freedom to creation:

¹⁹For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Tribulation may be the *love-made-angry* God coming for the sole purpose of making sure that we are free and that we know how to maintain that freedom. It is only in freedom that our true personality can be cultivated into the image of Jesus Christ as our Lord. Our personality must be newly birthed, inseminated with *Agape* and increasingly made whole for us to know the Father and for Him to know us (see 1 Cor. 8:3).

Zoomanity

Don't be naive. There are difficult times ahead. As the end approaches, people are going to be self-absorbed, money-hungry, self-promoting, stuck-up, profane, contemptuous of parents, crude, coarse, dog-eat-dog, unbending, slanderers, impulsively wild, savage, cynical, treacherous, ruthless, bloated windbags, addicted to lust, and allergic to God. They'll make a show of religion, but behind the scenes they're animals. Stay clear of these people (2 Tim. 3:1-6 TM).

This is humanity that acts like an animal. Just because we are believers doesn't mean we won't act like animals. Being a believer is not like white magic that automatically changes someone's behavior. Unfortunately, it has little to do with our conduct. Have you ever bought a cheap piece of furniture and watched the veneer peel off after

it got wet? In a similar way, godly behavior is the basis of civilization, and animal behavior is the veneer of civilization that peels off. In 1977, New York City had a major power outage one night. Many people were injured, homes and businesses were broken into, and 4,500 looters were arrested. No one could believe people's conduct in the darkness. When the lights came back on, they became civilized again.

David, standing in the transcendent beauty of God's presence, said, "So foolish, stupid, and brutish was I, and ignorant; *I was like a beast before You*" (Ps. 73:22 AMP). The animal picture is important. It does matter what kind of animal with which we are being compared. A serpent and a dove or a wolf and a lamb are two different categories; one symbolizes a taker, the other a giver. Psalm 73 has to do with David almost backsliding because he saw everyone getting away with evil; while he was suffering and going through changes, everyone else seemed to be blessed. Then he realized that compared to God, he was completely stupid and brutish and ignorant.

George MacDonald in *Diary of an Old Soul* (1994, Reading "Nineteen", Augsburg Fortress Publishing House. P. 35) wrote:

*I am but a beast before thee, Lord.
Great poet-king, I thank thee for the word.
Leave not thy son half-made in beastly guise --
Less than a man, with more than human cries --*

*An unshaped thing in which thyself cries out!
Finish me, Father; now I am but a doubt;
Oh, make thy moaning thing for joy to reap and shout!*

Each of these lines have depth and meaning. Let's look at each of them.

I am a beast until I love as God doth love. In this statement I saw the mixture of *eros/Agape*. This is what we lost at the fall—I was reduced from God's son, to a beastly thing dead in trespasses and sins. I lost the image of God and changed from humanity to zoomanity.

Great poet-king, I thank thee for the word. This means he is grateful for the word because it is light.

Leave not thy son half made in beastly guise. This is a plea for God to continue conforming him to the image of His Son. He doesn't want to be left where he is, in beastly guise—he's not really a beast, but he acts like one. We may look all big, bad, and mean, but that is not who we really are.

Less than a man, with more than human cries. That is less than a Man—Jesus to whose image we are being conformed. The world is going to be judged by the Man (see Acts 17:31)—everything will be measured by Agape Incarnate.

An unshaped thing in which thyself cries out! Notice this in that passage from Romans 8:22, "We know that the whole creation [of irrational creatures] has been moaning together in the pains

of labor until now” (AMP). The Holy Spirit is inside us interceding when we don’t know how to pray. Christ intercedes in me calling me up to that which the Father wants and intends.

Finish me, Father; now I am but a doubt. He’s confused over the issues of being changed into the image of Christ, but it is His job, not ours to finish us.

Oh, make thy moaning thing for joy to reap and shout! Romans 8:22-23 describes three kinds of groaning: creation groans, we groan, and the Holy Spirit groans. Creation is groaning because it is waiting to come out of something. We are groaning because we know what we ought to be. The Holy Spirit groans as He forms us into the image of Christ. I found it interesting that the author didn’t say leap and shout, he said reap and shout. Reaping comes when you see the authentic and you want it. If we are half-formed, we are half-beast and half-Christlike. The pagan god Dagon was half man/half beast. I am but a doubt is the confusion and conflict we experience in the process of being created in the image of Christ.

In these lines the author was pleading with his Creator to not leave him in the state he was in; God had to finish the job He started in him. That is the cry of every one of us. This cry is not motivated by condemnation or even guilt; it is simply recognizing that we are less than fully formed.

In zoomanity, there are only two things we’re worried about: sex and food. To get them we become a predators or parasites and engage in domination and turf battles. This describes a Christian animal; if he died he would go to heaven, but he lost the image of God and his created purpose. This is indicative of the loss or absence of the image of God. When we lose the image of God, we lose what it means to live by principle rather than instinct.

There are hundreds of Scriptures having to do with animals; I’ve just chosen a few:

- ✦ Ps. 32:9, “Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding....”
- ✦ Ps. 59:6, “They return at evening, they howl and snarl like dogs, and go [prowling] about the city” (AMP). This is referring to the prophets. No doubt you’ve heard a prophetic message that sounded like a snarling dog, “God is going to judge you!”
- ✦ Ecc. 3:18, “I said to myself regarding the human race, ‘God’s testing the lot of us, showing us up as nothing but animals’” (MSG).
- ✦ Jer. 2:24, “Or [you have the untamed and reckless nature of] a wild donkey used to the desert, in her heat sniffing the wind [for the scent of a male]. In her mating season who can restrain her? No males seeking her need weary themselves; in her month they will find her

[seeking them]” (AMP). How is God going to find us? In this case, He’ll find us when we are pregnant out of season.

- ✦ Dan. 4:16 regarding King Nebuchadnezzar who was under the judgment of God, “Let his nature and understanding be changed from a man’s and let a beast’s nature and understanding be given him” (AMP). He then went out in the field and ate grass like an animal.
- ✦ Titus 1:12, “One of their own prophets said it best: The Cretans are liars from the womb, barking dogs, lazy bellies” (MSG). The island of Crete had degenerated into an animal farm.
- ✦ 2 Pet. 2:12, “These people are nothing but brute beasts, born in the wild, predators on the prowl. In the very act of bringing down others with their ignorant blasphemies, they themselves will be brought down, losers in the end” (MSG).
- ✦ Jude 10, “But these people sneer at anything they can’t understand, and by doing whatever they feel like doing—living by animal instinct only—they participate in their own destruction” (MSG). Living by animal instincts is being a pure taker. Living by Kingdom instinct is being a pure giver. They are living on two totally different foundations.

Degeneration

Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let a beast’s mind be given to him (Dan. 4:16).

The implication of de-generation means we are individually losing who we were created to be and as a collective society are moving more and more toward *eros*. We increasingly become parasites or predators. Degeneration moves us toward animal behavior; regeneration moves us toward the image of God.

De-generation is the loss of civilization; re-generation is the implementation of godly behavior. It is the image of God recovered in the new birth with “seed which is...imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Pet. 1:23). Unfortunately, the church is essentially a taker and as the church goes, so goes society. The problem is that the whole society turns in on itself and become predatorial. The image of God has been lost, disfigured, traded, or distorted (Rom. 1:18f). Scripture always degenerate behavior in two distinct categories: predator or parasite and uses such animal terms as:

chicken	leopard	serpent
fox	pig	dog
bear	cockroach	chameleon
worm	scorpion	hyena

A beast is instinctive, cruel, and absolutely determined to have its own way. When we describe a beast, we are describing a predator or a parasite. *Beast* is used 20 times in Daniel and more than 35 times in Revelation. When I taught the book of Revelation in Bible College, I thought the mark of the beast was some kind of a tattoo. But a beast refers to our behavior, not a tattoo or mark. A beast takes authority over the earth.

When Adam sinned, he abdicated his authority and took on the imprint of Belial, which means worthless. Belial himself is an animal and his serpent nature is in us. We have been stamped with the imprint of Belial's nature and that nature was passed down to you and me. Jeremiah 12:8 says, "My inheritance has become to Me like a lion in the forest; she has roared against Me; therefore I have come to hate her." Many of us have seen the animal manifestations that come out of people during deliverance.

Revelation 22:4 says, "They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads." His name on our foreheads means "we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16). It is the mind of Christ that keeps us from degenerating to the beastly realm. Paul saw the glory of God in the face of Christ, and it changed him forever (see 2 Cor. 4:6).

Half-Formed

My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you (Gal. 4:19).

The church is half-formed. It has the theory without the life. Cross the church and she can reduce to beastly instinctive survival; she will bite, claw, rip, and tear. I have seen pastor-eating congregations. I have seen congregation-eating pastors. Religious people bite and devour. You may have known an angel once, but the backbiters ate her wings off. Many of us are still nursing wounds from human bites. If you have a few teeth marks, join the club. Years ago I watched my poodle run my German shepherd off the food dish. He controlled the territory. As soon as the poodle was done eating, the shepherd would come back to eat.

We have to grow up, and there is only one way to do that—Agape perfected. Half-formed means mixture—Christ is not completely formed in us; there is some gold and some brass. It is hard to tell brass from gold. A lot of religious stuff looks like gold but it isn't. In 2 Chronicles 12 when the Egyptians were invading Jerusalem and were about to take the treasures of the house of the Lord, King Rehoboam took down the gold shields and put up brass ones. No one knew the difference.

Galatians 5:19-21 is mixture—Paul was addressing the church in Galatia about being a predator or parasite and living by animal instincts:

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these.

Immediately following this description of being half-formed, Paul shows us that “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:22–23). The works of the flesh is all the brass, but the fruit of the spirit is *Agape*. The marvelous thing is that God doesn’t accept the gold and reject the brass. He accepts us and loves us just like we are. Then He says, “Do you think you could grow up and represent Me properly in this world?” We are a beast until we love like He loves. To be fully formed means the image of God has been given to us and we are functioning out of Kingdom principles not instinct. When Christ is formed in us, He is restoring His image in us. Godly behavior means being fully formed not half made and involves the cessation of being a predator or parasite.

Paul in Philippians 3:13 said, “I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet (half-formed); but one thing *I do*: forgetting what lies *behind* and reaching forward to what lies *ahead* I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Until we love as Father loves, beastly phenomena exhibit in our lives. When we love as Father loves, the instinctive behavior stops and the godly behavior manifests. That is God’s glory. God uses all things working together for good (see Rom. 8:28) to finish forming us into the image of Christ. As we are being formed, the brass is burned out with heat and the gold increases.

There is a difference between an individual beast and a corporate one. The individual beast is a person who acts like a beast. For example, Marx, Lenin, Hitler, Idi Amin, Pol Pot, and Ghengis Khan were individual brutal beasts who used their creative power to form a corporate beast. Hitler formed the Third Reich, Lenin and Khan almost conquered the whole world. Today Africa is dealing with a beast by the name of Joseph Koni—a beastly young man who formed the LRA (Lord’s Resistance Army), a corporate beast that rapes, pillages, and plunders.

For 2000 years, we have presented the Kingdom through half-formed people. We tell them God is love and then curse them to hell. They don’t know what to believe. One atheist author said that the New Testament is the most

contradictory book in the Universe. I thought, of course, he can't see Truth because we haven't allowed him to see it. People don't reject God; they reject the characterization of Him.

We are going to see men and women who are beastly continue raising up new individual and corporate animals. WorldCom and Enron were beasts. They were brutal and ripped, tore, pillaged, and plundered. Just because it had a white shirt and tie on didn't make it any less cruel. It took people's investments with such cruelty that it can't be measured. We are not allowed to live by those laws or the instinctive behavior of the beastly machine.

When Kingdom is presented by those of us who are "half formed," there is strong mixture of godly and animal-like behavior causing Father's reputation to be damaged in the earth. When the Kingdom is presented by those of us who are more fully formed, we understand the reason for the *suffering* in order to be "conformed to the image of Christ." Even Jesus learned obedience through suffering (see Heb. 5:8). "In a word, what I'm saying is, Grow up. You're kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you" (Matt. 5:43-48 MSG).

When the Kingdom is presented by those of us who are fully formed, we understand the reason for the suffering in order to be conformed to the

image of Christ. Where this goes is significant because *Agape* is incarnate: His name is Jesus. He is a giver, not a taker. He is not a beast but has a head and body—a corporate person with all the principles and DNA of God the Father. This Kingdom is uncreated, eternal, and unshakable. We are members of a corporate person that is a giver. However, in mixture it has taken and injured, murdered, pillaged and plundered and put the sword under the chin and threatened people to convert to Christianity or die. Now we have brass and gold, a mixture of *eros* and *Agape*. A corporate personality of the Kingdom of God is a giver, not a taker. The Kingdom is a person, the expression of a Father, not of an animal. He is the Son, and we are the Bride.

Condemned to Victory

Then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death.... When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24-26, 28).

We are condemned to victory. Jesus ruled on behalf of His Father and brought us back to manhood and womanhood. Then, when we are fully human, He turns the Kingdom over to the Father that Father may be all in all. The Church is condemned to victory because He is going to take us to victory alive or dead; we don't have any choice. He is fully a Man born of the Spirit with the principles of *Agape* worked into Him, and He is giving it all back to His Father. Jesus completely represented God as He really is. It is our brass that injures His reputation in the earth. You are God's son, so grow up and live generously and freely toward people the way God lives toward you. Stop acting like an animal fighting over the food dish.

I have no question that things will continue to shake and tremble until every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord. The *manner* is uncertain, but the fact is guaranteed. Christ's Kingdom is uncreated, eternal, and unshakable. When we can love as Father loves (inclusive, not exclusive), the answer to Christ's high priestly prayer comes into view and reconciliation Kingdom-style will not be much of a problem. Father's goal is to release into the earth fully formed sons and daughters of the Kingdom whose brass has been washed (see Matt. 13:38).

King James translates Matthew 5:48 as, "be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect," but

that is not an accurate translation. The Message says, "In a word, what I'm saying is, *Grow up*. You're kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity." We are not an animal; we are God's sons and daughters, so we should not and cannot live by our instincts but out of the *Agape* of God, the Eternal Seed. As the Message states so well in this verse, we are called up to be givers: "Live generously and graciously toward others the way God lives toward you."

It should be our Father's pleasure that governs us. We don't steal someone's watch not because we don't want to or because we don't need one but because by stealing we are saying that our Father doesn't have the ability to provide us a watch. We don't steal someone's watch because it is displeasing to Father. That is a morality that transcends all rules. The law is for the lawless—for animals. I want Father to deal with whatever it is in me that snarls. He just *cannot* leave us half-formed.

"Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). It is the Son Himself who is our hope of getting out of the animal nature. As infusions of His Spirit come into us, the displacement and paternal transformation work begins. God is at work in you, and He is going to finish it. He draws us by the cords of our heart, and in a wise and careful way, He begins to put His finger on the animal instinct of all the self's: self-will, self-esteem,

self-actualization, self-life, self-preservation, self-gratification, etc. In our society even in Christian circles these have been taught to us as positive things. “Be all that you can be” is not the gospel. The gospel is about your utter removal—it is no longer I (the animal) that lives, but Christ the Son. The Son of God in you is the only One who can be blessed and capable of fruit bearing, of being alive to Father. The logical conclusion of the Scriptures is that there is a serious removal that has to take place, a displacement, so that the daily infusions of the Spirit can come and you can be transformed from glory to glory—from being an animal to a *fruit bearing son or daughter made alive to Father*. Self-conscious is the animal instinct; Father-conscious is denying ourselves and doing His will; it is what delights and pleases Him.

Fully Human

Einstein said, “No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it.” If we are on the same *eros* foundation as others, instead of helping them, we could have as many problems as they do. If we step onto the *Agape* foundation, we become problem solvers. It is more difficult to be really human than to be super-spiritual. The problem is that most people have been taught that being human equals sin.

I want to present Christ in a little different way so you can get a feel for His humanity. I hold

to the Nicene Creed in my doctrine, so I’m not playing any games with the doctrine of Christ, but the emphasis on Christ as the Son of God has almost stripped us from understanding Him as the Son of Man. This has been a controversial issue throughout history. Wolfhart Pannenberg (*Jesus: God and Man*, 1968 Westminster, John Knox Press, 2nd ed.) said that Jesus came as the Son of God so that He could become the Son of Man.

Adam was the first man, but he missed the mark that Father intended. Jesus was the second Adam and was fully the Man God intended. He was controlled by *Agape*. Being fully human means we are Christ-like—Son of Man, not Son of God. The Kingdom is relational, so we are relational. The person who is mature and secure in *Agape* is fully human. They are not afraid to be proven wrong or give nine reasons why it wasn’t their fault. They don’t run, hide, or shift blame. They are willing to forget what is behind and wipe clean the slate of hurts and disappointments and start again in a relationship. They are not two-faced but manifest the same face in all situations. They live in a culture of honor and give it without flattery. They don’t compare themselves to others or compete, they simply receive one another.

Being fully human means we are His government ambassador and His “hope of glory” (Col. 1:27). As normal human beings we

have healing in our person, authority over the demonic, and bear His light in a dark world. We are active members of His family and are known by Him and allow ourselves to be known. The idea of being fully human as God intended is very transformational. It requires that we live on the foundation of *Agape*. Paul said, “The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tim. 1:5). The key here is that we be conformed in purpose, thought, and action. A New Testament believer should not see himself as some supernatural spectacle but as God’s intended normal human being. When God created a human, He created him in glory, to have honor, and to rule. God’s intentional man is an unbelievably powerful person.

God is *Agape* (see 1 John 3:8), and it is *Agape* alone that restores us to the image of Christ. There is no other route. Being human as Father intends means we are controlled by *Agape* and have made the governmental shift from external rules to spiritual reality. *Agape* is not fixed, static, or rigid. It can make the hard call. I love you so much that I will confront you if needed. Our relationships are not based on rules but on a manifestation of love. *Agape* is absolute, unyielding, and measurable. When we understand *Agape* we know when we are giving to someone or taking from them. This

is something we can’t really teach; we can only share the fruit of it.

We need to be intentional about being human. *Agape* happens when people can touch you. There is something human that goes on in relationships that is pleasing to Father. God wants to prune us back to what is real. It means we do not perform but grow. Performance is fatal to relationships; being honest with one another is how relationships grow. We like to be with each other because we are human as God fully intended. You can’t hang out with someone who quotes Bible verses. Jesus stands at the door and knocks. If we open, He’ll come in and eat with us, not just join us in a Bible study.

Being fully human requires a catharsis. To be washed is regeneration. Some of us are soldiers who have been seriously injured, but Father is asking us to reenlist again. We are no longer 18-year-old Marines who think we know everything; we’re 30 year veterans who don’t volunteer for anything unless we hear Father’s voice asking us to get back in the fight. Veterans know that there are four seasons—summer, winter, fall, spring—and when we are in spring we are careful to not beat up people who are in winter. When everything is dead, they might not even read the Bible and that is okay. Spring speaking to winter is hard. The heat of summer speaking to fall is also hard. We cannot approach the different seasons in our

relationships as professionals in white coats and rubber gloves. The coat and gloves have to come off to touch someone. That is the process of being a human. There are times when a human doesn't have anything to say.

Observations about Being Fully Human

If “new creation” signifies a human re-created in God's image—man as Father intended—then our concept of being half made would make sense. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. The new creation means our goal is to be a son or daughter of Man, a person as God originally created us. It is a reassertion of the second Adam emerging in the earth. Being a new creation and human as Father intends involves the five manifestations of the Kingdom-priestly function: absorb human failure, love without reward, vocational suffering, intercessory behavior, and extender of mercy. This is not supernatural Christianity; it is what a normal person does. We should have learned these five things the first week we were saved—it is normal and what being fully human is all about.

The implications of the Son of God becoming the Son of Man are far reaching. “Son of God” is used 53 times and “Son of Man” 199 times in Scripture. “Son of Man” is the title Jesus used of Himself; “Son of God” is what other people called Him. The two terms are never used synonymously;

they always have a different inference. Jesus lived as the Son of Man; He was crucified as the Son of God. When we see the Son of Man coming in His glory, He is coming as the human God intended—the new creation. The Son of God emptied Himself and surrendered it all to be made in the likeness of men and become the Son of Man (see Phil. 2:7). He proceeded being fully human out of the anointing He received at water baptism when the Holy Spirit descended on Him. We proceed in that same anointing.

Matthew's illumination of judgment could be based on whether or not Christ has made us fully human:

Then the King will say to those on His right, “Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me” (Matt. 25:34–36).

Being judged according to these actions could mean that we did or did not become human. Clothing and feeding and nursing someone to health is what a normal person does. An abnormal

person is so wrapped in his own *eros* that he can walk by you while you are shivering and hungry and say, “Be warmed and fed.” If we are human beings of God’s intention, we simply cannot do that. Two different foundations have two different standards of normal. On the *Agape* foundation, leaving someone hungry is not normal. We go to the poor not because of 12 scriptural reasons or because we are being so self-sacrificial but because it is normal *Agape* behavior. When we are fully human, this kind of behavior is innate and in the very fabric of our being.

Consider the rather far-reaching implications of Luke’s statement in Acts 17:31, “He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.” The world is going to be judged by the Son of Man, not the Son of God. We are going to be measured by His standard. The question is: how much was Jesus able to make me human? I was dead, and I came alive in the new birth, but was He able to make me human as God intended? We always think that being human was plan B when being human was really plan A. On an *Agape* foundation we are human as God intended rather than dead in trespasses and sin. Some can stand on the *Agape* foundation but never grow in Christ, so they are half-made and will cheat you out of your bubble gum.

We need to see the distinction between human as God intends and humanism, which is an *arche* sustained by intentional willfulness. Rather than have the Lord ruling over them, Israel said, “No, but there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles” (1 Sam. 8:19–20). Humanism is the wrong foundation—it controls, is ugly, demanding, and raw. Being human is expressed in Isaiah 26:13, “O Lord our God, other masters besides You have ruled us; but through You alone we confess Your name.”

Reconstituting Our Human Personality

It is evident that degeneration moves us toward animal behavior. Animal symbols such as pig or cockroach are used to assassinate someone’s character, but the symbol of a redeemed person is a son. Regeneration moves us toward the image of God. *Agape* calls us to live by Kingdom principles not by the instincts of sex and food. Jesus told us not to worry about our food or our clothes because that is what the Gentiles do; we are to seek the Kingdom first (see Matt. 6:25-33).

The Acts 2 community experienced fully renewed personalities and sought to discover how their new life could find expression. Christ has given us life: how *can* we and how *should* we live that life? Jesus asked, “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46).

In the new birth, we have been called out (Greek *ecclesia*) to function on behalf of God the Father. Our function is to embrace in our own life and family the *Agape* paradigm, consequently giving the rest of the hurting world perishing in moral darkness an example and illustration as to *how life should be lived as Father designed it*. This is the idea behind Jesus' instruction in Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." It follows, then, that after they have been discipled and shown the way the Kingdom functions they asked to be baptized. After baptism we are free and responsible to teach the full-orbed concepts of the Kingdom principles of *Agape* and His purpose to reconstitute humanity as He originally designed it.

The new birth was primarily designed to *reconstitute* our human person/personality. The insemination of *Agape* is for the purpose of our learning to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. As Jesus stated, "If you love (*Agape*) Me, you will..." (John 14:15). It is *Agape* that allows us to bring each area of our life under Father's rule. Being reconstituted is a *philosophy of the Kingdom*.

God uses *all things* to conform us to the image of His Son. Nothing is omitted from the category of all things—Father will use success and failure,

victory and defeat, human weakness and strength, as well as obedience and rebellion. What we are saying is that a Kingdom philosophy would expect us to see that every permissive act of God in our earthly life is for the purpose of Him getting to *know* us. As we come to know our God, the actions of being kings and priests begin to emerge, allowing or precipitating that opportunity for us to disciple the nations and instruct them in the ways of God and His Kingdom.

Father's determination to set us free from all five of the *arches* has the single purpose of releasing us from all that keeps us in bondage, distorts our person/personality, and prevents us from knowing others and being known. We are Father's inheritance and this is part of "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18). Tribulation then becomes an act of remedial love from a Father who really does know what we need even when we are not aware that bondage has distorted our person and is fully intent on making us its servant. The end result of tribulation is being "rescued from this present evil age" (Gal. 1:4) or from the *persona* of our own creation. The reward for embracing tribulation is abundant *life* so that we can live in *relational* reality knowing God, ourselves, and others, but more importantly so we can allow Him to know us. Above everything stands His eternal purpose:

“that I may *know Him*” (Phil. 3:10). This is our inheritance, which Christ purchased for us from before the foundation of the world (see 2 Tim. 1:9).

Paul, with pastoral pain and concern, speaks of the loss of our Kingdom inheritance more than three times. This *inheritance* may be determined by the degree to which our personality has been *reconstituted* or conformed to the image of Christ. Father seeks a real and normal person/personality. It is His intention to reconstitute that human personality by the insemination of the *Agape* of God at the new birth. This is accompanied by the incremental displacement of anything that prevents or hinders the growth and development of that personality. Loss of our Kingdom inheritance is serious and age-abiding. Its gain is abundant life producing Kingdom fruit identified as righteousness, peace, and joy. Reconstituting the human personality is the new birth in its proper Kingdom context.

Being Made Alive

And you [He made alive], when you were dead (slain) by [your] trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1 AMP).

The Kingdom or governmental dimension of the new birth needs to be extracted from the captivity of heaven and hell in which it has

linguished for so many years. Ephesians 2:1 is an issue of the loss of the *Agape* of God due to the transgression of Adam and Eve, which deprived us of freedom. Christ died as the result and in doing so He challenged all the systems (religious/political) of this world in order to make us alive and human as God intended and restore to us freedom (see Gal. 5:1). The freedom gained in His life is imparted in the new birth, and when cultivated, it takes us to the Father.

It appears to me to be almost self-evident that the Kingdom *treasure* which was discovered by happenstance is the governmental freedom that Paul guarded with his very life and sought to give to the entire created universe. The *pearl*, then, appears as the other exchanging aspect of freedom that disallows our being captured by *arches* or systems. Christ insists upon our exercising adventure and risk by trading up as the Kingdom expands and Father presents us with new insights into His ever-expanding *governmental* purpose.

God's Gift

God's gift to the world is Himself in Jesus. God almighty came to us as a baby and put Himself in our control. God gives Himself to us freely and unreservedly. We have to learn how to handle this properly because this supernatural intervention is God's gift to the world.

When Jesus ascended, God's gift to the world became you and me. Jesus descended to impart Himself to us and then said, "You are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). "You are our letter... known and read by all men" (2 Cor. 3:2). If we are Father's letter and are not human as God intended, the world has a hard time believing in Him. They read our lives and are not so sure they want anything to do with Him.

You are God's government ambassador. "Christ in you (plural), the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). That has to do with Christ and family—the One New Man. Christ in me (singular) is not the hope. The normal human being whom God is sending is a bearer of light, has healing in his person, has the authority over all the demonic, and has signs of His Kingdom in his person. This normal human being has the authority to break the dominion of darkness. This ambassador needs instruction as to how to walk in the light. He has to know how to use his freedom, not abuse it, which embarrasses the Father and His family. He is an ambassador who wants to bring together all the families in the earth. "All the families of the earth will be blessed" (Gen. 12:3) is not heaven or the millennium; it is a fruit of having disciplined the nations. When families begin to be blessed and there is cohesion in the family, that is human as God intended.

Gifts are intended to meet needs. If I'm crawling across the desert and I haven't had water for 3 days, a prophecy is not what I need. The best gift is the one that is needed. Paul said, "...what I do have I give to you" (Acts 3:6). What do we have that we can give others? *Agape*. Christ and His Bride are preparing for Father to be all in all. Father really likes to give. He loved the world and He gave. He came that we might be human as Father intended.

Book Recommendations

The Collapse of Complex Societies: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed by Joseph Tainter

The Humanity of God by Karl Barth

In Man We Trust: The Neglected Side of Biblical Faith by Walter Bruggeman

Jesus: God and Man by Wolfhart Pannenberg

