



Lesson Guide

Lesson 7 - Sociology: The Divine Imprint

Introduction

During the course of Tour 5 we took a good look at a few of the miraculous ways in which the physical universe declares the glory of its Maker. Now we turn south to consider some of the amazingly detailed reflections of God's nature inherent in the *social* order. According to Dr. Tackett, the evidences of the divine imprint that we see in this realm are even *more* awe-inspiring and *more* indicative of the heart of the Creator than the marvels of DNA replication or the complexities of the blood-clotting system. But for this very reason they also stand closer to the focal point of the *Cosmic Battle*.

Themes

We begin where we left off in Tour 5: with the voice of nature making loud and unmistakable statements about the nature and character of God. "Ask the animals, and they will teach you," says Job, "and the birds of the air, and they will tell you" (Job 12:7, 8). In this case, *order* is one of the overwhelming messages with which creation bombards us. From the atom to the solar system, from photosynthesis to the cleansing tides, from the human body to the design of a chicken egg – everywhere we look we see obvious indications of purposeful design in the things God has made. This, of course, is a serious problem for those who argue that the universe is the product of "random, mindless forces."

The same element of *order* is apparent in the *social systems* God has instituted. Dr. Tackett lays out six that he see in Scripture: family, labor, church, state, community, and the relationship between man and his Maker. But the order we detect in this area is not simply an expression of the Lord's creative design. Instead, it flows out of His very nature. It is a reflection of *who He is*. As Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Triune God embodies *in Himself* the ultimate resolution of the old philosophical problem of "the one and the many." He exemplifies *diversity* within *unity* and the answer to *why* it is "not good for man to be alone" is bound up in the Triune Essence. Relationship, union, communion, intimacy, fellowship, love, and community – these things have existed from all eternity within the economy of the Godhead. Accordingly, they serve as the basis for the smooth and ordered functioning of creation. It is for this very reason, Dr. Tackett argues, that basic social institutions such as marriage, family, and church have come under such heavy attack in our day: just as the world, the flesh, and the devil hate the Creator with a fervent and undying hatred, so they inevitably stand opposed to the social order that bears the imprint of His divine nature.

As this tour unfolds, the principles of order and relationship will be examined specifically as we find them manifested in three of the social systems designed by God: the family, the church, and the union between God and man ("The Intimate Three"). During the course of this discussion, Dr. Tackett will explain how the threefold Trinitarian pattern is reflected in and fundamental to the internal functioning of each of these spheres. Special attention will be given to the subject of the family and some of the pathologies associated with disregard for the divine plan in this crucial area of human life.

Points to Watch For

Statements from video interviewees poignantly highlight the pain, confusion, and deep emotional reactions connected with almost any examination of family life and family-related issues. Similar emotions are almost certain to arise during group discussion. The video segments also present a broad range of popular definitions of “family,” a subject that has the potential to stir up equally diversified reactions from group participants. In addition, Dr. Tackett and his students fearlessly broach the often troublesome topic of *authority* and *submission* within the context of marriage, the church, and other aspects of God’s social design.

Discussion Questions (Pick 3 or 4 for your discussion time.)

(Make these questions your own. That is, don’t just “read” them, but become familiar with them so that they don’t appear as simply an item to get through. Go through them yourself before your group meets and ponder them.)

1) Opening Question: (this may be the only question you need to ask).

- A. Ask your guests to list what they saw on the tour. Here are some of the key items: The heavens, the skies, the animals, the birds, the earth, the fish are all declaring and teaching us about the glory of God and the work of His hands; listening to a chicken egg; God is a God of order, not disorder; the problem of order; order baffles the blind; physical systems and social systems both designed by God; the Divine Pause: "It is not good ...", pragmatic or ethical?; the Triune nature of God; the Divine image stamped upon social order; it's all about relationships; one defines aloneness; two: relationship and intimacy; three: community and fellowship; aloneness contrary to God's nature; the six social systems; the intimate three; authority, submission and unity within the Trinity; authority, submission and unity within the family and church; responsibilities of husbands and wives; love and respect; the cultural attack upon the family; the serious view God has of breaking His design.
- B. Ask your guest to point out the ones that were particularly interesting or striking to them and why.
- C. Ask if this particular area struck anyone else as well.

- 2) Ask if there were other items that they saw that stood out to them. (You may want to read back through the list if you need to.)

What point was Dr. Tackett making with the chicken egg?

(That God’s creation is not only one filled with marvel, but delicate order, consisting of many “systems”. The chicken egg can be seen as one of those incredible “systems”, each of which contains precise elements that work together to fulfill the overall purpose of the system. So, too, will be find the social systems that God has created.)

3) What did Dr. Tackett call the “Divine Pause”? Why?

(This was the “pause” in which God made the statement that it was not good for man to be alone. He then finished the creation by making Eve for Adam.)

4) In Genesis 2:18, God declares that “it is *not good* for man to be alone.” What does Dr. Tackett mean when he says that this is an *ethical* rather than a *qualitative*

statement? How does this assertion become important to our entire discussion of the social order?

(Aloneness is bad in an *ethical* sense because it contradicts the nature of God, who is three-in-one: God Himself exists in community and relationship; man, who is made in His image, is supposed to do the same. This concept forms the basis of a true, God-centered understanding of the social sphere. To go against God's social design is to deny His character.)

5) What do theologians and philosophers mean when they talk about the “Natural Law?”

(The term “Natural Law” refers to an unwritten ethical and moral law which is built into creation and human nature. In effect, this “law” is the stamp or imprint of God's essential nature or character upon the things He has made [Romans 1:20]. The important point to make in this connection is that social institutions such as marriage and the family are not just a matter of cultural convention. Instead, their shape, form, and function are determined by the “Natural Law” which is rooted in the Trinitarian nature of God.)

6) Dr. Tackett claims to see “threes” wherever he looks in creation or in the human social order. How is this “Trinitarian” pattern evident in the structure and relationships of family, church, and the union between God and man? (The “Father-Son-Spirit” is revealed in the family as “husband-wife-child;” in the church as “Christ-leaders-flock;” and in the God-man relationship as “Abba-Lord-man who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit.” In addition, similar configurations of authority, submission, nurture, and honor are manifested in each of these spheres: for example, Christ *loves* the church as a man *loves* his wife; the wife *submits* to her husband as the church *submits* to its Lord; children *honor* their parents as Christians *honor* their appointed leaders; and so on.)

7) In Malachi 2:16, God says that He “hates divorce.” Why does Dr. Tackett maintain that this is *not* simply a *practical* or *pragmatic* statement? What light does the principle contained in this verse cast on *all* of the pathologies associated with the family? With human life as a whole?

(Just as the unity, communion, love, and intimacy of marriage are rooted *organically* in the essence and character of God Himself, so the violent breaking of this bond in divorce is something more than an unfortunate blip in the lives of two individuals – it is an offense against the divine nature and the foundations upon which the entire creation is built. It is a reminder of the fact that “sin” can be defined very basically as a breakdown in *relationships*, whether between God and man, man and wife, or man and his neighbor.)

Note to the hosts and guests: Normally Dr. Tackett includes in each of the tours on social order a lengthy discussion on the pathologies and issues within each social system. Because we had to edit each DVD down to less than one hour, these discussions, unfortunately, were not captured for you. A short discussion of each will be provided on the website. However, the next question will list a few of those issues and pathologies for this first sphere, the family. Pick one and discuss it. This is usually the fun and lively part of the tour! Remember to practice being winsome! As you discuss an issue, try to focus on God's design, the personal or cultural counter to that design, and the resulting consequences.

8) Discuss some practical examples of the intensity of the *Cosmic Battle* as it is being played out in the realm of the social order in our day. How are people in contemporary society manifesting their unwillingness to acknowledge the obvious and look upon the face of God in this area? What should our response be to this situation?

(This can be an opportunity to review some of the family-related pathologies discussed by Dr. Tackett during the course of this lesson: abdication of male responsibility, radical feminism, “rights of the child,” pornography, abuse, homosexuality, and the redefinition of the family. Our response, like God’s, should be one of grief, compassion, and renewed willingness to reach out with the healing message of God’s plan for the social order.)

Tour Guide Notes: Trinity Lesson 7 – Sociology: The Divine Imprint

In this tour and in the ones to follow, we are emphasizing the “roles” within the Triune nature of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We have done so to highlight its imprint upon the social order that He has created. In doing so, however, it is possible that someone may wrongly begin to perceive the persons of the Trinity as separate beings. They are not.

One must never lose sight of the reality that God is One—one in essence and being. He exists in three persons, yet each is fully and wholly God. The Son is fully God, not a separate God. The Holy Spirit is fully God, not a separate being. So God is truly one in essence because each person of the Trinity is one in essence with the other.

But, God is not only one in essence, but He is one in unity. The three persons of the Trinity exist in complete oneness. Each person of the Trinity carries out a unique role and performs unique operations, yet they remain one in essence and one in unity. This is the nature of the eternal God.

All of this is mysterious, yes. But not so mysterious that we cannot comprehend its reality. The “mystical union” that exists within the Triune nature of God has also been impressed upon His creation. I do not understand how the flesh and the spirit within me are joined together. I do not understand how my wife and I have become “one flesh”. I do not understand how the Spirit of God can dwell within me and somehow be united with me. Paul cries out in reference to these matters and calls it a “profound mystery”.

So, when we refer to the Son being in submission to the Father, we are referring to the relationship that exists between the second “person” of the Trinity and the first “person” of the Trinity. When we refer to the Holy Spirit “proceeding” from the Father and the Son, we are referring to the unique operation that the Father and the Son carry out and the implied relationship that exists between the Holy Spirit and the Father and the Son. Yet, we are dealing with one God, one Being, one in essence and unity.

Tour Guide Notes: Where is Education? Why is it not one of the Social Spheres? Lesson 7 – Sociology: The Divine Imprint

I have often been asked why education is not listed as a unique social system, along side the family, church, state, etc. The fact of the matter is, I used to do so.

If you were to pull out some of my old overhead transparencies (does any one use those anymore?) you would find a circle labeled “education” floating around with the six others that still exist today. My justification was that I could identify a clear authority (the teacher) and a clear role of submission (the student). But as time went on, I began to sense that I had “forced” that sphere into “my” picture—primarily because it had become such a major force within our culture today and I wanted to deal with it.

However, when I honestly looked at the places where I had found it in the Scripture, it was obvious that the majority of the biblical references to education clearly fell under the authority of the parents. So, in reality, education was just one of the roles mom and dad played within the sphere of the family. It wasn’t a separate social system at all.

Now, the principle of delegation still applies, so yes, they may delegate that educational responsibility to someone else. But as is the case with every act of delegation, the one who receives that delegation is still ultimately responsible to the one who granted the authority to them and the grantor is still ultimately responsible for how well the one to whom they have granted authority fulfills that responsibility. (I hope that makes sense, because it is vitally important.) The parent is never absolved from the ultimate responsibility of their child’s education and the educator is never relieved from ultimately being responsible to the child’s parents.

Do you get a sense of how warped this is in our culture today? This is not the picture we see played out in our governmental forms of education. (By the way, I can find no biblical support for the position that the state has responsibility for the education of children.)

However, at some point, the role of educating an individual, as they become adult, transfers to the sphere of labor, where the “owner” should have a deep vested interest in the training and education of his workers and the worker should have a deep vested interest in possessing the skills needed to take his place as a craftsman within this critical social sphere. In old language, the apprentice attaches himself to the master to learn the trade. We will deal with the sphere of labor in Tour 11, but in preface to that tour, it should be noted that the owner, manager, or boss, should not take lightly the responsibility he has to make sure his employees have the proper education and training needed to do their work well. Additionally, the young man or woman, who is ready to enter the world of creative work, should diligently pursue the education and training necessary to prepare themselves to be an excellent craftsman.

This is a radical thought in a world that has turned education over to the state.

Appropriately, some may find that their “craft” is indeed a “business” whose “work” is to educate and train customers who come to them and pay money for their educational and training services. Their responsibility is to their customers, to provide a good education in exchange for the payment they receive.

What a novel idea!