



# MONDAY'S MEAL

SUSTAINABLE NOURISHMENT *for the* LONG DISTANCE RUN

## An Educational Vision (part 1)

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**Monday's Meal is a service of The Oaks Classical and Christian Academy. Each meal is selected specifically to feed and nourish parents for the long distance run. If you found it helpful, consider passing it along.**

**"...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds..."  
Hebrews 10:24**

The last several years we have grown accustomed to the haze that fills our skies as a result of wildfires in the summer. While this year has been remarkably clear, for the last couple weeks the haze has settled in, obscuring our view of God's world. Unfortunately, we often live our lives in such a haze. There are seasons in which the purpose of life, the reason for living, is shrouded in a smoky haze; times when it is hard to see our way forward. What am I doing? Why am I doing it? Who am I? Why am I here? Yet God in His grace gives us moments of clarity; instants when the hustle and bustle and busyness of the world seem to stop. I want this sermon to be one of those moments. I want us to return to some things we learned when we studied the opening chapters of Genesis – six years ago! I want to do this both because many of you were not here then and because we are on the cusp of another school year. Our congregation emphasizes the centrality of Christian education – not in the form of Sunday School but in the form of intentional weekly discipleship of our kids. Many of you are investing time, money, and energy in the education of your own kids or others' kids. Many of you are kids beginning yet another school year. We can often grow discouraged in this task. We wonder why we are devoting so much time to this endeavor. The smoke obscures our vision. What is it we are aiming to accomplish?

The opening chapters of Genesis help us answer this question. In these chapters, Moses clears away the haze and shows us the world as it was created to be: a realm of light and life, of joy and delight in the Creator and in one another. In short, Moses casts a vision of glory, glory that is to drive and guide us as human beings. His confidence in casting this vision is that it will resonate with us as human beings. Though smoke often obscures our vision of the good life, still we have a sense of what life is supposed to be like. We have a craving for Eden, a longing for paradise, a yearning for glory – God has placed eternity in our hearts (Eccl 3:11), He has created us in His image with the ability to perceive and long for the glory that once was and yet shall be. And it is this that I want to explore now.

We begin with Moses' declaration that mankind was made in the image and likeness of God. <sup>26</sup>*Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."* <sup>27</sup>*So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

God created us in His own image. Genesis 2 enables us to understand more fully what it means that we were made in God's image. The text alludes to some of our character traits that cause us to long for glory and enable us, by the grace of God, to embrace it when we see it.

**Mind:** First, God has created us rational creatures. We are not merely material creatures. We possess both flesh and spirit, body and soul. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (2:7). Moses reminds us that we are different than the animals. We did not evolve from some common soup as Darwin would have it, but were uniquely crafted in God's own image. Every human being has a soul not merely a body; a mind not merely a brain; there is a "me" that includes both body and soul. Consequently, we can think, reason, evaluate, and weigh evidence. We can identify those plants that are "good for food" (2:9); we can map the world and assess its resources (2:10-14); we can categorize the creatures of the earth (2:19-20); we can recognize differences (20). In other words, God gave us minds; we are rational creatures.

**Conscience:** Second, God has created us moral creatures. Not only have we been created with minds, we have also been created with consciences – with the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, between good and evil. As human beings we are responsible for our actions. Note that when God places the man in the garden, He gives him a calling, a duty, a task (15 - to tend and keep/guard the garden) and forbids him from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (16-17). Both actions reveal that God created man to distinguish between good and evil; to obey God and listen to His Word is good, is life and peace, whereas to eat of the forbidden fruit, to disobey the voice of the Lord, is death. We have a conscience and hence we know what it is to be ashamed or not (2:25). Again, we are not merely animals; nor are we just chemical reactions, nor bags of protoplasm, nor victims of our circumstances. We are moral agents, shapers of history, and changers of events. God gave us consciences; we are moral creatures.

**Imagination:** Finally, God has created us aesthetic creatures. Not only can I think, not only can I make moral choices, I can also dream and imagine. When God created the garden, it was not merely a utilitarian haven, a place of food. He also created it as a place of beauty and gave us the ability to perceive that beauty. He endowed us with an aesthetic awareness, with imagination. Note v. 9 – God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. God created us with an appreciation of beauty. Further, He created us with the ability to recognize what is not beautiful. Note that after God had judged that the man alone was not good and had paraded various animals before Adam, Adam perceived that something was not right (2:20). Adam could imagine something lovely and beautiful and he knew these animals didn't fit the bill. But then God fashions the woman and brings her to Adam and suddenly we see Adam's imagination at work – his poetic soul – "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (2:23). Adam speaks not just words, not just factual data, but poetry, song. In other words, God gave us imaginations; we are aesthetic creatures.

So notice that to be made in the image of God is to have a mind, a conscience, and an imagination. So why did God give us these things? The answer, in part, is that these traits enable us to understand and apprehend God Himself and the eternal realities that exist in Him and in the world He has made. Our minds, consciences, and imaginations are receptors

that enable us to perceive transcendentals – the eternal realities that exist separate from our perception of them; realities that shape the world in which we live. Mind, conscience, and imagination enable us to perceive and appreciate and embrace “glory.” In Western Civilization these eternal realities, these transcendentals, have often been summarized with the so-called Golden Triad of truth, goodness, and beauty. Our receptors, used rightly, enable us to give attention and praise to that which is true, that which is good, and that which is beautiful. ...*to be continued*

