

Sanctity of Life Bible Study

I am Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

By: Barrett Duke

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. (Psalm 139:14 NIV)

Introduction

We often look to Genesis 1:27 to defend the sacredness of human life. In that passage, Moses wrote that human beings are created in God's image. While we do not know all that it means to be created in God's image, we do understand that nothing else in creation has been endowed with this relation to God.

There are other reasons to defend the sacredness of life as well. Three of those reasons can be found in David's great psalm about God's attributes. In the midst of expressing his amazement at who God is, David reflects on the meaning of this for his own life. In verses 13-18, he looks at the beginning of his life and shares three great truths about God's care for him that give us more reason to appreciate the sacredness of human life.

God cares about our beginning (vs. 13-14)

God was personally involved in shaping David in the womb. David expressed the comprehensive nature of God's involvement in his formation by saying that God "created" his inmost being. The basic meaning of the word translated "created" is "get" or "acquire." Franz Delitzsch (Biblical Commentary on the Psalms, p. 350) notes that the word does not mean, "to acquire" in the sense of "purchase" but rather "to put together." God brought together all the necessary components for David's life.

God's involvement in David's development reached to the most remote parts of his life. The word translated "inmost being" is often translated as "kidney" or "heart" in the Old Testament. David used the word here to refer to that which is the most inaccessible in the body. God didn't just shape the outside. He also took interest in the inside. W. VanGemeren (Psalms, EBC, p.838) suggests that this phrase refers to David's spirit. David credits God with both his physical and spiritual development.

David also stated that God's involvement was purposeful. God wasn't simply throwing together a jumble of flesh and spirit. He was carefully crafting a unified whole. David brought out this purposeful activity with his use of the word "knit." Each fiber, each sinew, each organ was woven together

God cares about our beginning (vs. 13-14) continued...

with the others to make David a complete human being. C.H. Spurgeon (The Treasury of David, vol. 3, p. 277) says that God had "put his parts together, as one who weaves cloth, or who makes a basket."

As David considered the wonder of God's care for his beginning, he broke out in praise (v. 14). He used two words to describe his awe at his creation. He said he was "fearfully" and "wonderfully" made. The word "fearfully" is used often to refer to people's response in God's presence. They are awestruck with reverence for God's magnificence. David looked at his body and was overwhelmed with a similar awe. Delitzsch (Biblical Commentary on the Psalms, p. 350) says the word "wonderfully" signifies "to be picked out or separated, to be made in a select, altogether singular, i.e., a marvelously enigmatic, manner." David was amazed at how intricately God had worked to make his body so versatile and unique among all of God's creation.

God cares about our present (vs. 15-16)

In vs. 15-16, David repeated his acknowledgment of God's presence at his earliest moments of life. But the focus is much different in these verses. In v. 13 he said "you created" and "you knit," but in v. 15 he said, "I was made" and "I was woven." Instead of saying that God performed the work, he said, "Your eyes saw my unformed body" (v.16). God is pictured here as one who observes the work rather than as one who actually performs the work. Here David considered God as the one who watched over his development, like a foreman watching over a job's progress, making sure everything goes according to plan.

God's observation didn't just end in the womb. David envisioned God looking far into David's future, where He observed every event in David's life before it occurred. God saw all of this and wrote it down in His book (v. 16). God cared so much about David that He recorded the events of every day of his life even before they took place.

God cares about our future (vs. 17-18)

What was even more amazing to David was that God had a plan for his life. The word translated "thoughts" probably means "plans." David used the word in v.2 when he acknowledged God's knowledge of the ideas he entertained in his mind. Here David stated that God entertained ideas about him. In other words, God had a plan for David's life, and this excited him. In fact, David recognized that God's plans for his life exceeded his ability to understand. He said that if he could count them they would "outnumber the grains of sand" (v. 18).

When we consider that God had a plan for David's life even before David was born, God's role in David's development takes on an even greater significance. God was busy shaping David while he was in his mother's womb to equip him for the task that He had planned for him. God had plans for David, and He was making sure that David would be equipped to fulfill them.

Conclusion

God's intimate involvement with David was not unique. It is typical of His involvement with every human being. E.M. Blaiklock (Commentary on the Psalms, p. 130) comments that "God is interested in the unborn child, a point which necessarily determines the Christian attitude towards abortion. The embryo is His work, and the subject of love and interest of One who sees future potential and value in the first beginnings of life." When one considers that God is this involved with humanity, it is impossible not to respond with profound respect for human life.

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