

The Image & The Likeness of Love

I. The Meaning Being Human

The human cannot live without love.

He is **incomprehensible** to himself, his life is **senseless**,
if love is not **revealed** to him, if he does not **encounter** love,
If he does not **experience** it and **make it his own**,
if he does not **participate** intimately in it.

A. Image —

1. Self-Awareness (**reason**)

Adam names the animals

Knows he is different.

Aware he is a **someone** not a **something**

2. Self-Determination (**freedom of will**)

He is given a commandment to exercise his freedom. An
animal can't do that.

B. Likeness — The capacity to love and to rule creatively from the
root and foundation of love.

True freedom— To live as a gift.

Spirit—Soul—Body = Person

II. We've Lost the Plot

**A. People often ask the wrong questions because they don't
understand the true nature of life. Religious people too!**

Matt 19:3 NKJ The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and
saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for *just*
any reason?"

4 And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He
who made *them* at the beginning 'made them male and female,'
5 and said, "*For this reason a man shall leave his father and*

mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? 6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

8 He said to them, "Moses, because of **the hardness of your hearts**, permitted you to divorce your wives, **but from the beginning it was not so.**

50% divorce for first marriages. Money, irreconcilable, (50%) adultery (25%)

American children are the least likely in the Western world to grow up in the same household as both biologically related parents, with only **63%** living in this situation at any given time.

Couples who actively practice a religion together and pray on a daily basis have a **much lower divorce rate**, which is estimated at around **1-2%**.

However, religious couples who are not as active do not enjoy this low divorce rate; conservative Christians in general were more likely than atheists or agnostics to divorce.

B. People Do Wrong Things Because They Don't Understand the Gift of Life. Abuse rather than Proper Use

The confusion between men and women is not explained by looking at Mars and Venus, but by looking in the Garden. The original plan.

III. Our Father's Message in Our Persons

A. Our Bodies Matter

If we **idolize** the body, we **demean** it. It's no longer a gift, no longer *holy (qadosh, hagios)*.

The prevailing philosophy, "I can do what I want with my body," has led to a cultural landscape littered with broken families, lost human dignity, lonely individuals and deep moral confusion.

Symptoms:

Massive sex tourism

Multibillion dollar pornography industry

Relentless attack on God's plan for the family

1 Cor 6:18 NIV Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. **19** Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; **20** you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

B. Our Bodies Form the Interface with the Physical World

A child doesn't say, "Stop hitting my body, but stop hitting *me!*"
No one would say, "I like you and want a relationship with you, but I don't want to see, hear, touch, smell or have any contact with your body."

The body is the means by which we are **present** to the world and **relate** to one another. The body is the sacrament of the person. "a visible sign of an invisible reality."

C. Our Bodies reveal the Image and Likeness of God:

The male body has a marvelous and unique capacity for union with the female body, and the female body with the male....
Evidently they were made to go together!

Along with this capacity is a built-in desire for such a union, an attraction to and fascination with the opposite sex.

Our bodies are created for relationship, for interpersonal union.

C. We Need Our Bodies to be Like God in this World!

"This-time, she-is-it!

Bone from my bones,

flesh from my flesh!

She shall be called Woman/*Isha*,

for from Man/*Ish* she was taken!

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become **one** flesh. **Shocken G 2.23-24**

Adam recognized in Eve—unlike the animals—an **equal**, a **person** like himself whom **he could love**, to whom he could give himself completely and who could receive and reciprocate his gift to form a union that would **fulfill the very meaning of their existence**.

(v. 24 implies **monogamy**— polygamy is a disorder)

God did not tell Adam and Eve to have a **platonic relationship**, to come to a **meeting of minds**, to be **spiritually in sync**.

He told them to **“be fruitful and multiply”** (Genesis 1:28). They were to come together in a physical union that would signify and enact a personal union on the deepest level of their being.

The love of spouses is **expansive**. The one-flesh union becomes “incarnate” in a mysterious way when a **new human** is born into the world! Their communion grows to encompass new persons equal in dignity and worthy of unconditional acceptance, enabling the spouses to reflect even more fully the mystery of God’s own love.

D. The Message in our Bodies— *Inscribed in every person:*

I am **capable of**, and **made for**, an interpersonal union in which I **freely give myself** to another in love and **receive love** in return.

The human body says, **“I am a gift**. I am capable of giving myself freely to another person in an intimate union of love.”

An alligator can mate, but it cannot make a gift of self to another in an intimate union of love.

God is a Communion of Persons, a Trinity in which the Father, Son and Holy Spirit pour themselves out in an eternal exchange of self-giving love.

The body, and it alone, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It was created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden since time immemorial in God.

Man, the only creature on earth which God willed for himself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self.

John 15:9 NKJ “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. **10** If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

11 “These things I have spoken to you, that **My joy** may remain in you, and *that* **your joy** may be full. **12** This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.

Applications:

Can your **marriage** or **other relationships** be a reflection of the love of the Trinity?

Are there ways to live as a gift that are **not sexual**, but still bring about a communion of persons?

Why was Jesus unmarried? Why did Paul live as a celibate?

Have you felt **used** rather than **loved**? Do you ever pray, “God **use** me?” Would you rather pray, “Father, **love through me**?”

Can you relate to the experience of **being loved** and treated with proper human dignity?

Lots of stuff to delve into:

Solitude — Unity — Nakedness

IV. Disruption & Restoration

The ***disorders*** brought about by the Fall:

Shame: disruption between spirit & body. Their bodies were no longer transparent, revealing the true inner person, but now a distraction which can become an object rather than a gift.

This is where iniquity, a disorder in our desires, enters. It causes humans to desire that which is harmful, to dishonor the glory of others and themselves.

Fear: disruption in relating with God (Love)

Conflict: disruption between Persons meant to be mutual gifts.

Work: disruption between Man and the creation

Death: disruption from the ETERNAL life of God

THE PROMISE: *God's Inextinguishable Mercy!*

Oceans of Mercy gushed from the Cross to cover the whole world. A Fountain of Life drawn from Immanuel's veins!

HEALING OF OUR SOULS — Isa 30:15

In Returning and Rest — Salvation (return to freedom)

In Quietness and Trust — Might (of a warrior)

Come to Me — I will Give You Rest

Matt 11:28 NKJ ***Come to Me***, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light."

True freedom is the ability to unite your whole being in choosing what is good, without any constraint.