

AUGUST 23, 2020

LESSON 12

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD

THE CREATIVENESS OF GOD (2 CORINTHIANS 5:17)

Have you ever gone to the grocery store, shopping for a loaf of bread, only to be bombarded with all the varieties? It's not as simple as getting either white bread or wheat bread. And that's because there's split top honey wheat bread, Essential Grains 100% whole wheat bread, slide protein bread (whatever that is), extra-thin sliced white bread, French toast bread, sourdough bread, pumpernickel bread.

And then, it's time to move on to the ketchup aisle...

Physical Creation

Our world brims with variety. We can see it everywhere we look. The sheer mind-boggling number of colors, animals, fruits, vegetables—and everything else—amazes and delights us. And it's all a reflection of the creativeness of our creator, God.

Colors

Our world is not simply black and white. But if it were, we would still be able to see a tremendous amount of variety, because the human eye can distinguish between more than 500 shades of gray. We can see as many as 10 million colors in the world. But that doesn't mean those are all in existence: there are billions of shades and mixtures of the primary colors, red, yellow, and blue.

Animals

Consider the animal kingdom. There are over 10,000 species of birds, an estimated 34,000 species of fish, and over 900,000 different kinds of insects. There are nearly 40 species of cats, but only one species of dogs. However, there are over 360 recognized breeds of dogs that have been developed by humans over the centuries.

Fruits and Vegetables

Let's go back to the grocery store. Want some fruit? Not only do blueberries, strawberries, cantaloupe and apples look quite different, but they taste nothing alike. And if you're looking for a vegetable to go with your meal, you can choose between broccoli and cauliflower, potato or sweet potato, collared greens or spinach, eggplant, beets—and over 1,000 other varieties of veggies that all look and taste so uniquely different from each other.



In the mid-17th century, Isaac Newton determined that there are seven colors in the rainbow. Red, yellow, and blue are primary colors, which means they cannot be produced from other colors, but can be mixed to produce the rainbow's other colors, including orange, green, or shades of purple (indigo and violet).

Eternity in Our Hearts

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, **he has put eternity into man's heart**, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

—Ecc1 3:11

Humanity

And then there's all of us. *Homo sapiens* are the only humans in existence. We all ultimately descended from the same original parents, Adam and Eve (see Acts 17:26), but throughout the millennia, we have become various races of the one human race. We have different skin color, use different languages, have unique cultures, and live all over the globe. Of the 7 billion people on the planet, no one has exactly the same DNA or fingerprints.

God, who made all this variety—and far, far more—is the genius behind all of this. What the world's variety shows us is God's creativity. When we create and innovate, build and construct, we are simply imitating our Heavenly Father, who made the universe with such amazing variety that it overwhelms our senses.

Take music, for example. What do you enjoy listening to? I love Classical music, but there are numerous varieties of it. Other separate genres include rock, country, bluegrass, jazz, hip hop—just to name a few.

We all have different experiences that shape us throughout our lives, molding our personalities, developing our talents, and making us unique. And yet, we also have, at our core, the same fundamental physical needs for food, clothing, and shelter. We also crave the same basic psychological needs, including love, acceptance, and a sense of purpose.

Spiritual Creation/Recreation

And here's something else we all have in common: we're all sinners in need of forgiveness. This means we all have the same spiritual needs, including God's forgiveness, acceptance and guidance (Jer 10:23).

God isn't finished with us quite yet, because spiritually, God has continued his creative work. While everything in the world was made in six days (Ex 20:11), God has extended his creation by recreating us spiritually in the image of his Son (Rom 8:29). According to 2 Cor 5:17, "anyone [who] is in Christ... is a new creation." When we sinned, we destroyed and corrupted ourselves spiritually. But through the sacrifice of Jesus, we can

put off the old self with its practices and...put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator (Col 3:9–10).

When Paul wrote, "The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor 5:17), he was talking about our new life in Jesus (2 Cor 5:21). He enabled us be "born again" (John 3:3) by his sacrifice on the cross. When we are baptized for the remission of our sins, we rise to "walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4). And it doesn't stop there, as "our inner self is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor 4:16).

