

Study in Genesis: Creational Norms

Written by Calvin Fox
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Part of the goodness of Creation is its structure. God has built certain Norms into His work, Norms which we must recognize and respect. We are called to be conservationists of Creation, i.e.- to conserve these creational Norms.

Creational Norms are God-given ordinances established at the beginning of Creation. They are incorporated in authoritative Special Revelation (the written Word of God) as well as confirmed by General Revelation found in Nature itself. The Norms are codified in the Torah, God's Law.

I. The General Principle: "You must distinguish"

Leviticus 11:47 You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean, between living creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten.'

Leviticus 20:25 You must make a distinction between clean and unclean animals and between unclean and clean birds. Do not defile yourselves by any animal or bird or anything that moves along the ground-those which I have set apart as unclean for you.

Leviticus 19:19 Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed. Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.

Deuteronomy 22:9 Do not plant two kinds of seed in your vineyard; if you do, not only the crops you plant but also the fruit of the vineyard will be defiled. 10 Do not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together. 11 Do not wear clothes of wool and linen woven together.

II. Applying the General Principle

A.) Distinguish between Human Beings and all other Animals

GEN 1:26 God said, "let us make Man [= "adam" (ahh daahm) = Humanity] in our image, in our likeness and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Though they share some similarities, the Theory that human beings and all other animals and living things are equal in any way and have equal rights is without any Biblical Warrant and is a

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vacuous and very objectionable idea.

B.) Distinguish between Human Males and Females

Gen. 1:27 God created male and female ...28 God blessed them and said to them, "be fruitful and increase in number

Lev 18:22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.□

Deut.22:5 A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the LORD your God detests anyone who does this

1 Cor. 11:14 Does not nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace for him

We need not be legalistic about specific apparel. The "Norm", what is natural, is the difference between men and women. That difference must be respected and not denied or "covered up". Gender distinction must be maintained. Cross-dressing or attempts by males and females to be unisexual must be avoided. (This is relevant to the issue of homosexuality, but the issue here is different than that)

C.) Distinguish between Gender Roles

Genesis 3:16□ To the woman He said,□ "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;□ in pain you shall bring forth children.□ Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

Genesis 3:17□ And to Adam he said,...cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground,□□

These roles (female: painful child bearing and male: arduous labor to provide) are included in the consequences of the Fall and are descriptive not prescriptive. At Creation, before the Fall, husbands and wives together were to multiply, occupy the Land and work cooperatively to cultivate it. These are the normative, expected roles, not essential in every case.

□ **III.□ Second General Principle: Separation** The process of creating order out of chaos involved separation, division, establishing boundaries -1:4, 6,7,14,18

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.□ 3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning-the first day.□ 6 And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." □ 7 So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so.□ 8 God called the expanse "sky." □ □ And there was evening, and there was morning-the second day. 9 And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. 10 God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. ETC

IV.) Application the Principle of Separation:

A.) Reproduction according to "kinds"-

Lev 18:23 And you [human men] shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it: it is perversion.

Lev.19:19 Do not mate different kinds [miyn=species] of animals.

Genesis 1:11 God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the

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land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. 12 The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 24 And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so.

cf-Genesis 6:19 And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. 20 Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. 7:3... male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. 7:1-2

B.) Separation of Israel from Unclean Foods and Pagan Culture

Lev.20:22 "You must be sure to obey all my statutes and regulations, so that the land to which I am about to bring you to take up residence there does not vomit you out. 20:23 You must not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am about to drive out before you, because they have done all these things and I am filled with disgust against them. 20:24 So I have said to you: You yourselves will possess their land and I myself will give it to you for a possession, a land flowing with milk and honey. I am the Lord your God who has set you apart from the other peoples. 20:25 Therefore you must distinguish between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean, and you must not make yourselves detestable by means of an animal or bird or anything that creeps on the ground – creatures I have distinguished for you as unclean. 20:26 You must be holy to me because I, the Lord, am holy, and I have set you apart from the other peoples to be mine.

The Old Testament is replete with such warnings to Israel, especially about the dangers of intermingling and intermarrying with Heathen (non-Israelite) people.

C.) Separation of Christians from Beliefs, Values of Unbelievers

2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." 17 "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. See Rom.16:17; 1Cor.5:9-13,15:33; 2Cor.6:14; Eph.5:5-11. 1

IV.) Third General Principle: Sovereign Spheres

Beside distinctions, separations, boundaries and norms in Nature, God also created the Ordinances or "Spheres" of Marriage, Labor (Business), the Sabbath (Church and Worship) and Civil Government. These Spheres or Institutions are creational, prior to Israel and the Mosaic Law, and, therefore, universal- for all people everywhere at all times. Each Sphere is sovereign under God. It has its own set of boundaries.

Summary

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If the Bible is our authority in all matters of Faith and Practice and we want to obey the Word of God, we must include the authority of all these Creational Boundaries (Divisions and Separations), Norms and Institutions and honor God by seeking to obey them. This teaching is missing in contemporary churches, but is a distinctive of Neocalvinism [see Articles on this Website]