



Lesson Guide

Lesson 7 - Sociology: The Divine Imprint

Introduction

During the course of Tour 5 we took a good look at a few of the miraculous ways in which the physical universe declares the glory of its Maker. Now we turn south to consider some of the amazingly detailed reflections of God's nature inherent in the *social* order. According to Dr. Tackett, the evidences of the divine imprint that we see in this realm are even *more* awe-inspiring and *more* indicative of the heart of the Creator than the marvels of DNA replication or the complexities of the blood-clotting system. But for this very reason they also stand closer to the focal point of the *Cosmic Battle*.

Themes

We begin where we left off in Tour 5: with the voice of nature making loud and unmistakable statements about the nature and character of God. "Ask the animals, and they will teach you," says Job, "and the birds of the air, and they will tell you" (Job 12:7, 8). In this case, *order* is one of the overwhelming messages with which creation bombards us. From the atom to the solar system, from photosynthesis to the cleansing tides, from the human body to the design of a chicken egg – everywhere we look we see obvious indications of purposeful design in the things God has made. This, of course, is a serious problem for those who argue that the universe is the product of "random, mindless forces."

The same element of *order* is apparent in the *social systems* God has instituted. Dr. Tackett lays out six that he see in Scripture: family, labor, church, state, community, and the relationship between man and his Maker. But the order we detect in this area is not simply an expression of the Lord's creative design. Instead, it flows out of His very nature. It is a reflection of *who He is*. As Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Triune God embodies *in Himself* the ultimate resolution of the old philosophical problem of "the one and the many." He exemplifies *diversity* within *unity* and the answer to *why* it is "not good for man to be alone" is bound up in the Triune Essence. Relationship, union, communion, intimacy, fellowship, love, and community – these things have existed from all eternity within the economy of the Godhead. Accordingly, they serve as the basis for the smooth and ordered functioning of creation. It is for this very reason, Dr. Tackett argues, that basic social institutions such as marriage, family, and church have come under such heavy attack in our day: just as the world, the flesh, and the devil hate the Creator with a fervent and undying hatred, so they inevitably stand opposed to the social order that bears the imprint of His divine nature.

As this tour unfolds, the principles of order and relationship will be examined specifically as we find them manifested in three of the social systems designed by God: the family, the church, and the union between God and man ("The Intimate Three"). During the course of this discussion, Dr. Tackett will explain how the threefold Trinitarian pattern is reflected in and fundamental to the internal functioning of each of these spheres. Special attention will be given to the subject of

the family and some of the pathologies associated with disregard for the divine plan in this crucial area of human life.

Points to Watch For

Statements from video interviewees poignantly highlight the pain, confusion, and deep emotional reactions connected with almost any examination of family life and family-related issues. Similar emotions are almost certain to arise during group discussion. The video segments also present a broad range of popular definitions of “family,” a subject that has the potential to stir up equally diversified reactions from group participants. In addition, Dr. Tackett and his students fearlessly broach the often troublesome topic of *authority* and *submission* within the context of marriage, the church, and other aspects of God’s social design.

Discussion Questions

- 1) **What did you see on this tour? Were any of these points of particular interest to you? Why?**
- 2) **What point was Dr. Tackett making with the chicken egg?**
- 3) **What did Dr. Tackett call the “Divine Pause”? Why?**
- 4) **In Genesis 2:18, God declares that “it is *not good* for man to be alone.” What does Dr. Tackett mean when he says that this is an *ethical* rather than a *qualitative* statement? How does this assertion become important to our entire discussion of the social order?**
- 5) **What do theologians and philosophers mean when they talk about the “Natural Law?”**
- 6) **Dr. Tackett claims to see “threes” wherever he looks in creation or in the human social order. How is this “Trinitarian” pattern evident in the structure and relationships of family, church, and the union between God and man?**
- 7) **In Malachi 2:16, God says that He “hates divorce.” Why does Dr. Tackett maintain that this is *not* simply a *practical* or *pragmatic* statement? What light does the principle contained in this verse cast on *all* of the pathologies associated with the family? With human life as a whole?**

Note to the hosts and guests: Normally Dr. Tackett includes in each of the tours on social order a lengthy discussion on the pathologies and issues within each social system. Because we had to edit each DVD down to less than one hour, these discussions, unfortunately, were not captured for you. A short discussion of each will be provided on the website. However, the next question will list a few of those issues and pathologies for this first sphere, the family. Pick one and discuss it. This is usually the fun and lively part of the tour! Remember to practice being winsome! As you discuss an issue, try to focus on God’s design, the personal or cultural counter to that design, and the resulting consequences.

- 8) Discuss some practical examples of the intensity of the *Cosmic Battle* as it is being played out in the realm of the social order in our day. How are people in contemporary society manifesting their unwillingness to acknowledge the obvious and look upon the face of God in this area? What should our response be to this situation?**