

Understanding People - Chapter 8 - People are Rational pp 122-141  
Class Notes - Students

Review:

God made people in His image and therefore we reflect certain characteristics of Him including being persons.

As personal beings made in the image of God, humans are relational. We have great longings to love and be loved.

As personal beings humans also long to have significance to their lives. We desire to have an impact in life, i.e., to have our lives count for something. We desire to have purpose in life.

Our longings may be classified as casual (issues of convenience, comfort and preference), critical (issues which if unmet leave us hurt or grieved), and crucial (issues that drive us to dependence upon God).

We are finite beings who are dependent on our Creator for everything needed to sustain life, both physical and personal .

1. The ultimate root of all personal problems is sin. *A broken relationship with God and making something other than knowing God a higher priority. pp 123.*

*“Self-awareness” (Gesalt), “insight” (psychodynamic therapy), “realization” (existential therapists), “new habits” (positive thinking, New Age, etc.) may be helpful to some people in improving their outlook and behavior, but none of them individually or together are enough to tackle the real problem, for:*

*trading one sinful practice for a more socially acceptable one still leaves the person in sin.*

The remedy is having the relationship with God restored and set right. This requires repentance, trust and obedience. pp 126-130. This also then enables proper relationships with other people. *We must move toward a deeper, worshipful, intimate enjoyment of God & a compassionate, penetrating, rich, involvement with others - pg. 124, Repentance is a change of mind resulting in a change of direction. Trust is faith in God and His promises. Obedience is the key to fulfillment and joy in God.*

2. Crabb describes a healthy person as someone with a deep relationship with God that enables them to have deep involvement with other people.

*They are open and vulnerable without being protective or defensive. “They don’t retreat, they increase their level of involvement.” They understand the fallen nature of man and are involved in the battle against it. “They experience marred joy - life in a minor key “- yet with great anticipation of the future restoration. They are hopeful, but realistic. “They are not afraid of confusion” They struggle and fall, but get back up and keep going. They experience emotional turmoil, but do not let that control them. They are mature enough to both give and receive help.- pp 125-126.*

3. A shallow view of sin has resulted in a wrong definition of sin and with it a strategic failure in being able to deal with its depths - pp 126-130

*Sin must be understood in terms of total depravity - it affects every area of the person. Sin is more than wrong behavior. It also includes false beliefs and wrong attitudes which arise from being alienated from God. These are often hidden by spiritual blindness. Turning people from bad behavior is not enough. Motivations, perceptions of reality and patterns of thinking must also be changed - pg. 128*

*Note: Crabb is not discounting memorizing and meditating on the Scriptures. He is advocating making sure that Scriptural truths are applied to expose and change the deceitful heart and the darkened mind*

4. The rational circle describes the ability of man to think/reason based upon his beliefs. A full rational circle reflects thinking that is objective and accurate based on true beliefs. Anything less represents the degree of faulty thinking based on false premises and beliefs.

*Foolishness is believing the lie that a better life can be found through independent self-expression and determination. We rationalize our actions as good if they result in what we think is a better life - more happiness, less pain for ourselves - regardless of sin and reality. Clear thinking is based in understanding that life is in God, not oneself. - pp 130-133.*

5. Change comes through the renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2). Outward (behavioral) change without inner (belief system) change is worthless. Crabb separates the belief system into two categories (pp 133-138)

Images (R-2): A relatively fixed mental representation of how you think things really are. An image is how you view reality.

Beliefs (R-1): Belief deals with the system the mind works out to try and live within the image system and still satisfy the heart's desires.

*Image deals with your perceptions of the world.*

*Belief deals with how you think you can make your world work for you*

*A renewed mind involves a shift from images and beliefs that preserve independence to those that require dependence on God.*

6. It is important to recognize that we are both "victims and "agents" (pp 139 - 140) for opportunities come with understanding each truth

Victims: Each of us are victims of the sinful practices of others (*Adam's sin is passed on to us - Romans 5 and the sins of others negatively affect our lives directly and indirectly*). Exploring past victimization can be helpful only if it brings us back to the present to deal with our role as "Agents."

Agents: Each of us choose how we will respond to our past and present circumstances and experiences based on our images & beliefs.

Exposure of wrong beliefs prompts repentance. The sins that others have committed against us give us the opportunity for forgiveness. Using past victimization as an excuse for current behavior is to continue in sin (1 Cor 10:13).