

Healing the Culture: Defining Happiness and the Four Levels of Happiness

- Review: What have we covered thus far? What have we done and where are we going with all of this?
 - Main theme this year: healing the culture
 - DISCUSSION: What is culture? What is it exactly that needs healing? What are some of the specific elements of culture? (youth group discussion from 9/27)
 - Culture is a complex whole
 - Culture is acquired by man as a member of society
 - Culture is comprised of:
 - Knowledge
 - Belief
 - Art
 - Morals
 - Law
 - Custom
 - Capabilities
 - Habits
 - What is *central* to *every* culture? People!
 - And so, after your discussion on what is culture, we moved on to what are people, what is person, what *defines* person
 - This part of our discussion so far concluded with our three-part definition of “person,” which is:
 - a being possessing an intrinsic guiding force...
 - a being: an individual object that actually exists
 - possessing: *actual* or *potential* (that is, the *capacity* to act)
 - intrinsic guiding force: there is *something* within us that compels us to move forward; this *something* is either genetic or spiritual or both
 - that compels it toward fulfillment/perfection...
 - through perfect, infinite, unconditional Beauty, Goodness, and Truth
 - This definition holds true for each and every single being of human origin, so we can just as well call the Holy Spirit a person as a human embryo a person
 - This definition distinguishes persons from every other individual object that exists in the entire universe; this definition describes perfectly why humans are different than animals, plants, chairs, colors, sounds, and every other individual object in reality
 - After defining “person,” in order to be on guard against any abuses against the God-given dignity of any person, we needed to make a Critical Assumption, which is:
 - Because of the countless abuses against human personhood all throughout history, to keep history from repeating itself, we must assume that *every being of human origin must be considered a person*
 - In other words: when in doubt, lay out → when in doubt about whether or not something of human *origin* (such as a zygote or a fetus) is a human *person*, we must err on the side of life
- And now, we move on to defining happiness and exploring the four levels of happiness

- Why is this important? What is the connection between “person” and “happiness”?
 - How we treat other persons (and how we treat ourselves) depends on how we understand happiness and what we think happiness means?
 - Example: if we think that happiness is pornography, then we are not treating others as persons but as mere objects.
 - Example: if we think that happiness is eating chocolate all day, every day, and we eat nothing else, then we are not treating ourselves as persons but as a hungry-hungry-hippo that must keep feeding.
- DISCUSSION: What is happiness? What makes us happy and why?
- Definition of happiness: fulfillment of desire
- Four levels of happiness
 - One: Immediate Gratification
 - Objective: maximize pleasure and minimize pain
 - Characteristics
 - Obligation to self alone
 - No desire for common, intrinsic, or ultimate good
 - Lack of self-worth; fear of tangible loss/harm; boredom
 - Gratification: immediate (immediately had; immediately gone again)
 - Two: Personal Achievement/Ego
 - Objective: Ego centeredness; be better than; gain advantage
 - Characteristics
 - Promotion of self is primary
 - Personal power and control are crucial
 - Jealousy, contempt, and cynicism
 - Isolation and loneliness
 - Fear of failure
 - Gratification: short term (soon to be had; soon to be gone again)
 - Three: Good Beyond the Self
 - Objective: do good beyond self
 - Characteristics
 - Principles include justice, love, and community
 - Intrinsic goodness is an end in and of itself
 - Decisions are focused on the greater good
 - Gratification: long term
 - Four: The Ultimate Good
 - Objectives
 - Participation in giving and receiving is ultimate meaning
 - Goodness, ideals, and love
 - Characteristics
 - Good is ultimized
 - Principles include perfect Beauty, Goodness, and Truth (the Transcendentals)
 - Gratification: eternal
- DISCUSSION: Revisit the list of what makes us happy and why. On which Level of Happiness do each of these items belong?