



## THE ABSOLUTELY INDISPENSABLE 6-FOLD ACTIONS OF LIFE

God could have made the world instantaneously, or He could have done it over the course of six billion years. He could have taken six seconds, or six millennia. The fact that He chose to take six days is significant, for His sole declared purpose in doing so was to set a pattern for man, His image. The world was designed for man, and God's actions in building up the world are prototypes of human actions in continuing to build up and glorify the world, transforming the raw materials of the garden and the rest of the world into the perfected beauty of the New Jerusalem, from glory to glory.

God's original creation of the heavens and the earth out of nothing is unique, and man cannot copy it. (We say "out of nothing" because God did not make the world out of His own being or out of any already-existing stuff.) From that point on, however, God acts in ways that man can copy. He brings light to darkness, gives form to the shapeless, names the unnamed, and apportions the restructured world to various kingdoms. Man as God's image copies these acts of illuminating, restructuring, naming, and distributing. We can summarize God's activity in Genesis 1:2-2:4 as a five-fold sequence of actions.

First, God takes hold of creation. This is expressed by the phrase "And God said." God does not need hands to work, and He lays hold on things solely by the power of His Word and of His Spirit, who is the

breath or out-speaking of His inner Word. Man images this aspect of the Divine work when he lays hold on any created thing in order to begin to work with it. Like God, man cannot work with anything until he has names, words, to put on what he is doing. God thinks and then puts forth His Breath to perform His actions. Similarly, the image of God thinks and then acts.

Second God restructures the creation. This is particularly in focus in the first three days of the creation, wherein God *separates* light from darkness, waters above from waters below, land from sea. The world, already glorious in that it reflects God's glorious Person, is rendered even more glorious in the course of time by being broken down and restructured, so that at the end of each stage the world is "good," with still greater goodness to come.

Men continually and inescapably image this restructuring action of God. If I remove a book from my shelf, I have broken down the original form of my room and restructured it. If I dig up ore from the ground and heat it so as to separate gold from dross, I am restructuring. This act of restructuring is what we generally think of as work in the strict or narrow sense.

Third, God distributes His work. This is particularly apparent in the last three days, during which God gives the firmament to the sun, moon, and stars, the

sea to fishes, the land to birds and animals, and all things to men. This act of distributing follows naturally after the work of transforming. After I have made something I can do one of three things with it. I can keep it for myself, I can give it away, or I can trade it for the work of someone else.

Fourth, God evaluates His work. This noted repeatedly by the phrase “God saw what He had made and it was good,” climaxing at the end” “God saw all that He had made and it was very good.” Evaluation always comes before consumption or full enjoyment. Before eating there is tasting. When a mother makes a soup and distributes a bowl to each member of the family, the first taste elicits and evaluation. “Well, how do you like it?” she asks. That question comes not at the end of the meal but after the first sampling of it.

Fifth, God enjoys His work. God’s sabbath rest on the seventh day was not apart from the creation; it was in it. God’s temple is always set up in the midst of the world--think of the Tabernacle in the center of the Israelite camp and the Temple in the center of the land of promise. Having tasted His work and finding it good, God relaxed and enjoyed it. Similarly, if the soup tastes good, we enjoy a whole bowl of it, and maybe a second helping.

These five simple actions are as ordinary as they are inescapable. It is, or should be, encouraging and invigorating to realize that imaging God does not necessarily involve performing great, earth-shattering acts. It can be accomplished simply through carrying out ordinary activities.

For instance, when I give you a glass of water:

1. I *take hold* of a glass in the cabinet.
2. I *restructure* the cabinet by removing the glass, separating it from the rest.
  - 1a. I also take hold of the faucet.
  - 2b. I separate the water from the faucet into the glass, restructuring the water. I now have a new thing: a glass of water.
3. I *distribute* the glass of water to you.
4. You evaluate the water. It might taste bad...or it might taste fine.
5. Assuming you judge the water to be good, you *enjoy* it by drinking more of it.

Such simple, mundane actions constantly and unavoidably imitate God’s actions in the building of the world. Thus, every calling in life. indeed every action in life has immeasurable dignity.

Because all men, whether true believers or renegades, constantly imitate God in their work, it cannot be in the area of works where the final distinction between righteous and the wicked is found. Rather, it is the attitude or faith that accompanies these works that makes the difference.

This requirement of right faith is set out in Genesis 2 and 3 and is seen in God’s placing an additional step in man’s performance of this five-fold sequence of actions. That additional step is the giving of thanks, a conscious act of self-submission to God., affirming that he is the One who set up the conditions for human labor and also affirming that He does all things well. This act of thanksgiving is placed immediately after the first step of “taking hold,” before the

act of “restructuring.” While all our actions are to be invested by a spirit of thanks, an act of thanks is sometimes to be performed at this point in the sequence.

What is thanksgiving? The giving of thanks is a rendering of praise and an affirmation of dependence upon someone else. A person does not thank himself; God did not thank Himself when He made the world. That would be absurd. When, however, I thank you for something, I am acknowledging that you have done something for me (acknowledging dependence), and expressing gratitude (not resentment).

Roman 1:21, speaking of all men (and especially of Adam and Eve, says “for even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, or *give thanks*.” Man was created on the sixth day of creation week. He was made in the middle of the day, after the animals were made. Before that sixth day was over, God brought various animals to Adam for him to name. The next day was the sabbath, the time when Adam was to come before God and give thanks, glorifying God as God and offering God’s Garden back to Him.

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The study above is from Rev. James B. Jordan’s fascinating book, *Primeval Saints*.

Condensing some of this material, we can see this six-fold rite for life as follows:

1. We take hold of some portion of God’s creation.

2. Before working with it, we give thanks to God for His gifts...this is an act of faith.
3. We then take those gifts of God and restructure them. We make something useful, creative, or beautiful.
4. We then distribute our work. Ten percent belongs to God as the tithe, another act of faith. The rest belongs to us to use, share, or trade.
5. Our works will be evaluated...by ourselves, by others, and by God.
6. Our works would be enjoyed by others, as well as by God (we pray).

Behold, the Absolutely Indispensable 6-Fold Actions of Life.

Two points to remember, Jordan says, are:

First, what is “good” at an earlier stage of history, may not be later under different conditions. For instance, we may say a child’s drawing is “very good.” A drawing with the same artistic crudities from an adult we would not commend as “very good.” The idea is that there is movement toward that which is better.

Second, this 6-fold pattern of action is an act of glorification. The world created by God is glorious, but man was created to increase that glory. The creation reveals God’s glory, yet the work of man (who is in the image of God) is to reveal God more fully and bring Him more glory.

*Next week we will continue to see the corruption of this pattern and a renewal of it through Christ and His Church.*

# Praise God in His Sanctuary

Brian L. Penney

Psalms 150

Brian L. Penney

Praise God in His sanct-u - ar - y, praise our might - y King; Praise the Lord Who

reigns in heav'n, let all His creat - ures sing. Praise Him for His nob - le acts, His

wis - dom they dis - play; Ex - cell - ent in pow'r and great - ness, worth - y of all praise.

Lute and harp with dance and tim - brels, strings and pipes with clash - ing cym - bals;

All that breathe, with joy re - sound - ing, sing un - to the Lord!