

Lesson Five

Individualism

LESSON IDEA

Every single person has been created as a separate and distinct individual. And the primary purpose of government should be to protect each individual's rights.

VISUAL AID

None recommended for this lesson.

Three friends were discussing the question of which system of social organization would foster the most benefits. The first contended that mankind should emulate bees. "In a hive," he pointed out, "each bee is assigned a specific task. All are expected to work for the benefit of the colony, and those that won't or can't are banished. The young are suitably cared for and trained, while the adults are assigned useful work according to their abilities. There is work for every bee, and their production of food and other necessities is enormous. In short, gentlemen, we would be better off by copying the system of the bees, since it creates one of the most efficient societies imaginable."

The second disagreed. "You may be right when you state that a bee colony is remarkably efficient," he said, "but I cannot agree that efficiency is the most important consideration. You admitted that bees that are elderly, infirm, unable to produce, or merely different are driven from the hive. It is a heartless procedure that does not provide adequate security for its most vulnerable members. What we need instead is a system in which every inhabitant is guaranteed adequate food, clothing, and shelter; where medical care and recreational facilities are available to all; where everyone has an opportunity to work, but those who cannot are cared for."

The third had remained silent. But when his associates were finished with their arguments for efficiency and security, he stated: "My friends, you have both overlooked the most essential element of all. If God had desired that man live in the most efficient system, He would have beseeched man to establish a dictatorship, where everyone is told

what to do. If He had wanted man to have maximum security, he would have created Earth as one large prison, for it is in a prison that one finds the degree of security that one of you recommended. But it was not efficiency that was to be proclaimed throughout the land. Nor was it security. You have overlooked something that is far more important to man's spiritual and material progress, and happiness than either of those attributes."

What was the ingredient that the first two men ignored? [Liberty.] Do you agree that liberty is more important for the true welfare of mankind than either efficiency or security? Why? [Encourage everyone to participate in the discussion.]

WHILE THERE may be a great deal of efficiency in a beehive, and virtually total security in a prison, both places lack individuality. The lives of both a bee and a prisoner are dominated by dull monotony: the same dress, the same work, the same daily routine. Yet one of life's greatest wonders is not the sameness of everything, but the marvelous differences. There is evidence everywhere of God's love of variety within His divine pattern. The seas and oceans teem with multitudes of distinct creatures, from the tiny algae to the massive whales. And no two plants, fish, insects, or mammals are exactly alike.

Forests spread across thousands of acres and are filled with vast varieties of flora and fauna. Each living creature is different than every other. What are some of the differences that illustrate the incredible diversity and individuality in nature? [Some examples are the varying colors of flowers, sizes of animals, shapes of clouds, and heights of mountains. So far as we know, not even two snowflakes are ever exactly alike.]

Nowhere is God's preference for individual differences more apparent, however, than among the human beings whom He made "a little lower than the angels." Let's consider, for example, the ways

