

Human Nature

WHAT IS IT?

WHAT DID THE

CREATOR

GIVE US?

False Ideas About Human

Nature

- **Augustine: “Man’s nature, indeed, was created at first faultless and without any sin; but that nature of man in which everyone is born from Adam, now wants the Physician, because it is not sound” (Augustine, *A Treatise on Nature and Grace against Pelagius*, 3).**

False Ideas About Human

Nature

- **John Calvin: “. . . Free will does not enable any man to perform good works, unless he is assisted by grace; indeed, the special grace which the elect alone receive through regeneration” (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 2, 2.6)**

False Ideas About Human

Nature

Westminster Confession of Faith:

“From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, 6.4).

False Ideas About Human Nature

“This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin” (*ibid.*, 6.5).

These False Ideas Assert That:

- Adam's sin changed human nature. It is now corrupt and inclined toward sin
- We can't obey without empowering grace. Only the direct operation of the Holy Spirit enables us to do what is good

These False Ideas Assert That:

- This grace does not change human nature. Even if one is chosen by God and saved, he retains a depraved nature that continues to sin
- Christ shared man's original nature, not his corrupt inherited nature

What Do The Scriptures Say?

- Gen. 3:23
- Gen. 4:6-7
- Gen. 6:5-8
- Ezek. 14:14,20
- Heb. 11:7
- 2 Pet. 2:5

The Scriptures Admonish Us To Obey

- Deut. 30:11-14
- Rom. 10:4-8
- Titus 2:11-12
- Deut. 30:19-20
- Josh. 14:14-15
- 1 Chron. 28:8-10
- 1 Kings 11:33-39

What Kind Of “Nature” Did Jesus Have?

- Descendant of Adam (Lk. 3:23-38)
- Jesus was flesh (Rom. 9:5)
- Jesus was made like his brethren (Heb. 2:14-17)
- Jesus came “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3) – but flesh is only sinful by sinning
- Sharing our nature qualified Jesus to be our propitiation (Heb. 4:14-16)

Why Do We Sin?

- Rom. 3:23, “all have sinned”
- Matt. 26:41, Flesh is weak, but not depraved
- Jas. 1:12-15 identifies sin’s source
- Rom. 4:20; 7:7, Law brings the knowledge of sin triggering the potential for sinful desire
- Rom. 7:8-11, Weak flesh chooses sin

How Does Sin “Dwell” In Us?

- Rom. 7:12-14, we are “sold under sin”
- John 8:34, the one who sins is the slave to sin
- Rom. 7:15-20, Paul’s teaching on indwelling sin
- Rom. 7:24-8:8, The gospel, “the law of the Spirit of life” offers “deliverance from this body of death”
- Rom. 8:9 shows that the Romans were “not in the flesh” ... if it is depraved, the Romans still were, but it is NOT depraved, just weak

Augustine

- **“God. . . does not command impossibilities; but in His command He counsels you both to do what you can for yourself, and to ask His aid in what you cannot do” (Augustine, *A Treatise on Nature and Grace, against Pelagius*, 50).**
- **“... The just and good God could not possibly have enjoined impossibilities, we are admonished both what to do in easy paths and what to ask for when they are difficult” (ibid., 83).**

What We CAN and CANNOT Do

- We cannot merit our own forgiveness: ***“it is God who justifies”*** (Rom. 8:33).
- We cannot know how to behave from our own knowledge: ***“it is not in man who walks to direct his own ways”*** (Jer. 10:23).
- We can follow what God reveals: ***“we may hear it and do it”*** (Deut. 30:11-14).
- We can understand without direct operation of the Holy Spirit: ***“when you read, you may understand my knowledge”*** (Eph. 3:4).

What We CAN and CANNOT Do

- We can trust in Christ's aid when we ask: ***“He is able to aid those who are tempted”*** (Heb. 2:18).
- We cannot expect His aid if we do not ask for His aid: ***“you do not have because you do not ask”*** (Jas. 4:2).
- We cannot know all He does to aid us: ***“The secret things belong to God”*** (Deut. 29:29); He ***“is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think”*** (Eph. 3:20).

What We CAN and CANNOT Do

- We can trust in the power of His word to work mightily within us: it ***“effectively works in you”*** (1 Thess. 2:13); ***“The word of God is living and powerful”*** (Heb. 4:12; Eph. 3:20).