

Total Depravity

January 14, 2007 (PM) - Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Genesis 6:5

I. THE NATURE OF MAN

* Genesis 6:5 *And GOD saw that the wickedness of man [was] great in the earth, and [that] every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil continually..*

God saw the wickedness of man come down from Adam for 2000 years, and it was becoming so wicked that God could not stand it any longer. Man left to himself will only get worse and worse. He will not adapt to God's spiritual rule nor will he become more righteous as he practices his desires.

The Hebrew word YETSER for "imagination" has to do with man's intellectual makeup or framework. It is man's basic instinct to imagine vain things. Psalm 2:1 *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?* The word "vain" means empty, of no value, worthless.

This is man's mind in his original makeup made possible by the sin of Eve and then the sin of Adam. Any righteous stand man had before God became vain after Adam's sin. Rom. 5:12 *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

The Hebrew word MACHASHABAH for "thoughts" also means device or invention. Eccl. 7:29 *Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.*

* Romans 8:7-9 *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

The carnal mind is this physical mind that we think with. It is by nature against God and is not subject to the law of God, so how can a man obey the righteousness of God if his mind is not subject to that law? Man is by nature an enemy of God.

* Eph 2:3 *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

The lusts of the flesh are the overwhelming properties of a man before he is born again by the grace of God, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. The "if it feels good do it" syndrome of the 1960's.

God is not in the business of satisfying our every whim and imagination; He is in the business of changing our nature that we might love God and the truth and live a righteous and holy life before him and before the world.

Instead of fulfilling the desires of the flesh, we desire to fulfill the desires of the Lord. This is true Christianity.

II. THE INABILITY OF MAN TO COME TO GOD

* 1 Cor. 2:14 *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned.*

The natural man, the man or person which we are born to be, does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. These things are Bible and spiritual truths that God has sent to us to know, and these things include His Son, Jesus Christ, whom we all must receive to be saved.

A man, then, does not have the inclination to arbitrarily receive Jesus Christ and His Gospel. These things are foolish things to the natural man, so he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned—discerned by the Spirit of God and only by the Spirit of God. No man can receive Heavenly things unless he is prompted by the Holy Spirit.

* Jer 13:23 *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? [then] may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*

It is impossible for an Ethiopian to change his skin or a leopard his spots, because he has a nature to have what he has and nothing else. The nature of man is enmity against God, and he has no nature that will change his old, corrupt nature.

If a leopard's spots are to be changed, it will take a miracle, just as a miracle must take place before a man can receive the thing of God. This miracle is a miracle of regeneration, a giving of new life from above. This happens somewhere on the earth each and every day that we live.

* Joh 6:44 *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

No man can, DUNAMAI, or have the power to come to Christ. In himself man does not have this power. We need dynamite power to come to Christ. A man must be drawn by the Father before he can come to Christ.

How does God produce or wield this power? Well, it is through the Gospel, because Rom. 1:16 says, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power [same word as "can"] of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

* Romans 3:10-11: 10 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

Another reason that a man cannot receive Christ on his own is because man has no righteousness. Isa 64:6 *But we are all as an unclean [thing], and all our righteousnesses [are] as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

No one understands God nor the way to God. John 14:5-6 *Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

No one seeks after God. Though the Bible tells us many times for men to seek him, yet they cannot without God's help. When the Holy Spirit regenerates us and gives us new life, then we begin to seek the Lord, and seeking Him should be a continual process.

III. THE EXTENT OF DEPRAVITY

The doctrine of Total Depravity does not teach that man is as bad as he can be. It teaches, however, that man is wicked and depraved in every part of his being.

If you put strychnine in a glass of water, every particle of water will be affected by the strychnine, and it will kill; but it will kill a lot faster if you put more strychnine in the water. You can add more and more strychnine.

Comparatively, a person who is depraved in all parts of his being may be less wicked than another person. Wickedness can be added to the wickedness that a person already has. If he learns crime and associates with criminals, he will learn more and more to commit crime; but if a man refrains from learning sin and does not company with sinners, he will be less criminal and wicked. But his basic makeup will still tend toward sin.

Every part of your being is depraved, and you have no means in yourself to come to Christ, but the Bible commands that you do so. Through the preaching of the Gospel (the power of God), you may repent of your sins and trust Jesus Christ and become alive unto God, be saved, and go to Heaven when you die.

The teaching of man's depravity is not simply to get across a theological idea; it is to instruct a man that he is a sinner and that he needs Jesus Christ to save him. If you convicted of your sin today and know that you are sinner before a holy God, then repent and turn to Christ, believing in his death, burial and resurrection, and you will be saved.