

Human Depravity

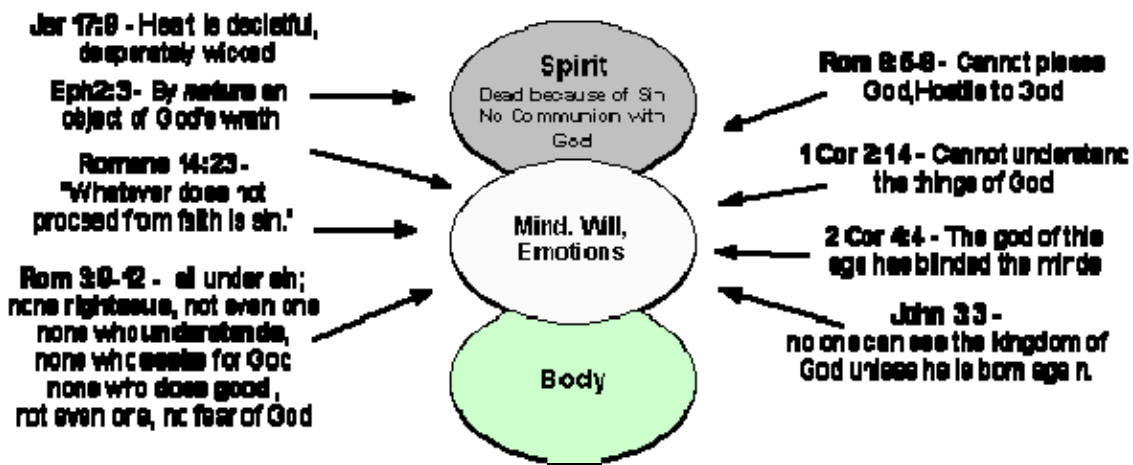
Mankind's Natural State

Good people?

The Bible makes it very clear that "no one is good, no not one." Jesus said, "there is *only one* who is good, God." It is no secret that from the earliest time in their lives people sin against God. An observant look at young children will tell us this. But the Word of God has confirmed it again and again. People are steeped in sin from birth (Ps 51:55). It is the natural state of mankind, that we are sinners, fallen short of God's required standard (Rom 3:23,5:12). Mankind fell into sin and darkness when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit and transgressed against the law of God. At that time, the spirit of man died, thus the channel of communication with God, who is Spirit, was cut off. Mankind no longer had communion with God, no longer did we naturally understand the things of God or even have a desire to do so. Mankind is therefore described as "dead in transgressions and sins" (Eph 2:1), that is, before coming to Christ in repentance and faith. *The truth is, mankind neither pleases God nor seeks after God, and that in his natural state does not even possess the ability to understand the things of God.*

Rom 3:9-12 - 9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "**There is none righteous, not even one;** 11 **There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God;** 12 All have turned aside, together they have become useless; **There is none who does good, There is not even one.** " 18"**There is no fear of God before their eyes.**" NAS

1 Cor 2:14- 14 But a **natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God;** for they are foolishness to him, and **he cannot understand them,** because they are spiritually appraised. NAS



What does depravity mean?

Depravity is a term used to describe the natural sinful state of men and women. As the scripture has said, people are enslaved to sin, their hearts being deceitful and desperately wicked, and in their natural state are unable to please God or even understand the things of God. *Mankind has a natural inability to seek after, understand, or please God.*

Indeed unregenerate persons have minds, which are hostile to God, and have their minds set on the sinful nature.

John 8:34- 34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, **everyone who sins is a slave to sin.**" NIV
Rom 8:5-8 - 5 Those who **live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires;** but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 **The mind of sinful man is death,** but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; 7 **the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.** 8 Those controlled by **the sinful nature cannot please God.** NIV

The Bethlehem Baptist church makes a statement about depravity which follows:

When we speak of man's depravity we mean man's natural condition apart from any grace exerted by God to restrain or transform man. There is no doubt that man could perform more evil acts toward his fellow man than he does. But if he is restrained from performing more evil acts by motives that are not owing to his glad submission to God, then even his "virtue" is evil in the sight of God.

Romans 14:23 says, "**Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.**"

This is a radical indictment of all natural "virtue" that does not flow from a heart humbly relying on God's grace.

It is clear therefore that the natural person, apart from the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (being born again), abides in a sinful and rebellious state in relation to the Holy God, and is therefore "by nature, an object of God's wrath."

Eph 2:3-4 - 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. **Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.**

The consequence of sin

It is important for us to understand the meaning of human depravity and just how lost and without hope mankind is apart from the saving grace of God in Christ. God has testified that we are sinners, separated from Him by our sins, and in a hopeless and awful condition, destined to perish in death and separation from any good thing.

1 John 1:10 - 10 If **we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar** and his word has no place in our lives. NIV

This is why Jesus came into the world. He came to redeem mankind from his sins. He came to pay the penalty, which we could not pay and live, for if anyone pays the penalty for sins, he/she will die. Death is separation from God, who is the source of everything good. Death is an eternal state of intense suffering which is never satisfied or comforted. Jesus said of death, "it is outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, where the worm never dies and the fire is never quenched." (Mk 9:48, Matt 25:30) The intensity and utter agony for the human soul in that place can neither be understood nor comprehended.

Rom 6:23 - 23 For the **wages of sin is death;** but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. KJV

Ezek 18:4 - 4 For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son-both alike belong to me. **The soul who sins is the one who will die.** NIV

Rom 5:12-13 - 12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this **way death came to all men, because all sinned-** NIV

Rev 21:7-8 - 8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars-their place will be in the **fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.**" NIV

The Bethlehem Baptist church makes a further statement which follows:

The reality of hell is God's clear indictment of the infiniteness of our guilt. If our corruption were not deserving of an eternal punishment, God would be unjust to threaten us with a punishment so severe as eternal torment. But the Scriptures teach that God is just in condemning unbelievers to eternal hell (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9; Matthew 5:29f; 10:28; 13:49f; 18:8f; 25:46; Revelation 14:9-11; 20:10). Therefore, to the extent that hell is a total sentence of condemnation, to that extent must we think of ourselves as totally blameworthy apart from the saving grace of God.

Questions on Human Depravity

Jeremiah 17:9 - 9 "The **heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked**; Who can know it? NKJV

1. Jeremiah 17:9 describes the human heart as _____ and _____.

2. When God uses the word "desperately", what is He implying about the wicked condition of the heart?

3. What do the words "who can understand it" imply about how desperately wicked the heart of man is?

4. What does the word deceitful reveal about the heart of mankind?

1 Corinthians 2:14- 14 But a **natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God**; for they are foolishness to him, and **he cannot understand them**, because they are spiritually appraised. NAS

5. 1 Corinthians 2:14 explains that *naturally*, man does not _____ the things of God.

6. What does it say about man's *natural ability* to understand the things of God?

7. What does this verse imply about man's *natural ability* to spiritually appraise things?

Ephesians 2:3- 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. **Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.**

8. Ephesians 2:3 explains that man is by *nature* a recipient of God's _____.

9. It further describes that man by nature follows the desires and thoughts of the _____.

Romans 8:5-8 - 5 Those who **live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires**; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 **The mind of sinful man is death**, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; 7 **the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.** 8 Those controlled by **the sinful nature cannot please God.** NIV

10. Romans 8:5-8 describes the *unregenerate* and sinful person, without saving faith in Christ. What does it say that these persons have their minds set on?

11. According to Romans 8:7, the natural sinful mind is _____ to God?

12. What does Romans 8:7 say about *man's ability* to submit to God's law? _____

13. Romans 8:8 explains that unregenerate man _____ please God?

Romans 3:9-12 - 9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "**There is none righteous, not even one**"; 11 **There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God**; 12 All have turned aside, together they have become useless; **There is none who does good, There is not even one.** " 18" **There is no fear of God before their eyes.**" NAS

14. Romans 3:9-12 refers to "Jews and Greeks." These terms are used to describe people of the Jewish faith and *all other people in the world*. It clearly describes all people then as being "under _____" and that there is _____ righteous, not even _____.

15. Romans 3:11 explains that no one _____ or _____ for God.

16. According to Romans 3:12, how many people naturally do good? _____

Romans 14:23 says, "**Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.**"

17. What does Romans 14:23 say about the deeds of people who do not possess saving faith in Christ? _____

18. Based on all the above scriptures, does mankind possess a *natural ability* to please God?

19. In your own words, explain what the bible teaches about human depravity. _____

Natural inability and its remedy

Friends, as we have clearly seen, the bible describes the natural state of man to be depraved. Based on this, we have made these two statements;

1. Mankind has a **natural inability** to seek after, understand, or please God.
2. The truth is, mankind neither pleases God nor seeks after God, and that in his **natural state does not even possess the ability** to understand the things of God.

Therefore, in order for man to even seek after, understand or please God, he must receive a **divine work of God** whereby he receives the **capacities** needed to understand. Jesus clearly states in John chapter 6 that no one can even come to God unless God has enabled him. Y

John 6:65 -65 He went on to say, "This is why I told you that **no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.**" NIV

This divine work we call **regeneration**. This is what Jesus explained in John chapter 3 to Nicodemus, one of the chief Rabbis of Jesus day. Jesus explained that in order to even "see" the kingdom, one must be "**born again.**"

John 3:3-7 - 3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, **no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.**" 4 "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" 5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, **no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.** 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, **'You must be born again.'**" NIV

Jesus further explains that this is why He came into the world. People could freely receive this divine work of God by having faith in Him. The English word translated "believe" really falls short of the biblical meaning of faith. Jesus claimed that those who possessed this faith "would not perish but have eternal life." This is **good news**. We have already seen that man is lost in sin and in a desperate condition resulting in death. But here we see the **compassionate and loving heart of God**, sending His Son into the world to provide for man everything he needs to be redeemed or "bought back" from sin and death. Jesus freely offers **eternal life** to those who will believe, but warns that those who do not believe are **already condemned**, remaining in their **natural sinful state**. He also describes to some degree here the natural state of man saying that "men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil" and that man "will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed." He offers then that **if** mankind will simply come to Him in faith, **God will enable them to understand** and receive a right standing with God not based on mankind's merits, but on God's **free gift** provided by the perfect and sinless life of Jesus Christ. Dear reader, if you have not placed your faith in Christ, you will die in your sins without hope or remedy for your desperate condition! But if you will simply come to Christ **just as you are**, confessing your sins and turning away from them (repentance), He will **freely pardon** you and grant you eternal life in heaven, a place of eternal happiness and bliss where God fulfills every good and loving desire of your heart.

John 3:16-21 - 16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that **whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.** 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 **Whoever believes in him is not condemned,** but **whoever does not believe stands condemned already** because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. Y 19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but **men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.** 20 Everyone who

does evil hates the light, and **will not come into the light** for fear that his deeds will be exposed.
21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been **done through God.**" NIV

Friend, God is not willing for anyone to perish nor does He delight in the death even of the wicked and sinful man or woman. The sinful heart of mankind, who is unwilling to even acknowledge that He exists, grieves God. In His grief, God has freely offered a way where man by his free choice can be pardoned of his sins and be restored to a right standing with God (righteousness). This is the glorious good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

There is much more to be said of these matters, but for the purpose of this lesson, we will end here. For more information on these matters go to www.heavenslight.org.

Depravity in the Old Testament

Ps 51:55 - Ý Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. NAS

Ps 58:3 - Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies.

Gen 6:5 - 5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. NIV

Ecc 9:3 - 3 This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of men, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead. NIV

Jeremiah 17:9 - 9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? NAS

Job 15:14-16 - 14 "What is man, that he should be pure, Or he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? 15 "Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, And the heavens are not pure in His sight; 16 How much less one who is detestable and corrupt, Man, who drinks iniquity like water! NAS

Ps 143:2 - And do not enter into judgment with Thy servant, For in Thy sight no man living is righteous.

Ecc 7:20 - Ý 20 Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.

Isaiah 64:6 - For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. NAS

Isaiah 53:6 - 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; NAS

Depravity in the New Testament

Rom 3:9-12 - 9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; 11 There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; 12 All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one." NAS

Rom 3:18 - 8 "There is no fear of God before their eyes." NAS

1 John 1:8 - 8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. NAS

1 John 1:10 - 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. NAS

Eph 2:1-4 - 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. NIV

Col 2:13 - 13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. NIV

John 3:3 - 3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." NIV

Mark 7:21-23 - 21 "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, 22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. 23 "All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man." NAS

John 3:18-19 - 19 "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. NAS

Rom 8:7-8 - 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. NAS

1 Cor 2:14-15 - 14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. NAS

Eph 5:8-9 - 8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light NAS

Eph 4:17-19 - 17 This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. NAS

Titus 1:15 - 15 To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

John 8:44 - 44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.

2 Tim 2:25-26 - 25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. NAS

1 John 3:10 - 10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. NAS

1 John 5:19 - 19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. NAS

John 8:34-35 - 34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. NAS

Titus 3:3-4 - 3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. NAS

John 3:19-20 - 19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. NIV

John 15:22 - 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin. NIV

If you have comments or questions, please do respond to shaan@heavenslight.org

If you would like to added or add someone to this email list, just reply with "**sign me up**" and the address you want it sent to. May the Lord bless you and keep you!

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