

## ***The Doctrine of Total Depravity***

*Total Depravity-Unconditional Election-Limited Atonement-Irresistible Grace-Perseverance of the Saints*

### **I. Introduction to the Five Point of Calvinism**

- A. Introductory questions
  1. Are the five points Scriptural? If not, then it's futile to believe in them.
  2. Can you believe in one of the points and not the others?
  3. Can humanity merit the grace of God in any way?
  4. Does God save sinners, or does He enable man to save himself?
- B. Introductory observations
  1. The five points are based on a trinitarian framework that shows the great soteriological unity within the Godhead.
  2. To truly appreciate the five points they must be viewed in light of each other.
  3. These are not just abstract truths to assent to, but ones that move us to better glorify the Savior.

### **II. Introductory Observations on Total Depravity**

- A. Humanity didn't start out depraved.
- B. There are three instances within Scripture where humanity is not depraved (we're not Gnostics).
  1. Adam and Eve were free from sin in their original state.
  2. The Lord Jesus Christ never sinned.
  3. When believers reach glorification they will be free from sin.
- C. Total depravity and the effects of the fall are different.

### **II. Biblical Definition of Total Depravity**

- A. Gen 3/Ro 5 (**Humanity is guilty**)
- B. Eph 2:1-3/Col 2:13 (**Humanity is dead**)
- C. Ps 51:5/58:3/Ro 3:9-21/Ro 6:20 (**Humanity is sinful from birth**)
- D. Gen 6:5/Gen 8:21/Mk 7:21-23/Jer 17:9 (**The heart is evil**)
- C. Ro 8:7-8/1 Cor 2:14/Eph 4:17-19/Titus 1:15 (**The mind is corrupt**)
- E. Jn 3/Jn 6:44/Jn 6:65 (**Our affections are corrupt and unable to love God**)
- F. Ro 1:18-32 (**Our actions are filled with unrighteous lusts stemming from our depraved mind**)

### **III. Total Depravity Defined**

- A. Loraine Boettner's definition, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*

"This doctrine of Total Inability, which declares that men are dead in sin, does not mean that all men are equally bad, nor that any man is as bad as he could be, nor that any one is entirely destitute of virtue, nor that human nature is evil in itself, nor that man's spirit is inactive, and much less does it mean that the body is dead. What it does mean is that since the fall man rests under the curse of sin, that he is actuated by wrong principles, and that he is wholly unable to love God or to do anything meriting salvation. His corruption is extensive but not necessarily intensive. It is in this sense that man since the fall 'is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil.' He possesses a fixed bias of the will against God, and instinctively and willingly turns to evil. He is an alien by birth, and a sinner by choice. The inability under which he labors is not an inability to exercise volitions, but an inability to be willing to exercise holy volitions."
- B. How is total depravity defined for the believer in the Christ?
  1. Humanity must still wage battle against the flesh but they have a new set of affections.
  2. They now have Christ as an object to believe in and follow, yet they still have sinful desires (simul iustus et peccator).
  3. They are not intrinsically changed at the moment of salvation; they are still sinful, yet they have a positional declaration of righteousness.

*It's not enough to merely know the definition of depravity, but to know where and how it affects you so that you may fight it to the glory of God.*

IV. Areas Affected by Total Depravity

- A. **Problem-Our relationship with God is marred because of sin and we are separated from Him.**
1. Humanity is separated from God and wants no part of Him because He is light and they love the darkness.
  2. Our entire being is sinful and rebelling against God and His righteous commands through every aspect of our life.
  3. **Solution-ULIP**
- B. **Problem-Our communal relationships with other believers are marred by sin because we are self-seeking and desire our greatest good, not the greater good of others (1 Cor 1-15).**
1. The Corinthians were masters at flawed relationships within the community of faith.
    - a. They were divisive over their leaders (1:10-17).
    - b. There was jealousy and fighting among them, boasting in people, not God (3:1-23).
    - c. There was gross immorality in the church regarding an adulterous relationship (5:1-13).
    - d. They were taking each other to court over disputes (6:1-11).
    - e. They are being judgmental on aspects involving Christian liberty (8:1-9:27).
    - f. They are having gender issues with men and women (11:1-17).
    - g. They are being disruptive in the Lord's Supper, using it to fill themselves and get drunk (11:18-34).
    - h. They are having all kinds of problems in regards to spiritual gifts (12:1-14:40).
    - i. There are some in the church who are denying the resurrection of the dead (15:1-58).
  2. **Solution-Love (1 Cor 13)**
    - a. Paul is setting forth the way in which God's covenant people should relate to each other within the community of faith so that disputes and divisions don't come about.
    - b. If you have a problem with someone in the community of faith then you need to honestly approach that person in love. If you think they have sinned and you don't confront them then you are impeding their sanctification.
    - c. Your discomfort is not more important than their sanctification.
- C. **Problem-Our minds are so corrupted by sin that they constantly dwell on impure and unholy thoughts.**
1. If our minds didn't dwell on impure thoughts then Paul wouldn't have to tell us to dwell on things that are pure (Phil 4:8).
  2. **Solution-Dwell on the pure and holy, not the impure and unholy.**
    - a. John Owen says to dwell on the Savior all day long.
    - b. Set your mind on the things of the Spirit (Ro 8:5-8).
- D. **Problem-We have fleshly desires that are unholy and dishonoring to God, set against the Spirit, that include sexual immorality, sorcery, idolatry, jealousy, drunkenness and envying (Gal 5:19-21).**
1. Even those who love the light still retain the attraction to the things of the dark because they are not fully saved until the moment of glorification and will not have completely pure fleshly desires until then.
  3. **Solution-We are to practice the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) because we have been justified by faith (5:25-26).**
    - a. To do this we must find our full satisfaction in God, not in stuff, so that we don't neglect the great salvation that God has provided for us (Heb 2:1-4).
    - b. We must offer the members of our body to acts of righteousness, instead of acts of sinfulness (Ro 6:12-13).
    - c. We must continually examine ourselves to make sure we are living the life that God has called us to, not partaking in the evil desires that we used to since we didn't learn Christ in that way (Eph 4:17-21).