

Survey of Christian Theology.5

Sin & Human Nature / Hamartiology & Biblical Anthropology





Logistics & Learning Objectives:

1. Learning Objectives. Participants will gain an understanding of:
 - a. The doctrine of total depravity
 - b. The creation story and how it informs us of human nature
 - c. The shortcomings of secular views of human nature
2. For more information please visit studioscriptura.com



Key Sources:



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What Does it Mean, “Created in His Image”? “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” Genesis 1:27

1. Man has a spiritual nature, and we know this because “God is Spirit.”
2. Man is able to make moral decisions.
3. Man has the capacity to love and forgive.
4. Every human has a beginning because he was *created* by God. Every man and woman, upon conception, is a living soul and will live forever.
5. Man has the ability to know and have a relationship with God.
6. Due to sin the image of God is terribly marred.
7. Upon repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are a new creation in Him (2 Corinthians 5:17) as God desires to see HIS image fully recreated in us as believers.

Source: Smiechewicz. *Discipleship Training Manual*



The Fall

"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Genesis 2:16-17

1. God created the world out of His goodness and free will.
2. Man was created in God's image.
3. Man was therefore created with free will.
4. God respected man's free will even when man exercised his free will for disobedience to God.
5. In the Fall, man exercised his free will to be disobedient to God, and sin entered the human race.
6. "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." Romans 5:12
7. Due to *original sin*, all men have followed Adam in their disobedience to God. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," Romans 3:23
8. Due to sin (man's free choice of disobedience to God) God no longer maintains a moral responsibility for man and God is justified in judging man.
9. "For if by the one man's offense death reigned" Romans 5:17
10. "For the wages of sin is death" Romans 6:23



The Judgment on Sin

"Where are you?" Genesis 3:9



1. Man is cast from God's presence.
2. Man experiences pain and toil throughout his life.
3. Man experiences imbalance and friction in his relationships.
4. Death is the ultimate judgment for sin. Physical death - man separated from his earthly body. And spiritual death - man separated from God for eternity.

The Results of Sin

“So He drove out the man.” Genesis 3:24

1. Man realizes his nakedness and seeks to cover it up. Adam attempted to cover up his nakedness with fig leaves. Man continues to try to cover up his nakedness before God with religion, philosophy, and good works.
2. Man hides from God. Today, man hides from God with psychology, atheism, materialism, and idolatry.
3. Man blames others for his faults: “I am the victim.”



Human Nature - The World's Perspective - "Am I a Good Person?"



Theories of Human Nature:

Man has asked and studied for millennia, "Why are we the way we are?" "Why am I the way I am?" "Am I a good person?"

Human nature is the multidisciplinary study of the dispositions and characteristics of humans. What does it mean to be human? Why do we think and act the way we do?

Human nature is of key interest to corporate America and HR groups. How do we lead, manage, and get people productive? How do we coach human nature to our corporation's benefit?

Social sciences and psychology plumb the depths of these questions with a desire to gain an understanding of human nature.



Human Nature - The World's Perspective - "Am I a Good Person?"

(continued)

Theories of Human Nature:

Early experiences shape our personality, our nature, and how we live life. Everyone is also born with certain traits. Family impacts those traits as we develop habits that make us who we are. Human growth from a secular perspective focuses on identifying our habits (good and bad) and building new habits for success.

The result of our nature and nurture (our habitual patterns of behavior) is who we are. We only truly know one's nature by observing how these habits are lived out in society and in the group within which they live.

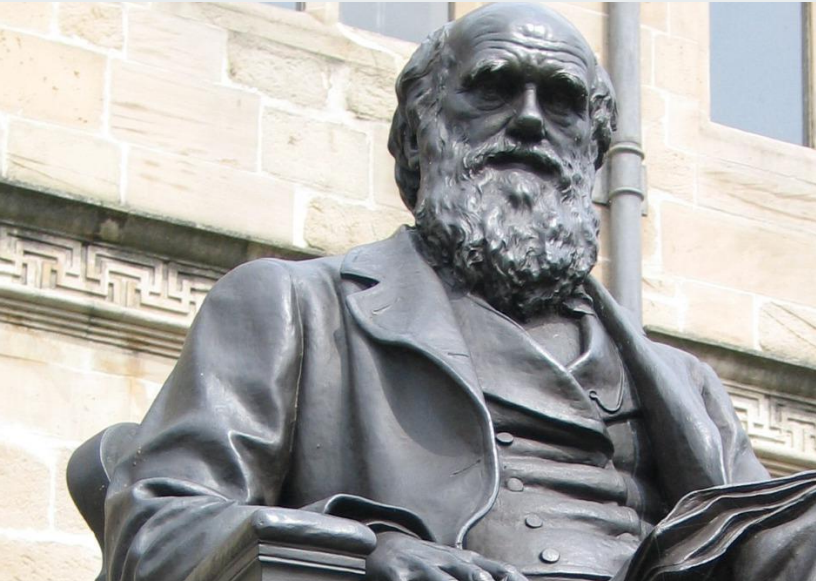
People seek to live in groups, and all groups have a hierarchy and a series of closely held beliefs.

One's *group* takes care of its own. Human nature is therefore driven by a desire to not offend the group - because no one wants to get kicked out of the group into an environment perceived as unsafe. In addition, people are driven by a desire to advance their status within the group.



Human Nature - The World's Perspective - "Am I a Good Person?"

(continued)



Theories of Human Nature:

Theories about humans have been argued about for centuries. Anthropologists, sociologists, neurologists, psychologists, and philosophers have all weighed in with their respective and sometimes contradictory positions of human nature.

A watershed theory in the world's view of humanity and human nature was Charles Darwin's proposition that all species of animals, including humans, have evolved from a single common ancestor - a single origin. His compelling book, "On The Origin of Species" written in 1859, became a foundational work in the unifying theory of life sciences. His theory led to the harsh view that "aiding the weak to survive and have families could lose the benefits of natural selection."

Bang to Eternity and Betwixt: Cosmos, John Hussey, 2014

Evolutionary thought has led to a view that mankind is getting better through the process of natural selection (a.k.a. survival of the fittest).



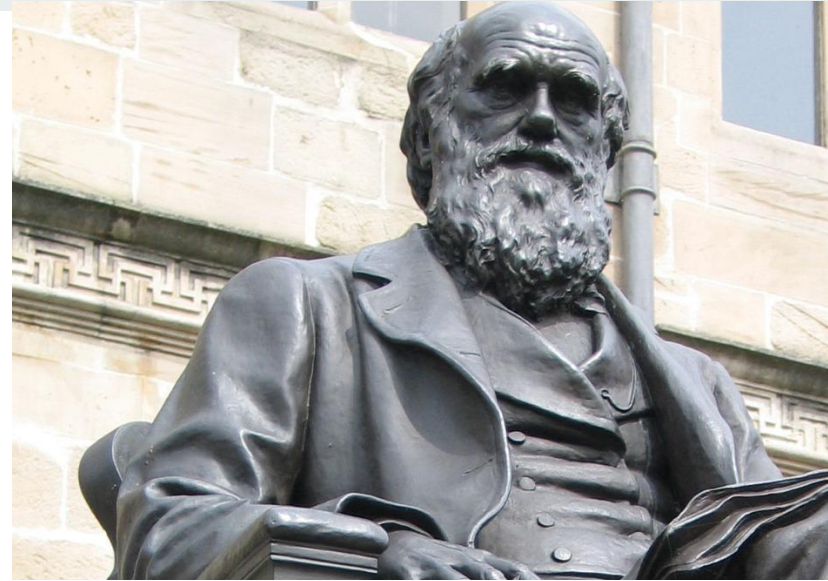
Human Nature - The World's Perspective - "Am I a Good Person?"

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Theories of Human Nature:

Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola on Human Nature

"You are constrained by no limits, and shall determine the limits of your nature for yourself, in accordance with your own free will, in whose hand we have placed you. We have set you at the center of the world, in order that you may more easily observe whatever is in the world. We have made you neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that you may, as the free and proud shaper of your own being, fashion yourself in whatever form you may prefer. It will be in your power to descend to the lower orders of animals; it will also be in your power to rise again to the higher orders, whose life is divine."





"Am I a good
person?"

In a
word...

No!



"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
Romans 3:23

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." Romans 5:12

"What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.
Romans" 3:9

"But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."
Galatians 3:22



"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me." Psalm 51:5

"There is none who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, No, not one." Psalm 14:1b-3



"Come now, and let us reason together,"
Says the Lord, "Though your sins are like
scarlet, They shall be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson, They shall
be as wool." Isaiah 1:18

"But we are all like an unclean thing, And all
our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We
all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the
wind, Have taken us away." Isaiah 64:6

"If we say that we have no
sin, we deceive ourselves,
and the truth is not in us."

1 John 1:8

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

The Biblical Doctrine of *Total Depravity*

The doctrine of total depravity flows from the of *The Fall*.

Sin corrupts the entirety of our human nature. Although we are still made in the image of God, that image has been horribly disfigured because of sin.

Total depravity posits that we are slaves to sin and unable to come to God unless God's enabling grace draws us to Himself.

Our attempts at righteous actions to prove our worth and standing before God are offensive to God as they are attempts to show God we are righteous outside the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Individuals are not as *bad as they could be*, but total depravity holds that every individual's human nature is so fully tainted by sin that as we stand before God we are *as bad off* as we can be and we are without hope. We therefore need God's grace to draw us to faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sin.



The Biblical Doctrine of *Total Depravity* *(continued)*



What about those who do not read or adhere to the Bible? Are they also under the judgment of sin?

Yes, original sin is a state in which all men find themselves, and the Bible says that all are without excuse.

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” Romans 1:18-20

Charles Hodge has said, “And there are no passages of an opposite character; there are none which represent the human race as being what God requires, nor any which speak of any member of that race as being free from sin.”

The Biblical Doctrine of *Total Depravity*

(continued)

Just what is sin?

- “Missing the mark - departing from God's expectations. *Harmatano* - where we get our topic - “misses the mark because you miss or decide to shoot at the wrong target.”
- Gone astray, wandering about like a drunkard with no destination.
- Moral Error / Neglect of your duties / Transgress - to cross over the line / Rebellion
- Sin, and one's delusion about their own lack of sin, is at the root of the problems in society. At sin's apex, the sinner ends up calling good evil and evil good!
- “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!” Isaiah 5:20-21
- “For whatever is not from faith is sin.” Romans 14:23(b)



The Biblical Doctrine of *Total Depravity* (continued)



Just what is sin?

- "Being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful." Romans 1:29-31
- "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." 1Corinthians 6:9-10
- "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." Galatians 5:19-21
- "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Revelation 21:8

Human Nature - More from the Biblical Perspective

Brutally honest self-reflection is not good enough and does not go far enough. You are never able to see who you really are. Sin blinds you to the fact you are a sinner.

John 2:25b "He knew what was in man."

Because of sin, we do not see life from God's perspective, and we have a propensity to make wrong decisions in life. That is why the Scripture regularly tells the believer to cry out for wisdom and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Original sin/the sin nature are sort of like a hereditary disease in one's family. All have it, but different individuals at different times in the family tree experience various (some more and some less serious) impacts of the disease.



Pelagius (AD 354 - 418) who is regarded as a heretic, held that humans were not fully tainted by Adam's sin and The Fall. He believed that humans were capable of self-improvement through a type of enlightenment, or instruction, graciously provided to us. Man could achieve God's will, and could do that unaided by God. Man just needs to be shown the way and then we are left on our own to achieve perfection. This position (rejected at the council of Ephesus in 431 AD is not supported by biblical truth) is held by New Age thinking and sadly also held by parts of Christendom today.

Human Nature - St Augustine

Augustine of Hippo (AD 354 – AD 430) was a theologian, philosopher, and the bishop of Hippo, which is the northern part of modern-day Algeria.

St Augustine helped codify the doctrine of original sin and believed that grace was indispensable to salvation. One of his favorite verses was John 15:5, "apart from Me you can do nothing."

Grace is the real redeeming presence of God through Christ in the believers' life.

St Augustine was the key theologian who pushed back against the heresy of Pelagius.



GRACE

Human Nature - St Augustine *(continued)*



He saw the human being as a perfect unity of soul and body. He believed that *self-centeredness* and a "lust for something *more*" are key failings of human nature that cause man to disobey God, i.e., to sin.

Augustine taught, as does the Bible, that the sin of Adam is inherited by all mankind. I.e., ***Original Sin***.

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned."
Romans 5:12

"For if by the one man's offense many died," Romans 5:15b

"For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one,"
Romans 5:17:a

"Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation," Romans 5:18a

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Romans 5:19a

GRACE



So where does this leave us and what's next?

- "What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God." Romans 3:9-11
- "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Revelation 21:8
- "How can these things be?" John 3:9
- "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3:17

As we live in our multicultural society and world, it is important to find common ground with others. As Christians, we realize our common ground with others is that we are all created in the Image of God and are sinners in need of forgiveness.

Social media is structured to feed our inner self-desire to receive confirmation that we are right in what we believe and what we do. This leads us to believe we are good people. The advent of social media has made it harder, not easier, for us to change.

The biblical view of human nature is that we hold the wrong worldview, have incorrect beliefs, and daily perform sinful acts - because we are sinners.

A close-up photograph of a hand reaching up towards a blue rectangular box. The box contains the text 'So What' in white, bold, sans-serif font. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

So What

Examine yourself in the mirror and come to grips with the eternal and universal truth that you are a sinner.

With this humbling thought, tell God you are sorry for your sin, that you are turning away from them, turning to Him in faith, and asking Him to forgive you of your sin and be your Lord & Saviour.

The (1)healing of emotional pain, (2)the cure for friction in relationships, (3)the erasing of the constant seeking for truth in religion, philosophy, and psychology, and (4)the cure for always feeling you are the victim comes from believing in your heart and confessing with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and that God raised Him from the dead for the forgiveness of your sins!

Commit to telling someone this week about Jesus as the the cure for sin.



Now What

