

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Moral Character = Intention****Moral Character = Intention, on: 2007/8/8 16:39**

Is your moral character derived from your outward actions or from your inward intention?

I believe that as your intention is, so your moral character is. If your intention is loving, you are pure. If your intention is selfish, you are sinful.

Consider the Pharisees. Their outward action consisted in praying and fasting. But their inward intention was selfish, they did it to be seen.

Did the Pharisees have any righteousness at all, or did they merely appear righteous? Jesus said that they "appear righteous outwardly but inwardly were full of iniquity."

Doing a "good thing" which a bad motive makes you a bad person, not a good person.

Also consider the story of The Count of Monte Cristo

Edmond is helped by Napoleon on an Island to try to save his captains life. Though the captain dies, Napoleon asks Edmond a favor. Take a letter off the island (from which Napoleon was a prison) to a friend of his, as sort of payment for the help.

Ignorant and stupid Edmond trusted Napoleons words that the letter was harmful, of nothing but person nature, simply written to an old friend.

In England, Edmond is caught with the letter, which to the surprise of stupid Edmond, was treasonous.

The prosecutor realizes Edmond is innocent, because Edmond did not know any better and was ignorant, because Edmonds intention was pure, yet because the letter was suppose to be sent to the prosecutors Father, who was in on the treason, the prosecute sends Edmond to a secret prison.

Everyone who knows the story becomes grieved at heart at Edmond's plight, because Edmond was innocent. Granted, Edmond broke the letter of the law - he carried a treason letter from Napoleon. But Edmond himself was innocent in the sense that his intentions were pure and was ignorant so as not to have known better.

And so it is, that a man's moral character is derived from his intention. A man is innocent or guilty, harmless or praiseworthy, depending on his intention.

Did he mean well? Then he is blameless! Did he mean harm? Then he is evil!

"To the pure, all things are pure" and "a good tree cannot produce bad fruit".

A man with a pure intention has a perfect intention, and is therefore blameless, which is why the bible talks about having a "pure heart" and a "perfect heart" and of a man being "faultless" and "blameless".

Re: Moral Character = Intention - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/8/8 16:58

Have you ever studied Immanuel Kant?

What you are putting forth here sounds an awful lot like his philosophy, which I would not be excited about.

Sadly, he and Finney both agree that Christ did not die for any particular people, and that He was an example of right living.

The following are borrowed from The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy-

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Moral Character = Intention

"Unlike original sin, which Christian belief has understood as inherited, radical evil is self-incurred by each human being. It consists in a fundamental misdirection of our willing that corrupts our choice of action. In Kant's terminology, it consists in an "inversion" of our "maxims," which are the principles for action we pose to ourselves in making our choices. Instead of making the rightness of actions— i.e., the categorical imperative— the fundamental principle for choice, we make the satisfaction of one of our own ends take priority in the willing of our actions. We thus inculcate in ourselves a propensity to make exceptions to the demand of the categorical imperative in circumstances when such an exception seems to be in our own favor."

"Overcoming radical evil requires a "change of heart" — i.e., a reordering of our fundamental principle of choice — that we are each responsible for effecting in ourselves."

*"In answer to this question, **Kant reinterprets the Christian doctrine of the atonement through the death of Jesus Christ. He rejects the view of "vicarious atonement" — that Christ takes away the guilt of previous evil conduct by standing as a substitute for all of us — in favor of an "exemplary" one. Christ thus provides a model in which we recognize steadfast adherence in both word and action to the principle of moral rightness which we already possess in the categorical imperative as the principle for the exercise of our practical reason. Such adherence to the principle of moral rightness is fundamental to what Kant considers to be the "religion of reason."***

This if I am not mistaken sounds a lot like Finney

Re:, on: 2007/8/8 17:05

I don't know anything about Kant, and this has nothing to do with Finney. This was about the bible's teaching.

And this is about moral character and intention, not about the atonement.

If this were a thread about philosophy, you could respond with philosophy. But since this is a thread about the bible, you must respond with the bible.

Were not the Pharisees sinful in their praying and fasting, because their motive was selfish, because they did it to be seen?

Isn't a man with a "pure heart" and "perfect heart" as the bible says, "blameless" and "faultless".

We are all prone to mistakes because of our finite minds. No man can be perfect in knowledge and understand and therefore no man is above making mistakes, but we can be perfect in intention and therefore blameless, because love fulfills the law.

Re: - posted by ANewInHim, on: 2007/8/8 17:06

Quote:
-----Sadly, he and Finney both agree that Christ did not die for any particular people, and that He was an example of right living.

Thanks roaringlamb for your statement.

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/8/8 17:13

Quote:
-----Were not the Pharisees sinful in their praying and fasting, because their motive was selfish, because they did it to be seen?

The Pharisees were sinful, because they rejected God's appointed means of righteousness which was Christ, and sought to build their own according to their good works. This is why the tax collector who could not even lift up his head, yet cri

ed out for mercy went away justified, and not the one who boasted of his own righteousness.

There is one and only one righteousness that can stand before God, and that is the perfect righteousness of Christ. If one is in Him, He is justified, and if one is outside of Him, he is damned.

We must realize that all mankind is fallen through both original, and actual sin. Thus there is need of a new race of man whose Head is Christ, and by the re-birth alone we are made to become members of this new race.

Re:, on: 2007/8/8 17:23

These are questions that need to be asked and answered:

- Is sin some "stuff" or is sin a motive?
- Is sin transgression of the law?
- Does something other than selfishness violate the law of love?
- Is sin something else other than violation of the law of love?
- Is there a sin that does not violate the law?
- Is there a law other than the law of love? Doesn't love fulfill the law?

If all sin is violation of the law, and the law is the law of love, then all sin is violation of the law of love, i.e. selfishness.

Otherwise, there is some type of "sin" that does not violate the law, and there is some law other than the law of love, so that love does not fulfill the law.

roaringlamb,

Are you saying that sin is transmitted through semen like Augustine taught? What is "sin" that it can be transmitted through semen?

Is sin a gas, solid, or a liquid? All sins if of the heart (as Jesus said all sin comes from the heart) consists in a wrong moral choice, or in a selfish intention of the heart.

- "Sin is transgression of the law (1John)
- What is the law? The law of love.
- Sin is transgression of the law of love.

Sin is being selfish, loving self supremely rather than loving God supremely and neighbor equally. Sin is not some "stuff" but sin is selfishness.

Nothing can be sin but violation of the law, and nothing is the law but the law of love. The law requires that we love God supremely and neighbor equally, and so sin is loving self supremely.

This is what Jesus said about the Pharisees:

Matthew Chapter 23

25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

- Were the Pharisees "full of iniquity" because they had some sin stuff inherited from Adam, or because their motive, was it because "all their works they do for to be seen of men" ??

Mt 6:5 - And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/8/8 17:49

Mar 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

Mar 7:22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

Mar 7:23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Why does the heart produce such vile things? Because it can do no other as it is dead to that which is good in the sight of God(believing on Christ being the highest good).

Again, these men were using works as a means of justification before men, and God. Outwardly they looked wondrous, but Christ was always quick to get at the heart of the matter which is the heart.

The sin nature is transmitted by birth. All men are born dead in sin, and children of wrath(Eph 2), and until they are born of the Spirit, they cannot hear God's word, and be saved.

Consider Christ's words here-

John 8:42 Jesus said unto them, **If God were your Father, ye would love me:** for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

John 8:43 **Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.**

And what was the cause of this-

John 8:44 **Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.**(Lit. the lusts of your father you desire to do) He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Re:, on: 2007/8/8 18:02

In the original language, "heart" is referencing man's will and mind, it is referencing what a man voluntarily wills or what a man voluntarily is minding - a man's preference - choice - selection.

Man is self-determining because man has a freewill. No man is forced to sin by God, the devil, or nature. You cannot blame others for what man himself is responsible for. Freewill is responsible for sin.

A man voluntarily sins because his heart is *voluntarily* evil.

Mt 12:35 - "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

If a man's intention (will/heart) is good (benevolent), he will bring forth good things. But if a man's intention (will/heart) is evil (selfish) he will bring forth evil things.

A man's intention (will/heart) determines his own character and conduct. A man who wills evil does evil. A man who selects good does good.

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2007/8/8 18:03

Quote:

Are you saying that sin is transmitted through semen like Augustine taught? What is "sin" that it can be transmitted through semen?

Is sin a gas, solid, or a liquid? All sins if of the heart (as Jesus said all sin comes from the heart) consists in a wrong moral choice, or in a selfish intention of the heart.

Jesse,

Do you believe that men are totally depraved "physically?" If you do, are you saying that a moral action that would be immaterial (not a gas solid liquid) was transferred into a material substance (flesh)? According to your logic, isn't the below scripture absurd?

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:

PS. I doesn't sound like I agree with what Augustine taught on "transfer of sin" either..

Re:, on: 2007/8/8 18:12

Quote:
-----Do you believe that men are totally depraved "physically?"

If you were totally physically depraved, you wouldn't be able to think, see, smell, or hear.

I believe sinners are totally morally depraved (their motive is always selfish) but that we are not totally physically depraved. We can still touch, taste, etc.

Our bodies are physically fallen and corrupted that is for sure, but not totally. They still have somewhat of a proper function.

Quote:
-----If you do, are you saying that a moral action that would be immaterial (not a gas solid liquid) was transferred into a material substance (flesh)?

Physical disease, discomfort, and death are a result of wrong moral action (Adam getting us kicked out of the garden) but disease, discomfort, and death are not moral action transferred into material substance. They are the result of bad moral action, but not moral action becoming some physical stuff.

If I make a bad moral choice to drink alcohol, that may have physical effects upon my body. And if a parent does drugs during pregnancy, that has effects upon her body and her child's body. These are effects of sin, but not sin itself being transmitted.

Adam has brought disease, discomfort, and death to the whole human race because he was kicked out of the garden of Eden, and consequently so where all of his posterity.

Quote:
----- According to your logic, isn't the below scripture absurd?

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:

I believe that 1Corinthians teaches that we inherit physical death from Adam through semen, because what is physical is hereditary and is transmitted through semen.

But I believe Romans 5 simply compares the results of Adams disobedience to the results of Christ's obedience.

Romans 5 says *absolutely nothing* about sin being transferred through semen nor does it say anything about our birth.

It simply says that the result of Adam's sin is that all men have voluntarily chosen to sin and the result of Christ's obedience is that all men have justification offered to them, but they of course must voluntarily take it.

Sin is not transmitted through birth anymore then justification is transmitted through birth. Sinful parents do not transmit their sinfulness through semen anymore then holy parents transmit their holiness through semen. Romans 9:11 says children in the womb have not yet done good or bad, because sinfulness and holiness are derived from voluntary choices of freewill.

What is moral must be voluntary. To send a baby to hell for being born with sin is like sending a man to jail for being born with a certain color skin. Criminality is limited to the voluntary. What is moral and ethical comes, not from what is physically hereditary, but what is voluntarily and avoidably chosen by freewill.

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/8/8 18:29

Quote:
-----Mt 12:35 - "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

And the question would be, who has a good heart? Who of his own free will and natural birth has a good heart that loves God and his neighbor.

Jesse your view is dangerous in that has no need of the Spirit's regenerating of a heart. If man can will himself to be good, then why a re-birth by the Spirit?

If the flesh can do something profitable, why would Jesus make the point that the flesh is profitable for nothing, and also that which is born flesh remains flesh, but it is the Spirit that gives life.

This view also does not need the mediatorial role of Christ as man's standing is completely based upon his adherence to the moral law, and therefore man and man alone must keep himself in God's favour.

Actually if you follow this line of thinking to its logical end, man can be his own redeemer so long as he can just make his heart good enough by his actions, and you would not even need a redeemer from sins, but just an example to follow.

Re:, on: 2007/8/8 18:39

Haven't you read any of my posts on the bible's doctrine of synergy?

* Jesus has given us an "example" as to how we should live - John 13:15

* The grace teaches us to live holy and to deny sin - Titus 2:11

* God calls us to repent - Acts 17:30

* the Spirit convicts us of sin - John 16:8

* and the instrument used in setting us free is truth - John 8:32.

* But we ourselves need to voluntarily repent (cleanse ourselves) - James 4:8; we ourselves need to voluntarily obey the truth (thus purify our souls) 1Pet 1:22.

Jesus, God, the Spirit, the Truth, God's grace, and freewill have a role in a sinner turning from sin (being cleansed from sin).

Jesus gave us an example, we must follow. God calls, we must obey. Grace teaches, we must listen. The Spirit convicts, we must yield. Truth reveals, we must believe. And repentance is an act that we ourselves do, (it is not forced) and repentance is brought about by Jesus - God - Grace - Spirit - Truth.

These all influence us to repent (turn from sin, cleanse ourselves) and we ourselves must yield to or obey that influence.

And if we do this, if we obey by repenting, then the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin - 1John 1:7 - that is, the blood of Jesus Christ justifies us, God pardons us because of Christ's blood upon condition of repentance - Luke 13:3

Justification by the blood (cleansed from all sin) is upon condition of our own repentance, which is brought about by Jesus - God - Grace - Spirit - Truth. The blood cleanses (justifies) those who "walk in the light" and who "confess" their sin - 1John 1:7, 1:9

So we must repent and then the blood justifies us.

I would argue that your belief is dangerous. If you believe that the will is not free, and regeneration therefore needs to be forced, the only way that you can account for the fact that not everyone is regenerated and saved is (not because of free will) but because God wants the majority of the world to live in sin, die in sin, and go to hell for their unavoidable sin.

In your view, God is willing that the majority should perish and not repent; that God wills that multitudes continue to sin in stead of repent.

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/8/8 20:27

Synergism is not a Scriptural idea at all, and this is proven simply by the words of Christ here John 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.

Here is what "draw" means in Greek

helkō / helkō

Thayer Definition:

- 1) to draw, drag off
- 2) metaphorically, to draw by inward power, lead, impel

God never does this against the will of man, but rather He changes the man's will so he is willing. This is the new birth which produces repentance, and faith.

So is salvation dependent upon our righteousness, or Christ's?

Whose work opens the way to Heaven for us?

Also, since when has God delighted in men perishing? Is not the whole of man equally damned to begin with, and thus He is under no obligation at all to save any?

What would you say to this-

Christ death has made a way possible for salvation, but it is only appropriated by our obedience.

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2007/8/9 0:16

Jesse,

How do you interpret the phrase "the law of sin which is in my members. " from Romans 7:23?

Re:, on: 2007/8/9 1:48

Quote:

----- Jesse,

How do you interpret the phrase "the law of sin which is in my members. " from Romans 7:23?

I think it means that your flesh (your body) has lusts or cravings for gratification (sin).

A drug baby has cravings for drugs. The law of sin is in it's members, or you could say the cravings for sin (drugs) is in it's body.

Temptation comes from lust. Each man is tempted by his own lust. But sin is when freewill voluntarily yeilds to that lust.

Our physical lusts can be called physical depravity. We are born physically depraved with a bias towards sin because of those physical lusts. Those physical lusts are temptation, not sin. So we are born with the law of sin in our members, influencing our wills to commit sin.

Roaringlamb, the bible also says "If I be lifted up, I will DRAW ALL MEN unto myself".

And God sends the Holy Spirit to convict all men, to strive with man, but men must voluntarily yield to that influence - to that drawing.

When I preach open air, I draw in crowds. I do my part in influencing them to come, and they do their part to voluntarily come of their own freewill.

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/8/9 2:26

Quote:

-----If I be lifted up, I will DRAW ALL MEN unto myself

Then either this means all men come to Christ, or this means all types of men, and not just the Jewish people, or that though all men are drawn some are saved while most are repulsed.

Only two of the three are realistic.

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2007/8/9 11:35

Quote:

-----I think it means that your flesh (your body) has lusts or cravings for gratification (sin).

Well, if this is the case how can Paul still be in a physical body and proclaim that he was freed from the law of sin?

Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Re: - posted by Eli_Barnabas (), on: 2007/8/9 15:02

Quote:

-----Well, if this is the case how can Paul still be in a physical body and proclaim that he was freed from the law of sin?

Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

I believe Josh has made an excellent point. If the definition of "the law of sin" is simply cravings of the flesh then Paul would essentially be saying he is totally free from even temptation itself, which according to James 1:14 comes from the flesh.

Romans 7 shows clearly that the will alone is not enough to overcome sin. Paul wanted to do good but he could not. He did not want to do evil but that is what he did. Therefore even the will is in bondage until Jesus Christ sets you free.

Re: - posted by Logic, on: 2007/8/9 15:07

Quote:

-----PreachParsly wrote:

Jesse,

How do you interpret the phrase "the law of sin which is in my members. " from Romans 7:23?

The "law of sin" is the dictates or the controlling factors of my own fleshly desires that make me inclined to oppose God to be separated from Him.

Therefore, the demands of my own fleshly desires separates me from God which is spiritual death "the penalty of sin is death".

Therefore, that which is in our "members" is death.

The next verse proves this point.

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2007/8/9 21:54

Quote:

-----The "law of sin" is the dictates or the controlling factors of my own fleshly desires that make me inclined to oppose God to be separated from Him.

Therefore, the demands of my own fleshly desires separates me from God which is spiritual death "the penalty of sin is death".

Therefore, that which is in our "members" is death.

The next verse proves this point.

I'm not real sure I follow you. Can you elaborate some? It seems like your making some logic statments (hence your name!) but I'm not able to follow.

Re: - posted by Logic, on: 2007/8/10 11:52

Quote:

-----PreachParsly wrote:

I'm not real sure I follow you. Can you elaborate some? It seems like your making some logic statments (hence your name!) but I'm not able to follow.

The "law of sin" is defined in Rom 6:23.

Eze 18:20 The soul that sins, it shall die.

Spiritual death is that "other law in my members" from Rom 7:23.

Unsaved man is spiritually dead, separated from the life of God. Since there is no spiritual life in a unsaved man, one must yield to the flesh and its desires. Its desires are opposed to Gods law and commands.

The Law(requirements of God) exist for the reason of making the inclination opposed to them to be evident and to be seen for what they truly are.

It made death to be evident in me by that which is good; In other words, the Law exist so that my inclinations would be evidently more wicked in contrast to the commands(specific requirements)**Rom 7:13**

Therefore, in conclusion, spiritual death is my own fleshly desires that make me inclined to oppose God(bringing me into captivity to the law of sin), and the opposition is the "law of sin".

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2007/8/11 2:18

Quote:
-----Therefore, in conclusion, spiritual death is my own fleshly desires that make me inclined to oppose God(bringing me into captivity to the law of sin), and the opposition is the "law of sin".

I think you might be saying that the "law of sin" is something that moves you towards sin. If so, I agree. But then again, I'm not really sure that is what you are saying. You said "spiritual death is my own fleshly desires that make me inclined to oppose God." Are you saying that we are spiritually dead if our flesh wants to oppose God?

Re:, on: 2007/8/11 15:50

I have very little time, as I'm on a preaching trip to Utah and we are about to go back out to do some open air, but I wanted to comment really quick.

Jesus taught that your intention (will) was your moral character when He said that to look with lust was adultery of the heart, and to hate is murder of the heart.

All sin is of the heart (will). What your will is, what your intention is, is what your moral character is. To will adultery is to be guilty of adultery. What you will is what you are guilty of. Your will determines your character because your will is your character.

Re:, on: 2007/8/11 15:51

PS. Josh and Eli,

Paul was free from the law of sin because Paul no longer walked after the flesh. Being free from the law of sin does not mean that you are free from having flesh, but that you are no longer walking according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

The law of sin that is in our body is cravings and desires, but to be free from that law is to no longer obey that law. You are free from sin, not when you are free from physical temptation, but when you no longer surrender to those temptations, thus a man with temptation is yet free from sin; a man with a fallen body with the law of sin in his body is yet free from the law of sin that is in his body.