

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Does Man Have A Sinful Nature?

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I thought that this was a pretty good article:

DOES MAN HAVE A SINFUL NATURE?

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Whenever the topic of human nature is brought up, the question about man's natural tendency is usually introduced to the discussion. Just as natural inability is commonly used by sinners as an excuse for sinning, so also a "sinful nature" is a common excuse that I regularly hear from sinners when witnessing. Instead of taking full responsibility by saying "sin is my choice", they blame their Creator by saying "sin is my nature". Instead of humbly admitting that sin is the choice of their will, they comfort themselves by saying that sin is the defect of their nature. For that reason I thought it might be good to comment on that issue here.

Effective communication necessitates definition. Therefore the word "nature" must be defined. Your nature is your constitution, make up, structure, composition, disposition and essence. Human nature would include our faculties of intelligence, emotion, free will, and all of the elements of spirit, soul, and body. Our constitution is physical, spiritual, and mental.

First we must understand that God is the author of our nature. God is the cause of our constitution. Neither Adam nor the devil forms our nature. The Bible says that God personally forms us in the womb (Gen. 4:1; Ex. 4:11; Isa. 27:11; 43:7; 49:5; 64:8; Jer. 1:5; Ps. 95:6; 139:13-14, 16; Ecc. 7:29; Job 10:9-11; 31:15; 35:10; Jn. 1:3). The work of forming a baby inside the womb is God's work. That is why God takes personal responsibility for the condition of our flesh at birth (Exo. 4:11).

Mankind is described as being made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Jas 3:9). That is why when it comes to sin, the Bible says that sin is actually contrary to human nature (Rom. 1:26-27). God wanted mankind to imitate Him in choosing holiness (Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26; Matt. 5:48; 1 Pet. 1:16). God did not design us to live wickedly. Sin is an abuse and misuse of our constitution. That is why the Bible says it is "against nature" to sin. Sinners choose to do "that which is against nature". Through the freedom of their will they choose to do what is contrary to their nature or design. It was never God's intention for man to sin; it was not His plan for mankind to be sinful (Gen. 6:5-6; Matt. 25:41; Eph. 1:4). God would have preferred a sinless universe that needed no atonement at all (1 Sam. 15:22). Since sin was contrary to God's plan or intention for mankind, God has made sin contrary to the design of our constitution.

God also designed our constitution or nature with a conscience so that we have the natural tendency or constitutional bent to obey the law of God. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another..." (Rom. 2:14-15). This is often referred to as "natural revelation" or "the light of nature". We have a natural disposition, or a constitutional inclination, to obey the law of God. By divine design we have a constitutional bias against sin. God has designed our nature to be in favor of virtue or goodness.

Alfred T. Overstreet said, "God created all men with a good nature. All sin is a corruption of man's nature, it is a perversion of man's nature. It is rebellion against our nature – it is rebellion against the 'law of God written in our hearts' and against the God who has written his law in our hearts."1 He also said, "The nature we are born with teaches us to reject evil and choose good... Men must go against their nature to sin."2

Winkie Pratney said, "Sin is never natural. It is horribly un-natural. Sin is never 'human'. It is horribly in-human. Sin creates remorse, guilt, and shame; every time a man feels these three witnesses in his soul, they tell him sin is not natural. Even the simple lie-detector can tell us this. The whole body reacts adversely when a man sins... God never planned sin for man. It is the most un-natural thing in the moral Universe... Do not dare say sin is 'natural'! God hates sin with perfect hatred; He loves humanity."3

Charles Finney said, "The constitution of a moral being as a whole, when all the powers are developed, does not tend to sin, but strongly in an opposite direction..."⁴

We have been so created by God that we naturally feel the pains of conscience when we do what is wrong and we naturally have peace of mind when we do what is right. When the idea of right and wrong is developed within the mind, we naturally feel good when we choose to do what is right and we naturally feel bad when we choose to do what is wrong. It is not by choice that we feel that way, it is by nature. By design, our sensibilities naturally respond or react when our will chooses contrary to, or in conformity with, the knowledge of our mind.

Even a transgressor can say "I consent unto the law that it is good" (Rom. 7:16) because of "the law of" his "mind" (Rom. 7:23). A sinner can say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7:22) which is a classic way of referring to our God given conscience. If the unregenerate did not consent unto the goodness law, they could never be convicted and consequently converted. They could never feel guilt or be convinced that they are justly condemned if they did not consent to the goodness of the law which they have chosen to violate. A man would feel justified in violating a bad law but a man would feel condemned for violating a good law. If the law is wrong, the transgressor is right. If the law is right, the transgressor is wrong. A man can only feel guilty and his mind can only recognize that he was wrong for his transgression if his mind is convinced that the law which was violated was a good law.

Since God has created our nature with a conscience, or a natural knowledge of right and wrong, we naturally approve of the moral attributes of God and other benevolent beings and we naturally disapprove of the moral attributes of the devil and other selfish beings. Epic tales of good vs. evil in both literature and Hollywood depend upon mankind's ability to distinguish between good and evil and mankind's natural approval of the good and natural disapproval of evil. Think of any famous tale of good vs. evil, or think of any story that has a "good guy" and a "bad guy". What was it that made the "good guy" good? It was that he cared about other people. We naturally know what the Bible also says, that love is the fulfillment of the law (Rom. 13:10; Gal. 5:14). What was it that made the "bad guy" bad? It was that he cared supremely for himself. We naturally admire and respect a man's good moral character. Through our conscience we naturally know that benevolence is right and selfishness is wrong.

It is because of our conscience, or the natural moral knowledge God has given us, that we naturally approve of what is right and good and naturally disapprove of what is evil and wrong.

I remember as a young child on the playground of my elementary school seeing a little boy being picked on by another boy. I remember being naturally outraged at the abuse the child was suffering by the bully. I naturally knew that the way he was being treated by the bully was wrong and consequently I naturally felt upset over it. Having care and concern for the young and innocent is a "natural affection" (Rom. 1:31; 2 Tim. 3:3). These thoughts and feelings I had were not the origination of my own choice but were the result of the design of God. It was by nature, not by choice, that I was disturbed over this unjust treatment. It is natural to be upset over the abuse an innocent person suffers at the hands of a bully; it is unnatural not to be so.

Through the habitual choice of sin a moral being is capable of numbing their conscience. Through continually ignoring your conscience, you can desensitize yourself so that you can have a seared conscience (1 Tim. 2:4). This state of insensitivity is not a natural state, but an unnatural state. It is a degenerate state which is arrived at through habitual choice. God speaks of Israel after they continually rebelled against Him and He said, "Where they are ashamed when they had committed abominations? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush..." (Jer. 6:15; 8:12) This state of being is not how God makes us, or how we are born, but how we can make ourselves through our free will. Extreme cases of this degenerate state would be sociopaths and cereal killers. These are the exceptions and not the rule for mankind. The average or normal person does feel good when doing right and feels bad when doing wrong. That is normal or natural and anything else is abnormal and unnatural.

It should be understood that a man is not virtuous because he feels bad for doing wrong. Even the unconverted naturally feel bad for doing wrong. That is a natural reaction that the sensibilities have in response to the consciousness of the choices of the will and the moral knowledge of the mind. Our feelings naturally react when our will chooses to obey or disobey our conscience. Moral character is not determined by the states of the sensibilities but by the states of the will. A man is virtuous if he actually chooses what is virtuous. A man is not virtuous because he has a natural tendency towards virtue. His will is free to live according to his nature or to choose that which is against nature. Man's character is derived from his will choosing according to, or contrary to, the conscience God created as part of his nature.

We must not confuse character with constitution. Nature and character must be distinguished between, lest we confuse our natural attributes with our moral attributes. Character is determined by our own will. Our constitution or nature is determined by God's will. Moral character relates to voluntary states, not involuntary states. There is no moral character in man's involuntary nature. Man did not consent to or choose what type of nature or natural tendencies he would have and therefore his moral character does not consist in his nature or natural tendencies. Man's natural tendency does not show any virtue in the transgressor, rather, it shows the goodness of our Designer. God has given us our nature and therefore our nature reveals the character of God. God has so constituted man that we naturally know right from wrong, we naturally approve of the right and disapprove of the wrong, and naturally feel good when we do right and naturally feel bad when we do wrong. In this way God has created us with a natural tendency towards virtue.

Some may think that if I am saying that mankind has a natural tendency towards virtue that mankind is not sinful. The truth is that a man is a sinner, who truly deserves punishment and therefore needs forgiveness through the atonement of Christ, because while God has given mankind the natural ability to obey Him, and He has given us the natural tendency to obey Him, we have nevertheless chosen to sin. Despite all the efforts of God, both internal and external to man, mankind has still chosen to rebel against the good moral government of God. All men everywhere have personally and freely chosen to be sinners (Gen. 6:12, Ex. 32:7, Deut. 9:12, Deut. 32:5, Jdg. 2:19, Hos. 9:9, Ps. 14:2-3, Isa. 53:6, Ecc. 7:29, Rom. 3:23, Rom. 5:12.) despite our natural tendency towards virtue and our natural ability to do the will of God. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way..." (Isa. 53:6). "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." (Ecc. 7:29). We have used our natural ability of choice to choose contrary to the design of our nature. All men have deliberately chosen what they have naturally known is wrong. Sinners have abused their constitution and misused their nature. Man, not God, is at blame for sin because sin is the result of free will, not the result of a sinful nature.

Gordon C. Olson said, "Moral beings themselves are the author of their own rebellion, which is an unintelligent abuse of their God-given endowments of personality.... It is man who has abused his God-given freedom."5 Paris Reidhead said, "Are people in trouble spiritually because they inherit some spiritual defect from their parents or grandparents? No. They are in trouble because when they reach the age of accountability they deliberately turn their own way - they commit their will to the principle and practice of pleasing themselves as the end of their being. That is sin."6 He also said, "Now remember, sin is a crime. It is the committal of the will to the principle and practice of governing one's life to please one's self. In other words, when the Scripture says, 'all have sinned,' it is saying that upon reaching the age of accountability, every individual has chosen to govern and control his life to please himself... We know that upon reaching the age of accountability, each of us chose as the principle by which we would live: 'I am going to govern and control my own life.'"7

While it is true that our natural tendency is for virtue as far as our conscience is concerned, but our natural tendency is for self-gratification, as far as our flesh is concerned. Our flesh doesn't care if we gratify it naturally or unnaturally, lawfully or unlawfully, it just wants to be gratified. The reason many think that we have a "natural tendency towards sin" is because they are thinking of our flesh, but our flesh doesn't want "sin" as if "sin" was the end in mind or object sought. The flesh wants gratification, whether it comes through sin or through lawful means.

We have a constitutional, natural, God given desire for gratification. The flesh and mind that God has given us has natural desires that can be gratified through natural and lawful means. Sin is the choice of the will to gratify these natural desires through unnatural and unlawful means. F. Lagard Smith said, "We have a nature that is capable of being perverted from legitimate to illegitimate, from the natural to the unnatural, from the pure to the polluted." He said that sin is to "pervert... natural, legitimate, human desires."8 Augustine said, "Evil is making a bad use of a good thing."9

A perfect example of this is the narrative of Eve's temptation and sin. We are told that she was tempted, not because she had a sinful nature, but because she had natural God given desires which the devil tempted her to gratify through forbidden means. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." (Gen. 3:6). The narrative of Jesus' temptation in the desert shows the devil appealing to the natural desires that Jesus' body had (Luke 4:3). This is why we must choose to keep our body under subjection (1 Corinthians 9:27). "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh..." (Gal. 5:17). Our flesh wants us to be self-indulgent and practice self-gratification but the Spirit tells us to practice self-control and self-denial, choosing to our flesh in its proper place! and make a proper use of it. Our flesh has its proper place and proper function and its desires have a natural and lawful

way of being gratified. Sin is to misuse our flesh and gratify its desires unnaturally and unlawfully.

Michael Pearl said, "The root of all sin is founded in runaway indulgence of God-given desires... Drives which are not in themselves evil, nonetheless, form the seedbed on which sin will assuredly grow... As the body of flesh was the medium of Eve's sin and of Christ's temptation, so it is the implement of your child's development into selfishness— which, at maturity, will constitute sinfulness."10

Charles Finney said, "The bodily appetites and tendencies of body and mind, when strongly excited, become the occasions of sin. So it was with Adam. No one will say that Adam had a sinful nature. But he had, by his constitution, an appetite for food and a desire for knowledge. These were not sinful but were as God made them. They were necessary to fit him to live in this world as a subject of God's moral government. But being strongly excited led to indulgence, and thus became the occasions of his sinning against God. These tendencies were innocent in themselves, but he yielded to them in a sinful manner, and that was his sin." 11

An example would be our sexual desires. The attraction between the sexes is considered a "natural attraction". It is normal and natural and is not in and of itself wrong. God has given us our sex drive. These desires are God given. God intended for man to populate the world. God told Adam and Eve to "be fruitful and multiple" (Gen. 1:22, 28). Julian of Eclanum rightly said "that the sexual impulse—that is, that the virility itself, without which there can be no intercourse—is ordained by God."12 God designed men and women for each other. If a man and a woman commit themselves to each other through marriage, and engage in a sexual relationship with each other within that marriage, they are naturally and lawfully satisfying or fulfilling their God given desires (Heb. 13:4). Natural attraction is a normal state of the flesh, but lust in the sinful sense is a state of the will. It is a sin to intentionally look at a woman, whom you are not married to, lustfully (Matt. 5:28) but!

there is no sin in marital sex or in the fleshly passions which are involved, so long as these desires are fulfilled lawfully and naturally.

When a person engages in any form of sexual immorality, such as fornication, homosexuality, or sodomy, they are choosing contrary to God's intention, contrary to our design, and are trying to satisfy or fulfill their God given sexual desires in an unnatural and an unlawful manner. Fornication is a sin against our body (1 Cor. 6:18), homosexuality is against nature (Rom. 1:26) and sodomy is an abuse of our flesh (1 Cor. 6:9). Our will is free to choose to gratify our flesh lawfully or unlawfully, naturally or unnaturally.

The fact that our nature or body is susceptible to temptation does not mean that we have a "sinful nature", a "sinful flesh", or a "sinful body". We must distinguish between sin and temptation. The desires of the body are the occasions of temptation (Jas. 1:14-15) but sin itself is a choice of the will (John 5:14, John 8:11, Rom. 6:12; Rom. 6:19 Eph. 4:26; 1 Jn. 3:4). Charles Finney said, "the appetites and passions tend so strongly to self-indulgence. These are temptations to sin, but sin itself consists not in these appetites and propensities, but in the voluntary committal of the will to their indulgence. This committal of the will is selfishness."13

Sin is contrary to the design of our body. It is an abuse and misuse of our flesh. An example is the sin of drunkenness. Drunkenness is an unnatural state of mind and body. Sobriety is a natural state. Drunkenness is an "induced" state. Liquor and beer require an "acquired taste". Our body naturally rejects alcohol when the body becomes inebriated or intoxicated. Our body reacts with vomiting and headaches which show that the sin of drunkenness is contrary to our nature, it is contrary to our design, it is contrary to the proper function of our flesh. We have to corrupt our body to enjoy cigarettes or to crave alcohol. Our bodies do not naturally have those enjoyments or cravings. It is through choice that we corrupt our flesh, degenerate our nature, or pervert our body to enjoy and crave these things.

These unnatural desires of the flesh do not, in and of themselves, constitute sin. Drug babies for example cannot be considered "sinful" just because they inherit a flesh that has these unnatural cravings. Sin or sinfulness does not consist in the states of the body or in the states of the sensibilities. All moral character consists in the states of the will. A person could decide to no longer abuse mind altering substances while their flesh is going through withdrawals. If a person's body craves drugs, but they choose not to gratify these cravings, then they are experiencing temptation but are not sinning.

Charles Finney said, "If these feelings are not suffered to influence the will... if such feelings are not cherished, and are not suffered to shake the integrity of the will; they are not sin. That is, the will does not to them, but the contrary. They are only temptations. If they are allowed to control the will, to break forth in words and actions, then there is sin; but the sin does not consist in the feelings, but in the consent of the will, to gratify them." 14 Paris Reidhead said, "Now tempt

ation is not sin. Temptation is the proposition presented to the mind that you can satisfy a good appetite in a forbidden way. Temptation leads to sin.... Sin is the decision of the will.... sin is the decision to gratify a good appetite in a bad way."15 Winkie Pratney said, "Don't mistake temptation for sin. Temptation is a suggestion to gratify a desire in an illegal way or amount. Temptation is not sin. Jesus was tempted."16

We cannot say that our flesh is "sinful" or that we have a "sinful nature" just because our flesh or nature is susceptible to temptation. It is not "sinful" to be tempted. Jesus Christ was tempted yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). Therefore temptation is not sin. Sinfulness is violation of God's law (1 Jn. 3:4). God's law tells us what type of choices we should and shouldn't make (Exo. 20:3-17), not what type of body or nature we should or shouldn't have. Therefore choices can be sinful, but a body or a nature cannot be. Our flesh is just dirt (Gen. 2:7, Gen. 3:19) and therefore it cannot be "sinful". You cannot have sinful dirt. Dirt does not violate any commandment. There is no commandment that says, "thou shalt not be made out of dirt". Even if there was such a commandment, our violation of it would not be our fault but God's fault, since it was God who made us out of dirt.

While it is sinful to selfishly live after the flesh (Rom. 8:13), or to be living to gratify our flesh (Rom. 8:7), it is not sinful to have a flesh. We know that it is not sinful to have a flesh because Jesus Christ was sinless (2 Cor. 5:21) and He had a flesh (Luke 24:39, John 1:14, 1 Tim. 3:16, 1 Jn. 4:3, 2 Jn. 1:7). Jesus had the same type of flesh that we have. "For as much as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.... For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren..." (Heb. 2:14, 16-17). Jesus made in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. 8:3) which means Jesus was made in the likeness of men (Philippians 2:7). The word "flesh" is sometimes used synonymous with men (Gen. 6:12, Matt. 16:17). Jesus was morally perfect (2 Cor. 5:21) even before He had a glorified, resurrected, or perfect body, even while!

He had a body which was subjected to death (Heb. 2:14). We must differentiate between moral depravity and physical depravity and we must distinguish between moral perfection (Philippians 3:15) and physical perfection (Philippians 3:11-12). What is physical relates to the flesh but what is moral relates to the will or heart.

Charles Finney said, "The fact is, sin never can consist in having a nature, nor in what nature is, but only and alone in the bad use which we make of our nature. This is all. Our Maker will never find fault with us for what He has Himself done or made; certainly not. He will not condemn us, if we will only make a right use of our powers—of our intellect, our sensibilities, and our will. He never holds us responsible for our original nature... since there is no law against nature, nature cannot be a transgression... man's nature is not a proper subject for legislation, precept, and penalty, inasmuch as it lies entirely without the pale of voluntary action, or of any action of man at all."17

The Gnostic's taught that the flesh was sinful in and of itself which is why they denied that Jesus Christ came in the flesh (1 Jn. 4:3, 2 Jn. 1:7). Gnosticism attributes moral qualities to states of matter. The Bible says our flesh is an instrument or a tool which we could use for sin or for righteousness. Paul said, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (Rom. 6:13) and "...for as ye have yielded your members servants of uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." (Rom. 6:19).

To counteract the Gnostic idea that matter was intrinsically evil, or that the flesh was in and of itself sinful, Paul said that we can choose to sanctify our flesh, to set apart our bodies for the service of God. "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1). "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor." (1 Thes. 4:3-4). "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thes. 5:23). "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." (1 Tim. 2:8).

We certainly cannot have a glorified body in this life but we can have a sanctified body in this life. That means that we cannot have a physically perfect body in this life (Philippians 3:11-12) but we certainly don't have to use our body to sin or gratify our flesh through sin. We can sanctify our flesh. We can set apart our body from sin to the service of God.

If we fail to distinguish between sin and temptation, between the physical and the moral, between nature and character, between natural attributes and moral attributes, we will fall into the error of Gnosticism. While I was preaching on North Carolina State University I asked a Calvinist, "Is the body a sin?" He said, "Yes our bodies are made of sin." I asked

d, "You can put sin under a microscope and look at it?" He said, "Sure." While I was preaching on Alabama A&M a man said to me, "You can't stop sinning. Even waking up is a sin because you wake up in sinful flesh." While I was open air preaching to students at Tyler Junior College, I said, "Sin is a voluntary choice to violate God's law!" A Calvinist in the crowd responded by saying, "Your body is sin. You are a sinner because you have a body. And so long as you are in your body, you are a sinner!"

After traveling the length and breadth of this nation and talking to thousands of people I have concluded that Gnosticism is alive and well today. The idea that your body is sinful and consequently you cannot be morally perfect until you get a glorified body is pure Gnosticism. Gnosticism fails to distinguish between physical depravity and moral depravity. Gnostic moral philosophy says that sin is a substance of matter and is not limited to free will choices. To view sin as a state of the body, or a state of human nature, rather than a state of the will, is to have a Gnostic view of sin. The whole idea that man has a "sinful nature" or that man's nature is sinful, that man is sinful through hereditary inheritance rather than through voluntary choice, is nothing more than the remains of Gnostic philosophy surviving through Augustinian and Calvinistic theology. These notions were foreign to the Early Church and even refuted by them, as they were held by the Gnostics only until!

Augustine converted from Manichean Gnosticism and brought these views with him. Many throughout Church history have publicly refuted these Gnostic views of human flesh and human nature.

Charles Finney said, "To represent the constitution as sinful, is to present God, who is the author of the constitution, as the author of sin."18 A writer in the Early Church said, "... it is impious to say that sin is inherent in nature, because in this way the author of nature is being judged at fault."19 Winkie Pratney said, "To equate humanity with sinfulness is to make God the Author of His own worst enemy; to make God responsible for the thing that has brought Him unhappiness."20 Julian of Eclanum said, "God is the Maker of all those that are born, and that the sons of men are God's work; and that all sin descends not from nature, but from the will."21

Some today may think that sin is natural because they have developed a habit of sinning. Choice creates character and character creates habits. Through the continual choice of disobedience men have made sin "natural" or "normal" for them, in the sense that it has become their habit. This habit of sin, or tendency towards unlawful gratification, is the result of their own will and not the product of the hands of God. Their habit comes, not from their nature, but from their will.

When the Bible talks about the natural man (1 Cor. 2:14) it is talking about a sensual and carnal man. It is someone who chooses to be governed by their passions rather than being governed by their conscience. When the Bible says that sinners are "by nature children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3) it is talking about those who live for the gratification of their flesh. The context of men being under God's wrath by nature is talking about a former manner of life, addressing a previous lifestyle. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world... among whom also all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh..." (Eph. 2:2-3) Instead of obeying their conscience, living for God, and putting their flesh in its proper place (a spiritual life), they ignore their conscience and live for themselves by living for the gratification of their flesh (a carnal life). This is a natural life as opposed to a spiritual life. Living a natural or carnal life is selfishly living for the gratification of your flesh.

In summary, our constitution is not sinful in and of itself. Our constitution could be used as a tool for righteousness or unrighteousness. We do not have a constitutional tendency towards sin but towards virtue. We naturally know good and evil because God has written his laws upon our conscience and we consequently we naturally feel good when we do what is right and we naturally feel bad when we do wrong. That is the way God has designed our constitution. Feeling bad is an undesirable state. It is a state of misery. Feeling good is a desirable state. It is a state of happiness. Therefore we are naturally prone to virtue; we have a natural tendency towards goodness. That is, as far as our conscience and subsequent feelings or sensibilities are concerned. Our sensibilities respond to the knowledge of our mind, which is why we start to feel bad when we recognize that we have done what is wrong. Regarding our flesh, it wants gratification. Our flesh feels good if we gratify it!

lawfully or unlawfully, but if we gratify it unlawfully we start to feel the pains of conscience. Our flesh inclines us towards gratification, but our conscience or intelligence inclines us towards virtue.

It makes sense that if God would give us the natural tendency towards virtue, and a natural approval of the good, that He would also give us the natural ability to do what is good. Or you could argue the other way around. If God gives us the natural ability to do good because He wants us to do what is good, why wouldn't He give us the natural tendency towards virtue and the natural approval of it? If God wants us to avoid sin, why wouldn't He give us the constitutional tendency away from sin? Since God wants us to obey His Will, He has given us the natural approval, the natural tendency, and the natural ability to obey His Will.

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1. Alfred T. Overstreet (Over One Hundred Texts From The Bible That Show That Babies Are Not Born Sinners, pg. 8).
2. Alfred T. Overstreet (Over One Hundred Texts From The Bible That Show That Babies Are Not Born Sinners, pg. 6-7)
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3. Winkie Pratney (Youth Aflame, Bethany House, pg. 78).
4. Charles Finney (Lectures on Systematic Theology, 1851 Edition, published by BRCCD, p. 348)
5. Gordon C. Olson (The Entrance of Sin into the World, pg. 31, 38).
6. Paris Reidhead (Finding the Reality of God, pg 64-65)
7. Paris Reidhead (Finding the Reality of God, pg 85).
8. F. Lagard Smith (Troubling Questions for Calvinists, page 134-135).
9. Augustine (Confessions and Enchiridion, trans. and ed. by Albert C. Outler, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, N. D, page 326-338, section 36).
10. Michael Pearl (To Train Up A Child, No Greater Joy, pg. 15-20)
11. Charles Finney (You Can Be Holy, published by Whitaker House, p. 215).
12. Julian of Eclanum (Letter to Rome)
13. Charles Finney (Lectures on Systematic Theology, 1851 Edition, published by BRCCD, p. 348).
14. Charles Finney (Lectures on Systematic Theology, 1851 Edition, published by BRCCD, p. 191).
15. Paris Reidhead (Finding the Reality of God, pg 141-142)
16. Winkie Pratney (Youth Aflame, Bethany House, pg. 83).
17. Charles Finney (Sermons on Gospel Themes, p. 78-79, published by Truth in Heart)
18. Charles Finney (Finney's Systematic Theology, Bethany House, p. 261).
19. Early Church writer (The Letters of Pelagius and his Followers by B. R. Rees, p. 168, published by The Boydell Press).
20. Winkie Pratney (Youth Aflame, published by Bethany House, pg. 78).
21. Julian of Eclanum (Letter To Rufus Of Thessalonica)

Re: Does Man Have A Sinful Nature?, on: 2009/12/9 15:33

This is heresy , false doctrine and contrary to the scriptures.

Re: , on: 2009/12/9 15:37

You read the article that fast? I don't think you even gave it a fair chance. A fool judges a matter before he hears it the Bible says.

What I liked the most about this article is how every point was supported with Scriptures. It seems that the idea of a sinful nature was really a Gnostic heresy. That false doctrine was introduced to the Church by Augustine who converted from Manicheanism.

How far the Church has fallen from Biblical truth!

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2009/12/9 15:49

Quote:
-----What I liked the most about this article is how every point was supported with Scriptures.

The same can be said for all sorts of false teachings.

The issue is correct interpretation of Scripture...not just seemingly supported.

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiisss (), on: 2009/12/9 15:55

Hi TheArminian...

Quote:

TheArminian wrote:

A fool judges a matter before he hears it the Bible says.

What I liked the most about this article is how every point was supported with Scriptures.

Did you write the article in the first post of this thread?

:-{

Re: , on: 2009/12/9 15:58

Not true. This is scripture twisting.

The bible says in Psalm 51.5:

NIV

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

NASB

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

King James Bible

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

ASV

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; And in sin did my mother conceive me.

ERV

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Webster's Bible Translation

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

and

Romans 7,18:

NIV

I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

NASB

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

KJV

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Jeremiah 17:9

NIV

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Does Man Have A Sinful Nature?

NASB

"The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

Re: , on: 2009/12/9 16:10

Ps 51:5 is talking about David and his mother. It says nothing about all of mankind. It is talking about David's conception, not his birth. It is a Gnostic translation to say that he was born sinful. It says that he was conceived in sin, possibly fornication or adultery. It cannot mean that he received a sinful nature while in the womb because he said elsewhere that God made him fearfully and wonderfully! We are not wonderfully made by God if God forms us in the womb with a sinful nature!

Rom 7:18 should not be translated "sinful nature". That is a Gnostic translation. The greek word is flesh. The Bible says in Hebrews that Jesus was made of the same flesh that we are made of. And Paul said that we can sanctify our flesh.

Jer. 17:9 is talking about man's heart, not man's nature. A man's heart is his will. A man's nature is his constitution.

Calvinists twist Scriptures.

Quote:

-----This is scripture twisting

Which Scriptures were twisted? The ones that says God forms us in the womb? The ones that say transgressors delight in the law of God according to their conscience? The ones that say homosexuality is against nature? The ones that say Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law? The ones that talk about sanctifying our flesh? The ones about our body being an instrument for good or evil? These Scriptures are not being twisted, they explicitly contradict the Gnostic /Augustinian/Calvinistic notion of a "sinful nature".

Re: , on: 2009/12/9 16:16

We need to study the Scriptures with an honest mind, apart from any prejudices or biases based upon traditions we have been taught or doctrines that we are comfortable with.

Sin is a choice. Sin is violation of God's law. God's law tells us what type of choices to make, not what type of nature to have. Therefore you can have sinful choices but you cannot have a sinful nature. God's law does not tell us what type of substance we are supposed to be made out of. Gnostics say that sin is a substance of matter. The Bible says sin is a choice. "Go and sin no more" implies that all sin is a choice. Sin is a choice, not a nature.

These are some of the most solid Scripture arguments against the Gnostic idea of a "sinful nature":

Quote:

----- First we must understand that God is the author of our nature. God is the cause of our constitution. Neither Adam nor the devil form our nature. The Bible says that God personally forms us in the womb (Gen. 4:1; Ex. 4:11; Isa. 27:11; 43:7; 49:5; 64:8; Jer. 1:5; Ps. 95:6; 139:13-14, 16; Ecc. 7:29; Job 10:9-11; 31:15; 35:10; Jn. 1:3). The work of forming a baby inside the womb is God's work. That is why God takes personal responsibility for the condition of our flesh at birth (Exo. 4:11).

Mankind is described as being made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Jas 3:9). That is why when it comes to sin, the Bible says that sin is actually contrary to human nature (Rom. 1:26-27). God wanted mankind to imitate Him in choosing holiness (Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26; Matt. 5:48; 1 Pet. 1:16). God did not design us to live wickedly. Sin is an abuse and misuse of our constitution. That is why the Bible says it is "against nature" to sin. Sinners choose to do "that which is against nature". Through the freedom of their will they choose to do what is contrary to their nature or design. It was never God's intention for man to sin; it was not His plan for mankind to be sinful (Gen. 6:5-6; Matt. 25:41; Eph. 1:4). God would have preferred a sinless universe that needed no atonement at all (1 Sam. 15:22). Since sin was contrary to God's plan or intention for mankind, God has made sin contrary to the design of our constitution.

God also designed our constitution or nature with a conscience so that we have the natural tendency or constitutional bent to obey the law of God. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another..." (Rom. 2:14-15). This is often referred to as "natural revelation" or "the light of nature". We have a natural disposition, or a constitutional inclination, to obey the law of God. By divine design we have a constitutional bias against sin. God has designed our nature to be in favor of virtue or goodness.

Quote:
 ----- We have been so created by God that we naturally feel the pains of conscience when we do what is wrong and we naturally have peace of mind when we do what is right. When the idea of right and wrong is developed within the mind, we naturally feel good when we choose to do what is right and we naturally feel bad when we choose to do what is wrong. It is not by choice that we feel that way, it is by nature. By design, our sensibilities naturally respond or react when our will chooses contrary to, or in conformity with, the knowledge of our mind.

Even a transgressor can say "I consent unto the law that it is good" (Rom. 7:16) because of "the law of" his "mind" (Rom. 7:23). A sinner can say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7:22) which is a classic way of referring to our God given conscience. If the unregenerate did not consent unto the goodness law, they could never be convicted and consequently converted. They could never feel guilt or be convinced that they are justly condemned if they did not consent to the goodness of the law which they have chosen to violate. A man would feel justified in violating a bad law but a man would feel condemned for violating a good law. If the law is wrong, the transgressor is right. If the law is right, the transgressor is wrong. A man can only feel guilty and his mind can only recognize that he was wrong for his transgression if his mind is convinced that the law which was violated was a good law.

Quote:
 ----- While it is true that our natural tendency is for virtue as far as our conscience is concerned, but our natural tendency is for self-gratification, as far as our flesh is concerned. Our flesh doesn't care if we gratify it naturally or unnaturally, lawfully or unlawfully, it just wants to be gratified. The reason many think that we have a "natural tendency towards sin" is because they are thinking of our flesh, but our flesh doesn't want "sin" as if "sin" was the end in mind or object sought. The flesh wants gratification, whether it comes through sin or through lawful means.

We have a constitutional, natural, God given desire for gratification. The flesh and mind that God has given us has natural desires that can be gratified through natural and lawful means. Sin is the choice of the will to gratify these natural desires through unnatural and unlawful means. F. Lagard Smith said, "We have a nature that is capable of being perverted from legitimate to illegitimate, from the natural to the unnatural, from the pure to the polluted." He said that sin is to "pervert... natural, legitimate, human desires."8 Augustine said, "Evil is making a bad use of a good thing."9

A perfect example of this is the narrative of Eve's temptation and sin. We are told that she was tempted, not because she had a sinful nature, but because she had natural God given desires which the devil tempted her to gratify through forbidden means. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." (Gen. 3:6). The narrative of Jesus' temptation in the desert shows the devil appealing to the natural desires that Jesus' body had (Luke 4:3). This is why we must choose to keep our body under subjection (1 Corinthians 9:27). "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh..." (Gal. 5:17). Our flesh wants us to be self-indulgent and practice self-gratification but the Spirit tells us to practice self-control and self-denial, choosing to our flesh in its proper place! and make a proper use of it. Our flesh has its proper place and proper function and its desires have a natural and lawful way of being gratified. Sin is to misuse our flesh and gratify its desires unnaturally and unlawfully.

Michael Pearl said, "The root of all sin is founded in runaway indulgence of God-given desires... Drives which are not in themselves evil, nonetheless, form the seedbed on which sin will assuredly grow... As the body of flesh was the medium of Eve's sin and of Christ's temptation, so it is the complement of your child's development into selfishness—which, at maturity, will constitute sinfulness."10

Quote:
 ----- An example would be our sexual desires. The attraction between the sexes is considered a "natural attraction". It is normal and natural and is not in and of itself wrong. God has given us our sex drive. These desires are God given. God intended for man to populate the world. God told Adam and Eve to "be fruitful and multiple" (Gen. 1:22, 28). Julian of Eclanum rightly said "that the sexual impulse—that is, that the virility it self, without which there can be no intercourse—is ordained by God."12 God designed men and women for each other. If a man and a woman commit themselves to each other through marriage, and engage in a sexual relationship with each other within that marriage, they are naturally and lawfully satisfying or fulfilling their God given desires (Heb. 13:4). Natural attraction is a normal state of the flesh, but lust in the sinful sense is a state of the will. It is a sin to intentionally look at a woman, whom you are not married to, lustfully (Matt. 5:28) but! there is no sin in marital sex or in the fleshly passions which are involved, so long as these desires are fulfilled lawfully and naturally.

When a person engages in any form of sexual immorality, such as fornication, homosexuality, or sodomy, they are choosing contrary to God's intention, contrary to our design, and are trying to satisfy or fulfill their God given sexual desires in an unnatural and an unlawful manner. Fornication is a sin against our body (1 Cor. 6:18), homosexuality is against nature (Rom. 1:26) and sodomy is an abuse of our flesh (1 Cor. 6:9). Our will is free to choose to gratify our flesh lawfully or unlawfully, naturally or unnaturally.

The fact that our nature or body is susceptible to temptation does not mean that we have a "sinful nature", a "sinful flesh", or a "sinful body". We must distinguish between sin and temptation. The desires of the body are the occasions of temptation (Jas. 1:14-15) but sin itself is a choice of the will (John 5:14, John 8:11, Rom. 6:12; Rom. 6:19 Eph. 4:26; 1 Jn. 3:4). Charles Finney said, "the appetites and passions tend so strongly to self-indulgence. These are temptations to sin, but sin itself consists not in these appetites and propensities, but in the voluntary committal of the will to their indulgence. This committal of the will is selfishness."13

I especially like this argument:

Quote:

We cannot say that our flesh is "sinful" or that we have a "sinful nature" just because our flesh or nature is susceptible to temptation. It is not "sinful" to be tempted. Jesus Christ was tempted yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). Therefore temptation is not sin. Sinfulness is violation of God's law (1 Jn. 3:4). God's law tells us what type of choices we should and shouldn't make (Exo. 20:3-17), not what type of body or nature we should or shouldn't have. Therefore choices can be sinful, but a body or a nature cannot be. Our flesh is just dirt (Gen. 2:7, Gen. 3:19) and therefore it cannot be "sinful". You cannot have sinful dirt. Dirt does not violate any commandment. There is no commandment that says, "thou shalt not be made out of dirt". Even if there was such a commandment, our violation of it would not be our fault but God's fault, since it was God who made us out of dirt.

While it is sinful to selfishly live after the flesh (Rom. 8:13), or to be living to gratify our flesh (Rom. 8:7), it is not sinful to have a flesh. We know that it is not sinful to have a flesh because Jesus Christ was sinless (2 Cor. 5:21) and He had a flesh (Luke 24:39, John 1:14, 1 Tim. 3:16, 1 Jn. 4:3, 2 Jn. 1:7). Jesus had the same type of flesh that we have. "For as much as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.... For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren..." (Heb. 2:14, 16-17). Jesus made in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. 8:3) which means Jesus was made in the likeness of men (Philippians 2:7). The word "flesh" is sometimes used synonymous with men (Gen. 6:12, Matt. 16:17). Jesus was morally perfect (2 Cor. 5:21) even before He had a glorified, resurrected, or perfect body, even while!

He had a body which was subjected to death (Heb. 2:14). We must differentiate between moral depravity and physical depravity and we must distinguish between moral perfection (Philippians 3:15) and physical perfection (Philippians 3:11-12). What is physical relates to the flesh but what is moral relates to the will or heart.

Charles Finney said, "The fact is, sin never can consist in having a nature, nor in what nature is, but only and alone in the bad use which we make of our nature. This is all. Our Maker will never find fault with us for what He has Himself done or made; certainly not. He will not condemn us, if we will only make a right use of our powers— of our intellect, our sensibilities, and our will. He never holds us responsible for our original nature... since there is no law against nature, nature cannot be a transgression... man's nature is not a proper subject for legislation, precept, and penalty, inasmuch as it lies entirely without the pale of voluntary action, or of any action of man at all."17

The Gnostic's taught that the flesh was sinful in and of itself which is why they denied that Jesus Christ came in the flesh (1 Jn. 4:3, 2 Jn. 1:7). Gnosticism attributes moral qualities to states of matter. The Bible says our flesh is an instrument or a tool which we could use for sin or for righteousness. Paul said, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (Rom. 6:13) and "...for as ye have yielded your members servants of uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." (Rom. 6:19).

To counteract the Gnostic idea that matter was intrinsically evil, or that the flesh was in and of itself sinful, Paul said that we can choose to sanctify our flesh, to set apart our bodies for the service of God. "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1). "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor." (1 Thes. 4:3-4). "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thes. 5:23). "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." (1 Tim. 2:8).

We certainly cannot have a glorified body in this life but we can have a sanctified body in this life. That means that we cannot have a physically perfect body in this life (Philippians 3:11-12) but we certainly don't have to use our body to sin or gratify our flesh through sin. We can sanctify our flesh. We can set apart our body from sin to the service of God.

If we fail to distinguish between sin and temptation, between the physical and the moral, between nature and character, between natural attributes and moral attributes, we will fall into the error of Gnosticism. While I was preaching on North Carolina State University I asked a Calvinist, "Is the body a sin?" He said, "Yes our bodies are made of sin." I asked, "You can put sin under a microscope and look at it?" He said, "Sure." While I was preaching on Alabama A&M a man said to me, "You can't stop sinning. Even waking up is a sin because you wake up in sinful flesh." While I was on air preaching to students at Tyler Junior College, I said, "Sin is a voluntary choice to violate God's law!" A Calvinist in the crowd responded by saying, "Your body is sin. You are a sinner because you have a body. And so long as you are in your body, you are a sinner!"

Re: - posted by hmmm (), on: 2009/12/9 16:22

This topic has been discussed so many times before, and I have seen very little fruit come from these discussions, especially when the discussion starts off with someone or several people that are totally absolute sure all others are wrong. I made a reference list, a very short one, there are many more for those who search. So I think it is wise to read through those first and if anyone has something further that has not been covered and feel that could be building up the saints in their most Holy Faith they could post that to encourage the saints.

(http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id31655&forum35&8) often discussed topics thread

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Does Man Have A Sinful Nature?

Re: , on: 2009/12/9 16:24

I am sorry that this has already turned into a debate. It was only my intention to present the other side.

It is my hope that people will read this article with their Bibles in hand so that they can look up all the passages and be convinced in their own minds.

"I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are they works; and that my soul knoweth right well." Ps. 139:14

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2009/12/9 16:53

Hi TheArminian...

Quote:

TheArminian wrote:

A fool judges a matter before he hears it the Bible says.

.....

What I liked the most about this article is how every point was supported with Scriptures.

If possible could you answer this. Did you write the article in the first post of this thread?

If so, I find it highly suspect (and dishonest) if you created an identity to simply congratulate your own views. If I am incorrect, I apologize. Regardless of whatever is right or wrong with Jesse Morrell's views, it just seems somewhat interesting that you tend to respond to this particular man's views almost exclusively.

Again, I apologize if this question seems just a little overbearing. I don't mean to embarrass you or even accuse you of hiding an ulterior identity (or motive behind your posts). Yet, it would help me understand your posts just a little more if I knew whether you are actually Jesse (or someone related to him in any way) when you write these sort of favorable critiques that applaud his articles.

Thanks.

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2009/12/9 17:27

Quote:

-----What I liked the most about this article is how every point was supported with Scriptures.

In a court of law, an attorney will have a predetermined side of the case to argue, and will go out seeking facts to support their case. Unfortunately, many do the same with the Word of God. Every one of us is susceptible to hearing a doctrine that just "sounds good" to us or finding a teacher who we really like. We develop a loyalty to the doctrine or to the teacher, and from that point forward seek scriptural "evidence" to support our doctrine. Sometimes these "arguments" with all of their scriptural twists, turns, and complexities can assume monumental proportions.

This is not how one should approach scripture. The Word of God is alive, it is powerful, and it is meant to produce fruit in our lives. The word reveals to us who God is. The term doctrine simply means, "What the Bible teaches." But doctrine is not the end, and propping up doctrine with argument or support is not where it is at. Having God reveal to us the truth of His word, and allowing that word to produce in us His fruit is the point of all study of scripture.

How often have I been convinced of a doctrinal stand, and had scripture lined up on my side, only to find that there were other scriptures that blew my little theory out of the water entirely. Scripture is NEVER self-contradictory. Scripture is always its own best commentary. But, we must study to show ourselves approved, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

I am not going to "enter the fray" so to speak on this topic other than to offer a couple of scriptures that seem to me to be a commentary on the topic.

Ephesians 2:1-6

Lets dig into the word, always with the goal that the word transform us (Romans 12:2), and not that we will be better able to defend a position that we feel as though we have come to own.

Blessings Brothers and Sisters

Travis

Re: Does Man Have A Sinful Nature? - posted by nasekom (), on: 2009/12/9 17:28

of course man has a sinful nature.

"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.
O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"
Rom.7:22-25.

Praise be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord for His victory!

Re: , on: 2009/12/9 17:53

Here are some passages against the idea of a sinful nature:

Rom. 1:26-27

Rom. 2:14-15

Ps. 139:14

Ecclesiastes 7:29

Eze. 18:20

Luke 24:39

John 1:14

1 Tim. 3:16

1 Jn. 4:3

2 Jn. 1:7

Heb. 2:14, 16-17

1 Jn. 4:3

2 Jn. 1:7

Rom. 6:13

Rom. 6:19

Rom. 12:1

1 Thes. 4:3-4

1 Thes. 5:23

Quote:
-----"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

Isn't that taking about the part of our nature that demands virtue (conscience) and the part of our nature that demands gratification and indulgence (flesh)?

This is from the article:

While it is true that our natural tendency is for virtue as far as our conscience is concerned, but our natural tendency is for self-gratification, as far as our flesh is concerned. Our flesh doesn't care if we gratify it naturally or unnaturally, lawfully or unlawfully, it just wants to be gratified. The reason many think that we have a "natural tendency towards sin" is because they are thinking of our flesh, but our flesh doesn't want "sin" as if "sin" was the end in mind or object sought. The flesh wants gratification, whether it comes through sin or through lawful means. The flesh that God gives us when He forms us in the womb can be gratified lawfully or unlawfully.

Quote:
----- Ephesians 2:1-6

This is from the article:

When the Bible talks about the natural man (1 Cor. 2:14) it is talking about a sensual and carnal man. It is someone who chooses to be governed by their passions rather than being governed by their conscience. When the Bible says that sinners are "by nature children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3) it is talking about those who live for the gratification of their flesh. The context of men being under God's wrath by nature is talking about a former manner of life, addressing a previous lifestyle. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world... among whom also all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh..." (Eph. 2:2-3) Instead of obeying their conscience, living for God, and putting their flesh in its proper place (a spiritual life), they ignore their conscience and live for themselves by living for the gratification of their flesh (a carnal life). This is a natural life as opposed to a spiritual life. Living a natural or carnal life is selfishly living for the gratification of your flesh.

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2009/12/9 18:04

Quote:
-----Did you write the article in the first post of this thread?

Please answer the question Jesse and please don't bring in your other names(truefaithsav, georgefox, and I think there was another, but I don't recall it) to build up support for your views.

Thank you

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Does Man Have A Sinful Nature?

Re: Does Man Have A Sinful Nature? - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/12/9 19:02

Quote:

-----by TheArminian on 2009/12/9 12:19:37

http://kmeministries.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=549&Itemid=68

I thought that this was a pretty good article:
DOES MAN HAVE A SINFUL NATURE?

Jesse Morrell

In answer to the title question, I am definitely sure that man has a sinful nature. To prove this, all I need do is quote the author of the article himself, Jesse Morrell, who said:

"I would sooner become an atheist than to become a Calvinist."

and

"I do this for a living."

So here we have a man, Jesse Morrell, who loves his own doctrines more than he loves God. He also does his ministry work not out of love for God, as one would expect, but to make a living.

He clearly is not obeying the greatest commandment of all:

Mt 22:37-38 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment."

CASE CLOSED.

Re: Does Man Have A Sinful Nature? - posted by murrcolr (), on: 2009/12/9 19:04

Quote:

TheArminian wrote:

God also designed our constitution or nature with a conscience so that we have the natural tendency or constitutional bent to obey the law of God.

Hosea 11:7 And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him.

God in his good book says the opposite of what your teacher Jesse says. When he says "my people" he is talking about believers in him. If believers in him have a "bent" to turn away from God. What are we before we become believers.

Roms 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

Adam created in the image of God, lost that original image upon sin and became depraved and sinful by nature. Then, just as God transmitted His image to Adam, Adam transmitted his image to his offspring. This unfortunately was a depraved image, spiritually dead and subject to physical death. It was a sinful-nature we are born with that gave us a bent towards sin.

Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Does Man Have A Sinful Nature?

The "old man" mentioned here is that Adamic nature we inherited from Adam. Jesus the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world came not only to deal with the sin we committed but also the sin we inherited from Adam.

We who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ have to be crucified with him so that our body of sin our old man might be put to death.

Why because he who is dead is free from sin Rom 6:7.

After reading what you posted from Jesse it makes me think that this teaching is in fact doing away with the need for a saviour. That men are good and with the right upbringing and teaching then everything would be okay.

Wrong, wrong, wrong.

Our sin has separated us from a Holy God, and there is no amount of good-doing that could correct the penalty of our sinful actions and depraved nature.

Anyone that would claim that their right standing with God is based upon their goodness is deceived, and has not the grace of God. Everywhere the Scriptures proclaim that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" The conviction and admission of sinful failure is essential for faith to be saving faith. The barrier is sin.

Re: , on: 2009/12/9 20:33

Quote:

-----Hosea 11:7 And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him.

God in his good book says the opposite of what your teacher Jesse says. When he says "my people" he is talking about believers in him.

This verse is talking about Israelites. It is not saying that believers have a sinful nature or that Christians have a bent to disobey God. The green word here for "bent" means habituate.

The article said:

Some today may think that sin is natural because they have developed a habit of sinning. Choice creates character and character creates habits. Through the continual choice of disobedience men have made sin "natural" or "normal" for them, in the sense that it has become their habit. This habit of sin, or tendency towards unlawful gratification, is the result of their own will and not the product of the hands of God. Their habit comes, not from their nature, but from their will.

Quote:

-----Adam created in the image of God, lost that original image upon sin and became depraved and sinful by nature.

Wrong wrong wrong. The Bible says, after the fall of Adam, that mankind is in the image of God. (Gen. 1:26-27; Gen. 9:6 ; 1 Cor. 11:7). The Bible says that men are "made after the similitude of God" (Jas. 3:9).

Quote:

-----It was a sinful-nature we are born with that gave us a bent towards sin.

It is the conscience that God has given us that gives us a bent against sin and towards obedience.

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Does Man Have A Sinful Nature?

Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

The "old man" mentioned here is that Adamic nature we inherited from Adam.

No no no. The old man is the former selfish person that we used to be. "man" does not mean "nature". The old man was the previous person that we were - a self centered, wicked, selfish person. Christians have put off their sins, they are new men.

Quote:

-----sin we inherited from Adam.

Sin is a free will choice, not a hereditary substance.

"Go and sin no more" implies that all sin is an avoidable choice.

Quote:

-----After reading what you posted from Jesse it makes me think that this teaching is in fact doing away with the need for a saviour.

Actually the opposite is true.

If a man is born sinful, it is not his fault.
If it is not his fault, he doesn't deserve punishment.
If he doesn't deserve punishment, he doesn't need a Savior.
Therefore if man is involuntarily sinful, he doesn't need Jesus.

But if men have chosen to be sinners, despite their God given nature, then they truly deserve punishment and truly need a Savior.

Quote:

-----Our sin has separated us from a Holy God, and there is no amount of good-doing that could correct the penalty of our sinful actions and depraved nature.

Anyone that would claim that their right standing with God is based upon their goodness is deceived, and has not the grace of God.

Mankind has been given a free will from God and a good nature from God. Yet despite all of that, we have sinned and therefore deserve eternal hell. The only way that our penalty of eternal hell can be remitted by God's grace and mercy is through the atonement of Christ. Christ's atonement substitutes our penalty so that God will turn from His wrath if we turn from our sins.

Though we are naturally capable of obeying God, no amount of obedience can ever atone for even one act of disobedience. Only blood shed can atone for sin. Therefore man's natural ability to obey, and man's conscience (bent towards obedience) does not negate our necessity for the atonement. In fact the whole reason we need the atonement is because we have used our natural ability of choice to sin and we know better because God has given us a conscience (which gives us a bent towards obedience). Free will and conscience are the conditions of our accountability and consequently our need of a Savior.

Quote:

-----Everywhere the Scriptures proclaim that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God"
The conviction and admission of sinful failure is essential for faith to be saving faith. The barrier is sin.

This is from the article:

It should be understood that a man is not virtuous because he feels bad for doing wrong. Even the unconverted naturally feel bad for doing wrong. That is a natural reaction that the sensibilities have in response to the consciousness of the choices of the will and the moral knowledge of the mind. Our feelings naturally react when our will chooses to obey or disobey our conscience. Moral character is not determined by the states of the sensibilities but by the states of the will. A man is virtuous if he actually chooses what is virtuous. A man is not virtuous because he has a natural tendency towards virt

ue. His will is free to live according to his nature or to choose that which is against nature. Man's character is derived from his will choosing according to, or contrary to, the conscience God created as part of his nature.

We must not confuse character with constitution. Nature and character must be distinguished between, lest we confuse our natural attributes with our moral attributes. Character is determined by our own will. Our constitution or nature is determined by God's will. Moral character relates to voluntary states, not involuntary states. There is no moral character in man's involuntary nature. Man did not consent to or choose what type of nature or natural tendencies he would have. Therefore his moral character does not consist in his nature or natural tendencies. Man's natural tendency does not show any virtue in the transgressor, rather, it shows the goodness of our Designer. God has given us our nature and therefore our nature reveals the character of God. God has so constituted man that we naturally know right from wrong, we naturally approve of the right and disapprove of the wrong, and naturally feel good when we do right and naturally feel bad when we do wrong. In this way God has created us with a natural tendency towards virtue.

Some may think that if I am saying that mankind has a natural tendency towards virtue that mankind is not sinful. The truth is that a man is a sinner, who truly deserves punishment and therefore needs forgiveness through the atonement of Christ, because while God has given mankind the natural ability to obey Him, and He has given us the natural tendency to obey Him, we have nevertheless chosen to sin. Despite all the efforts of God, both internal and external to man, mankind has still chosen to rebel against the good moral government of God. All men everywhere have personally and freely chosen to be sinners (Gen. 6:12, Ex. 32:7, Deut. 9:12, Deut. 32:5, Jdg. 2:19, Hos. 9:9, Ps. 14:2-3, Isa. 53:6, Ecc. 7:29, Rom. 3:23, Rom. 5:12.) despite our natural tendency towards virtue and our natural ability to do the will of God. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way..." (Isa. 53:6). "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." (Ecc. 7:29). We have used our natural ability of choice to choose contrary to the design of our nature. All men have deliberately chosen what they have naturally known is wrong. Sinners have abused their constitution and misused their nature. Man, not God, is at blame for sin because sin is the result of free will, not the result of a sinful nature.

Gordon C. Olson said, "Moral beings themselves are the author of their own rebellion, which is an unintelligent abuse of their God-given endowments of personality.... It is man who has abused his God-given freedom."5 Paris Reidhead said, "Are people in trouble spiritually because they inherit some spiritual defect from their parents or grandparents? No. They are in trouble because when they reach the age of accountability they deliberately turn their own way - they commit their will to the principle and practice of pleasing themselves as the end of their being. That is sin."6 He also said, "No w remember, sin is a crime. It is the committal of the will to the principle and practice of governing one's life to please one's self. In other words, when the Scripture says, 'all have sinned,' it is saying that upon reaching the age of accountability, every individual has chosen to govern and control his life to please himself... We know that upon reaching the age of accountability, each of us chose as the principle by which we would live: 'I am going to govern and control my own life.'7

Re: - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2009/12/9 22:42

Try this article on for size, the other one does not fit.

Gaebelein's Annotated Bible
Romans 5:12

4. In Christ.
The Sanctification of the Believer;
his Deliverance from Sin and the Law;
Children and Heirs.
Chapter 5:12-8.

CHAPTER 5:12-21

1. Sin and Death Through the First Adam. 12-14.
2. In Adam by Nature; in Christ Through Grace. 15-21.

So far the subject of this Epistle has been our sins and how God has dealt with them in the Cross of Christ. The guilt and penalty of the sins of the believer are forever gone. With this section the question of sin itself is taken up and we learn how the justified believer is also sanctified in Christ and as such delivered from the dominion of sin and from the law. Furthermore we learn it also includes that believers are children and heirs of God. To distinguish between sins and sin is important. Sin is that evil principle in us, as fallen creatures, and sins are the fruits which spring from the evil root in us. Sin, the old nature, and how God deals with it in virtue of the redemption of Jesus Christ, is now, first of all, revealed. What we were in Adam and what we are through grace in Christ, how as identified with Christ we may be delivered from the power of indwelling sin, are truths unknown to many believers. Without this knowledge a true Christian experience, such which a believer should constantly enjoy, is impossible. One of the chief reasons why true believers are carried about with divers and strange doctrines, is the ignorance of these great facts of our redemption in Christ as unfolded in this part of Romans. How many others are constantly striving and struggling to lead a spiritual life and fail in it because they know n

of the great principles of sanctification and deliverance in Christ.

Verses 12-14.--"Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death and thus death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." By one man, the first Adam, sin entered into the world (not sins, but sin). And death followed, which is physical death. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," and this death has passed upon the race because of sin. The margin of the authorized version contains a statement which is responsible for a very unscriptural teaching. The margin states "in whom all have sinned"; upon this it has been taught that the guilt of Adam has been imputed to all. This is not correct. We are not responsible for the sin of Adam nor are we held responsible by God for a sinful nature; we are responsible for the outworking of that nature, that is for our own sins. The wicked dead, those whose sins were not taken away, because they believed not, will not be judged for having had a sinful nature, but solely according to their works (Re 20:12). Death comes upon us on account of our sins, as it is stated in this verse "death passed upon all men for that all have sinned."

"For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law; nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him to come." This looks difficult, but it is simple after all. The law was given by Moses; from Adam to Moses there was no law, men were left to conscience, by which they knew good and evil. But death reigned nevertheless from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Adam had a commandment which he transgressed, inasmuch as there was no law till Moses, the generations could not sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Sin is lawlessness and not as the faulty translation of 1Jo 3:4 states, "sin is the transgression of the law." However, sin becomes transgression when there is a law. As there was no law from Adam to Moses, sin was therefore not imputed as transgression. But as they all sinned, death reigned and there is also judgment afterwards for them. The last sentence of verse 14 "who is the figure of Him that was to come" is the important statement which is fully developed in the verses which follow and upon which the whole argument rests.

Verses 15-21.--The first Adam is the type of the last, Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. The same comparison is also found in 1Co 15 "For as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive" (verse 22.). This passage has often been used by those who teach the ultimate, universal salvation of the whole race. It has nothing whatever to do with salvation from the penalty of sin, but it applies to the resurrection of the bodies of the redeemed. Here in Romans the contrast is of a different nature. Adam and Christ are viewed as two heads, having each his offspring to whom they communicate something. The first Adam bestows upon his offspring the results of his sin; Christ, the last Adam,* bestows upon those who belong to Him, by personal faith in Him, the blessed consequences of His great work. (Christ is never called the second Adam, but the last Adam, as there will not be another after Him.) A sinful nature and physical death is what we have as the children of the first Adam. In Christ the believer receives a sinless nature, eternal life and glory. In this sense Adam is the figure of Him to come.

The first sentence of verses 15 and 16 is best put in the form of a question. This helps much in understanding this deep portion of the Epistle. "But shall not the free gift be as the offence?" By the offence of Adam the many died, his offspring has been affected by his Offence. In like manner the grace of God and the gift of Grace, which is by the other Adam, Jesus Christ abounds also to the many. The question asked must therefore be answered in the affirmative. This and the following verses have also been used to teach that there is universal salvation. But it does not mean that. The condition "faith in Christ" must not be lost sight of. We are all in the first Adam by the natural birth; identification with the second Man is only possible by the new birth and that takes Place when a sinner believes on Christ and in His finished work. Those who do not believe are in Adam and are dead in trespasses and sins. "And shall not as by one that has sinned be the gift? For the judgment was of one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification" (verse 16). The sins committed are here in view. Our sin brought judgment. The free gift of justification, on account of Christ's atoning sacrifice, is blessedly sufficient to deliver from the guilt of many offences. "For if by the offence of one death reigned by the one; much more shall those who receive the abundance of grace, and Of the free gift of righteousness, reign in life by the one, Jesus Christ" (verse 17). The Previous verse spoke of the guilt of sins, which rests upon all those who are in Adam and this guilt is met in Christ by justification. In verse 17 death which reigns in the first man is met by reign of life in Jesus Christ. Those who believe on Him have life now and are delivered from the reign of death. When He comes, the bodies of His Saints will be raised in incorruption and we who remain shall be changed in a moment and be caught up into His Presence without dying. Verse 18 in the Authorized version is poorly translated and misleading. "So then as it was by one offence towards all men to condemnation, so by one righteousness towards all men to justification of life." This blessed contrast between Adam and Christ is made again in verse 19. "For as indeed by the disobedience of the one man (Adam) the many have been constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many shall be constituted righteous." Here it is the contrast between Adam's disobedience and Christ's obedience. And the obedience of Christ which constitutes all who believe on Him righteous, is not His obedient life, but His obedience in the death of the cross. "But law came

e in in order that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded grace overabounded, in order that, even as sin has reigned in the power of death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here for the first time a reason is given why God gave the law. The Epistle to the Galatians will bring the subject of Law and Grace more fully to our attention. Law came in that the offence might abound; it has constituted man a transgressor and in this sense the offence abounds. But grace overabounds. It deals with the transgressions and reigns through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Wonderful and preciously deep contrast! In Adam sin, condemnation and death. In Christ righteousness, justification and eternal life; yea much more, eternal glory. In Adam we have his constitution; in Christ we possess through grace His life and glory.

In Christ: Phillip

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiisss (), on: 2009/12/9 23:59

Hi again, TheArminian...

Quote:

TheArminian wrote:

A fool judges a matter before he hears it the Bible says.

....

What I liked the most about this article is how every point was supported with Scriptures.

I haven't received a reply to this question yet (unless I missed it). Did you write the article in the first post of this thread?

Earlier, I wrote this to you:

Quote:

If so, I find it highly suspect (and dishonest) if you created an identity to simply congratulate your own views. If I am incorrect, I apologize. Regardless of whatever is right or wrong with Jesse Morrell's views, it just seems somewhat interesting that you tend to respond to this particular man's views almost exclusively.

Again, I apologize if this question seems just a little overbearing. I don't mean to embarrass you or even accuse you of hiding an ulterior identity (or motive behind your posts). Yet, it would help me understand your posts just a little more if I knew whether you are actually Jesse (or someone related to him in any way) when you write these sort of favorable critiques that applaud his articles. Thanks.

You might wonder what the point would be for my question. You see, honesty matters. If you are actually Jesse, the guy who is credited with writing the article that you posted (and I am not saying that you are), it would seem to be somewhat dishonest to write some of the favorable comments that you have included. It would be something like an author writing a favorable, third-person review of his own book (and of the author himself) but by using a pseudonym. This would be a seemingly sly and deceptive thing to do.

Of course, I don't know if this is even true. You might not be Jesse (and I apologize for the forward nature of the question). However, I have asked this question several times on at least two threads and have not received an answer yet. Previously, I did receive a response about why it would matter. It matters to me because honesty matters. I tend to avoid the words of preachers that I do not trust to be honest men. There have been ministers that I have not followed closely simply because of a glaring character issue like that. So please forgive me if this seems like an accusation.

Now, if this is Jesse: I would say that I would have a problem if you are operating under a pseudonym (or series of pseudonyms) and then speaking about yourself or your articles/views through a separate personality. It isn't helpful to your cause to pretend to be someone else simply to bring up your views and by telling yourself (through various identities) that your articles/teachings/views are admired.

Again, TheArminian, forgive me if this sounds like an accusation. I wouldn't want to accuse you of something like this. Please understand that honesty matters...even in the little things. Thus, I hope that you can understand my question. It would just help me better understand how I should respond (or not respond) in the future.

Re: , on: 2009/12/10 0:30

You guys are always trying to get off topic. Let's stick to the issue. It seems you are always trying to discredit me, by saying I am Jesse or that I am associated with him, instead of simply debating the issue.

Here is another solid argument:

The fact that Jesus Christ rebuked sin (Rev. 3:19) and we are called to rebuke sin (Lev. 19:17; Lk. 17:3; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:13; 2:15) implies that sin is a choice of a person's will and not a state of their nature. It implies that their sinfulness is their own fault. It implies that their moral character is within the realm of their own control. If a man is born sinful because of the nature they inherit, their sinfulness is not their fault and it makes no sense to rebuke them for their sinfulness. But if a man is a sinner by choice, if a sinner is the cause and creator of sin, then rebuking him makes total sense.

Re: - posted by Leo_Grace, on: 2009/12/10 1:08

Quote:
-----You guys are always trying to get off topic. Let's stick to the issue. It seems you are always trying to discredit me, by saying I am Jesse or that I am associated with him, instead of simply debating the issue.

So you consider being associated with Jesse Morrell, or *gasp* actually being Jesse Morrell, would be a discredit to you? You should really explain that to us since you have been consistently heralding his doctrines in this forum. I would think that you would be proud to be mistaken for him, and doubly proud if you were really him.

Honesty, or more importantly, character is an key factor as to whether a person's posts or issues are even worth responding to. The question stands - are you Jesse Morrell or are you an associate of his? Will you lie blatantly in black and white in this forum to preserve your subterfuge, or will you come clean and deal with us honestly? Do you or do you not fear God who is watching you?

Re: , on: 2009/12/10 2:16

I appreciate your concern but you can rest assured, I am not doing anything wrong.

Here is another solid argument to consider:

We are taught to train our children in the way they should go (Prov. 22:6). This presupposes that they have the power of choice to determine how they are going to live and through teaching we can influence them to make the right choices. We are also taught about the goodness of physically disciplining our children (Prov. 22:15; 29:15). This implies that bad behavior is the result of their own will, not necessitated by their nature. If behavior was necessitated by nature, instead of chosen by free will, teaching our children would be useless and disciplining them would be cruel.

Re: - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2009/12/10 3:04

1 Corinthians 1:25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

2 Corinthians 13:4 For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

So it does not matter whether it is by nature of man, which is which is total weakness compared to God. It does not matter that man is wise, for his wisdom is nothing but foolishness to God.

1 Corinthians 1:19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

This God must do that He can have children for His house, Born again of Incorruptable Seed, then having the nature of The Father that has rebirthed him.

A complete change in nature, from sin and death, to life and the Father's house, for those called to be His Children.

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Does Man Have A Sinful Nature?

My nature is death to me. My wisdom destroys myself. It is God and God only that can bring forth Children of His own Seed, with the nature of Christ in them the Hope of Glory.

If my nature is not of God then it is of my old father Satan and that is sin and death, of which I have no control over, it is God who calls His own, and gives them to the Son and none will take them out of His hands.

Without Christ all is sin and death, Adams destiny for all his offspring? Inherited from him and his and eves choices, which none of us could have done any better. All die in Adam, all live in Christ. Simple.

1 Corinthians 1:25-31 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Only in Christ can any believer by wise, righteous, put to the original use that God intended man for: Sanctified, Only God can Redeem any man through the Cross of Christ and His rebirth in the believer, "Christ in you the Hope of Glory".

In Christ: Phillip

Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2009/12/10 3:57

Hi TheArminian...

Quote:

TheArminian wrote:
You guys are always trying to get off topic. Let's stick to the issue. It seems you are always trying to discredit me, by saying I am Jesse or that I am associated with him, instead of simply debating the issue.

A simple "yes" or "no" would help.

Quote:
-----I appreciate your concern but you can rest assured, I am not doing anything wrong.

I suppose that such an opinion might be open to debate.

If you aren't Jesse, I don't think that you're really doing anything wrong. You're simply discussing a very divisive topic. If you ARE actually Jesse, then I would have a different opinion...simply because you pretended (through deception) to be someone other than the author of the article. Honesty matters.

Again, forgive me if you see this as an accusation. I'm not bitter with you (or Jesse for that matter) or accusing you at all. It would just help me to understand your perspective or approach just a little more if you answered my question.

Thanks.

:)

Re: - posted by murrcolr (), on: 2009/12/10 5:03

People my friends are in trouble spiritually because when we are born, we are born separated from God in a fallen state and in need of a savior.

When the Scripture says, 'all have sinned' then that's what it means For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God Roms 3:23 We are born short of the Glory of God, we are born sinners.

Romans 5:12-21

Notice Paul's point in 12-21. He parallels death that came through Adam with life that came through Christ in order to help us understand the basis of the justification we now enjoy. The logical point of this parallel is that something passively came to us through the actions of our representative head, death through Adam and life through Christ.

To say that death came to us because we committed acts of sin is to miss the whole point of Paul's comparison, for justification certainly did not come to us because we committed acts of righteousness. No, death came passively through Adam as our first head just as the grace of justification comes passively to us through the death of Christ (the clear point of v 18, the summary verse of the section).

Paul's point at the end of v12 is not that "death spread to all men because each of them committed acts of sin in their life times." This doesn't fit the context. Instead, Paul's point is that "death spread to all men because all future humans were represented in Adam when he ate the apple."

It's similar to Heb 7:9-10 which says that Levi, who wasn't yet born, paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham's loins. In other words, Abraham, the great-grandfather of a yet-to-be-born man named Levi, represented his entire race of descendants in this act of tithing such that it is accurate to say that the entire bloodline of Abraham tithed to Melchizedek.

The point is we passively inherit the nature or state of sin through Adam in birth JUST AS we passively inherit the nature or state of justification through Christ in faith.

Adam sinned and the result was that he "surely died" (Gen 2:17). Yes, this did include physical death for Adam and Eve and, indeed, for the whole human race. Yet it also included immediate separation from the presence of God in the garden of Eden for Adam and his entire race. When a child is born, he or she does not just inherit eventual physical death from Adam, he or she also inherits spiritual separation from God.

Notice also that immediately after the fall, Adam's race begins inventing sin. Cain did not learn to murder as murder had never occurred before. No, when anger arose he invented the act of murder. So while sin certainly can be learned it can also flow out of humanity as a creative expression of our natural bent away from God. The point of this is to say that the flow of biblical history after the fall illustrates the reality of inherited depravity in the entire human race.

Jer 17:9-10 the human heart is desperately wicked and sick. The problem is not that we sin; it's that we are naturally bent at our deepest level fully towards sin.

1 Cor 1:18 1 Cor 2:14 man in his natural state finds the gospel foolish and incomprehensible. Notice, it is all of humanity, Jew and Gentile alike, in their "natural" state. They are not blind because of their sin they are blind by nature.

2 Cor 4:3-4 unbelieving mankind is under the blinding power of Satan. Again, this does not seem to be because they have sinned but something that is a natural part of the state they are in.

If we are not born sinners but are born innocent, able to choose between right and wrong, then why has every single human except Christ chosen to sin (Rom 3:10-18,23)? It seems that human nature is bent towards sin, and this is best explained by saying that we were born sinners. We were born spiritually dead and loving to sin.

Few of us would doubt that even the smallest child sins. Toddlers frequently disobey parental instruction and even infants scream out in selfishness. Where does this sin come from? These children aren't yet old enough to even understand the concepts of right and wrong yet already act in sin. In fact, observation suggests that when a child is very young his natural choice will always be sin (selfishness, disobedience) unless the parents create sufficient negative consequences that train him/her otherwise. A child does not have to be trained to be selfish and disob

edient, that comes naturally!

So, we have scriptural and experiential evidence that we are indeed born sinners and that as a result, we sin.

Re: Wolf, on: 2009/12/10 10:20

My question would be, "How in the world is this thread edifying?" Over , over and over again, the Christian Brothers and Sisters throw pearls before a swine. Sounds harsh, but it is true. Try arguing with a Catholic Cardinal or a Mormon Apostle; for this is exactly the same thing.

Here is the Armenian

"It is the conscience that God has given us that gives us a bent against sin and towards obedience. Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

The "old man" mentioned here is that Adamic nature we inherited from Adam.

"No! no! no!. The old man is the former selfish person that we used to be. "man" does not mean "nature". The old man was the previous person that we were - a self centered, wicked, selfish person. Christians have put off their sins, they are new men. "

Armenian

AND.....

"Sin is a free will choice, not a hereditary substance."

"Go and sin no more" implies that all sin is an avoidable choice. "
Armenian.

Do not be deceived that this is an Armenian/Calvinist debate. IT IS NOT! This is a "PELAGIANISM*/CHRISTIAN debate, and it is the same as trying to debate any other faithless heresy.

*

Michael S. Horton

This trash... counters about every fundamental foundation of the New birth, and thereby the Cross of Jesus, and His atoning Blood. It is damnable heresy, and it is not to be argued, but condemned.

2 Timothy

14 Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and idle babblings,

For they will increase to more ungodliness.

17" And their message will spread like cancer."

Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, 18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past;

"and they overthrow the faith of some."

This is why we do not argue HERESY and HERETICS, but mark and condemn them. and are commanded to shun e

ven discussion. I appeal to the moderators to consider this.

WOLF.