

MASTER THE CONTENT

OF SCRIPTURE



DISCIPLESHIP 6

Human Beings and the Fall

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Introduction

What does it mean to be human—and what went wrong? *Discipleship 6: Human Beings and the Fall* tackles one of the most important yet misunderstood subjects in theology: the nature, dignity, and ruin of mankind. Drawing structural inspiration from R.C. Sproul's *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith*, this workbook brings biblical clarity to our origin, condition, and desperate need for redemption.

Through twelve chapters, readers explore profound doctrines like the image of God, original sin, depravity, spiritual warfare, and the conscience. You'll confront hard questions: Who are we? What is sin? Who is Satan? What does it mean to fall—and to be raised again in Christ? Each chapter includes vivid illustrations, deep biblical teaching, and practical application designed to transform knowledge into spiritual growth.

“To know humanity rightly, we must first see it in the light of God's truth—and the shadow of the Fall.”

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Chapter 1: Knowledge of Self and Knowledge of God

“The Mirror That Spoke”

Jacob, a young seminary student, once dreamed of a mirror that didn’t reflect his face, but his heart. It showed pride where he thought humility lived, ignorance where he claimed wisdom, and fear hiding beneath bravado. In the corner of the mirror, he saw a strange light – bright but calming. As he stared into it, the light took the form of a cross. He awoke trembling, convicted by what he saw. For the first time, Jacob realized: without knowing God, he could never truly know himself.

Overarching Question

How are the knowledge of self and the knowledge of God inseparably linked according to Scripture and Christian theology?

1. What Is the Starting Point of True Knowledge – God or Self?

Example: Philosophers have long debated whether understanding begins inward (as Descartes argued) or upward (as Scripture teaches). Calvin writes in *Institutes* that we cannot know ourselves without first seeing ourselves in the light of God's holiness.

 *Scripture Reference:* "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge..." (Proverbs 1:7).

2. How Does God's Holiness Reveal the Depth of Human Sinfulness?

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Example: Isaiah, a righteous prophet by human standards, cried “Woe is me!” (Isaiah 6:5) when he encountered God’s holiness. It was only in God's presence that he recognized his own uncleanness.

 *Scripture Reference: "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone..." (Isaiah 6:5).*

3. Can a Person Know Themselves Truly Without Knowing God First?

Example: In our culture of self-help and self-discovery, people attempt to define themselves by careers, relationships, or feelings. But without God, the ultimate reference point is missing. Just as a shadow cannot define the object that casts it, so we cannot define ourselves apart from our Creator.

 *Scripture Reference: "In Him we live and move and have our being..." (Acts 17:28).*

4. What Are the Dangers of Reversing the Order – Knowing Self Before God?

Example: When man becomes the measure of all things, pride replaces worship, and truth becomes relative. Just like Adam and Eve in the garden sought autonomy and lost communion, those who exalt self above God lose both knowledge and relationship.

 *Scripture Reference: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools..." (Romans 1:22).*

Conclusion

True self-awareness is only possible in the light of God's self-revelation. The more we see God in His holiness, the more we understand ourselves in our brokenness – and our desperate need for grace. Calvin was right: the knowledge of God and the knowledge of self are twin lights that illuminate one another. To know God is to know who we really are – and to see both our sin and our Savior.

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Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think modern culture prioritizes self-knowledge over the knowledge of God?
 2. How did Isaiah's vision of God lead to a deeper understanding of himself?
 3. In what ways does knowing God help us find purpose and identity?
 4. What dangers arise when we try to define ourselves apart from God?
 5. How can we pursue a balanced understanding of both God and self in our spiritual growth?
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Chapter 2: Human Beings Created in the Image of God

“The Broken Sculpture”

In an art museum, a child wandered into a special exhibit of ancient sculptures. One statue stood out—cracked, weather-worn, and missing an arm. Despite its flaws, it radiated dignity. The plaque read: *"Image of the Emperor."* A nearby artist remarked, “Even broken, it still bears the image of its maker.” The child asked, “So... am I like that statue?” The answer? Yes—but your Sculptor is the living God.

Overarching Question

What does it mean for human beings to be created in the image of God, and how does that truth affect our identity, dignity, and purpose?

1. What Does It Mean to Be Made in God's Image?

Example: Being made in God’s image doesn't mean we share His physical form, but rather His spiritual, rational, moral, and relational capacities. We reflect His creativity, reason, and ability to love.

 *Scripture Reference:* "So God created man in his own image..." (Genesis 1:27).

2. How Does the Image of God Give Every Human Being Inherent Dignity?

Example: From the unborn child to the elderly with dementia, all people bear God’s image. This is the foundation for human rights, justice, and ethical treatment. We don’t

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earn dignity –it's bestowed.

 *Scripture Reference: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image." (Genesis 9:6).*

3. How Was the Image of God Affected by the Fall?

Example: Like a shattered mirror, the image remains but is distorted. We still reflect God, but sin has marred our ability to love, reason, and govern righteously. The Fall didn't erase the image, but it corrupted it.

 *Scripture Reference: "Though they knew God, they did not honor him as God..." (Romans 1:21).*

4. How Is the Image of God Restored in Christ?

Example: Christ is the *perfect image* of God (Hebrews 1:3), and through union with Him, believers are being renewed. Sanctification is the gradual restoration of God's image in us.

 *Scripture Reference: "Put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator." (Colossians 3:10).*

Conclusion

The doctrine of the imago Dei is not a footnote in theology –it's foundational. To be human is to be made by God, like God, for God. Though the image is fractured by sin, it is being restored in Christ. Our worth is not found in what we do, but in whose image we bear. This truth shapes our ethics, our mission, and our hope.

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Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do people misunderstand the phrase “image of God”?
 2. How does the doctrine of imago Dei affect how we treat others?
 3. What are some ways the image of God is still visible in fallen humanity?
 4. How does salvation in Christ relate to the restoration of God's image?
 5. How might understanding this doctrine help us respond to social injustice or ethical issues?
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Chapter 3: Human Beings as Body and Soul

“The Empty Suit”

At a high-profile funeral, a man whispered to his friend, “He’s gone.” The friend nodded, replying, “That’s just the suit – he’s not in it anymore.” The comment struck them both. The body lay before them, but the soul – the person – was absent. That moment reminded them that humans are more than flesh and blood. We are embodied souls, fearfully and wonderfully made for both the seen and the unseen realms.

Overarching Question

What does it mean that human beings are made of both body and soul, and how does this shape our understanding of life, death, and eternal destiny?

1. What Is the Biblical Basis for the Body-Soul Distinction?

Example: When God created man, He formed him from the dust (body) and breathed into him the breath of life (soul/spirit). Man became a *living being*, a union of physical and spiritual essence.

 *Scripture Reference:* “Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life...” (Genesis 2:7).

2. Why Is It Important to Recognize Both Body and Soul as Good Creations of God?

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Example: Greek philosophy sometimes viewed the body as a prison of the soul. In contrast, Christianity affirms the goodness of both body and soul, as Jesus Himself took on flesh (John 1:14) and rose bodily from the grave.

 *Scripture Reference: "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit..." (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).*

3. What Happens to the Body and Soul at Death?

Example: At death, the body returns to dust, but the soul continues to exist. Believers go immediately into the presence of the Lord, awaiting the resurrection of the body at Christ's return.

 *Scripture Reference: "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:8).*

4. How Should the Unity of Body and Soul Affect Our Daily Living?

Example: We are to care for our bodies and souls alike – through health, rest, worship, and obedience. Discipleship isn't just spiritual – it's embodied faith. Our ethics must reflect this holistic view.

 *Scripture Reference: "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice..." (Romans 12:1).*

Conclusion

We are not merely spirits floating in flesh suits, nor are we just biological machines. God made us body and soul – fearfully designed for worship, relationship, and eternal purpose. The resurrection affirms that our bodies matter. The indwelling Spirit affirms that our souls matter. Together, they reflect God's wisdom in creating humans as whole persons.

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Discussion Questions

1. Why does it matter that humans are both body and soul?
 2. How does this dual nature affect our understanding of death and the afterlife?
 3. What are some unbiblical views of the body or soul that Christians should avoid?
 4. How can we honor God with our bodies?
 5. How does this truth influence how we care for both our physical and spiritual health?
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Chapter 4: Human Beings as Flesh and Spirit

“Two Dogs in One Man”

An old preacher once told a young man, “Inside me, there are two dogs fighting – one is flesh, the other is spirit.”

“Which one wins?” asked the young man.

The preacher smiled, “Whichever one I feed more.”

This simple image captured a profound biblical truth: in every believer, there is an ongoing struggle between the desires of the flesh and the leading of the Spirit.

Overarching Question

What does Scripture mean when it distinguishes between flesh and spirit in human beings, and how does this affect the Christian life?

1. What Is Meant by “Flesh” and “Spirit” in the Bible?

Example: “Flesh” in Scripture often refers not to physical bodies, but to the fallen, sinful nature that opposes God. “Spirit” refers to the renewed, God-directed part of us, especially under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

 *Scripture Reference: “For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh...” (Galatians 5:17).*

2. How Does This Flesh-Spirit Conflict Manifest in Daily Life?

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Example: Paul describes his inner turmoil in Romans 7 – desiring to do good but often doing the opposite. This is not merely psychological tension but spiritual warfare between two opposing forces.

 *Scripture Reference: "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."*
(Romans 7:21).

3. How Can Believers Live by the Spirit Rather Than the Flesh?

Example: Walking by the Spirit is not a one-time choice but a daily surrender – through prayer, Scripture, and dependence on God's grace. Spiritual disciplines are not legalism but lifelines.

 *Scripture Reference: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."*
(Galatians 5:16).

4. What Are the Results of Living According to the Flesh vs. the Spirit?

Example: The flesh leads to spiritual death – envy, strife, impurity. The Spirit produces the fruit of love, joy, peace, and more. One path ends in destruction, the other in life and peace.

 *Scripture Reference: "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."* (Romans 8:6).

Conclusion

To be human is to live in tension. Even redeemed saints feel the pull of the old nature. But the Spirit within us is stronger than the flesh. Through Christ, we are not slaves to sin. By the Spirit, we can overcome. The Christian life is not perfection, but progress in the power of the Spirit.

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Discussion Questions

1. How would you define “flesh” and “spirit” in a biblical context?
 2. In what ways do you personally experience the struggle between flesh and spirit?
 3. What practices help you walk more by the Spirit in your daily life?
 4. How does Romans 7 encourage believers who feel defeated by sin?
 5. Why is it important to remember that the Spirit is stronger than the flesh?
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Chapter 5: Satan

“The Disguise”

In a small village, a thief disguised himself as a trusted merchant. Over time, he tricked the townspeople, convincing them he was there to help. One day, a child caught him stealing and shouted, “That’s not the merchant – that’s a liar in disguise!” The crowd gasped as the mask fell. Likewise, Satan never comes as a cartoonish villain but as an angel of light. His greatest trick? Convincing people he doesn’t exist – or that he means no harm.

Overarching Question

Who is Satan according to Scripture, and how should believers understand his nature, power, and limitations?

1. Who Is Satan and Where Did He Come From?

Example: Satan is not equal to God. He is a created being – originally a high-ranking angel who rebelled. Pride was his downfall. His origin story reminds us that evil is not eternal but a corruption of the good.

 *Scripture Reference: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" (Isaiah 14:12).*

2. What Are Satan’s Primary Goals and Tactics?

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Example: He is called the “accuser of the brethren” and the “father of lies.” He sows doubt (Genesis 3), tempts (Matthew 4), and blinds minds (2 Corinthians 4:4). He’s not creative—just cunning.

 *Scripture Reference:* “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about...” (1 Peter 5:8).

3. What Are Satan’s Limitations?

Example: Satan is not omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent. He operates under divine permission, as shown in Job's story. Believers are not under his dominion—Christ has triumphed over him.

 *Scripture Reference:* “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7).

4. How Should Believers Respond to the Reality of Satan?

Example: We fight not with superstition but with spiritual armor—truth, righteousness, faith, the Word of God, and prayer. We resist by standing firm in Christ, not in fear but in faith.

 *Scripture Reference:* “Put on the whole armour of God...” (Ephesians 6:11).

Conclusion

Satan is real—but he is not sovereign. His power is limited, his time is short, and his doom is certain. Christ has crushed the serpent’s head (Genesis 3:15). While Satan seeks to devour, Jesus came to deliver. The believer stands not alone, but armored, defended, and victorious in the Lord.

Discussion Questions

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1. What are some common misconceptions about Satan?
 2. How does knowing Satan's limitations give believers confidence?
 3. What are some ways Satan subtly tempts or deceives today?
 4. How can Christians put on the "whole armor of God" daily?
 5. Why is it important to acknowledge Satan's reality without giving him undue attention?
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Chapter 6: Demons

“The Invisible War”

During a jungle mission, a soldier stepped into a peaceful-looking clearing – only to trigger a hidden mine. Though no enemy was in sight, danger surrounded him. His captain later warned, “You’re in a war, whether you see the enemy or not.” Similarly, the Christian life is lived in the midst of spiritual warfare. Demons do not march in uniform, but their tactics are real, subtle, and destructive.

Overarching Question

What does Scripture teach about demons, and how should believers understand their origin, purpose, and influence in the world?

1. What Are Demons and Where Did They Come From?

Example: Demons are fallen angels who joined Satan in his rebellion against God. They are not fictional monsters but spiritual beings with intellect and will, now bent on resisting God’s kingdom.

 *Scripture Reference:* “And the angels which kept not their first estate... he hath reserved in everlasting chains...” (Jude 1:6).

2. What Is the Goal of Demonic Activity?

Example: Demons aim to deceive, enslave, and destroy. From idolatry in the Old Testament to demon possession in the New, their influence leads away from truth and

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toward destruction.

 *Scripture Reference: "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits..." (1 Timothy 4:1).*

3. What Authority Does Christ Have Over Demons?

Example: Jesus cast out demons with a word (Mark 1:27). His authority is unmatched. At the cross, He disarmed principalities and made a public spectacle of them. Their defeat is sealed.

 *Scripture Reference: "Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly..." (Colossians 2:15).*

4. How Should Christians Respond to the Reality of Demons?

Example: Fear is not the answer – faith is. We are called to be alert, not alarmed. Demons flee from Spirit-filled believers who cling to the Word, walk in holiness, and pray fervently.

 *Scripture Reference: "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4).*

Conclusion

Demons are real, but they are not invincible. Christ reigns over all powers. While their activity continues, their doom is sure. The Christian doesn't fight alone. Armed with the Spirit, the Word, and the victory of Christ, we stand against the powers of darkness – not as victims, but as victors.

Discussion Questions

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1. Why is it important to understand the true nature of demons?
 2. How does biblical teaching about demons differ from popular culture's portrayal?
 3. In what ways might demonic influence manifest in modern life?
 4. What practical steps can believers take to resist spiritual deception?
 5. How does Christ's authority over demons shape our spiritual confidence?
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Chapter 7: Sin

“The Crack in the Foundation”

A family moved into their dream home. Months later, they noticed small cracks forming along the walls. By year’s end, the doors wouldn’t close, and the floors tilted. A structural engineer came and said, “Your foundation was flawed from the start.” What seemed cosmetic was actually catastrophic. Sin is like that – it may appear small at first, but it affects everything. Beneath all brokenness in the world lies the foundational problem of sin.

Overarching Question

What is sin according to Scripture, and how does it affect the human condition, our relationship with God, and the entire created order?

1. What Is Sin and How Is It Defined in Scripture?

Example: Sin isn’t merely breaking rules – it’s falling short of God’s glory and rebelling against His holy character. It is both an act and a condition.

 *Scripture Reference: "Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)*

 *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)*

2. Where Did Sin Originate and How Did It Enter the Human Race?

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Example: Sin entered the world through Adam's disobedience. His fall was not merely personal—it was representative. Through him, death and condemnation spread to all humanity.

 *Scripture Reference: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin..."* (Romans 5:12)

3. What Are the Effects of Sin on Human Beings and the World?

Example: Sin corrupts every part of human nature—mind, will, affections—and has tainted the entire creation. Suffering, injustice, and death are symptoms of a deeper disease.

 *Scripture Reference: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain..."* (Romans 8:22)

4. What Hope Do We Have in the Face of Sin?

Example: Though sin brings death, God provides life through Christ. The gospel is not a patch—it's a new heart, a new mind, and a new creation.

 *Scripture Reference: "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound..."* (Romans 5:20)

Conclusion

Sin is the great problem behind every problem. It separates us from God, enslaves us, and brings death. Yet, the message of the gospel is that sin does not have the final word. Christ has dealt with sin once for all. When we confess and repent, we don't just

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become better people – we become new people. Sin may explain our fall, but grace explains our future.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important to define sin biblically rather than culturally?
 2. How does the doctrine of original sin help us understand human nature?
 3. In what ways do we see the effects of sin in the world today?
 4. Why can't human effort alone solve the problem of sin?
 5. How does the gospel offer both forgiveness and transformation?
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Chapter 8: Original Sin

“The Inherited Stain”

When little Eli was born, he had a rare genetic condition – not because of anything he did, but because it was passed down from his father. Doctors explained, “It’s part of his DNA now. He needs help beyond his own ability to fix it.”

Original sin works the same way: we’re not sinners because we sin – we sin because we are sinners by nature, born with a condition that only the gospel can cure.

Overarching Question

What is original sin, and how does it affect every human being’s relationship with God from birth?

1. What Is Original Sin?

Example: Original sin refers to the inherited corruption and guilt that all humans possess as descendants of Adam. It's not just our actions – it’s our nature.

 *Scripture Reference: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalm 51:5)*

2. How Was Original Sin Transmitted to the Human Race?

Example: Adam was humanity’s federal head. When he sinned, we all fell with him. His disobedience was legally and spiritually imputed to all who would come after.

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 *Scripture Reference: "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners..." (Romans 5:19)*

3. What Are the Consequences of Original Sin?

Example: Original sin results in spiritual death, a bent will, darkened understanding, and separation from God. Even infants, though innocent in action, are not exempt from its guilt and need redemption.

 *Scripture Reference: "And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." (Ephesians 2:3)*

4. How Is Original Sin Overcome?

Example: Only through Christ – the Second Adam – can original sin be undone. Through His perfect obedience, righteousness is imputed to believers. Grace doesn't just cover sin; it gives new life.

 *Scripture Reference: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:22)*

Conclusion

Original sin is a sobering reality. It tells us we're not blank slates or morally neutral beings – we are born alienated from God. But it also magnifies the grace of the gospel. Just as Adam's sin was imputed to us, so Christ's righteousness is imputed to those who believe. The stain we inherited is washed by a righteousness we could never earn.

Discussion Questions

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1. How would you explain original sin to someone unfamiliar with theology?
2. Why is original sin more than just “bad influence” from others?
3. What evidence of original sin do you see in young children or in your own heart?
4. Why is it important to believe that Christ is the “Second Adam”?
5. How does original sin magnify our understanding of grace?

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Chapter 9: Human Depravity

“The Broken Compass”

A group of explorers relied on an old compass passed down through generations. Confidently they trekked through the forest – until they found themselves completely lost. The compass was defective, always pulling slightly off true north. “It didn’t seem like much at first,” one muttered, “but every step off course multiplied over time.” Human nature is like that broken compass. Our depravity may not feel dramatic, but it distorts everything, leading us away from God unless grace redirects our course.

Overarching Question

What does Scripture teach about human depravity, and how does it affect our ability to know, love, and obey God?

1. What Is Total Depravity?

Example: Total depravity doesn’t mean we’re as bad as we could possibly be – it means every part of our nature is affected by sin. Our mind, will, emotions, and actions are all corrupted.

 *Scripture Reference: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked..."*
(Jeremiah 17:9)

2. How Does Depravity Affect Our Relationship with God?

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Example: A depraved nature doesn't merely ignore God – it resists Him. Apart from regeneration, no one seeks God on their own. Our natural bent is rebellion.

 *Scripture Reference:* "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." (Romans 3:11)

3. Are Human Beings Still Valuable Despite Their Depravity?

Example: Yes. We are fallen, but not worthless. The image of God remains, though marred. Depravity explains our condition – not our value. God's love does not depend on our performance.

 *Scripture Reference:* "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

Major Point 4: How Is Human Depravity Addressed in Salvation?

Example: Salvation is not behavior modification – it's a resurrection. The Holy Spirit doesn't polish up the flesh; He gives a new heart. We are saved by grace alone, not by human willpower.

 *Scripture Reference:* "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." (Ephesians 2:1)

Conclusion

The doctrine of human depravity reveals both the depth of our sin and the height of God's grace. We are not spiritually sick – we are spiritually dead apart from Christ. This humbles us, strips us of self-righteousness, and magnifies the mercy of God. Until we see the gravity of our condition, we won't see the glory of our salvation.

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Discussion Questions

1. How does total depravity differ from utter depravity?
2. In what ways do we see depravity in culture, institutions, and personal lives?
3. Why is it important to affirm human dignity even while acknowledging depravity?
4. How does the doctrine of depravity impact evangelism and missions?
5. What does this doctrine teach us about our need for the Holy Spirit?

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Chapter 10: Human Conscience

“The Alarm You Can’t Silence”

Jason once ignored the low-battery beep of a smoke detector for weeks. Eventually, the noise faded into background noise – until the night it actually went off for real. In panic, he realized the alarm had a purpose: to warn, to awaken, to protect.

The conscience is like that God-given alarm in every human soul. It alerts us to right and wrong – but like all alarms, it can be silenced... or ignored.

Overarching Question

What is the conscience, and how does it function as part of God’s moral witness in the heart of every person?

1. What Is the Conscience According to Scripture?

Example: The conscience is the inner sense of moral awareness – God’s moral law written on the heart. Even those without the written Law instinctively know good from evil.

 *Scripture Reference: "Their conscience also bearing witness..." (Romans 2:15)*

2. How Can the Conscience Be Misinformed or Corrupted?

Example: A conscience can be seared through habitual sin, or overly sensitive through legalism. Like a compass near a magnet, it can point in the wrong direction if not

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calibrated by God's truth.

 *Scripture Reference: "Having their conscience seared with a hot iron..." (1 Timothy 4:2)*

3. How Does the Conscience Work in Both Conviction and Assurance?

Example: A healthy conscience convicts us when we sin (like David in Psalm 51), but also gives peace when we walk in truth. It's meant to drive us to Christ, not despair.

 *Scripture Reference: "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (1 John 3:21)*

4. How Should the Conscience Be Trained and Guarded?

Example: Consciences must be shaped by the Word, informed by sound doctrine, and sensitive to the Holy Spirit. We must not violate our conscience – but neither should we idolize it.

 *Scripture Reference: "I always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men." (Acts 24:16)*

Conclusion

The conscience is a moral gift from God, pointing us to righteousness and warning us against evil. Yet like all human faculties, it can be dulled, warped, or ignored. Christ doesn't just forgive the guilty conscience – He cleanses and restores it. The believer's task is to walk with a conscience held captive by the Word of God, guided by grace, and responsive to truth.

Discussion Questions

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1. How would you define “conscience” in simple terms?
 2. Can a person’s conscience be wrong? Give an example.
 3. How does the conscience function in someone who has never heard the gospel?
 4. What are ways to strengthen or train your conscience biblically?
 5. How does Christ’s work on the cross impact the believer’s conscience?
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Chapter 11: The Unforgivable Sin

“The Locked Door”

A man once wandered into a vast mansion, exploring every room except one with a red warning sign: *Do Not Enter*. He joked with friends, “There’s no such thing as a locked door.” One day, he turned the handle – and found it bolted shut. The owner’s voice echoed from within: “That door was never yours to open in defiance.”

Some doors are locked not by cruelty, but by judgment. The unforgivable sin is not God withholding grace, but man shutting the door from the inside.

Overarching Question

What is the unforgivable sin, and how should believers understand Jesus’ warning about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?

1. What Is the Unforgivable Sin According to Jesus?

Example: Jesus warns that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven – unlike all other sins. This was in response to Pharisees attributing His Spirit-empowered miracles to Satan.

 *Scripture Reference: "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness..." (Mark 3:29)*

2. What Makes This Sin Unforgivable?

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Example: It is not a slip of the tongue or a moment of doubt – it's a persistent, willful rejection of the Spirit's witness to Christ. It is a hardened heart that sees truth and defiantly calls it evil.

 *Scripture Reference: "They said, 'He hath an unclean spirit.'" (Mark 3:30)*

3. Can a Believer Commit the Unforgivable Sin?

Example: A troubled conscience over having committed this sin is often evidence that one has not. The unforgivable sin is not a passing fear – it is a settled, defiant rejection of grace.

 *Scripture Reference: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17)*

4. What Should This Warning Produce in Us?

Example: The warning isn't meant to breed paranoia, but reverence. It urges us to submit to the Spirit, cherish the gospel, and tremble at the idea of hardening our hearts to God's truth.

 *Scripture Reference: "Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts..." (Hebrews 3:15)*

Conclusion

The unforgivable sin is not about God's mercy running dry – it's about man refusing to drink. It's the final, settled rejection of the Spirit's work to draw sinners to Christ. If you fear you've committed it, you almost certainly haven't. The door of mercy is wide open to the repentant. Let this doctrine lead you not to despair, but to deeper gratitude for grace – and a heart that listens when the Spirit speaks.

BOOK 6 – Human Beings and the Fall

Discussion Questions

1. What exactly did the Pharisees do that prompted Jesus' warning?
 2. Why is attributing the Spirit's work to Satan such a serious offense?
 3. How can we distinguish between momentary doubt and the unforgivable sin?
 4. Why does fearing the unforgivable sin actually suggest spiritual sensitivity?
 5. How does this doctrine call us to greater reverence for the Holy Spirit's work?
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BOOK 6 – Human Beings and the Fall

Chapter 12: Syncretism

“The Contaminated Well”

In a small village, a clean well provided fresh water for all. One day, someone poured just a small amount of dirty water into it. “It’s still mostly pure,” they argued. But soon, people became sick. The elders gathered and said, “If truth is mixed with error, it becomes poison.”

That’s syncretism – mixing the pure gospel with foreign beliefs. It doesn’t enhance the truth. It infects it.

Overarching Question

What is syncretism, and why is mixing biblical Christianity with false religious ideas dangerous to both doctrine and discipleship?

1. What Is Syncretism and How Does It Manifest?

Example: Syncretism is the blending of Christian truth with elements from other religions, philosophies, or cultural practices. It often looks harmless – like mixing Christianity with moralism, mysticism, or nationalism.

 *Scripture Reference: "You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way..."*

(Deuteronomy 12:31)

2. Why Is God Jealous for Pure Worship and Doctrine?

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Example: God repeatedly warned Israel against adopting Canaanite practices. He desires worship in spirit and truth – not creative remixing. Syncretism dishonors His holiness.

 *Scripture Reference: "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another..." (Isaiah 42:8)*

3. How Has Syncretism Corrupted the Church Historically?

Example: The medieval church often adopted pagan rituals and customs, leading to superstition and idolatry. Today, prosperity theology blends Christianity with consumerism and self-help culture.

 *Scripture Reference: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit..." (Colossians 2:8)*

4. How Can Believers Guard Against Syncretism Today?

Example: By grounding ourselves in Scripture, testing all teaching (Acts 17:11), and prioritizing doctrinal clarity in discipleship, we guard the purity of the gospel and remain faithful ambassadors of Christ.

 *Scripture Reference: "Contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 1:3)*

Conclusion

Syncretism is a subtle yet deadly enemy. It doesn't usually show up as overt rebellion – but as compromise dressed up as relevance. The gospel does not need help from other belief systems. Christ alone is sufficient. As those entrusted with the truth, we must guard it with courage and clarity, knowing that even a drop of poison can spoil a well of life.

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Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of modern examples of syncretism in the church or culture?
 2. Why do people often find syncretism appealing?
 3. How does syncretism affect worship, discipleship, and mission?
 4. What does it mean that God is “jealous” for His glory?
 5. What practices can help believers discern and reject syncretistic thinking?
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