

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN: TOTAL DEPRAVITY

What does it mean to have a sinful nature? What is original sin?

I. WHAT TOTAL DEPRAVITY IS _____

1) Men are incapable of any good _____.

Romans 2:14–15 says, "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them."

Matthew 23:23 says, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others."

2) Men are as _____ as they can be.

Romans 1:32 says, "Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them."

Romans 13:3–4 says, "For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer."

3) Men are all equally _____.

2 Timothy 3:13 says, "while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."

4) Men have lost _____ capabilities.

Romans 1:18 says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth."

II. WHAT TOTAL DEPRAVITY IS

1) Our natural _____ is toward sin.

Ephesians 2:1–3 says, "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind."

John 8:31–34 says, "So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, 'If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.' ³³They answered him, 'We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will

become free'?" ³⁴Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin."

Jeremiah 13:23 says, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?"

Romans 3:10–18 says, "None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹²All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." ¹³"Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips." ¹⁴"Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." ¹⁵"Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶in their paths are ruin and misery, ¹⁷and the way of peace they have not known." ¹⁸"There is no fear of God before their eyes."

2) Sin pervades all our _____.

Ephesians 4:17–19 says, "Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity."

Romans 8:5–7 says, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot."

Titus 1:15 says, "To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled."

Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"

Genesis 6:5 says, "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

3) Our spiritual state is one of being "_____."

Ephesians 2:1–3 says, "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind."

Romans 8:10 says, "But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

4) There is an _____ to love God, please him or profess saving faith.

1 Corinthians 2:14 says, "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned."

John 6:44, 60–65 says, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day." "When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?"⁶¹ But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this?"⁶² Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.)⁶⁵ And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."⁶⁶

Romans 8:7–8 says, "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot."⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

Romans 3:11 says, "no one seeks for God"

Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."

III. QUESTIONS

1) Then who can be _____?

Mark 10:26–27 says, "And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?"²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God."²⁸

John 1:12–13 says, "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

John 3:3 says, "Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."³

2) _____ would God do this?

John 9:1–3 says, "As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth.² And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"³ Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him."

1 Corinthians 1:28–31 says, "God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.³⁰ And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,³¹ so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."³²

Ephesians 2:8–9 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Ephesians 1:6 says, *"to the praise of his glorious grace"*

APPENDIX: HISTORICAL ERRORS CONCERNING TOTAL DEPRAVITY

Some deny this doctrine as being incompatible with God's love and human responsibility or freedom. That is, we're not completely depraved as a result of Adam's sin. The Pelagian heresy was one where Adam's sin doesn't affect us at all, it was a denial of total depravity. The semi-Pelagian heresy taught that while we are affected by Adam's sin the effects are not total. We're still able to turn to God, to take that first step towards him so that he responds in our salvation. The Catholic Church teaches that baptism washes away the stain of original sin and allows us to respond to God in faith and good works. And more recently, although historically also recognized as false teaching, came the idea of prevenient grace. A grace that comes before saving grace. This is grace that either accompanies the gospel call so that people can respond or is grace that is given to every single person to overcome the effects of depravity so that they can seek God and respond to his call to repent and believe.

In response to all this, what we see in Scripture is that we are total depraved and this depravity is overcome by God's sovereign grace, mediated through the Spirit in the work of regeneration (**John 3:3; 1 John 5:1; 1 Cor 2:13–14; John 6:37**), so that no one can boast in his presence, to the praise of his glorious grace (**Eph 1:6, 12, 14**).

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

John Piper, Five Points

(free PDF at <http://www.desiringgod.org/books/five-points>)

John Piper, TULIP Seminar

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyGf4rLc_r4&list=PL93F178954D043A5E)

T4G Sermon

(<http://t4g.org/media/2016/04/the-bondage-of-the-will-the-sovereignty-of-grace-and-the-glory-of-god/>)