

The Doctrines of Grace (3): practical applications of total depravity Hymns 1, Turn Your Eyes/ Come Praise and Glorify, 544

For the past few weeks, we've been engaged in a short topical study on the theme of the Doctrines of Grace. These are often referred to the Five Points of Calvinism and are summarized by the acrostic TULIP (Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, Perseverance of the Saints).

Thus far in considering the first of these, Total Depravity, we've defined it and then considered a related truth, Moral Inability. Simply put, because man is totally depraved, he is morally incapable of recovering himself.

This brings us this morning to our third and final sermon on Total Depravity. Having sought to broadly define it, it's my intention at this point, to seek to apply it. This brings me to our topic: Practical Applications of Total Depravity.

In particular, I want to briefly consider three general applications: Total Depravity and Persecution, Total Depravity and Parenting, Total Depravity and Purity. I want to show how the fact of man's moral depravity and inability relates to our relationship with the world (persecution), our home (parenting), and ourselves (purity).

There are basically two errors that exist with regards to theology. First, many Christians fail to have a clear understanding of theology, and second, other Christians fail to apply this theology to their everyday lives. We must all start with a clear understanding of the truth, but we must then apply that truth to our lives.

- I. Total Depravity and Persecution
- II. Total Depravity and Parenting
- III. Total Depravity and Purity

I. Total Depravity and Persecution

1. Here I want to talk about how the depravity of man relates to Christians who remain within this world (but before I do that, I need to remind you of two things).
2. (1) Man by nature hates God and His word, Rom.8:7—"the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be."
3. Now, this verse actually summarizes everything we've seen in the previous two sermons on total depravity.
4. (a) Moral depravity—"the carnal mind is enmity against God"—that is, native man is hostile against God.
5. The word rendered "enmity" refers to "hostility caused by hatred"—the carnal mind is at war with God.
6. (b) Moral inability—"for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be"—because the carnal mind is at enmity with God it refuses to subject itself to the law of God.
7. But notice Paul not only says man refuses to subject himself to the law but that he is unable to subject himself to the law.
8. And the reason for this, was mentioned last week—man can not because he will not—inability is the result of depravity.
9. (2) Man by nature hates those who bear God's image and love His word—this is the result of his hatred for God and His law.
10. Jn.15:18-20—"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own., Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you

out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also."

11. Because man is unable to get his hands upon God, he turns his hatred for God in heaven to His image on earth.
12. In other words, the way in which the world treats God and His word are a reflection of his native depravity.
13. (a) Be thankful for the company—by this I mean, let us remember they hated our Savior, the prophets, apostles, and all faithful Christians since.
14. Matt.5:11-12—"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."
15. 1Jn.3:11-13—"For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you."
16. (b) Be thankful for the restraint—by this I mean, let us be thankful God does not leave man's depravity unchecked.
17. Thus, while we should expect the world's hatred, don't be surprised to encounter decent people along the way.
18. Remember, what we learned at the outset—total depravity does not mean man is as bad as he can be.
19. Any measure of social decency or kindness isn't a denial of total depravity, but evidence of God's common grace.
20. It's impossible to grasp the depth of man's native depravity and what would happen if God removed His hands of restraint.
21. Such think of the same of the most notoriously wicked people in history—Nero, Hitler, and Manson.
22. Although all men have the compacity to surpass these men, the Lord restrains most men and keeps them tame.
23. Furthermore, He not only restrains their potential wickedness, but He enables them to live productive lives.
24. (c) Be thankful for the reminder—by this I mean, the Lord allows persecution to remind us this is not our home.
25. For example, when we were in Cuba last year, we spent a day with Pastor Rene and his family at the beach.
26. The sun was so hot that parts of the sand would actually burn your feet and leave blisters (but boy did it ever make the shade appreciated).
27. So too, trials, afflictions, and persecution, are all like hot sand, that reminds us this is not our final home.

II. Total Depravity and Parenting

1. Here I want to apply the fact of man's total depravity to our homes and especially to the activity of parenting (but again, let me begin by reminding you of two things).
2. (1) Our children are born equally depraved—that is, they are just as depraved as children born into pagan homes.
3. Eph.2:3—"We were by nature children of wrath, just as the others"—by "others" Paul likely meant Gentiles.

4. Though he was raised a Hebrew and under gospel privileges, he was by nature under God's wrath just as others.
5. The reason being, he was conceived in sin and born with a corrupt nature, just as much as the Gentiles.
6. If you remember a few weeks ago I said, we are all conceived equally guilty and equally corrupt—no one is conceived more guilty or more corrupt.
7. The reason being, we were all equally represented by Adam in Paradise—we are all equally born in Adam.
8. (2) Our children are born highly privileged—this is the other side of the coin—our children are born depraved and privileged.
9. Now here of course, I am referring to the children of believers (Christians)—those born into a Christian home.
10. Though our children are born equally depraved, they are privileged to be taught the truth from the beginning.
11. This is why the children of Christians, ordinarily, at least have an outward decency and civility to them.
12. Why? Because the context into which they've been born, is used by God to restrain or constrain them.
13. Thus, to any degree that our children act differently, it's because of His common or His saving grace.
14. And so, in light of the fact that the children of believers are born totally depraved, I want to suggest three things (we must discipline, evangelize, and sympathize with them).
15. (a) We must discipline them—that is, we must apply appropriate Biblical discipline to every age group.
16. Prov.22:15—"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him."
17. By "foolishness" isn't meant a mere folly do to young—it doesn't refer to an ignorance due to youthfulness.
18. But the term refers to willful folly or foolishness—it refers to moral evil or wickedness—it refers to native depravity.
19. Native depravity is "bound up in the heart of a child"—his heart is packed full or stuffed with foolishness.
20. This is a sobering thought with regards to our beloved children—their hearts are full of foolishness from the beginning.
21. "The rod of correction will drive it far from him"—the word "rod" literally means "branch" or "staff."
22. In the broadest sense, the rod refers to the application of age-appropriate discipline, in the context of love.
23. The rod drives foolishness far from him in two ways—first, it keeps him from acting openly foolish (it provides at least an external morality).
24. But second, under the blessing of God and in connection with the gospel, it can change him and make him inwardly and truly wise.
25. Remember, friends, Biblical or Christian discipline is always just, controlled, and an evident act of love.
26. This is why, young parents, you must not overlook the obvious sinful behavior of your children (regardless how young).
27. Ronald Cammenga—"In our families it is the doctrine of total depravity that motivates faithful discipline of our children. When we constantly cover up and overlook the sins of our children, make excuses for them, and do not discipline our children as we should, it is because we do not take their

sin seriously; and if we do not take their sin seriously, it can be only because we fail to see that they are totally depraved."

28. (b) We must evangelize them—that is, we must teach the truth of Scripture, especially the gospel of Christ.
29. Dear brothers and sisters, think about what we've learned—think about the condition our children are in.
30. They are born spiritually dead, slaves to sin and Satan, at enmity with God, and under His just wrath.
31. Yes, we must tell them about God's holiness and wrath, but we must also tell them about God's love and grace.
32. This is something that most parents need to be reminded of—it's easy to become preoccupied with other things.
33. It isn't just, or even primarily, the responsibility of pastors to preach the gospel to your beloved children.
34. It's not enough that our children have the external blessing of being raised in a loving and religious home.
35. But they must be personally warned of their native condition, and pointed to Christ as the only remedy.
36. (c) We must sympathize with them—by this I mean, as saved sinners, we must be patient with them.
37. We must avoid two mistakes—to view our children are always Christian and to think our children are never Christian.
38. In other words, to view our children as already Christian and thus, not in need of conversion is a common mistake.
39. But the other mistake is just as troublesome (and perhaps even more so), and that's to always question whether they are Christian.
40. Now, here of course, I'm thinking of slightly older children, who make a credible profession of faith.
41. And the danger is to throw their "supposed profession" in their face every time they sin—"You claim to be a Christian!"
42. Brethren, remember, children who became Christian remain children—they don't automatically become adults.
43. And furthermore, how would we like it if our heavenly Father said the same thing to us when we sinned.
44. No, we need to deal with our children, especially those who give a credible profession, with sympathy.

III. Total Depravity and Purity

1. Here I want to turn the focus from others to ourselves—What does total depravity say to us as Christians?
2. Or perhaps better said—how does the fact of our native depravity impact our present pursuit of purity?
3. Well, in order to answer this question, let me back up and suggest two things are true of every Christian.
4. (1) Every faculty is radically renewed—we have become new creations; we've been given a new heart.
5. This means, our understanding has been renewed, our affections have been renewed, and our wills have been renewed.

6. Simply put, we are no longer the same person—the old man has been crucified and a new one resurrected.
7. Thus, in this sense it's no longer proper to refer to Christians as totally depraved—they've been renewed.
8. Furthermore, neither is it proper to speak of Christians as having two natures—one good and one bad.
9. No, Christians have a new nature that's radically and wonderfully renewed—they've been born again.
10. Gal.5:24—"Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires"—though it remains it no longer reigns.
11. (2) Every faculty is imperfectly renewed—by this I mean, there remains within man an unrenewed principle.
12. This principle is called the flesh, and to the degree it remains, it remains an evil and corrupt principle.
13. Thus, while the mind, heart, and will have been radically renewed, they all only been partially renewed.
14. Thus, it's proper to speak of a remaining principle of depravity or evil within us that remains wicked.
15. Rom.7:18—"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells"—the flesh remains unrenewed.
16. Rom.7:21—"I find then a principle, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good"—to the extent the flesh remains, evil remains within us.
17. Gal.5:17—"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."
18. (a) Our pursuit of purity is doable—by this I mean, we've been given all that's necessary to live holy lives.
19. Just go back to everything I said about Total Depravity over the previous weeks, and remember, the reverse is now true of you.
20. You are no longer spiritual dead but you have spiritual life—you now can do good deeds that please God.
21. You are no longer a slave of sin, Satan, or the world—you now love God and His word more than these.
22. (b) Our pursuit of purity is difficult—by this I mean, every step forward will be contested or opposed.
23. My friends, living a pure and holy life will not go without opposition—there's something in us that's evil.
24. Observation 1—Total depravity is foundational to all else—that is, foundational to the other doctrines of grace.
25. It's because man is totally depravity, election, particular atonement, irresistible grace, and preservation are necessary.
26. In fact, the other four points of Calvinism, really mean nothing, if not built upon the fact of Total Depravity.
27. Observation 2—Total depravity allows God's grace to shine—it adds a luster (shine) to the other points.
28. For example, the stars shine because of the dark backdrop, so too, grace shines because of Total Depravity.
29. Observation 3—Total depravity must be believed and declared—we must believe it for ourselves and tell it to others.