

ANTHROPOLOGY (23)

We may be absolutely certain of one key reality, there will **never** be any injustice or mistake made by God. Whatever God decides to do with any person is always His sovereign right, whether in life or in death. God always does that which is perfectly right and consistent with His perfect character, even in the death of a baby.

QUESTION #19 – What key biblical parts are involved in the immaterial part of a person?

There are certain realities that help us understand the immaterial part of a person:

(Reality #1) - A person has an intellect .

People have a capacity to think and reason. It must be noted that in order for the mind to think and reason properly concerning spiritual matters, God must turn on the light and allow one's intellect to perceive truth (II Cor. 4:3-6; Eph. 1:17-18).

(Reality #2) - A person has emotions .

People have a unique ability to feel things emotionally. It must be noted that the only way the emotional system will work properly is when God is controlling it (Gal. 5:22; Rom. 5:5).

(Reality #3) - A person has a will .

People do have an ability to make deliberate choices and to carry out various actions in view of and in accordance with those choices.

The subject of the human will is not only significant to the doctrine of anthropology, but it is especially significant to the doctrine of soteriology—the doctrine of salvation. It is under the doctrinal heading of Soteriology that the matter of the human will as it relates to salvation and God is discussed. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer accurately observed: “The fact of the will is a psychological truth, while the freedom of the will is theological” (Vol. 2, p. 194).

Theologically stated, there is no human will that is absolutely free in an absolute sense.

1. All human wills are subject to God's sovereignty . Prov. 21:1; Rom. 9:18-24
2. An unbeliever's will is controlled by Satan . II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2
3. A believer's will may or may not be controlled by God . Phil. 2:12-13

The Scripture is very clear that the more a believer is being controlled by God, the more the believer will grow in biblical knowledge (John 7:17; I Cor. 2:15-16; Eph. 1:17-18). The Scripture also makes it clear that a believer who persists in not being controlled by God will be condemned to ignorance (I Cor. 3:2-3; Heb. 5:11-6:3). The Scripture also teaches that there is a struggle at times in the believer between the will of the believer and the will of God. Sometimes the believer's will does the opposite of what God wants and other times the believer's will does the opposite of what God doesn't want (Rom. 7:18-19). The more the believer is willing to yield his will to God's will, the more he will develop as a God-glorifying child (Rom. 8:14-17).

ANTHROPOLOGY (24)

One theologian who has done extensive research concerning the will of a person is Augustus H. Strong. Mr. Strong was educated at Yale University. He became a Christian while in college after hearing the preaching of Charles Finney. He ultimately went on to Rochester Theological Seminary, where he became professor of Systematic Theology and president of that school from 1872 to 1912. The following considerations concerning man's will are taken from his theology—Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 504-513.

1. Intellect is the soul knowing.
2. Sensibility or emotion is the soul feeling.
3. Will is the soul choosing.
4. It is impossible to know something or feel something without willing something.
5. The action of the will gives direction to the intellect and the emotions.
6. The more a man wills to be influenced by something, the more his character is formed by that something.
7. By repeated acts of the will, moral direction and character are established. A character may become totally established in evil (Rom. 1:28-32; John 8:31-36) or it may be totally established in righteousness (Rom. 6:13-23). Repeated acts of the will determine this.
8. It is possible for a believer to choose something contrary to God's will (Rom. 7:18) and to repeatedly do so will permanently affect your character.
9. Man is held responsible and accountable for what he chooses to do with his will. If a person chooses to scoff at the Word of God, whether believer or unbeliever, he will be rewarded. If a person chooses to use his will to obey the Word of God, he, too, will be rewarded.

(Reality #4) - A person has a conscience.

A conscience may be best understood as that immaterial part of a person that passes judgment on the choices made by the will. It works hand-in-hand with the intellect and the emotions and sits as a judge over the choices one makes.

The conscience seems to be designed so that it particularly passes judgment on moral and spiritual choices; however, it is always operating within the person and may be involved in judging any choice the will makes.

The Bible is very specific to point out that the spiritual status and condition of a person has a great deal to do with the proper function of the conscience.

Conscience Classification #1 - The conscience of the unbeliever is natural

What this means is that the conscience of an unbeliever will naturally make judgments concerning choices in an unregenerate manner. We may observe certain biblical facts about this:

ANTHROPOLOGY (25)

(Fact #1) - An unbeliever's conscience is defiled. Titus 1:15

In this context, the conscience tells the unbeliever that his religious way of thinking is fine and he does not need to respond to the grace of God found only in Jesus Christ (Titus 1:16). The defiled conscience of the unbeliever will not permit him to judge himself as being a condemned sinner in need of God's grace.

(Fact #2) - An unbeliever's conscience is evil. Heb. 10:22

What this means is that the conscience of the unbeliever never works as a pure judge, but is always colored and dominated by an evil sin principle. Choices are not judged purely and righteously by God's standards.

(Fact #3) - An unbeliever's conscience is seared. I Tim. 4:2

What this means is that the conscience of a lost person is branded by error. The conscience is colored so that it cannot clearly see theological truth, and cannot accurately determine right and wrong. An unsaved person's conscience is permanently marked in its distortions, it is permanently desensitized.

(Fact #4) - An unbeliever's conscience may be convicted. John 16:7-11

The Holy Spirit has the power and capability of convicting a lost person's conscience of the fact that he has sinned and is in need of a Savior. Any person who comes to Christ has had his/her conscience convicted by the Spirit of God.

(Fact #5) - An unbeliever's conscience may accuse or excuse. Rom. 2:15

There is a secret work of conscience (Rom. 2:16) which takes place in the heart and mind of an unbeliever which either condemns or condones. A conscience may be so hardened that it condones everything, including the most evil kinds of things. However, eventually a person's conscience will be called into accountability by God and will show one he is guilty and deserves hell.

God has programmed a conscience and, by His Spirit, works in a conscience to convict of sin. When that happens, a person must judge himself by either excusing or accusing. In either case, the record of conscience will be enough to show man that he is guilty before God.

Conscience can judge one who has done wrong, but, in and of itself, conscience will not accept Jesus Christ. Conscience will, however, be enough to bring judgment against every human being.

Conscience Classification #2 - The conscience of a believer is supernatural.

A believer has a conscience that has been infiltrated by God. God most definitely works through the conscience of one who has believed on His son. There are some wonderful facts to observe:

ANTHROPOLOGY (26)

- (Fact #1) - A believer's conscience should be freed from all guilt. Heb. 10:2
(Fact #2) - A believer's conscience will promote a righteous testimony. I Pet. 3:16
(Fact #3) - A believer's conscience may promote a confident prayer life. I John 3:20-22
(Fact #4) - A believer's conscience may work in perfect harmony with the Holy Spirit.
Rom. 9:1
(Fact #5) - A believer's actions can influence another believer's conscience for the better or worse. I Cor. 8:8-10
(Fact #6) - A believer's conscience promotes submission to God-ordained authority.
Rom. 13:5
(Fact #7) - A believer's conscience prompts him to patiently endure hostile environments and hostile people. I Pet. 2:19
(Fact #8) - A believer's conscience is able to testify of a godly life and testimony. II Cor. 1:12
(Fact #9) - A believer's conscience can sense that there is an accurate handling of the Word of God. II Cor. 4:2

The conscience of the believer has far greater potential than the unbeliever. However, as Dr. Ryrie stated, "Conscience may be likened to unreliable brakes on an automobile. They may do their job at times, but they cannot be counted on" (*Basic Theology*, p. 199).

The one element that will constantly keep check of our conscience is continual exposure to the Word of God. It must always be remembered that the Word of God is our authority; not our intellect, our emotions, our will or our conscience. In making decisions, we must forever be concerned with "What saith the Scriptures," not "What saith our conscience!"

QUESTION #20 – What was the environment of the first man like?

We may clearly and categorically state that the environment of the first man was perfect. The reason this question is significant to theology is because there are some modern-day anthropologists and psychologists who postulate the belief that it is possible to produce perfect behavior by designing a perfect environment. John B. Watson and B.F. Skinner are two noted behaviorists who suggest that if one can create a perfect environment, one can produce a perfect behavior.

We will certainly admit that to some extent a positive environment can positively influence people in positive ways. For example, it is far better to place a person in an environment where people fear God and His Word than to place them in an environment of degenerate heathens. Solomon continually challenged his own son to stay far away from evil people and places (i.e. Prov. 1:10, 15; 7:24-25). There is truth to the concept that ones' environment may influence ones' behavior.

However, the big problem is when it comes to God's perspective of man. Man has a major problem in that he is a sinner and no positive, environmental existence can change this reality. One may attempt to create a wonderful environment and culture, but that will not change the fact that man has a rebellious sin nature that does and says things against God.