

Essentials of the Faith Lesson 2

The Depravity of Humanity: “How Fallen is Humanity?”

I. INTRODUCTION

- a. ILLUS: JC Ryle once took his keys out of his pocket and asked his audience, “Why do I need these keys? We have to lock everything up b/c people will break in, steal, covet, and destroy...the depravity of man.”
- b. A guy was getting a new refrigerator and getting rid of the old. He left the old, but functioning fridge out in front of his house w/ a big “FREE” sign on it. He left it out there overnight, but no takers after the 1st day. After the 2nd day, still no takers. Two weeks later, he was frustrated and amazed that no one had taken the well-functioning refrigerator. He decided to take a different tactic. That evening, he put a sign on it that said, “\$50.” The next morning it had been stolen.
- c. These are all signposts of the universal human condition.
- d. That condition is “totally depraved.” Depraved: the condition of humanity which is inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no ability to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly condemned.
- e. "It seems the Bible goes out of its way to portray the kindness of God in stark contrast to man's total undeservedness." -Jerry Bridges
- f. Outline of the Bible in 3 points
 - i. 1) Before sin (Genesis 1-2)
 - ii. 2) During sin (Genesis 3-Revelation 20)
 - iii. 3) After sin (Revelation 21-22)
- g. Why study depravity:
 - i. It is a main theme of God's word.
 - ii. John Calvin said that more disgraceful than anything is self-ignorance, or ignorance of the knowledge of ourselves as humanity. A study on depravity is absolutely essential to accurate self-knowledge.
 - iii. “Whosoever, therefore, gives heed to those teachers, who merely employ us in contemplating our good qualities, so far from making progress in self-knowledge, will be plunged into the most pernicious ignorance.” (Calvin)
 - iv. Declining emphasis on and awareness of personal sin is common in Christian culture.
 - v. Where you have an decreasing emphasis on and awareness of sin, you will have:
 - 1. Greater sinfulness.

Essentials of the Faith Lesson 2

The Depravity of Humanity: “How Fallen is Humanity?”

2. Less love for Christ.
3. More problems in relationships with less ways to explain and repair.
4. Confusion on salvation.

II. WHO ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

- a. Human beings
- b. Why talk about “what is a human being” in a discussion on depravity? B/c it provides the context and backdrop for understanding the devastated condition we are now in apart from salvation through faith in Christ.
 - i. ILLUS: When a mechanic starts discussing what is wrong w/ the car, he must first understand what a car is in the first place. Then, he can more thoroughly understand what is wrong.
- c. Created: man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness, free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9).
- d. A being created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27)
 - i. Chafer: *"The Scripture never speaks of the divine image in man, but always of man as formed after the divine image. And this indicates a profound principle of biblical thought. It presupposes God, to account for man. . . Thus, by 'the divine image,' the Bible does not mean those elements in man from which an idea of God may be framed, but conversely those features in the Divine Being of which man is a copy"* (Systematic Theology 2:169-70).
 - ii. Bancroft: *"The image of God in which man was created consisted in a natural and a moral likeness to God"* (Christian Theology, p. 191).
 - iii. Ryrie: *"The image of God in which man was created included the totality of his being as living, intelligent, determining, and moral"* (Basic Theology, p. 192).
- e. What being human, or created in the image of God, looks like:

ONLY MAN IS SELF-CONSCIOUS AS A PERSON-dogs don't look at themselves in the mirror and say, 'look, this is me.' They see another dog and bark.

IS ABLE TO EXERCISE CHOICE AND HAVE PURPOSES AND GOALS IN LIFE

POSSESSES AN EMOTIONAL CAPACITY FOR SADNESS AND JOY – animals may or may not be able to in certain degrees. But more importantly, the capacity of emotions in humanity is unique and in the image of God.

Essentials of the Faith Lesson 2

The Depravity of Humanity: “How Fallen is Humanity?”

APPRECIATES THINGS UNNECESSARY TO SURVIVAL: ART AND MUSIC CREATIVELY – It’s been said that horses like music, too. But its an instinctive reaction, not a thoughtful response.

CAN IMAGINE AND THEN MANUFACTURE REAL TOOLS – reveals creativity

CAN BE TRULY EDUCATED RATHER THAN MERELY TRAINED

CAN USE ORAL AND WRITTEN SYMBOLS TO COMMUNICATE ABSTRACT CONCEPTS AND THEREBY ENJOY FELLOWSHIP – some birds can speak but they will not carry on a theological conversation w/ you, nor inquire about your current spiritual condition. Nor will a parrot tell you a joke, wait for you to respond, and tell you the punchline, then laugh w/ you.

CAN ACCUMULATE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTAIN WISDOM AND MOVE BEYOND WHAT HE WAS, MAKING AND SEEING PROGRESS.

CAN DISCERN RIGHT AND WRONG AND SUFFER FROM A DAMAGED CONSCIENCE

CAN BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR HIS DEEDS, RECKONED GUILTY AND JUDGED

CAN RECOGNIZE THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF HIS CREATOR AND HONOR HIM PROPERLY

- e. Man: material (body) and immaterial (soul/heart/mind/spirit).
 - i. The immaterial is the seat of man's consciousness, emotions, intellect, and will, as well as his religious and moral life.
 - ii. Material (body) is perishing (though we all will be given new bodies in the resurrection, cf. 1 Cor 15:50-57, Rev 20).
 - iii. Immaterial (soul) is eternal.
- f. Conscience: that God-given faculty by which one distinguishes between morally right and wrong, which urges one to do that which he recognizes to be right and restrains him from doing that which he recognizes to be wrong, which passes judgment on his acts and executes that judgment within his soul [Elwell, EDT, 267].
- g. Worship. Human beings are created as worshipers. So strong is the hard-wired worshipping in all humanity, that true worship of God alone can bring peace to the soul.

III. WHAT WERE WE LIKE BEFORE THINGS WENT WRONG?

- a. Genesis 1-2

Essentials of the Faith Lesson 2

The Depravity of Humanity: “How Fallen is Humanity?”

- b. Worshiped God and therein was our purpose and fulfillment.
- c. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self determination, and moral responsibility to God (Genesis 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9).
- d. God’s intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God’s fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God’s purpose for man in the world (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11).

IV. WHAT HAPPENED SUCH THAT SIN ENTERED THE WORLD?

- a. Genesis 3:1-7 One of the saddest moments of history

Genesis 3:1-7 ¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’” ² The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³ but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’ ” ⁴ The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! ⁵ “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

Desire for glory and power

Genesis 3:14-24 ¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; ¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.” ¹⁶ To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you.” ¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. ¹⁸ “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.” ²⁰ Now the man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all *the* living. ²¹ The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. ²² Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”— ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

v. 14 cursed more than...

v. 14 crawl in the dust

Essentials of the Faith Lesson 2

The Depravity of Humanity: “How Fallen is Humanity?”

- | | | | |
|-------|--------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| v. 15 | enmity... | v. 15 | defeated by the Seed |
| v. 16 | pain in childbirth | v. 16 | desire be for husband |
| v. 17 | ground cursed | v. 17 | agricultural toil |
| v. 17 | dust to dust | | |

Death: separation from God

- i. Physical
- ii. Spiritual
- iii. Eternal

Curse on created world. Creation, being fallen itself, resists fruitfulness.

- b. “Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of Satan, transgressed the commandment of God in eating the forbidden fruit; and thereby fell from the estate of innocency wherein they were created.” (Westminster Catechism)
- c. Gen 3 and the account of the Fall of Man does not describe the origin of sin but the entry of sin and death in the world.

Rom 5:12 “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned”

- d. All humanity, being the posterity of Adam, has fully inherited the cursed, sin nature.
- e. There is somewhat of a veil of silence which hangs over the origin of sin.

V. IN WHAT CONDITION ARE WE NOW?

- a. Will go over our condition as described in Rom 3, then summarize from other places in Scripture.
- b. AN OVERVIEW OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY IN ROMANS 1-3

Against:

Stands the witness of:

Everyday sinner
Moralist
Religionist

Creation [ch.1]
Conscience [ch. 2]
Written Word [ch.3:10-18.]

1. Everyday sinner/irreligious (1:18-32)

Romans 1:18-32 ¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being

Essentials of the Faith Lesson 2

The Depravity of Humanity: “How Fallen is Humanity?”

understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. ²¹ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. ²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵ For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. ²⁶ For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, ²⁷ and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. ²⁸ And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹ without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; ³² and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

2. Moralist (2:12-16)

Romans 2:12-16 ¹² For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; ¹³ for *it is* not the hearers of the Law *who* are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. ¹⁴ For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵ in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, ¹⁶ on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

3. Religionist (3:10-18)

Romans 3:10-18 ¹⁰ as it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; ¹¹ THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ¹² ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.” ¹³ “THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,” “THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”; ¹⁴ “WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS”; ¹⁵ “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, ¹⁶ DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, ¹⁷ AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.” ¹⁸ “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.”

Whole world summoned before God’s testifying evidences from Romans 1-3:

1. General Revelation:

- a. The knowledge of God’s existence, character, and moral law, which comes through creation to all humanity.
- b. “General,” meaning it is generally/universally available to every human being (image of God).

Essentials of the Faith Lesson 2

The Depravity of Humanity: “How Fallen is Humanity?”

- c. Examples of general revelation:
 - i. Recognition of God’s attributes and existence in every corner of creation (Rom 1:20-21).
 - ii. The hard-wired knowledge of God in every human being (Rom 1:21).
 - iii. Conscience: God-given instinct of right and wrong; smoke-alarm for the soul which sounds off by producing guilt when violated (Rom 2:14-15).
 - d. Creation and conscience fall in this category, though it is less about what we perceive with the eyes (physical senses) and more about what we know due to being made in the image of God (for example, a blind and deaf person experiences general revelation).
 - e. General revelation is sufficient to condemn humanity, but insufficient to save.
2. Special Revelation
- a. The God-breathed word contained in Genesis-Revelation (2 Tim 3:16-17, 2 Pet 1:20-21).
 - b. Special revelation is sufficient to condemn and save.
 - i. Rom 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

The charge: All under sin

Romans 3:9 ⁹ What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.

Romans 3:23 ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Comprehensive: “none” “all” “not known” “no fear” (Rom 3:10-18)

Extensive: “throat” “tongue” “lips” “mouth” “feet” “eyes” (Rom 3:10-18)

The Verdict: Guilty Romans 3:19-20 ¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; ²⁰ because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

With no defense to offer
And nothing to offer in mitigation either

Because:

Essentials of the Faith Lesson 2

The Depravity of Humanity: “How Fallen is Humanity?”

1. None understand (Mind)
2. None seek God (Heart)
3. None do good (Will)

- What about the innocent people in a far-off place who do not know about God?
 - If there were such a thing, they would go to heaven. But Romans 1-3 has established that no such thing exists. All are: 1) Without excuse 2) Justly condemned 3) Need salvation through faith in Christ.
 - There is no such thing as an innocent person in any place; only guilty sinners.
- i. When do we become sinful?

Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.

Job 14:4 “Who can make the clean out of the unclean? No one!”

Distinction: we do not become sinners because we sin, but we sin because we are born sinners. We sin because it is our nature to do so.

All humanity enters the world with a sinful nature rendering them capable of every sin.

- j. Our condition: Congenitally depraved (far worse than “born neutral”)

“The psalmist frankly acknowledges his congenital sinfulness. . . . In Psalm [51] the psalmist is relating his sinfulness to the very conception of life; he traces his development beyond his birth to the genesis of his being in his mother's womb -- even to...conception. He is certainly not concerned here with the confession of his mother's sin. She is relevant only as the agent who initiated his life, the point where sinful humanity and the individual self of the penitent met, where the inheritance of the race became his vital endowment” (Edward R. Dalglish).

Dead in sin: Ephesians 2:1-3

Eph 2:1-3 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

"..in [our] pre-Christian life “we all” were in the condition of subjection to the Divine wrath; and that [we] were so not by deed merely, nor by circumstance, nor by passing into it, but by nature. [Our]universal sin has been already affirmed. This universal sin is now described as sin by nature. Beyond this Paul does not go into the present passage. But the one is the explanation of the other. Universal sin implies a law of sinning, a sin that is of the nature; and this, again, is the explanation of the fact that all are under the Divine wrath. For

Essentials of the Faith Lesson 2

The Depravity of Humanity: “How Fallen is Humanity?”

the Divine wrath operates only where sin is. Here is the essential meaning of the doctrine of original sin"(S. D. F. Salmond).

k. What has been damaged? The Universal Extent and Impact of Sin

- i. The overall emphasis: The Depravity is Total
- ii. Extends to every part of the person
- iii. No part has escaped the impact of sin
- iv. No man can commend himself/herself to God

1 Kings 8:33-46 “When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near

Ps 143:2 And do not enter into judgment with Your servant, For in Your sight no man living is righteous.

Prov 20:9 Who can say, “I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin”?

Eccl 7:20 Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who *continually* does good and who never sins.

Isa 53:6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

Rom 3:10-12 As it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”

p. Affects his whole thinking and living (Man's basic 'heart-trouble')

Summarized in OT: Jer 17:9 “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?”

Summarized in NT Mk 7:20-23

Mk 7:20-23 And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting *and* wickedness, *as well as* deceit, sensuality,

Essentials of the Faith Lesson 2

The Depravity of Humanity: “How Fallen is Humanity?”

envy, slander, pride *and* foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

- s. The fountain-head of all wrong and perversion is the fallen human heart.

Summarized in OT: Gen 6:5, 11; 8:21 (pre- and post-Flood)

Gen 6:5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Gen 6:11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

Gen 8:21 The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.

- y. 7 Far Reaching affects of sin:

"The Bible's most penetrating description of the extent of men's sin is found in its opening pages (Gen. 6:5, in the primeval period). That is to say, human depravity is total and shows no 'progress' in Biblical theology and human history. Genesis 6:5, with the addition of two other statements that follow closely upon it, reveals that human sin was great in at least seven major respects:

- 1) in its extent, 'in the (whole) earth'
- 2) in the inwardness, 'the thoughts of the heart'
- 3) in its inherence, in Hebrew: 'the y'ser,' that is, 'the very forming' of those thoughts'
- 4) in its exclusiveness, 'only evil'
- 5) in its continuousness, 'all the day'
- 6) in its inclusiveness, 'all flesh' (Gen. 6:12)
- 7) in its earliness, 'from his youth' (8:21). Subsequent revelations [in the Bible] simply elaborate upon this sweeping description" (J. Barton Payne).

- z. Summarized in NT: Eph 4:17-19

Eph 4:17-19 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

Futile thinking and a darkened mind cf. Rom 1:21

Essentials of the Faith Lesson 2

The Depravity of Humanity: “How Fallen is Humanity?”

aa. “The futility that characterizes the Gentile mind is a product of darkened understanding and estrangement from the God-given life...This darkening, moreover, is far worse than physical blindness, for the man who is physically blind knows it and admits it, but the person who is spiritually and morally darkened is blind even to the fact he is blind” (Hendrickson, Ephesians, p. 210).

bb. Sin’s Damage:

- a. The will. Rom 7:14-25, Jn 8:34, Eph. 2:1-2
 - i. Deepest motivation is in one direction: enthronement of self, dethronement of God.
- b. The mind/intellect. 1 Cor 1:21
 - i. Intellectual power, no matter how great (i.e. IQ) is an impossible avenue for the saving knowledge of God.
- c. The affections & emotions. Rom 1:24-27, 1 Tim 6:10, 2 Tim 3:4
 - i. Delight is in self and self-exaltation, by default.
- d. The speech. Jas 3:5-9, Gal 5:19-21
 - i. Merely a manifestation of the above (“..out the mouth comes that which fills the heart..” Luke 6:45).

cc. Truth Suppressing (Romans 1:18-21)

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. ²¹ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

- i. “Suppression” has the idea of a willful attempt to push something down that is constantly and ubiquitously blasting up for all to see.
- ii. One great example of truth suppressing is the invention and belief of the theory of evolution. Random chance, or at best an unknowable impersonal force, congregated raw materials to manufacture the universe. Much more than an intellectual problem, it is a moral atrocity. Not ignorance, but willful rebellion – suppressing the truth in unrighteousness.
- iii. Let me illustrate this, not for the purpose of arguing for creation, but understanding depravity: ILLUS: Has anyone ever been to the Louvre Museum

Essentials of the Faith Lesson 2

The Depravity of Humanity: “How Fallen is Humanity?”

in downtown Paris? Pretty incredible stuff. Especially the Louis-David exhibit – those 50 by 20 ft paintings of Napoleon and others – masterpieces... Now, imagine if we walked into the exhibit and exclaimed, “Wow, incredible that randomly spilled paint could arrange in such a way!! Amazing!”

- iv. The world is an art gallery infinitely more complex than a Louis-David painting. But that is exactly what happens, for example, in belief of the theory of evolution. Look what randomly happened! There is a problem – a great one.
 - v. The statement, “Well, why can’t he make it more obvious?” confirms our condition.
 - vi. And to further the point: no one in their right mind would say such a thing about those paintings, ever. Why? B/c of depravity: in our natural state we have little trouble giving glory to our fellow sinful man. But not only are we unable, but cannot bear the thought of giving glory to our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ – for the creation of all things.
 - vii. The problem is not the absence of evidence but the suppression of it. –Ravi Zacharias.
 - viii. Again, the main issue is 1 thing: an inability and unwillingness to give glory to God. And so, we give glory to self. Entire industries are created around celebrating, applauding, and exalting ourselves.
- cc. Atheism is a non-existent viewpoint due to the image of God in us (only “truth suppressing”)
- i. Atheism has 2 tenants:
 - 1. God doesn’t exist.
 - 2. I hate him. (Douglas Wilson)
 - ii. Why do people get angry about someone in whom they don’t believe? People don’t walk around and say, “Ahhh, I’m so angry about leprechauns!” Leprechauns are not blamed for the problems in the world.
- dd. Worship
- i. Depravity distorts worship to idolatry; the worship of anything but the God of the Bible.
 - ii. “What we worship we will: adore, sacrifice for, focus on, submit to, seek after, hope in, serve/give to, speak about, look to peace, meaning, and happiness, spend a great amount of thoughts, time, energy, and resources on.” (Stuart Scott)

Essentials of the Faith Lesson 2

The Depravity of Humanity: “How Fallen is Humanity?”

- iii. In the thousands of moments in a day, whatever we believe we must have in order to have peace, comfort, and security, that is what we worship.
 - iv. The human mind/heart is a factory of idols and a labyrinth of error. (John Calvin)
 - v. The existence of all religions declares human depravity. We were made for unhindered, unending relationship of worship to God alone.
 - vi. Religions are not a creative expression of human diversity, but clear evidence of human depravity. We were made for and by the true God, yet we invent endless ways to imagine, get to, know, and even be him on our own.
 - vii. Therefore, religions are fundamentally a moral atrocity against the true God, who is worthy of our unwavering worship.
- ee. An additional perspective: The Offense is Total
- ff. It is an offense against God

Ps 51:4 Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.

Lk 15:18 ‘I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight;

VI. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- a. The great tragedy is less seen in our relationship to one-another and more about our relationship to God.
- b. We use our intellect to suppress the God who gave us our intellect.
- c. We use our imagination God gave us to defy him.
- d. We use our bodies to engage in self-seeking pleasure and worship - in sports, sexual sin, self-admiration, etc etc.
- e. How effected are we? Totally damaged. Totally depraved. So the problem is not so much that we do various kinds of sins – though that is a problem – but even more, that I have been born in Adam, I have a totally sinful nature – and I need: 1) forgiveness and 2) a new nature
- f. So how sinful are we?
 - i. Dead, spiritually speaking. Dead to God. Like a corpse.

Essentials of the Faith Lesson 2

The Depravity of Humanity: “How Fallen is Humanity?”

- ii. Comprehensive inability and unwillingness to respond to God, seek God, or please God on our own.

Romans 3:10-12 ¹⁰ as it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; ¹¹ THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ¹² ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”

- iii. All humanity, from conception, is on a one-way sprint to eternal destruction.
- iv. Not one person on the face of the planet ever has nor ever will earn favor with God or get into heaven b/c of their good works
- v. Eternal punishment is the fair penalty: hell is justice; it is right.
- vi. There is no nation, country, ethnicity, or time period of greater or less depravity in nature. While there may be greater or less manifestations in times and places, human nature is equally and completely depraved.
- vii. In Adam’s sin of disobedience to the revealed will and word of God, man lost his innocence; incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death; became subject to the wrath of God; and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man’s salvation is thereby wholly of God’s grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).
- viii. Because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam’s sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

VII. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- i. Why then, should we talk about sin?
- ii. Why does it seem many don’t want to bring up sin?
- iii. Psychology is a philosophy created in response to human depravity. However, its presuppositions and beliefs arise out of human depravity and so are false and ineffective to solve the problem.

Essentials of the Faith Lesson 2

The Depravity of Humanity: “How Fallen is Humanity?”

1. Man is: basically good; neutral; a product of his environment; controlled by his animal instinct.
 2. But what does God say unredeemed man is and controlled by?
 3. What’s the big deal if I think of my anger as a personality issue?
 4. What is the problem with much of the psychological labeling? For example, “Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome,” or, “OCD – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder,” or, “IED – Intermittent Explosive Disorder”?
- iv. If all humans are born with the same sin nature, then why do some seem to sin more?
1. All have the same capacity to sin, but not all have had the occasion to manifest. ILLUS: Its like all are the same lemon tree seed – the seed grows – and lemons, the fruit sprouts. However, some trees are subject to different conditions, sun, light, water, fertilizer, and so on such that they manifest more or less fruit though they are the same exact kind of seed. But, what restrains depravity? 1) a built-in conscience 2) God’s common grace in various circumstances of life
- v. So, how can man have a responsibility to repent and worship God if he is unwilling and unable?
1. Our depraved condition does not release our duty to repent. For example, people intoxicated by alcohol or drugs are not absolved from their obligation to operate their vehicles in accordance with the law even though their condition incapacitates them from doing so.
 2. The true measure of our responsibility and guilt is not our own ability to obey God, but the perfection of God’s moral law and his own holiness (“You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” Matt 5:48). (Wayne Grudem)
- vi. If there are “none who seek for God” (Rom 3:11), and therefore, since humanity is totally depraved, how can any person respond to God’s offer of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? How does a dead person respond to something?
1. Next few lessons.