







Total Depravity

- Goals:
 - Define the doctrine
 - Definition
 - Implications
 - Misunderstandings
 - Scriptural Support (Exegetical Basis)
 - Theological basis
 - Answer objections
 - Application to Christian life (So What?)

Total Depravity Defined

Definition:

Since the Fall, humans are enslaved to sin and by nature bent toward evil in every part.

1. Consequence of the Fall
2. Applies to all human beings
3. Means we are captives or slaves to sin
4. Concerns the very nature of fallen human beings
5. When faced with a choice of God or evil, we inevitably choose evil
6. The whole human nature is affected

Implications

1. Human beings are NOT basically good
2. We are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners
3. Fallen, unregenerate people are by nature inclined toward sin, unbelief, and denial
4. Fallen, unregenerate people will never freely choose to embrace Jesus Christ as Savior

Implications

5. No fallen person can be saved without initial divine grace.
6. Divine Grace precedes the human response to the gospel (faith and repentance).
 - Divine grace not merely external to us (i.e. the objective work of Christ)
 - This divine grace must also bring about substantial internal changes in us.

Misunderstandings

1. Fallen, unregenerate people have no good in them and never do any good things.
2. Fallen, unregenerate people have no knowledge of God.

Scriptural Support

Genesis 6:5
⁵ 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.

John 6:44

⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

Romans 8:7-8

⁷ 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.

1 Corinthians 2:14

¹⁴ 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.

Ephesians 2:1-10

Summary Argument/Theological basis

1. Salvation is by grace alone (Sola Gratia).
2. Therefore, we must be unable to contribute to our salvation by our own efforts.
3. Therefore, we must be totally depraved.

Discussion Question

1. Why do so many people (including many professing Christians) believe that human beings are "basically good".

Objections

Objection 1: Wasn't Gandhi a good man even though he wasn't a Christian?

Objection 2: If unbelievers can't respond to the gospel, there's no point in preaching it.

Objection 3: If we aren't able to do any good, God can't hold us responsible for our sins.

Application

- TD explains why the world is in such a mess and why people commit moral atrocities.
- TD exalts God's free grace and mercy.
- TD reminds us what we would be were it not for God's grace and mercy in our lives.
- TD keeps us humble and reliant on God's continued grace and mercy.
- TD guards against self-righteousness and boastful comparisons with others.

Application

- TD reminds us that education and technology are not the solution to the world's problems.
- TD keeps us from being discouraged when our preaching and evangelism aren't 'successful'.
- TD keeps us from being discouraged when our parenting doesn't produce 'good' children.
- TD encourages us that the new creation must be no less good than this world is bad!
