

Chapter 2

The Nature of Sin

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 1

It is of great importance that God's people understand Romans 1:18-32 to understand the days in which we are living. In order to understand this passage, you have to understand the nature of sin. You begin, of course, with "God has a standard". The very thought of sin implies there is a standard. You can not have sin if there is not a standard. If there is no law, there can be no transgression of the law.

The humanists states that man does not need sanction outside of himself, that man is his own standard, his standard is very flexible, and that one can change the standard depending on the situation, the need, and the interest. God, of course, is the standard and He ordained the standard to be Himself. Whatever falls short of God is not living up to the standard.

God is immutable, He does not change, therefore, the standard does not change. On the American Humanist Association's logo, you read, "Good without a God". But there can be no such thing, because God IS good. Good without God means you have removed the standard of good. What happens is man removes the standard through the process of time, and now man has a different definition of love, righteousness, and good. Regardless of man's attempts to remove it, the standard remains the same. When you are considering sin, you have to understand God has a standard. Romans 1 is a very clear illustration of what happens when man disregards that standard.

Next, there is the nature of sin. *To understand the nature of sin, you have to begin with **the fact that man began in a state of bliss.*** The humanists begin with man starting out in simplicity, at the bottom, and then mutating upward. That is the whole teaching, the whole thinking of evolution. Evolution is not just about creation, it becomes how you view life. However, man did not start at the bottom and is not getting better. The Bible is very, very clear on the fact that man started in a state of bliss.

While the humanist believes that man is getting better, you are going to have an awful hard time proving that by society. That really does not pose a problem for the

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 1

humanist because they have removed the standard and have a different definition of better. In the mind of humanists, humanity in general is getting better, they are ascending, improving. However, when you look at society, you would be hard pressed to point to any one area and say man has gotten better. That is because he has not gotten better, he has gotten worse, because the standard has been disregarded.

The Bible declares just the opposite of the humanist's view of man evolving upwards, getting better. Genesis 1:26-27 declares that man began in a state of bliss. Man is created in the image of God. *"And God said, Let us make man in our image, let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his [own] image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."* Three times we are told in these two verses man is created in the image of God.

(This is off subject, but I want to ask, who would have thought you would see the day when the declaration that God created males and females would be offensive to individuals? You are what you were created. You are either male or female. You can not change that.)

Man was created in the image and likeness of God. In Ecclesiastes 7:29, you find, *"... God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."* The word *but* indicates a problem. Who is the problem? *They*, man. God is not the problem. Man was created in uprightness.

In Genesis you have the general account of the creation of all things. Six times in that account, you will read, *"It was good."* It was good in the eyes of God and that means it was beneficial, very favorable, and pleasant. Genesis 1:31 says, *"Behold it was very good."* Six times it was good and then the chapter ends with, *"It was very good,"* meaning it was remarkably, exceedingly, abundantly good.

In Genesis 1:28, concerning the male Adam and the female Eve, it says, *"And God blessed them."* In Genesis 2

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 1

we have a more detailed account of the creation of this male and female, Adam and Eve. In Genesis 2:8 it says that the Lord God planted a garden, "*And there He put the man whom He had formed.*" Keep in mind that this man was formed in God's own image. Genesis 1:29-30 says that in that garden, man had abundance and all of his needs were met. From Genesis 2:9, we learn that the garden was pleasant to the sight and everything was good or useful for food. We see that Adam and Eve had dominion, authority, command, and control over the animal kingdom.

In Genesis 2:15, it says, "*And the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.*" They had something worthwhile to do, to occupy them and they enjoyed doing it. There was harmony, peace, and joy. Life was lived in a state of complete enjoyment. There was no unhappiness, sorrow, grief, or pain. Man began in a state of bliss, a state of perfection, and innocence.

In Genesis 2:25, "*... and they were both naked the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*" For all the people who use that verse to defend the display of the human body, you have forgotten that this was before sin. In that time before sin, there was perfection and innocence. The human body was not an object of lust, but that is no longer the case. Sin is serious and it changed everything.

Adam and Eve's supreme enjoyment was fellowship and communion with God. I believe that Adam and Eve enjoyed each other and each other's company. They enjoyed being in that garden. They enjoyed the animals and the plants. Everything was very good. But the highest part of their enjoyment was their fellowship and communion with God. They walked with God in that garden. They had everything they needed. It was a state of bliss, yet even then, there was a standard established by God.

Genesis, 2:16-17 says, "*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:*" He put the emphasis on all the trees in the garden that they could eat of. Then He goes on, "*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not*

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 1

eat of it:” That is a standard. They could eat of all these trees, but there is one tree that God did not want them to eat from. “... *for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*” God knew what they would do. He did not say IF you eat, He said *for*, meaning ‘when’. He knew what they would do because it was part of God’s plan. God was not taken by surprise.

Those ignorant of scriptures will say that right there you have a problem because they did not die. They did not die physically, but rather they died spiritually, which is even worse. The day that they would partake of that tree, they would die spiritually, which would bring physical death and worse than that, eternal death. God had a standard and even in this state of bliss, God's standard was departed from.

God made man upright, but man's uprightness was not absolute. To put it another way, Adam's original holiness was *not immutable*. It *could* change. Being mutable, he could only remain steadfast in his original state by the power of God. God could and did permit Adam to fall from his righteous state. God chose to permit the fall and He did so simply by withholding His sustaining power from Adam. Adam's nature became disordered, just as the whole universe would fall to pieces if God were to withdraw His sustaining preserving power for one instant. So it was with Adam and Eve. Life was good, but it has never been the same since.

In Genesis 3, Eve enters into a conversation with Satan where he sowed the seed of doubt. If you look at Satan and Eve’s conversation in Genesis 3, you will find a lot of parallels between Satan’s methods and humanism because they work the same way. Satan begins by planting the seed of doubt. That is what the humanist does today by saying, “We are challenging you to think.” More than just *challenging* you, they are saying that to get you to doubt, to get you to question. What was it that Satan wanted Eve to doubt? The manner of God's way. “*Hath God said ...?*” Satan was casting that seed of doubt concerning God’s way of living and what He had said.

Then Satan went on to simply make a suggestion.

People will say, "I'm just making a suggestion." Oh no, you are doing more than that. Satan was suggesting that God was too restrictive, too confining. He suggested that Adam and Eve were missing out on the enjoyments of life. They were being robbed of their potential and they could improve. How can you improve on bliss? Satan suggested Adam and Eve could improve their life if they only cast aside the restrictions and the bounds that God had set. ***That is the teaching of humanism; 'If you believe in God, you can not possibly reach your human potential.'*** That is the lie of humanism. It is the very message of humanism and it coincides with Satan's lie. Humanists tell people "You can improve your life without God." Their motto is, "Good without a God."

Of the three Humanist Manifestos, notice how Humanist Manifesto II, which was written in the 70's, lines up with Satan's lie in the garden. Under the heading of "religion", Humanist Manifesto II states, *"We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species."* That is what Satan was suggesting to Eve. "God is doing you a disservice by not letting, by not allowing, by telling you you can't partake of that tree." It goes on to say, *"Traditional religions often offer solace to humans, but, as often, they inhibit humans from helping themselves or experiencing their full potentialities."* That is exactly what Satan was telling Eve. It continues, *"... we reject those features of traditional religious morality that deny humans a full appreciation of their own potentialities ..."* Again, that is exactly what Satan was telling Eve in the garden. Following that, God's standard would be departed from.

In those statements of humanism and in Satan's suggestion to Eve, self takes priority over God. That was the message then, and it has not changed. People word it a little differently, but the message goes back to the original lie. The entire educational system of the United States does not deny that their curriculum is based upon humanism, which is

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 1

based upon this lie of Satan. If you are a teacher and the “knowledge” you are imparting is based on a lie, that does not say much about your own knowledge. People say, "Knowledge is power". But what you must realize and keep in mind is not all knowledge is true. Only a fool would believe that whatever the educational system today tells you is true. Nevertheless, the world is full of them.

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 2

Humanists believe that man began at the bottom, and is working his way up the evolutionary chain towards getting better. Of course, the Bible, history, what you see in society, everything refutes that.

Adam and Eve were created in a perfect state of bliss. Satan came on the scene and *suggested* to Eve that God was too restrictive, too confining, which was resulting in her and Adam missing out on the enjoyments of life. He suggested that they were being robbed of their real potential and that they could improve their life by simply casting aside the restrictions and the boundaries that God has set. That same lie of Satan is the teaching of humanism. The humanist says, *"We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species."* That is exactly what Satan said in the garden. *"Traditional religions often offer solace to humans, but, as often, they inhibit humans from helping themselves or experiencing their full potentialities."* *"... we reject those features of traditional religious morality that deny humans a full appreciation of their own potentialities ..."* Those statements are fully in line with what Satan said. You need to realize anything fully in line with what Satan says is a lie.

What is it that takes priority over God in those statements? Self. Self as it relates to human potential, human need, human experience takes presidents over God. Eve entered into this conversation with Satan. Somewhere in that conversation, her thinking shifted from God being first to her and Adam becoming the priority. Her thinking shifted from God being the subject of life, to self becoming the subject. Anytime there is a shift away from God, disaster is going to follow. Humanism has its roots in evolution and if you follow through with humanism, the only thing that can follow is disaster. That is what you read in Romans 1. There is a shift from God's authority to man becoming their own authority. You see that pattern in the book of Judges and throughout scriptures, as well.

Eve now has a perverted view about the will of God.

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 2

If you have a perverted view of the will of God, you also have a perverted view of God. The result is in Genesis 3:6, where it says, *"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her; and he did eat."* God never said to Adam and Eve the tree wasn't good for food. That it would make you wise is what Satan put in her mind. In taking the fruit and eating it, they now have disobeyed God. They have departed from God's standard.

In the garden there was one rule and they broke it. People today will say, "Well, the Bible is so full of rules, we don't need that many rules." All you need is one and Adam and Eve broke that one rule. In breaking that one rule did they improve their lives? Is there a single area where you can point to and say, "That is better than it was before?" No. Nothing improved. Instead, their life of bliss comes crashing down. That life of tranquility immediately becomes a life of fear. For the first time, they are afraid of God. Tranquility has been replaced with fear. So it is today. Their life of fulfillment becomes a life of frustration and failure. You hear the frustration when Adam said, *"The woman whom thou gavest to be with me,"* You can hear frustration in that statement.

Adam and Eve sought to hide from God in Genesis 3:8, and ever since they partook of the fruit of that tree, man has been trying to hide from God. Man has been in the business of sowing fig leaves to try and hide their shame from God. The fact that Adam and Eve fled meant that they were now outside of fellowship with God. They have broken God's standard, the one thing He told them not to do and now they are out of fellowship with God. That familiarity they had with God is not the same. Their friendship with God is not the same. They are no longer in agreement with God. Being in disagreement with God, what are they trying to do? Get far away from him. Almost everything man comes up with today is in disagreement with God. That just leads

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 2

them further and further and further away from the Lord. Here Adam and Eve are, not living in the enjoyment of God. All that is gone.

Adam and Eve's relationship with God has drastically changed, which results in a negative impact upon their relationship with one another, as well. Go to the biggest section in a bookstore like Barnes and Noble, which by the way is the self-help section, and look at all the books on relationships, pick one up and read about the author. You will find that somewhere along the line, the author has struggled with relationships, and because they have, they are now "expert" to tell you how not to struggle with them. There is a direct connection between a relationship with God and relationships with people. That is proven in Genesis. Their relationship with God fell apart, and their relationship with one another was drastically changed.

In a life lived making self the priority, the source, the subject, and the authority, a life of rebellion against God, will always, without fail, make living that life far more difficult. Genesis 3:16-19, makes that very, very plain. We live in a time where we have more conveniences than man has ever had in the entire history of the world. Yet, life is more difficult. There is no one that can deny that. For you and I who have been around long enough, life is more difficult today than it was 25 years ago. There are more problems in spite of all the conveniences. Convenience is not what makes life less difficult. What makes life less difficult is being in agreement with God. What makes life SO difficult is fighting against God. That is what you find in Romans 1. Life is difficult, and man in his broken relationship with God, comes up with solutions to make life easier. But, every solution just adds to the difficulty of life. I am not saying it is harder to travel today than it used to be. I am saying living, in general the problems, the troubles of life are more difficult. Life is far, far more difficult than it has ever been. People go against, go aside from the standard of God, which is exactly what sin is.

You should know by now God has a standard, a rule

to measure by, that the very word *sin* implies there has to be a standard, and that God's established standard is Himself. Some say His word is the standard, which is true, but you can not separate His word from Himself. God's standard is Himself, "be ye holy for I am holy". Anything that goes aside from that standard, from God Himself, from what God has said, is sin. In spite of the promises of Satan and humanism, that turning aside from God will make your life better, it is going to make your life more difficult. I believe people are bent on convincing themselves and everyone else that everything is so much better today. All you have to do is look around. I am not buying what they are selling. It is just not so.

Sin goes aside from God's standard. In 1st John 3:4 it says, "*... sin is the transgression of the law.*" A transgression simply means that you go aside from what has been prescribed. Sin is a transgression, a going aside from what God has prescribed in Himself and in His word. It is a going aside from God's standard, which means that sin is an infraction, a violation of the law and the standard of God.

The word translated "trespass" in Matthew 6:14, is the same word that is translated as "sins" in Ephesians 1:7, 2:1, and 2:5; "offense" in Romans 5; "fault" in Galatians and James; and "fall" in Romans 11:11. From all of that, you learn that sin is unlawful, which of course, implies a law. You can not be unlawful if you do not have a law. Sin is unlawful.

Sin is a wrongdoing, an infringement, a defect, translated fault. When somebody says "I have this certain fault," what they are saying is they have a defect. Anything that does not line up with God is defective. Sin is a defect, a failure.

All of that necessitates a standard of measure which is God Himself. You have to understand that. God is the standard of measure. Neither the church nor man is the standard of measure. God is the standard of measure and sin is a deviation, a digression, a departure from that standard of measure. How great does the departure have to be in order

to be sin? The slightest outward or inward departure from God, is sin. The question is not how far does one have to depart in order to sin. All you have to do is depart and it is sin.

People today do not understand that sin is of a progressive nature and as such that departure keeps on growing because of the progressive nature of sin. The nature of sin is always progressive and unless God does something in our lives to stop it, sin will progress. People will go against God and they will make statements like, "I can't believe where I am." What is so difficult about believing that? "I don't understand." Sin is progressive and it is going to take you further and further from God, from God's standard.

Sin is always contrary to the nature of God, and anything that is in disagreement with God is sin. The statements from the Humanist Manifesto disagree with God, implying man begins at the bottom and is getting better, are contrary to God. If someone says, "Well, I can see their point," they are in trouble if they can even begin to see the point the humanist tries to make today. They are in serious, serious trouble. People will want to argue and say, "Well, I just want you to understand." Guess what? I do not want to understand humanism, I totally disagree with it, and as long as God protects me there is nothing that another person can say that is going to convince me along the lines of humanism. Everything about it is sinful, there is no truth in it, and it lines up completely with the methods of Satan back in the garden.

We have to understand that sin is a transgression of God's law. Sin is not determined by how far you have departed from God's law. The slightest departure is sin. That is why it is so important, when we detect the slightest departure in our own lives, to get on our knees before God. If we do not, sin will progress. People say all the time, "It's as bad as it can get." No it is not even close. It will get a lot worse as sin continues in its progression if God does not intervene. That is just the nature of sin and of man.

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 3

In order to understand Romans 1:18-32, you have to understand the two main subjects of these verses, sin and the wrath of God. God's wrath is the result of sin, they are like a cycle, and they progress. You have to understand the nature of sin, that it is a transgression and it is opposed to God and everything about God. Whether you talk about His love, mercy, or grace, sin is opposed to every aspect of the Lord.

1st John 5:17, tells us that all unrighteousness is sin, and therefore, unrighteousness describes the nature of sin. Unrighteousness is against, opposed to what is right. Unrighteousness is what is wrong. God's standard, not man's, determines what is unrighteousness; that which is right, that which is wrong. God's standard is Himself.

Sin is referred to as wickedness and evil in Genesis 6:5. Wickedness deals more with what is morally wrong. Evil is just kind of a summary of all that would be disagreeable to God, that which is unwholesome. That which is evil is harmful. So, it is, of course, with sin. Whatever does not conform to God's standard, which is Himself, is sin. The degree of nonconformity is not the issue.

Sin is iniquity. The Hebrew word translated as iniquity conveys the idea of twisting and perverting, so sin is a twisting and perversion of God's standard. Iniquity is a misrepresentation, a falsification, a subversion, a misuse of God's standard.

Sin is referred to as rebellion against God. Rebellion, of course, is a willful, deliberate act of resistance, an act of opposition to an established government or order. The very word rebellion implies that there is a standard, that there is a rule, a government, or a ruler. In this case, the ruler would be God. Every time we sin, we rebel against God. God often accused Israel of rebelling against Him. Rebellion against God is; you know what is right, yet you deliberately go against it. This is not a sin of ignorance, this is willful rebellion against God and His standard.

Sin is an act of ignorance and shows we are ignorant.

It is an act of obstinacy, an act of foolishness. In Isaiah 1:3, God is speaking to Israel, speaking to His people. "*The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: [but] Israel doth not know, [Does not understand, does not acknowledge.] my people doth not consider.*" Isaiah writes of an ox and a donkey, two animals which are not known for their intelligence, but are famous for their obstinacy and how difficult they are to handle. Nevertheless, these two animals have an instinct that makes them recognize their master. As stupid and ignorant as they are, they recognize their master. When they see their master coming with a bucket of food, they move towards him immediately. The sinner, on the other hand, reacts against the offers of God, refusing and speaking against it, thinking they are clever in doing so. The ox and the mule know they are dependent upon their master and if the master does not come with food, they will go hungry. The sinner does not know that. God comes with his blessings and the sinner refuses it and turns away from God. The sinner thinks that they are intelligent in doing so and that it makes them intelligent.

Sin perverts man. That is so abundantly clear in Romans 1. Sin makes fools of man.

Sin blinds the mind. You see that cycle in Romans 1. Man does not become more intelligent living in sin. He becomes more and more ignorant as sin progresses, but thinks that he is evolving in intelligence, progressing. Man never progresses going away from God. Never. It is only the stupidity of man, the insanity of sin that would cause someone to think that they are better off going against God than obeying God. Yet, that was Satan's pitch to man. "You would be better off to ignore God's command, ignore God's boundary that He has established. You would be as gods. You'd be better off." That has been Satan's pitch and the way of man ever since. Sin blinds the mind, leads to a failure to think logically, and renders man incapable of sound thinking. Sin is a mental problem. It really is. It is a mental illness.

Sin is a heavy weight. Isaiah 1:4 says, "... a people

laden with iniquity, ..." which means a people weighted down, encumbered, overloaded. The "pitch" of Satan is that sin gives liberty and freedom, but it does just the opposite. Sin weights down, encumbers, and overloads. People with sin are overloaded with iniquity, with that which is twisted, perverted, illogical, and senseless. Romans 1 is a good picture of that. Sin does not make sense. The more one progresses in that cycle of sin, the less logical that individual becomes. The picture in Isaiah is one of a people weighted down and obstructed, hindered with that which is twisted, perverted and illogical.

Sin is evil and corrupting. Isaiah 1:4, it says, "*... a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters:*" Here we have a picture of doers, participants in that which is wrong, immoral, vile, dishonorable, devilish, all described by the word evildoers, and as such, they **become** corrupters. That means evildoers are more than just corrupt. *Corrupt* speaks of that which is rotten and putrid. Evildoers are corrupt, and in addition to being corrupt, they corrupt others. Bring corrupters, they corrupt others, which means they bring damage, ruin, and destruction to others. In Isaiah 1:4, you also see the progression of sin. "*A people laden with sin, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters.*" Sin is passed on from one generation to another. Their children become corrupters. With each generation, sin progresses that much more.

Sin is a forsaking of God. In Isaiah 1:4, it says, "*... they have forsaken the Lord ...*" They left God and when you leave God, disaster follows EVERY, SINGLE, TIME. Nothing good comes out of leaving God. "*... a people laden with iniquity ...*", they have forsaken God, turned their back upon Him, and have done so willfully and deliberately. Romans 1 describes a nation, a people that has turned their back upon God, casting Him aside.

One who sins against God forsakes God. They then plan their own lives without God, without consideration of God, living their lives in disregard of God. These

individuals are not just those who announce, "I want nothing to do with God." Certainly that individual has forsaken God. But, anyone who plans their own life without considering the will of God, who lives their life in disregard of God has forsaken the Lord. That describes the world. Unfortunately, it describes many of God's people also. They live their lives without any consideration of God, planning their own lives, where they will work, live, what they will do, and how long they will do it. It is all about their plans and they live their lives with no consideration or regard of the will of God. On Sunday, as you drive to the house of God, you see people out, mostly in the summer months, doing all kinds of things. What have they done? They have forsaken the Lord. They are living their lives with disregard of God. That is what sinful man does.

Sin is a provoking of God. Isaiah 1:4 says, "... *they have provoked the Holy One of Israel ...*" To provoke is to irritate, to arouse, to anger. It is not a very smart thing to irritate, to arouse, to anger omnipotence. We know God is long suffering, not easily aroused to anger, and for that, we ought to be thankful.

In all of this, you can see a progression. This people, this sinful nation, is worse than the ox and the ass, they are weighted down with sin, the seed of evildoers, their children are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord, and in all this, God is being provoked. Every sin is a further provocation of God. The further you get along in the cycle of sin, the more God is provoked. That's what you read of in Romans 1.

Not only does sin progress, the wrath of God progresses. As you read Romans 1 you see part of the wrath of God is more sin, which brings more destruction. As you look at society today and see more and more sin, that is part of the wrath of God, which brings more sin, which brings more of the wrath of God. It is a cycle that man, in and of himself, can not get out of. The only way to get out of it is if God intervenes. Romans 1 describes the cycle of our nation, the cycle of people. They provoke, they irritate God. Even

though God is long suffering, there is a point when that long suffering is no more and God is provoked. That "point" may be different with individuals.

Sin is going backward. Isaiah 1:4, "... *they are gone away backward.*" If you go away from God, which they did when they forsook God, you will always go backwards. The pitch of Satan is that you will go forward. You talk to someone who professes to be saved, but they have been and are away from God. They try their best to convince you how great their life is. Well, in my opinion, if their life is great away from God, I think they are lost. I do not know if they are trying to convince you and I or if they are trying to convince themselves. It is probably both. Sin is going backward, a departure from God, and it puts one at a distance from God.

To go backward speaks of going in the wrong direction. Sin is always going in the wrong direction. It's to be in a state of decline. All sin is to move away from God. That is always the wrong direction and will always result in decline of some kind. You may not be able to see the decline immediately, but every single sin results in decline, whether we can notice it or not.

Sin is to go away from spiritual substance, resources, treasures, that which is beautiful, meaningful, of great help and encouragement to us. It is to go away from that which strengthens, comforts, sustains, and blesses us. Only someone who is ignorant would go away from these things, go away from that which will give courage, peace, and victory, and go in the direction of bankruptcy. "I'm going to leave all the blessings of God and go in the direction of bankruptcy. I'm going to leave the liberty I have in God and I'm going to go in the way that is going to lead to imprisonment, misery, and waste." Not too smart. Sin puts us lower than the ox and the ass.

Sin is absolute insanity. Isaiah 1:5 says, "*Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more:*" The question is asked, "Why would you do that?" If you have

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 3

raised children, you have asked, "Why did you do that? What were you thinking?" That is basically what God is asking here. The word *why* is stressing the fact that to continue in sin is beyond reason. It is irrational. Many times, the one who professes to be saved will say, "Well, I've just realized some things." Really? They are being irrational, yet they think they have come to a realization. "I've realized I don't have to be in church to be spiritual," or whatever things they come up with. In spite of the fact that sin brings suffering, trouble, pain, agony, and sorrow, the sinner just keeps on sinning and blaming all their sorrow and misery on everything but the real cause. Sin is insanity. It's absolutely insane.

All of these things are very clearly illustrated in Romans 1. There is the nature of sin, which you have to understand. The individual who sins and says, "I'm only going to do it this one time," does not understand the nature of sin. That statement is a statement of ignorance. God help us to have some understanding of sin.

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 4

When you study about what sin is, you learn it is a transgression, a trespass, an unrighteousness, iniquity, rebellion, a state of ignorance, a heavy weight, corruption, a forsaking and provoking of God, and going backwards. Isaiah poses the question in Isaiah 1:5, "*Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more.*" This question is stressing the fact that to continue in sin is beyond reason, it does not make sense, it is irrational, considering sin brings suffering, trouble, pain, agony, and sorrow. In light of all that, why would the sinner go on sinning? The answer; because it is a form of insanity, and the greatest insanity that there is. Furthermore, sin has a destructive power. You learn that from Isaiah 1:7, where you find the words *desolate*, meaning it's dismal, grim, deserted; *burned*, which is consumed, devoured, laid waste; *overthrown*, referring to conquered, mastered by an enemy power. All of that is sin.

Next is the *nature of sin*. It is both a state of being and a state of doing. It is a state of being before it is a state of doing. Put another way, sin is not only an outward act, it is what we are, our state of being. Every sin we commit, all sin for that matter, involves a wrong view of God, a wrong feeling toward the Lord, a wrong position with God.

Sin is an act and an attitude of defiance, contempt and disregard for God. Often, people concentrate on just the act, but sin goes much deeper than the act. It is a state of being, an act and attitude of opposition, hostility, resistance, striving, uprising against God, of treason against the majesty of God, of disagreement with the Lord, of a reaction against God. It does not matter what the sin is, all sin is against God. Sin can be against another person, but more importantly, it is against God. All sin is an act and attitude of ingratitude.

Sin is an act that proceeds from an attitude. First there is a state of being, and then an act. Romans 1:18, refers to both. Paul says, "*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.*" You have ungodliness and unrighteousness, which are not the same thing. If you look up the word ungodliness and

follow it throughout the scriptures, you will find that ungodliness is the inward aspect of sin. One can perform an ungodly act where *ungodly* is used as an adverb to describe the act. Ungodliness is a state of being, the nature of man. The very word *ungodliness* shows that it is the antithesis of God and His character, meaning it is *unlike God*. That is the nature of sin. The most complete summary of the nature of sin would be, it is ungodly.

Ungodliness is the attitude of irreverence, an unconsciousness of God, displeasure with God. Man by nature is displeased with God. Displeasure with God comes out all the time as people murmur and complain. They get angry with God, and say so. Where is that going to get you? You have no understanding of who God is. Being angry with God is not going to get you anywhere. Ungodliness is a spirit of independence in relation to God, hardness, ingratitude, and disobedience.

You have *ungodliness* and *unrighteousness*. The word, *unrighteousness*, is the external aspect of sin. Most people today have no concern about sin, but those who do are very prone to have their emphasis in the wrong place. They put the emphasis upon the outward act. They confess and repent of the outward act, which they should do, but that is not where the emphasis needs to be. *Why* did you do what you did? Because of who you are inwardly, which is a sinner. The emphasis needs to be upon the inward. If we could get the inward straightened out, the outward would take care of itself.

The word *unrighteousness* is the habitual course of sin. Adam's sin was the sin of the entire race. Even before Adam and Eve sinned outwardly, they were already sinning inwardly. In Romans 5:12, it says, "*Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, [Then, the result of sin entering the world.] and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, [Why?] for that all have sinned:*" [Referring to the external, we have sinned.] Then in Romans 5:16, it says, "*And not as [it was] by one that sinned, [so is] the gift: for the judgment [was] by one [By Adam] to*

condemnation, but the free gift [The free gift refers to salvation.] [is] of many offences unto justification." Then in 1st Corinthians 15:22, it says, *"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."* There was death in Adam, there is life in Christ. While Adam's sin brought physical death, more importantly, it brought spiritual death, and eternal death upon all the race. If someone of the world has any religious training at all, they will say that Adam's sin brought physical death, which it did. However, it is more important that Adam's sin brought spiritual death and that is what needs to be addressed. Adam's sin brought eternal death, as well. As a result, Romans 5:12 says Adam's sin brought condemnation upon all, *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"*

God warned Adam and Eve, concerning the tree, in Genesis 2:17, where He said, *"... for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* He did not just say, "Thou shall die," He said, Thou shall SURELY die. Obviously, God was not putting the emphasis on physical death, because they did not physically die that day, nor did they die eternally, referring to condemnation in hell. But, they did die spiritually, that day, which was evidenced by the fact that they fled and tried to hide from God.

Mankind, all of us are born in sin, we all know that, and the scriptures are very clear concerning that. People today find that very offensive. However, if they would give it some thought, they would see that it explains so many things. It explains all about a little baby's behavior. Psalms 51:5 says, *"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."* In the very womb we are shapen in iniquity. Psalms 58:3 says, *"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, [Children do not hit a certain age and become sinners. As soon as they are born, they go astray.] speaking lies."*

Man born in sin, is born spiritually dead. What does it mean to be dead? Death means several things. Keep in mind we are referring to spiritual death and not physical

death, but they share some of the same characteristics. In physical death, you are unconscious. In spiritual death, there is an unconsciousness of God. Death is a separation. The very second your spirit and soul departs from your body, you are dead. Your spirit and soul have left, separated from the body. Spiritual death is a separation from God. Everyone begins in the womb in a state of separation from God, and certainly so when we come out of the womb. We are born in a state of separation from God. That is spiritual death. We are born in a state of spiritual alienation, estranged from God. The result is, we are in a spiritual state of darkness.

Being spiritually dead, we are in a spiritual state of inability. When you die physically, you are rendered unable to do anything in the physical realm, because you are dead. If you are dead spiritually, you are unable in the spiritual realm. There is no spark of goodness in every man. That is an invention of man and is taught nowhere in the Bible. In spiritual death there is a spiritual inability and helplessness. If you were to go to the funeral home where there is a dead body, sit there all day long, pleading with that body, going through all kinds of steps, and that body would never rise from the casket. It is not going to happen because it is unable, helpless. However, IF that body were to rise from the casket, a miracle has taken place. The impartation of life has taken place. Impartation of life, of course, is what happens in salvation.

As a result of Adam's sin, by nature man is totally depraved, and man will act out that depravity. Man is a sinner, and because he is a sinner, he sins. To put it another way, you do not become a sinner because you sin, you are already a sinner and therefore you sin. That is what sinners do. Sinners sin.

What does, "Man is totally depraved," mean? We know what the word *total* means. In physical death, man is *totally* dead, not part way dead. You are either alive or you are dead. Therefore, "Man is totally depraved" means he is depraved or he is not. It does not mean that man will do everything he is capable of through his depravity. He would

if not for the Holy Spirit being a restrainer. But the restrainer is being removed, which is why men grow worse and worse. Men do not GROW worse and worse in their NATURE, because we are all born totally depraved. But the spirit no longer strives with man, so he begins to act out his depravity even more. Romans 1 shows the acting out of depravity.

Man being totally depraved means he is *thoroughly* crooked, *thoroughly* wicked, and *sinful by nature*. He does not have to be trained to lie. That infant baby, that young child will tell its first lie without you giving any instruction whatsoever, because by nature they are liars. That is what we are. You say, "Well, a baby can't lie before it talks." Oh, yes it can. That baby learns to cry and along with that, "If I do that, mom and dad will do this." They can lie through their crying. Do they know they are lying? I do not know, but they are lying.

Totally depraved means we are sinful by nature. We are sinful by position before God. That is stated in Jeremiah in 17:9, where it says, "*The heart [is] deceitful.*" Some of the worst advice you can get is, "Follow your heart." You better not because you can get yourself into a lot of trouble. "*The heart is deceitful.*" That means it is crooked, perverted, and polluted. How deceitful is it? "*The heart is deceitful above all [things].*" What does that mean? It means there is nothing more deceitful than the human heart. "... *and desperately [incurably] wicked:*" Man can not cure his heart because he is unable. The word wicked means sore, sick, wounded. The sinful heart is incurable in and of itself. Man can not cure his own sinful heart. Man can not undo his nature. That is why we still sin, because by nature, we are still sinners. The sinful heart of man is incurable.

Jeremiah 13:23 asks, can the leopard change his spots? No. You can talk to that leopard all day, asking it to change its spots, but it is not going to, because it does not have that ability. Can the Ethiopian change his skin? He goes on to make the application. Then can ye which are evil do good? You learn that man can not cure himself.

Man sins because he is a sinner by nature. This

affects every realm of man's being. He is totally depraved. There is nothing in us that is not affected by that depravity that is in us by birth. There is nothing in us *from birth* that has not been affected by sin. That is no longer true once the Holy Spirit enters us through salvation.

Romans 1 is a picture of the acting out of depravity. People will say all the time, "I don't understand why someone would do that." Because they are a sinner. You would do it, too, if it weren't for the Holy Spirit restraining you. None of us would be trying to serve the Lord today if we would have freedom to act out our depravity. God the Holy Spirit has restrained us and lost people, as well, today. People would be doing horrible, horrible things were it not for the Spirit of God restraining the natural inclinations of man.

As we move closer to the end, the Holy Spirit is withdrawing His restraining power. The result is man, born totally depraved, does things that are worse and worse, not becoming worse and worse in his nature, but acting out that nature more and more. In these last days, we need to pray that the Lord would restrain the passions of man.

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 5

As you get into the study of Romans 1:18-32, you need to understand sin and the nature of sin. If someone willfully goes down the road of temptation, they can not understand their own nature nor the nature of sin. Man is totally depraved. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "*The heart [is] deceitful above all [things], and desperately wicked.*" and as you study Romans 1:18-32, need to understand what Jeremiah is saying in that verse; you must realize what you are dealing with, which is the total depravity of man.

In looking at the effects of this depravity, there are things most of us know, but need to be reminded of. The *arminian persuasion* teaches there are two parties in salvation, God and man. You can not be wrong in either and be right on salvation. The *arminians* are wrong on both, which has skewed their salvation message very, very much. The Bible very plainly teaches sin has an effect on man's understanding. Man's understanding is corrupt by and enslaved to man's own sinful nature. As you study Romans 1:18-32, you learn that the understanding of the people those verses are speaking of, is corrupt. You may ask, "Why do they keep doing those things?" Because their understanding is corrupt and enslaved to their sinful nature. In Romans 3:11, Paul is giving a summary of the condition of man, "*There is none that understandeth.*" I shutter every time when someone says, "Well, they're not of an age where they can understand." I tell myself, "That's not what they mean, because neither is somebody that's 50, 60, or 70, if they don't have the Lord." No man, "*there is none that understandeth.*" You do not understand until the Spirit of God give you birth, gives you life.

Romans 2 teaches us that man does possess a knowledge of God, which we are born with. One can have a knowledge of what the Bible says about salvation. Anybody, who comes to church on a regular basis, has some form of a knowledge of God and of salvation. That does not mean they are saved. Romans 2:20 says, "*An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge.*" There is knowledge and there is a form of

knowledge. When you read, *"there's none that understandeth,"* it is not saying *they have no knowledge of God or of salvation.* But, they can not, in and of themselves, possess a knowledge unto salvation. In 2nd Timothy 3:15, Paul used those words, unto salvation, *"... the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation ..."* There is a form of knowledge that does not lead "unto" salvation, and when the Spirit of God works, there is a knowledge that leads "unto" salvation. To put it another way, people have a general, factual knowledge about God, about salvation, but that knowledge is not able to bring them into a personal relationship with God, it does not bring them to the salvation of God. When God saves them, He imparts understanding of that factual knowledge of salvation to them. Without God's saving work, as Romans 3:11 says, there will be no one that understands. Having knowledge and having an understanding of knowledge are two different things.

Paul wrote in Romans 8:7, *"The carnal mind [The fleshly mind that we are born with.] [is] enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."* Lost man can not bring his mind into subjection to God. The nature of the fleshly mind is enmity against God. That is always so until God intervenes and gives the new birth. The conclusion of what he states in verse 7 is stated in verse 8, *"So then they that are in the flesh [The condition in which we enter into life.] cannot please God."* They are enslaved to the flesh.

1st Corinthians 2:14, declares, *"But the natural man [That is our condition by birth. It does not matter what your age is.] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: [Here is why] for they [The things of God.] are foolishness unto him: [Unto the natural man, the things of God are foolishness, because their minds are enmity against God.] neither can he [The natural man] know [them], [The things of God. He can not know the things of God in a saving way. Here is why.] because they are spiritually discerned [By nature, man is spiritually unable]."*

Because the mind of natural man is corrupted and

enslaved to his sinful nature, their minds are blinded. People who ought to know better, will say all the time concerning someone who is lost, "Well, they've been in church, they ought to know better." Well, they do not because the things of God are spiritually discerned and their minds are enslaved to sin. In 2nd Corinthians 4:3, Paul is talking about "*them that are lost.*" Then in verse 4, he goes on, "*In whom [referring to the lost] the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them ...*" Their minds are blinded by their own sinful nature. Even if Satan did not exist, their minds are blinded by their own sinful nature. But, Satan does exist, so you can add on top of being blinded by their sinful nature, "*In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, [Here is why Satan does that.] lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*"

The whole time you talk to a lost sinner about the salvation of their soul, you have to be praying that God does a work within them. People say, "You just need to make it as simple as you can." You can not make it simple enough because "... *the things of God ... are spiritually discerned.*" Outside of the Holy Spirit doing the work of regeneration, a lost sinner will not grasp salvation. Their understanding is enslaved.

In Ephesians 4:18, you will read, "*Having the understanding darkened,*" *Understanding* is darkened both by our sinful nature and Satan. When I say man's understanding is darkened, and salvation is spiritually discerned, I am not saying man does not possess intelligence, but rather, left to itself, man's intelligence invariably works error. Man's intelligence is enmity against God and will eventually lead away from God. Romans 1:25 says that, because of man's understanding, "*Who changed the truth of God into a lie, [That is what man does.] and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.*" Why would someone worship the creature more than the creator? Because they do not understand, because their understanding is darkened.

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 5

As you read Romans 1, and you look at society today, you have to realize you are dealing with people who do not understand, and their understanding is enslaved. The only way they are going to understand is if the Spirit of God does the work of regeneration. It is like what Jesus said to the woman at the well, "... if ye knew, ye would." That is true. People will say, "Well, I know that." Well then why do they not *do* what they *know*? Because they really do not know. They may know it intellectually, but they do not know it spiritually, because man's understanding is affected by his sinful nature.

Man's heart and affections are corrupted and enslaved to his sinful nature and he can not change his heart, or the heart of anyone else. This is a very important point when dealing with the subject of salvation. To avoid going into error when you are talking to someone about the Lord, you have to realize God is sovereign and unless He does a work, nothing is happening. If you do not realize that, you end up trying to do God's work and end up on the path of salvation by works. In Genesis 6:5, it says, "*And GOD saw that the wickedness of man [was] great in the earth, and [that] every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil continually.*" That is true. If you break down every single thought of a lost sinner, somewhere there is sin. Their minds, hearts, and affections are corrupt.

People do not like to hear these things. They want to believe they have some spark of good, which is a main line of arminian theology. It makes man happy to think he has just a spark of good. However, the Bible does not teach any such thing. Ecclesiastes 9:3 tells us, "*This [is] an evil among all [things] that are done under the sun, that [there is] one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness [is] in their heart while they live, and after that [they go] to the dead.*" In Matthew 15:19-20 the Pharisees were saying that if a man does not wash his hands he is polluted. The Lord said the hands are not the problem, the heart is the problem. He goes on to mention several sins that proceed from the heart. Man's heart and affections are

corrupt and enslaved to his nature.

In John 3:19-20, it says, "*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, [Light refers to Jesus] and men loved darkness rather than light, [Loving darkness is the nature of man, spiritually speaking. Here is why.] because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, [The light is Jesus.] neither cometh to the light, [Man is not coming to Jesus unless the Lord does a work.] lest his deeds should be reprov'd.*" Man's understanding and heart are corrupt and enslaved.

This next scripture is one that enrages people the most. Remember, man's will is corrupt and enslaved to his sinful nature. Romans 3:11 says, "*There is none that understandeth, [The result of none that understandeth is,] there is none that seeketh after God.*" **Man's natural understanding will not cause or lead anyone to seek the Lord.** People talk all the time, "Well, so and so was seeking." What were they seeking? "They were seeking God." NO! They are seeking peace, but doing so in all the wrong places. The only way anyone will seek the God of the Bible is if the Spirit of God has done a work upon your heart. What did Adam and Eve do as a result of their sin? They fled and tried to hide from God. That is what the unsaved sinner will *willfully* do. No one made Adam and Eve flee and hide from God, but rather, they chose to do that, because their will is enslaved to their nature. Man has been fleeing and trying to hide from God ever since. That is what man does by nature. Jesus said in John 5:40, "... *ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*" You will not come on your own. The arminian says all one has to do is come. While that is very true, people have a sinful nature, that sinful nature controls their will, and left to themselves, they will not come. Left to yourself, you will not come to God. In John 6:44, Jesus says, "*No man can come ...*", unto God.

While it is true, all you have to do is come, and we can invite sinners to come to Jesus, but you have to realize they are not coming unless the Spirit of God does a work. If you do not realize that, what do you do next? **You** try to get

them to come and *your* whole plan of salvation is perverted. No man can come.

You read of all of these things in Romans 1, that people are not going to come to God unless God does a work, because they can not come unless God does a work. Why is that? Because man's will is enslaved to his sinful nature and man's sinful nature is to flee from God. People argue that I am doing away with the will of man. No, I am not. I do not deny that man does have a will, but his will is enslaved to his sinful nature; when you talk about freedom of will, man's will is free within its nature; and man's will is enmity with God; and because man's nature is to flee from God. Since Adam's fall, the will of every person is naturally inclined away from God. The enslaved will of man is controlled by his affections, meaning his heart, which is evil, earthly, and sensual, according to James 3:15. Every sinner's will is free according to its nature. It does not act outside of its nature.

You look at a dog, a cat, an elephant, whatever, they all act within their nature. A fish is not going to swing from a tree; it is not in its nature to do that; but a monkey will, because it is in its nature to do so. Everything acts within the bounds of its nature. That is true of man, as well. That is why, when you read Romans 1:18-32, you are reading of the progression of the sinful nature of man. It is imperative that we have an understanding of the sinful nature of man. If you are dealing with people, whatever realm it is in, you are going to understand a lot more if you understand the sinful nature of man explains why people do what they do, whatever that might be. The *action* of a person's *will* is determined by the *nature* of the person making the choice. Man's nature is away from God.

If a person is not corrupt, if they have good in them, and they believe these things, why do they even need to be saved? Why then, when the Lord deals with a sinner and gives him new life, that sinner can not even describe the sinfulness that they feel? If a person is saved, there was a time, *the* moment the Lord was dealing with them, they had

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 5

some understanding of their sinfulness, and they knew, "There's nothing that I have that I can offer unto God. Nothing!" The Lord does the work.

You tell people that man's nature is thoroughly corrupt and they say, "You mean to say that man is capable of doing anything that is evil?" Yes, man can do anything that is evil. The only reason he does not is because the Spirit of God is a restraining agent. But as we move further and further towards the coming of Christ, that restraining power is being lifted. Man today is acting more and more according to his nature and he *will* get worse as the restraining agent is removed. Even without the Bible, one need only to observe what is going on in society, in the world, and it should be clear that man has a problem with his sinful nature.

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 6

When studying Romans 1:18-32, it is important to lay the groundwork for studying this passage verse by verse. The subject of these verses is the progression of sin and the progression of God's wrath. The two go hand in hand. Therefore, you need to have an understanding of sin, see the effect of sin upon man, and that man is totally depraved. If anyone is going to have any chance of solving what ails society, they have to understand the nature of what they are dealing with. That eliminates almost everyone from solving what ails society.

A good picture of depravity is found in Judges 2:17-19, where it says, "*And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, [That pretty much describes man.] and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way [This is very descriptive of man by nature.] which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; [but] they did not so. And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, [that] they returned, and corrupted [themselves] more than their fathers, [Here you see that there is a progression.] in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; [This next bit is very descriptive of man.] they ceased not from their own doings, [That is man's doings.] nor from their stubborn way."* These verses pretty much sum up the depravity of man. Because of sin, man is totally depraved and this is by nature. He is born that way.

Man's understanding, his heart and affections, and his will are corrupt and enslaved to sin. For whatever the reason, the corruptness and enslavement of man's will is the one thing that is most offensive to the religious world. People will accuse those of us who believe that salvation is by grace of not believing in the will of man. I have been told many times that I believe man does not have a will. That is

not true. Man does have a will, and like everything else concerning man, it is corrupt and enslaved. I will even say that, yes, man has a free will, but it's only free within the bounds of his enslavement. He is not free to go outside of that enslavement. Do not let anyone accuse you of not believing that man does not have a will. The arminian will hold onto free will to the death. But the Bible very plainly teaches that man's will is enslaved to sin. Apart from an intervention from God, that will can not act outside of its enslavement. That makes God, of course, the author, the agent of salvation.

In John 5:40, Jesus said that man will not come to Him that he might have life, followed by John 6:44, where it says, no man can come unto Jesus. Those two statements are pretty clear. In Psalms 10:4, you read, *"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek [after God]:"* They **will not**. As it says in Romans 3, there is none that seek after God. Man left to himself, will not seek God. Psalms 58:3-5, says, *"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison [is] like the poison of a serpent: [they are] like the deaf adder [that] stoppeth her ear; Which will not hearken [This is what man is like; he will not hearken.] to the voice of charmers, [That refers to snake charmers. This is the comparison that is being drawn.] charming never so wisely."* Man will not hearken.

Isaiah 65:12, says, *"Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose [that] wherein I delighted not."* People like to talk about man having a choice, that man has a choice. Let's say that he does. The problem is man's choice will always be within the bounds of his enslavement to sin. Isaiah 66:3 declares, *"He that killeth an ox [is as if] he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, [as if] he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, [as if he offered] swine's blood; he that burneth incense, [as if] he blessed an idol. [Notice what it says,*

next.] *Yea, they have chosen their own ways*, [Left to himself man will not choose God. He will chose his own ways.] *and their soul delighteth in their abominations...*" The reason that they choose their own ways is because of the inward problem that their soul delights in abominations. That is pretty descriptive of man. The will, the choice, is in bondage.

We are told throughout the new testament things that man can not do. In John 3:3, Jesus says mankind "... *cannot see the kingdom of God.*" Left to yourself, you can not because you are enslaved. Then in John 3:5, He says, mankind "... *cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*" You need to keep all of these things in mind as you look into Romans 1; the progression of sin and realizing that left to himself, man can not change his course.

In John 8:43, Jesus asks, "*Why do ye not understand my speech? [even] because ye cannot hear my word.*" Obviously, He is not talking about the physical ear, physical hearing, because they were hearing. He was talking about effectual hearing. He said, "*Ye can not hear my word.*"

In John 12:39-40, Jesus, quoting Isaiah, "*Therefore they could not believe ...*" All you have to do is believe, but the problem is you can not unless God works on you. We are to tell the sinner that they must believe, but we know they can not unless God does a work. It is true that the sinner must believe and we tell them that, praying that God would intervene. In verse 40, "*He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their heart* [This is referring to spiritually.] *and be converted and I should heal them.*"

Romans 8:7-8, you read, "*Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*" There is the problem; in and of itself, man's mind is not and **can not** be in subjection to God, which is an even greater problem. "*So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*" Twice, you are told that man "can not"; man can not be subject and man can not please God. I would not discourage anyone from doing the best

they can, but the sinner who says, "I'm doing the best I can," you must understand they can not please God.

1st Corinthians 2:14, you read, "*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: [The reason he does not receive them, is because his understanding is enslaved. Man is not going to choose spiritual things.] neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned.*" They can not know spiritual things to the point of saving their soul.

John 1:12-13, says, "*But as many as received him [Him refers to Jesus Christ.], to them [them refers to those who have received Christ.] gave he power to become the sons of God, [He gave them ability. God has intervened.] [even] to them that believe on his name: [How do they believe? He gave them power to believe. If that is not clear enough, the following verse says...] Which were born, [Referring to born spiritually, the new birth.] not of blood, [Meaning it is not of heredity.] nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, [That is referring to the will of the individual or anyone else.] but of God.*" That is very plain. Man is totally depraved, therefore his will is corrupt, his will is enslaved.

In Romans 9:15 you find, "*I [Referring to God.] will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. [Notice, "I will" is stated four times. God's will is emphasized.] So then [Or, because of the will of God.] [it is] not of him [Referring to man.] that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*" When we study Romans 1, you need to understand that man's will is enslaved.

I believe the plan of salvation, as God presents it, is simple. But man, in his endeavor to simplify it has corrupted it greatly and has made it a plan of works. You need to understand along with man's will being enslaved, that evil progresses.

In Romans 8, you also read that man is enmity against, in opposition to God by nature. That is why many pulpits bring God down, to basically a puppet, so God will

not be in opposition to man. Man is not opposed to a God that he can control, but man is opposed to a God who controls all things and is so by nature.

To be at enmity means to be at hostility. What you have to understand is there is an open hostility against God, that it is man's nature, and it progresses. It is an animosity against God, a friction with God, a bitterness toward God. If you listen to many lost sinners when you present to them the God of the Bible, they are very bitter at that God. To the contrary, if you were to bring God down to a level below or, at best, to their equal, they can handle that. But, you present to them a God that is sovereign and they are bitter toward such a God. They have resentment and malice. That is what it means to be at enmity.

In Ephesians 2:14-15, Paul is talking about Jews and gentiles in the church, where it says, "[The Lord] ... *hath broken down the middle wall of partition [between us];*" He then goes on to speak of reconciliation. ***It is God who reconciles*** and man needs to ***be*** reconciled with God because he is at enmity with God. The very word reconcile *insists* that there has to be an enmity, there has to be a problem between man and God. The arminian should take the word "reconcile" out of their vocabulary. They say one thing, but they use that word to suggest something entirely opposite of what they believe.

Man is enslaved by sin and by Satan. In John 8:34, you find, "*Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*" Man is enslaved to sin and the devil. In John 8:44, you read, "*Ye are of [your] father the devil, [He is talking to lost man.] and the lusts of your father ye will do....*" In other words, because you are of him, referring to the devil, you will by nature do his desire. However, God is merciful and God restrains. People would say that if man is enslaved to Satan, everybody would kill everyone. No, because God is merciful and restrained. Nonetheless, man is still enslaved to his nature and Satan.

In 2nd Timothy 2:26, Paul speaks of those who are

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 6

ensnared, trapped by the devil. There are many other verses as well showing the enslavement of man to sin. You need to understand that about sin.

You also need to understand the nature of sin is ALWAYS, without exception, against, contrary to, in opposition to the well being of man, against his comfort, his joy. Any time man goes the opposite direction of God, the result is not good.

It is my personal opinion there is less joy in the world today than there has ever been. Just go and sit on a bench somewhere and watch people walk by. There are not very many of them happy and most are very unhappy. As you go through Romans 1, unhappiness progresses. That is the nature of sin. The nature of sin works against man's joy.

The nature of sin works against man's health. There are certain lifestyles that are not going to be good for man's health. Sin works against the peace, the tranquility of man's mind. All of that is illustrated very clearly in Genesis 3, where you read of sin entering into the human race. It did not turn out well for Adam and Eve. In all sin, to some degree, damage is done, there is destruction, ruin, loss, havoc and misery. You see that progress through Romans 1 and throughout the history of the world. You learn in Jeremiah 2 and Jeremiah 5 that sin is a great thief. Therefore, man is not happy. Nothing has caused more heartache in the world than sin. Nothing has broken up more homes than sin.

There is no greater plague. In congress, politicians will address all kinds of plagues. Let's use AIDS as an example. They want to heal AIDS. There is nothing wrong with that, but you need to realize that the root problem, the root cause of AIDS is sin. Even if you find a cure, sin still exists. You can find all the cures you want, but another disease is coming because the root cause of the problem is sin. People do not want to address the real problem. I believe the power of sin is seen through all the healing miracles of Jesus Christ. They illustrate the disabling, enslaving power of sin.

Hebrews 3:13, says sin is deceitful and now you have

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 6

a two fold problem. Man's heart is deceitful above all things. There is nothing more deceitful than man's heart. The devil is a liar, so he is a deceiver, and we see sin is a deceiver as well. Man, by nature, falls for the deceit; therefore, man pursues the wrong things because he has been deceived.

No matter how it is portrayed, sin is always in opposition to man, always in conflict to the well being of man. Government can not fix society. They can pass laws that are good laws, but the truth is, the ten commandments are really all the laws you need. All laws are summed up in the ten commandments.

Sin is contrary and set against the good of man, everything that is profitable to man. Romans 1, tells how it has made man a fool. If you listen to the "left" and many on the "right", you will soon see that man is a fool, not because of lack of education, but because of sin. The Psalmist in Psalms 73:22, comes to realize his sin and he says, "*So foolish [was] I, and ignorant: I was [as] a beast before thee.*" Proverbs 23:5 talks about the foolishness of sin, which is seen in idolatry. Only a fool would bow to an image. Man's foolishness is seen in his earthly pursuits and, more than anything, in religion. Sin makes man a fool and it progresses.

The nature of sin is progressive. It's why you know individuals and some who are even God's people, have been deceived and say, "Well, I know it's wrong, but I'm only going to go so far." Your heart, Satan, and sin have deceived you. The nature of sin is progressive as well as the nature of God's wrath. You will see that in Romans 1.

There is only one cure for the sin problem and that is Jesus Christ. Nothing else will solve the problem, there is no other cure.

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 7

The main topics of Romans 1, is sin and the wrath of God upon that sin. In studying Romans 1:18-32, you have to understand the nature of sin and sin's effects on every part of man. There is nothing in the natural man that is unaffected by sin.

In this lesson, I want to look at and understand the progressive nature of sin. In Romans 1 as well as all through the word of God, you learn that sin by its very nature progresses. I could give hundreds and hundreds of illustrations from the word of God concerning the progressive, spreading nature of sin. It is illustrated by the use of leaven and leprosy, which shows that it is progressive and spreading in its nature.

In Genesis 1:31, you see that after God had created all that He did, it was not *just* good, but it was *very* good. There was no disorder whatsoever. There was no chaos, conflict, struggle, pain, disease, decline, or death. By the time you get to the end of Genesis 3, you read that Adam and Eve were ashamed and feeling guilt, something they never felt before, as well as trying to flee and hide from God. Man still tries to hide and flee from God, doing so out of a feeling of guilt.

In Genesis 3, everything changes. There you have the record of man's sin. Adam and Eve took of the forbidden tree. That is where sin entered into the human race. But, it did not stop there. As you follow through the book of Genesis, it just keeps getting worse and worse. In Genesis 4, there is anger, jealousy, murder, and polygamy. What began in the garden has now progressed. We read that Cain killed his brother out of jealousy and by the time you get to the end of Genesis 4, there is polygamy. Sin has progressed since the garden of Eden.

In Genesis 5, there is a genealogy, where you find the words, "and he died", eight times. "He died" is there because of sin.

Then, you come to Genesis 6:2, just prior to the flood, it says, "*.... the sons of God [Referring to the saved.] saw the daughters of men [Referring to the unsaved.] that*

they [were] fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." You have saved people marrying unsaved people based upon lust. They "saw the daughters of men that they were fair", that they were beautiful. It was all by sight. In Genesis 6:5, you read that it progresses. *"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man [was] great in the earth,"* Where did it begin? With Adam and Eve partaking of the forbidden fruit; that brought murder and polygamy; that led to an intermingling between God's people and the world's people; which led to the wickedness of man being great in the earth. *".... and [that] every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil continually."* Sin is progressing.

In Genesis 6:11, you learn that even the earth was corrupt also. *"The earth also was corrupt before God"* All of creation was affected by sin. *".... and the earth was filled with violence."* In Genesis 6:12-13, it says, *"And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; [In other words, sin just keeps on progressing.] and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth."* The result was, of course, God in His wrath sent a universal flood that killed everybody, except for Noah and his family. That is quite a change from, *"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, [it was] very good."* It is a *drastic* change and what changed it was sin.

If you continue to follow the story, going into Genesis 9, the water subsides and Noah and his family are given another chance. Genesis 9:1, has God telling them, *".... Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."* God has given man another chance, but by the time you get to the end of Genesis 9, Noah is drunk and sexually exposed. The progression of sin.

In Genesis 10, you read more genealogy, followed by Genesis 11, where there is strife and confusion. In Chapter 12, there is lying because of a lack of trust in God with Abraham and Sarah. In Genesis 13, there is strife between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot, resulting in a family

separation. Lot pitched his tent towards Sodom, which was a wicked place. Lot knew that, but all he had his mind on was how green the grass was, how that his herds would benefit. So he pitched his tent toward Sodom. Then in Genesis 13:13, you read, *"But the men of Sodom [were] wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly."* (By the way, that word "exceedingly" tells you there are degrees of sin. All sin is sin and all sin is evil, still there are degrees of sin. The scriptures tell that in Sodom the main sin was homosexuality. Homosexuals should be called Sodomites, not gays.)

In Genesis 14, there is war. There have been many wars since.

In Genesis 16:1, you read of Sarah, the wife of Abraham, telling Abraham to have sexual relations with Hagar. *"Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name [was] Hagar. [Sarai had a servant.] And Sarai said unto Abram, [Sarai is speaking to her husband.] Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: [I can read into that a little bit of blame being cast upon the Lord, using the Lord for justification for what she is about to do.] I pray thee, [Sarai is pleading with her husband.] go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. [That is wicked. Then ...] And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife."* Oh, the progression of sin. Genesis 16:4, *"And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived;"* That brought out hatred between Hagar and Sarah. Sin caused all kinds of problems and strife within that family. It still does today. You look at families today and it is almost beyond belief. It all goes back to sin and the progressive nature of sin. You have this act of adultery and it produced a son, which brought great chaos into the family. That led to cruelty to Hagar.

In Genesis 19:4-10, there is homosexuality. In verse 4, some men come to the house of Lot, *"But before they lay down, the men of the city, [even] the men of Sodom,*

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Sin, Part 7

compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where [are] the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. [Speaking sexually.]. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as [is] good in your eyes: [How wicked is that? It is a progression of sin.] only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. And they said, Stand back. And they said [again], This one [fellow] came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, [even] Lot, and came near to break the door. [They were ready to break the door down for homosexual activity.] But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door."

At the end of the chapter, Genesis 19:34, you read that Lot committed incest with his daughters. *"And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger; Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, [and] lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father."* Sin is disgusting and of a progressive nature. Who would have thought that Adam and Eve's disobedience in partaking of that forbidden tree would have come to Genesis 19? The earth has been destroyed once, and you have homosexuality and incest.

In Genesis 26, there is famine, and more lying. In chapter 27, there is deception. In chapter 29, there is betrayal and deception. In chapter 30, there is rage, adultery, more polygamy. In chapter 31, there is deception, theft, idolatry, anger, ruthlessness, hatred within a family, In

chapter 34, there is rape, mass murder, looting. In chapter 35, idolatry. In chapter 37, you have family jealousy, hatred, and betrayal, as well as selling a sibling into slavery, and you have harlotry. On and on it goes throughout the old testament, such things as sexual defilement, genocide upon genocide, child sacrifice, cannibalism. All of this we find in the book of Genesis. It simply tells us how sin progresses.

All through the book of Genesis and the old testament, you read of horrific crimes and cruelties, much disease, death, plague upon plague, all as a consequence of sin. That is quite a change from, *"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, [it was] very good."*

If you go on from the end of the first two chapters of Genesis, the old testament is an illustration of good gone bad. In Romans 8:22, Paul writes, *"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."* Everything you read of in the book of Genesis, has been continuing up to this present time. Sin continues to progress. The world is anything but good, and it has been anything but good throughout its history. Throughout the history of civilization, you see the cycle of sin, of rise and fall.

Evolutionists, the so-called "progressives" of our day, live under the delusion that man is getting better. The Bible refutes that over and over. Even if the progressives do not believe the Bible, history and our present day, refutes over and over that man is getting better. He is not. The idea of evolution is that man starts from simplicity and mutates upward. That is totally false. Man began at the top and has been falling ever since. The first 3 chapters of Genesis make that very plain and it is illustrated throughout the word of God and world history.

The world is filled with evil and creation and mankind are in a downward plunge. Romans 8:22, says, *"... the whole creation groaneth and travaileth [That means it is intense and it is continual.] in pain together until now."* The entire creation, in every aspect, is collectively suffering due to sin. Everybody groans under the decay that sin causes. It

is a massive change, a complete reversal from where we began. Romans 5:12 says, "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, [In other words, sin invaded the world. The result...] and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*"

While society continues to get worse and worse, continues in their downward plunge, becoming more and more ensnared in the abyss of darkness, the physiological and sociological evolutionists continue on in their delusion and continue to propagate the lie that man is getting better. "Man is so much smarter today than he used to be." I highly doubt it and would argue that point, but let's say it is so, that man is more intelligent than in the past. What has man's intelligence brought other than more destruction and decay. We are in that cycle.

Man has a sin problem, and no one wants to address the problem man has. The only answer to a sin problem is Jesus Christ. Neither politics or laws can fix the sin problem. Jesus Christ fixes the sin problem. Today, man does not like to hear about sin, nor does man want to believe in a God that has wrath, a God that displays His wrath.