

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

THINGS YOU NEVER HAD TO LEARN

*When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child:
but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*

I Corinthians 13:11

Human infants are some of the most helpless creatures in the world. They have no survival instincts other than hunger and the ability to suckle their mother's breast if placed upon it. Yet they are born with certain innate traits and concepts which show the work of the law written in their hearts. It does not take long for these traits to make themselves known even as the Psalmist said, *"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."* (Psa 58:3)

The LORD created mankind in an upright, but fallible state which was susceptible to the leanings of their nature and in keeping with HIS ordained purpose. (see Gen. 1:31) In order to fulfill the purpose of GOD in manifesting the glory of HIS grace in the redemption of HIS elect bride, it was according to that purpose, for man to act according to this corruptible nature, disobeying the clear commandment of GOD as the woman was deceived by the serpent and the man knowingly embraced that which was forbidden to him.

Thus sin entered into the world, and death by sin was passed on to all of Adam's race as the justice and judgment of GOD against sin was demonstrated. *"For as in Adam all die."* (1Cor 15:22) Men sin because they are sinners, both by choice and by nature. Thus it comes as no surprise that we discover, in them many preconceived notions and errors of judgment which are consistent with a corrupted state of mind and an inability to comprehend spiritual truth as Paul points out to the Corinthians. *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* (1Cor 2:14)

So we might say that sin, began as a small seed which has flourished in the fertile ground of man's wicked imaginations and his innate corruption is manifested in those traits which are contrary to the law of GOD. *"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; ---- to be carnally minded is death---. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."* (Rom 8:5-8) The principle (i.e.; the law) of sin and death rules in and over men by nature.

Some think that sin is a set of activities which a man might choose to avoid, and much teaching is done to either instruct men in how to shun various "sins" or to strike fear in them about the coming judgment so that they might steer clear of this or that activity in order to keep themselves from such a sad fate. The truth of the matter is that "sin" is a condition of the natural man which is manifested by the very principles which form the basis of his understanding.

These principles are in men from their birth and do manifest themselves in time, to varying degrees according to the purpose of GOD. *"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."* (Psa 76:10) Men do not need to learn these principles which form the very context of his nature. These include:

The principle of self will which shows itself in the self-centered thought process of men. When Adam sinned, he did so because he desired to choose that which benefited him (as far as he could tell with his limited understanding). He desired to be "the god". This trait serves in some measure a useful purpose (in the flesh) for it is this principle which forms the basis of self preservation. He also shows the "law" written in his heart by this since it is upon this principle that the LORD sets forth in the summation of the law, *"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."*

Every man knows what it is to "love himself". I am often amused by the "philosophers" and "psychologists" of the modern era, whose mantra is to teach men to first "love themselves". I have never met, nor does the Bible describe a man with such a need, but rather recognizes that all men have this love in their very own nature. A lack of "self esteem" is hardly the problem of men who love themselves first and foremost. Men will by this nature seek their own benefit even when they are analyzed by the "psycho-babblers" as lacking "self-esteem". Self pity is the epitome of self-love. Out of this very trait arises practically all of the other manifestations of sin which are discovered in the sons of Adam. *"An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin."* (Pro 21:4)

The principle of "free will". By nature man considers that he can control his destiny and by his own power and ability, choose to do whatever he decides to do. It is not shocking therefore when we see the predominance of the notion of "free will" interjected into the teachings of practically all mainstream religions, sadly even including what is commonly called "christianity" by those who do not know any better. By nature men believe that they can both seek out GOD and discover HIM according to their natural understanding. Most so called "preaching" today is geared towards this notion. *"Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow."* (Isa 50:11)

The principle of "fairness". I am not sure at what age a young child first recognizes something as "not being fair" but it happens quite early. Being the father of four sons, I heard it quite often. I have never observed a young child objecting to some advantage they might have over their siblings, or arguing for fairness to be exhibited to others at their own expense, but they readily recognize what they perceive as their own disadvantage.

This forms the very basis of man's natural rebellion against the sovereign right of GOD to create one vessel unto honor and another to dishonor as it pleases HIM. Men will rail against the notion that GOD chooses to show mercy to whom HE wills while passing by others. It also forms the basis of their objections to the grace of GOD, manifested by the imputed righteousness of CHRIST alone as the foundation for the salvation of HIS elect. All men, by nature, believe that they can produce some measure of righteousness which GOD should find acceptable. They think it is only fair for GOD to "reward" what they consider to be "good" behavior and to "punish" that which they judge to be "bad". *"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."* (Rom 10:3)

The principle of "relative righteousness". The natural man may convince himself that it is acceptable for him to take something that belongs to someone else, such as another man's wife. Yet he is absolutely convinced (and cannot be swayed) that it is wrong and sinful for someone else to steal the same thing from him. Thus is the proof that the law is written in the heart of men by nature as Paul says, *"Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another."* (Rom 2:15) In this same line of thought men judge themselves to be righteous while condemning others as being outcasts.

We see this manifested quite readily as men look on in disgust at the heinous crimes which have been committed of late, yet seldom do we hear men lament their own wickedness with the same disgust. Suppose ye that these are greater sinners, *"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."* (Luke 13:3)

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