

Disciples Church

A Firm Foundation

Week of June 20, 2018

**Handout Notes**

**LESSON 3: Character of MAN**

Seeing the biblical flow and reason behind our character is the aim for our time tonight.

1. **The Character of Man Before Sin**

**Genesis 1:27**

Character: the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual.

1. **Man in the Image of God:**

Man was the only created thing made in the image of God.

Before sin, man was made in God’s image perfectly.

**Ecclesiastes 7:29 … God made man upright …**

In the garden and prior to sin, Adam and Eve were perfect and lived in perfect harmony with God.

**Pre-Fall**

**1)** Man had true knowledge- Adam and Eve had not set aside the creator-creature distinction, so for all truth that they received, they depended completely upon God to give it to them, and they agreed or conformed all of their thoughts to the standards of God.

**2)** Man had “righteousness and holiness of the truth.”

In every way possible, man before sin knew truth and lived according to that truth fully dependent upon the God of truth.

1. **Sinless and Finite:**

Although man was the perfect image of God prior to the fall, man was still a finite creature.

**Hebrews 4:13b (NASB) … there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him [God] with whom we have to do.**

**Isaiah 55:9 “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are [God’s] ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”**

There is and always was a Creator–creature distinction. This truth shows us that man can only know truth for certain through what God has revealed to him. Otherwise, man is incapable of knowing truth for certain, because the very things man does not know can prove what he thinks he knows to be false.

God is the only source of truth; however, God does not reveal all things to us.

**Deuteronomy 29:29 (NASB) The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.**

Man is dependent on God to know truth, even prior to the fall. This dependence was not an effect of the fall.

1. **Logic, God and Man:**

Logic- reasoning conducted or assessed according to strict principles of validity.

* Reason is not bad.

Reason is not opposed to faith or truth.

* Logic is not above God.

Logic cannot be an ultimate standard.

1. **The Character of Man in Sin**

**1 Corinthians 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.**

“The knowledge of ourselves lies first in considering what we were given at creation, … secondly, to call to mind our miserable condition after Adam’s fall.” - John Calvin

1. **The Fall of Man:**

Man knew they were **created,** so they dedicated their lives to God their Creator; they depended on Him.

**Genesis 2:17 “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”**

**Genesis 3:1-5** **Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”**

The serpent’s words contradicted what God had said. Eve was faced with a decision: Who was more trustworthy?

Now it ***wasn’t just*** a matter of believing between God and serpent, die and won’t die.

The crafty serpent added to the temptation: “You will be like God.”

Ultimately, Eve decided she no longer depended on God for truth or morals but that she could make those decisions herself.

**Genesis 3:6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.**

Eve decided that she was the ultimate standard and could discern what was good or bad, right or wrong.

This is the essence of sin: that man in his rebellion denies his dependence upon God in everything.

1. **The Effects of the Fall:**

**Romans 5:12 … just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned**

**Romans 1:18-32**

**Matthew 23:33-41**

According to Scripture, the man who is dead in sin cannot accept this special revelation of the word of God either.

**Romans 8:7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; for it does not submit to God indeed it cannot.**

Man in sin is incapable of understanding God’s special revelation in Scripture.

**1 Corinthians 2:14 … he is not able to understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.**

The failure of man to acknowledge God in creation and the incapability of man to discern the Scriptures has left fallen man in a bad spot.

**Jeremiah 8:9 (NASB) … Behold, they have rejected the word of the Lord, and what kind of wisdom do they have?**

When we reject God, we cannot have wisdom and knowledge. God alone teaches man knowledge. If we reject His word, we reject all truth and in principle know nothing but falsehoods.

**Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge**

As long as man remains in sin suppressing the truth, they will be unable to arrive at true knowledge of themselves, the world, and God.

1. **Inconsistencies and Surface Truth:**

**1)** Though unbelievers reject God’s revelation of Himself, they cannot be completely consistent in this because they were made in His image, and they retain many of man’s original abilities. Fallen man still thinks and reasons. He is able to do this because he is made in God’s image.

**Romans 2:14-15 … when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires … They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts …**

**2)** The unbeliever may ***seem*** right. However, because they have beliefs founded in something other than the one true God, they end up using ***similar terms*** or phrases, but their meaning is corrupted.

Ultimately, because unbelievers are in sin, they have an underlying belief that they are independent and capable of knowing truth apart from God and God’s revealed will.

**3. The Character of Man Redeemed by Christ**

**2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.**

**The Reversal of the Fall:**

At salvation, there is a reverse of the things that happened as a result of the fall.

**1 Corinthians 1:21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.**

**Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.**

The heart of fallen man in sin is to forsake true knowledge and falsely assert his independence from God. The heart of the believer, the one who is truly saved, holds that God’s word can always be trusted, for God is true!

**Isaiah 45:19 … I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right.**

**1 Samuel 2:2 There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.**

1. **Restoration by Regeneration:**

**John 3:5-7 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”**

Man in his sin is spiritually dead. Fallen man must be born again.

**2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.**

When we are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone, we are given a new life. Therefore, the entirety of our lives has been affected. We are entirely like a new creation.

**Eph. 4:20-24 But that is not the way you learned Christ! — assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.**

Believers are being restored according to the original character of the image of God. We are restored in righteousness, holiness, and true knowledge--all these things we lost at the fall.

**2 Corinthians 10:5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.**

1. **The Believer and Remaining Sin:**

**Galatians 5:17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.**

The Holy Spirit dwelling within the true believer is at war with the remaining sinful flesh.

**Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**

**Romans 6:11-12 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.**