

Session 7: DEPRIVED OR DEPRAVED?

I. Defining our Nature

Key Verses: Psalm 14:2-3; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 5:12

Key Principle: We are broken and sinful creatures at odds with our Creator.

II. Consequences of our Nature

1. We are separated from God.(Psalm 51:4, Colossians 1:21)
2. We are enslaved to a corrupt nature that corrupts our own lives and lives of others with sin.(Ecclesiastes 9:3, Romans 6:6,17)
3. We are sentenced to death.(Romans 6:28, Ephesians 2:1-2)

III. Facing our Nature

1. Most of my real problems are in me, not out there.(Jeremiah 17:9, Psalm 139:23-24)
2. Depravity wears all kinds of sophisticated masks.(Matthew 23:25-26)
3. Depravity means we must not trust ourselves.(Proverbs 14:12)
4. Admitting my depravity is the first step to finding God; understanding the depth of my depravity enables me to progress in my relationship with God.(Matthew 5:3)
5. Depravity cannot be eradicated by education, better environment, better self-understanding, or more will power; we must be saved from it.(1Corinthians 5:17, John 3:16)

BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD

Discussion Questions:

1. From our Reflection Assignment last week: How has a Feminist perspective affected choices you have made in the past?
2. Is the concept of people being basically depraved rather than basically good a paradigm shift for you? If so, how?
3. How would shifting your thinking from “my real problems are out there” to “my real problems are in me” change some of your relationships?
4. What kind of masks have you used to hide your depravity? (education, beauty, personality, religion, achievement, etc.)
5. What attempts have you made to deal with your depravity apart from God? What aspects of your depravity have driven you to God?
6. What does it mean to be “saved” from our depravity? If you have been saved from yours, share your experience/decision.

Reflection Assignment:

Consider your current relational and circumstantial challenges and difficulties. How have you tried to deal with them in the past?

Factoring in the possibility of depravity being true, indicating you have personal blind-spots and problems that come from inside rather than outside, how might you shift your approach?

Passage to Ponder this week: Romans 3:21-23

Week Seven Summary...

We spent the first part of this course examining what has shaped our understanding of Womanhood and have suggested that Humanity is not as it should be. Men and women are not as they should be. “Masculinity” and “femininity” have lost the meaning God intended for them; the very ideas have been corrupted. We’ve considered many factors that have influenced us to take us off track. We’ve seen that we have an Enemy whose goal is to keep us from being what God intended, using whatever tool works to accomplish that goal. We’ve looked at how voices in the world around us can influence and deceive us about what it means to be women—from our culture in general to the feminist movement to our own families of origin.

However, if we stop there, we will miss the most important lesson we have to learn about why things are the way they are: We are not as God intends us to be; I am not as God intends me to be. This lesson is one that’s hard to learn; it’s a truth that’s hard to face. I’d much rather believe that I’m the product of my environment, that forces beyond my control have conspired to put me in my predicament. That view makes me feel justified and gives me someone to blame. Yet the truth, according to the Bible, is that I contribute more to my own problem than I want to believe is possible. I am not what God intended me to be because I am bent and broken. In fact, the world is not as it should be, in part, because I am not as I should be. I myself contribute to making the situation worse! In short, the problem is not “out there” as much as it is “in here.” Theologians call this concept Depravity. Mankind in general (and each one of us in particular) is broken. We are separated from God—and each other—as a result of our sin. We are utterly unable to fix or reform ourselves. We need to be **SAVED**.

The Good News is that coming to this realization is exactly what we need in order to turn to the One who can save us. When we face the fact that we are far from God and powerless to help ourselves, we have reached a crucially important crossroad, because then we are ready to accept the indescribable gift of God’s salvation—eternal life. As a bonus, we gain the help of the Holy Spirit in dealing with the power of sin in our lives, regardless of the influence of the world around us.