

Doctrine of Grace

Total Depravity and the Loss of Liberty

1. Three major systems of theology have competed with each other over the centuries.
 - Pelagianism.
 - Semi-Pelagianism.
 - Augustinism.
2. It was Augustine (AD November 13, 354 – August 28, 430) of Hippo who gave the concept of Sola Gratia, by grace alone, to the Reformation leaders in the sixteenth century.
3. What Augustine contended for was that salvation is by grace alone. This is in contrast to Pelagius who argued that grace facilitates a person's decision to be a Christian, but is not necessary.
4. For Augustine, grace is not only necessary, it is essential. It is only on the basis of grace that a person is converted.
 - *Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*
5. Augustine was concerned about free will. He made a distinction between the concept of Liberium Arbitrium, or free will, and Libertas, or liberty.
6. After the Fall man still had free will. What was lost in the Fall was liberty.
7. In order to understand this distinction, another distinction is necessary. A person can make a distinction between the faculties of thought, and willing.
8. Man is a rationale creature with a mind. Man can think. Man is also a volitional creature. He has a will. Man has the power to make choices.
9. At the Fall, the whole of man's nature was affected as sin entered into the world. Something significant was lost in the Fall in the soul of man.
10. The human mind was darkened by the Fall. This is the noetic (Greek, *nous*, mind) effect of sin, meaning the effect of sin on the intellect. The "nous" refers to the mind, and thus to the intelligence, and ability to always make good judgments and decisions. Sin has made that impossible.
 - *Ephesians 4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:*
11. The natural mind is hostile to God, it is at enmity with God, and cannot know God in salvation.

12. In the Fall, man did not lose his mind. He can still reason. He can still think. The faculty of thought remains intact.

13. In the Fall, man also retained his will. He still has the faculty of choosing. Choices are made every day.

14. What man did lose in the Fall is the liberty to please God, to obey God fully, and to honor Him.

- *Romans 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

15. What man did not lose in the Fall was the freedom to act on his desires.

Special Note.

In the eighteenth century, freedom was defined politically in terms of what man was able to do. He was able to pursue life, liberty, and happiness.

In the 20th century, freedom was defined in a negative way by Franklin Roosevelt. There was freedom from want, and freedom from fear,

16. For Augustine, man, after the Fall had freedom, but now, the will was evil. After the Fall man was free to act on his evil desires, which, with respect to God, are only evil continually.

- *Genesis 6:5 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.*
- *Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:*

17. After the Fall, man has lost any innate desire to please God, to seek after God, to know God. This is the reprobate mind.

- *Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;*

18. Man will not choose God, because man does not desire God.

19. Man still has the ability to choose what he wants, but since he does not want God in his thoughts, or in his life, he is spiritually dead, so that man lacks liberty.

20. For Augustine, liberty is the ability to do good, as well as to do evil. The natural man cannot do good. The natural man can only do evil continually. Therefore, the natural man does not have liberty.

- *Isaiah 59:7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.*
21. Pelagianism postulates that man has, after the Fall, what he had before the Fall, freedom and liberty, and pretends that man still has what is clearly lost, his liberty. Pelagianism is delusional.
 22. The Fallen will is free in the sense that it has power to do what it wants, but it is not free to direct, or incline its own heart to the things of God because it does not want to.
 23. To express the condition of Adam prior to the Fall, and after the Fall, Augustine made the following distinctions.
 - Before the Fall. Posse (possibility, power) Peccare (to sin). Before the Fall, Adam had the power to sin.
 - Before the Fall. Posse Non Peccare. Adam had the power to not sin.
 - Before the Fall. Non Posse Peccare. Adam did not possess the inability to sin. This is obvious, because Adam did sin. Only God cannot sin. He lacks the motive to sin. One day, when man has been glorified, man will sin no more. He will have no sin nature, and no inclination to sin.
 - After the Fall. Non Posse Non Peccare. After the Fall, Adam did not have the power to not sin. The Latin phrase uses a double negative. The phrase means, it is not possible to not sin. It is impossible for a person to live in a fallen condition without sin.
 24. It is impossible for a person to live without sin. “To err is human. To give, divine.” Why is no one perfect? Why can people not live without sin? The biblical answer is that man has lost his liberty due to the Fall.
 25. Pelagius argued that it is possible for people to live perfectly righteous lives, even after the Fall.
 26. Augustine believed the Fall has left individuals in a state of Moral Inability. Man cannot turn himself to choose God because he has no desire to choose God by himself.
 27. The question Pelagius asked was this. “If I am born in a state of sin, if I am born without the moral ability to obey God, how can God hold me accountable for my sin?” “How can I be guilty of sin if being a sinner is my nature?”
 28. The biblical revelation is that God does hold people morally accountable for a standard of perfection which He knows they will not, and cannot possibly obtain.
 29. God can hold people accountable for sin from the moment of birth because Adam had acted as a Federal Representative of the human race. “In Adam’s Fall, we fell all.”

- *Romans 5:12 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:*

30. When Adam Fell, the human race fell with him.