

# THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE

## LESSON 4

### TOTAL DEPRAVITY

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- Look up these Old Testament verses that witness to man's depravity. Make a running list of observations and statements describing our fallen natures.
- Genesis 6:5
- Genesis 8:21
- Job 4:17
- Job 14:4
- Job 15:14-16; 25:4-6
- Psalm 14:1-3
- Psalm 58:1-3
- Psalm 143:2
- Proverbs 20:9
- Proverbs 30:12
- Ecclesiastes 7:20, 29
- Ecclesiastes 9:3
- Isaiah 53:6
- Isaiah 64:6
- Jeremiah 13:23
- Jeremiah 17:9

- Now do the same for the New Testament's witness to the total depravity of man.
- Matthew 7:17-18
- Matthew 12:33-37
- Mark 7:21-23
- Luke 11:13
- John 3:19
- John 15:5
- Romans 1:18-32
- Romans 3:9-20
- Romans 5:6-10
- Romans 6:17-20
- Romans 8:5-8
- Galatians 3:22
- Ephesians 2:1-3
- Ephesians 4:17-19
- Ephesians 5:6-8
- Colossians 1:21
- Titus 1:15-16

An illustration of total depravity from W. D. Smith as found in *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, Loraine Boettner (New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1932), 69-70:

“In a gang of pirates we may find things that are good in themselves. Though they are in wicked rebellion against the laws of the government, they have their own laws and regulations, which they obey strictly. We find among them courage and fidelity, with many other things that will recommend them as pirates. They may do many things, too, which the laws of government require, but they are not done because the government has so required, but in obedience to their own regulations. For instance, the government requires honesty and they may be strictly honest, one with another in their transactions, and the division of all their spoil. Yet, as respects the government, and the general principle, their whole life is one of the most wicked dishonesty. Now, it is plain, that while they continue in their rebellion they can do nothing to recommend them to the government as citizens. Their first step must be to give up their rebellion, acknowledge their allegiance to the government, and sue for mercy. So all men, in their natural state, are rebels against God; and though they may do many things which the law of God requires, and which will recommend them as men, yet nothing is done with reference to God and His law. Instead, the regulations of society, respect for public opinion, self-interest, their own character in the sight of the world, or some other worldly or wicked motive, reigns supremely; and God, to whom they owe their heart and lives, is forgotten; or, if thought of at all, His claims are wickedly rejected, His counsels spurned, and the heart, in obstinate rebellion, refuses obedience. Now it is plain that while the heart continues in this state the man is a rebel against God, and can do nothing to recommend him to His favor. The first step is to give up his rebellion, repent of his sins, turn to God, and sue for pardon and reconciliation through the Savior. This he is unwilling to do, until he is made willing. He loves his sins, and will continue to love them, until the heart is changed”

“The good actions of unregenerate men are not positively sinful in themselves, but sinful from defect. They lack the principle which alone can make them righteous in the sight of God. In the case of the pirates it is easy to see that all their actions are sin against the government. While they continue pirates, their sailing, mending, or rigging the vessel, and even their eating and drinking, are all sins in the eyes of the government, as they are only so many expedients to enable them to continue their piratical career, and are parts of their life of rebellion. So with sinners. While the heart is wrong, it vitiates everything in the sight of God, even their most ordinary occupations; for the plain, unequivocal language of God is, ‘even the lamp of the wicked is sin,’ Prov 21:4.”