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The Divine Conspiracy Teaching Series
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Session 2 Outline: What is a Human Being?

In the contemporary scene, the biggest battle is to try to understand what a human being is.

The Battle Over Human Nature:

Is there a human nature? The official response now is, "There is none."

This is an outcome of the drive to total liberty that developed in the 20th Century. That drive is the essential mark of the Babel orientation of human life. "People should be able to do what they want."

- Democracy as a political and social system has come to officially mean the exaltation of the human will; everyone should be able to do what they want to do. That is a perversion of human liberty.
- This can only be true if we don't have a Nature. Having a nature puts a limit on what you can do.

***Nature limits freedom if by "freedom" you mean
doing what you want to do.***

In the past, nature was used as an argument for what you should not or could not do. These were often bad and oppressive arguments: Racism, Feminist controversies, the idea that biology is destiny.

The swing against this is currently all around us:

- John Dewey is the most famous 20th Century American to reject the idea of Human Nature.
- Natural Law is being rejected as a basis for law. What is *wanted*, *desired* or *felt* to be right by the public is becoming the basis for law.

Desire

Denying human nature takes care of all the issues where **desire** wants free play, and turns it into a social issue at most. People can be controlled on this basis. That is why political correctness has become so important in our time.

The underlying issue is the difference between what is desired and what is good. And then that redefines the meaning of "love".

- Desire can be for what is not good. So you can not define good in terms of desire.

- If you do define “good” in terms of desire, then if you desire something, it is automatically good. Most people know and regret having desired things that are not good.

Love

To love someone means you *will* what is good for them. Benevolence.

If I love you, that means sometimes I’m not going to will what you desire, because sometimes what you desire is not good.

- To love a child often means we do not do what they want.
- To love *me* would mean that I often would not do what *I* want.
But self will says, “I want what I want when I want it.”

Nature and Will and Desire

[12:13]

“Nature” is connections of things in reality independent of what we think or desire. But we, as individuals, are not smart enough to find out what those are. That is where a God who speaks in love becomes central to the well-being of human life.

When you cut lose from the teachings of God, you step into an area where things have a nature regardless of what you like. You can choose the action but not the consequences.

Human WILL and DESIRE has institutionalized itself in a culture that rejects TRUTH and goes with DESIRE.

Nothing lacks a nature: parts and properties. And because things have the parts and properties that they do, they stand in the relations that they do. Including human beings. God’s nature dominates everything and determines what nature is elsewhere.

Romans 1 and Psalms 2

[16:33]

Where people cast aside God’s restraints.

Romans 1 is a profound analysis of the human situation.

1:21-23, “*Even though they knew God, they did not honor God...*”

When you start to deny the reality of God, everything comes loose. Since reality does not fit the human will, the mind becomes confused.

What you worship is what you take to be ultimate. When you turn from God, you take man to be ultimate.

1. With the rejection of God, we loosen our minds from reality.
2. Now the MIND is directed by the WILL and won’t function correctly.

3. The WILL is supposed to be directed by the MIND under TRUTH.
4. The human BODY is the first thing under the direction of our WILL.
I John - *"The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life."*
When you turn from God, your BODY becomes God.

God goes first, then degrading passions (Romans 1:26). This is the natural progression of wanting "good" in terms of what is desired.

Desire is not self-limiting, and it will keep pushing for satisfaction even though there is none. Desire only leads to more desire, and that will push you increasingly into perversion of desire.

Dostoevsky: *"If there is no God, everything is permitted."*

- That's the way the mind works. If you are not rooted in the knowledge of God, it will seem as if there is no restriction on what you might do to fulfill desire.

Ephesians

[23:36]

Read Paul as though he was a University Professor talking about social and psychological reality.

Currently in the context of knowledge, "Sin" is not a category. It does not explain anything. So we don't understand why things go as they do because we can't introduce the appropriate categories.

Ephesians 4:17

("Gentiles" always means people without God who stand outside the covenant relationships with God.)

- Looking at the people around them, Paul says, *"Don't walk in the futility of the mind"* - the mind that doesn't succeed in getting anywhere by thinking.
- They have distorted reality. Become "calloused" - they don't feel.

Feelings - We live in a sensual culture. We want to "feel good." That's why we are so addictive. The only way out of addictions is to realize you have a will distinct from your feelings. If you live for feelings, you will become callous. And if you become callous and you're living for feelings, you will do whatever is required to get more feeling.

Once you get that callous MIND and you've misunderstood your NATURE in such a way that you're only going for FEELING, then social institutions and arrangements will conform to that. [30:10]

Romans 1:28, "*acknowledge God*" is the linchpin. If you have God, then you have NATURE, and a God who speaks tells you the TRUTH.

- "*God gave them over to a depraved mind*" - a MIND that doesn't work. When you listen to the discourse in our culture today, what you're listening to is a mind that doesn't work.

In this progression with fallen humanity where DESIRE and WILL does not square with TRUTH and REALITY, we see that social institutions and arrangements adapt to that situation.

When there is a restraint by the knowledge of God that is institutionalized in human institutions, then you see a knowledge that these are wrong, and people step away from them.

Romans 1:31

"They know the ordinance of God" – People do not lose this entirely.

"They give hearty approval..." That's where the institutional dimension takes over.

- Today there is no recognized body of moral knowledge because of this progression. This is the way things generally stand in our schools and professional institutions because when NATURE disappears, KNOWLEDGE and TRUTH disappear. And then "Political Correctness" takes over: meaning what is correct *in someone's view*.
- Implicit in this is the idea that WILL is the all you have to deal with.

Truth Unchanging

What is good for human beings and what is right for them does not change fundamentally. Good and right are built into human nature.

The human capacity to *know the good and the right* is distorted by the human *will* to fulfill *desire*.

- We want what we want. This is why a divine source of knowledge is essential to human life. And this is true because the human capacities to know are extremely limited, and consequently, the things that we most need to know—including what is human nature—is not something that is readily accessible to us.

The Whole Law

Jesus sums up the whole law by referring to the essential aspects of the human being. He refers to the heart, mind, soul and strength:

Loving God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength and loving your neighbor as yourself. Very simple.

Remember, if you love something, you *will* its good. So to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength is to *will* what is good for God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbor as yourself.

That's not a simple thing, because often your heart is one place and your soul is another; your mind is one place and your body is another. And then your social relationships may be running on a different track. That's what we call "the problem of integrity." *Integrity* means everything is *integrated*.

Integrity - If you intend to do something, you do it. If you don't intend to do it, you don't do it. You realize that's exactly the opposite of the picture that Paul paints in **Romans 7** of the person that is caught in sin. That is the picture of the Disintegrated self.

- Peter said, "I will not deny you". He meant it, but there was something in Peter that he didn't recognize. It was something that will control his behavior. Jesus was teaching Him very carefully when he said that Peter would deny him three times. Peter went out and wept when he realized there was something in him that was not being directed *by* him but was *directing* him.

This is the analysis of the essential aspects of the human being. If you love, then that will pull all of them together. But that has to be directed toward God and then out of that comes love of neighbor. And if you do you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the law. As Paul explains, "*If you love your neighbor, you will not...steal, etc.*"

Six Parts in Human Nature

This diagram illustrates the parts that go into the whole of human nature. And human nature is in an Infinite Environment that contains good and evil.

The parts all have to align before we can be subject to the law of God. There's going to have to be an invasion by the Word and Spirit of Christ, a living power in its own right, that comes into the HEART through the MIND. When that is accepted, the result is Faith in Christ which re-establishes Communion with God. The primary function of the center part is to trust God. It can't do that on its own. It has to interact with the other parts.

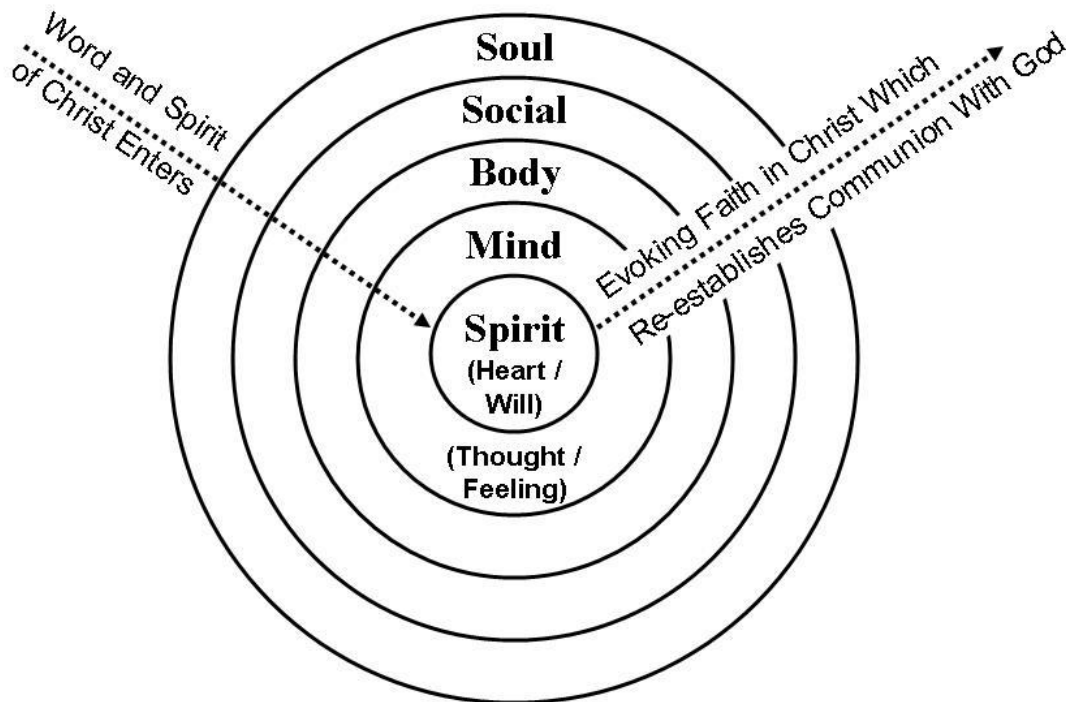
Example: Eve in the Garden received a solicitation to not trust God. That's the general form of all sin – don't trust God.

We see here the three things that John said was in the world: *Lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and the pride of life*.

Their effect is to seduce the individual into taking things into their own hands and not trusting God. If you analyze all the things we regard as wrong, you will find they all come back to mistrusting God.

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Infinite Environment



Once the **SPIRIT** comes alive to God because of the Gospel that is lodged in the **MIND**, then the individual begins the process of working *with God* for the transformation of the whole self.

- "Submit your bodies a living sacrifice... be transformed by the renewal of the mind." (**Romans 12:1**)

As the mind is renewed, these other parts are going to be renewed also. And questions like what is in your body become all important.

- What Peter did when he denied Christ was in his body and in his social relations. He didn't have to *think* about denying Christ. He just did it.

The **SOCIAL** situation and what the **BODY** is ready to do comes together and is acts on its own.

The **SOUL** is like the computer that runs the whole show. You're not conscious of your soul.

The **SPIRIT** is the Executive Center of the self; capable of changing the computer through spiritual disciplines, leading to transformation of the whole self.

This is human nature. Everyone has this. If they are dead in sin, they don't have the relationship to Christ, but they can still hear the word and the Spirit can move in them. If they don't have this, they begin to worship their own will, their own desires, their own body and so their whole life is devoted to themselves.

The ROLE of a Human Being

[46:50]

The Divine Conspiracy is not for the greatness of God just to steam roller everything. It is to elicit love and obedience through the development of character so that out of human history comes a certain kind of community that then is going to have a role forever in the universe.

That's the key to understanding what human history is about. This is why it's worth the awful things that have happened in it.

Genesis 1:26-30 - The "Creation Covenant"

"Let us make man in our image. Let him have dominion (let him be responsible)."

- The assignment for humans is to be responsible for the earth. That's built into human nature. This is the foundation of a *genuine* Environmental Ethic - actually thinking about the world.

Psalms 8 The Psalmist is impressed with the greatness of God and the fact God cares about Human Beings.

v. 6-8 - *"You make him to rule over the works of your hands."*

The function of the human being is to rule, to bring good to pass in creation.

Isaiah 63:11-12 - Acting with God in Leadership: God & Moses working together. The cooperative aspect of our work with God is essential. That is the way we were meant to live on the Earth under God. God never set us out to be responsible for the Earth in our own strength.

- Before Adam sinned, he didn't sweat. He wasn't acting in his own strength. Now we sweat to produce bread in our own strength.
- **Mark 4** - Jesus speaks to the fig tree. By speaking, he brings into play the power of God. He acted and spoke with the power of God because he was totally aligned with Kingdom of God. When we work in the Kingdom of God, we work in the Community of God.

Luke 16 - Unjust Steward

[59:45]

Jesus uses real life circumstances to illustrate important points.

Ruling is the vocation and calling of man.

Money & Prayer are the two first steps in Kingdom acting.

- Money is among the smaller things in life, and you use that as you advance the cause of God for good around you.

Hebrews 1 and 2

[1:02:30]

Here Jesus is being put in the right place in relation to the cosmos.

1:2 - *Through whom He made the world* (that's standard teaching, as in Colossians and John 1)

- Jesus is a glorious being, much greater than the angels

2:5 - Quotes Psalm 8 – Makes the connection between the place of human beings and how that relates to Jesus.

2:8 - "*subjecting all things to him*" (human beings, not Jesus) but not all are subject to humans yet.

- "The Babel Imperative" is driving humanity in the direction of having all things under human control.

2:9 - We do see Him (Jesus) made for a little while lower than angels. Jesus comes into the human scene and eventually will pull them up to where everything can be subject to them because they are subject to God.

- God's intention for each of us is that we should grow to the point where He can empower us to do what we want. This is the role for the human being. This is what God made them for, so this whole cosmos will turn out to be something that is subjected to God through them.

Revelation 22:5

[1:07:30]

"They shall see His face. The Lord God shall illumine them and they shall reign forever and ever."

Who is the "they"? The "they" is you!

Matthew 11:11 - *"Anyone in the Kingdom of the Heavens is greater than John the Baptist"*

When you live in the Kingdom of the Heavens as a disciple of Jesus, you are related to something greater than John the Baptist. Keep that in mind when you think about your nature.

[1:10:20]

Here is the truth about you; who you are and why you are here.

You are an unceasing spiritual being with an eternal destiny in God's great universe.

- This the true dignity of the Human Being. This is why they were worth dying for.
- This is why Isaiah 53 says, *"He shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied."*

You are spiritual is substance,
you are never ceasing in duration,
you are ruling or creative in destiny.

Your life as a spiritual being is completed only by living in and from the Kingdom government of the Heavens. That's why Jesus' message is "*Repent, for the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand.*" ("has drawn near.")

That was Jesus' message. Will we preach this or preach something else? Everything else that comes out of our work is going to depend on the message we preach. What we see in the church now is the result of the message that is preached...and it isn't this one. [1:12:50]

- Dare we preach the message that Jesus preached?

"Repent" means think about your thinking. Have a thought about your thoughts in the light of this new fact that the rule of God is now *immediately* available for you to live in. That's what's being presented in the gospels over and over again. People are pushing their way in because they've discovered the presence of the Kingdom in the presence of the King. Jesus was a King.

- You don't have a King without a Kingdom.

[1:14:16]

One of the deep sicknesses of our theology is that we preach a Jesus without a Kingdom.

- That's why a lot of Christians believe in Jesus but don't believe in God. They don't understand who Jesus was, so they don't really have confidence in God.
- All of the gospels are a manifestation of the presence of the kingdom to people who will turn to Jesus.

Remember that to love is to will the good of the beloved. To know what God wills for things enables us to know what is good for them. Love can't be separated from God. If we are going to fulfill our role, we will live with love for all of creation.

- Jonathan Edwards' treatise on "Virtue" is a wonderful treatment of love as the principle of the Kingdom of God and what we are to live in.

When we come to the place where we are possessed by love, then we are ready to rule. If we love God with every dimension of our being, that puts us in position to be a fully functioning human being.

So the partial versions of love that do so much to harm human life, where love is confused with desire, and anger results when desire is not fulfilled,

are done away with. In every part of our being - heart, mind, soul & strength - that is increasingly true of us.

As that personal reality of love, which is God after all, possesses our being, it enables us to live a free and joyous life beyond legalism. We don't aim at doing the right thing, we aim at being the kind of person who would do the right thing.

This is where "Perfect love casts out all fear" takes hold. We are able to live without fear because we know that we are loved by God, and that we love God and through God we love others and that provokes others toward love of us. Generally speaking, they will love those possessed by love. They will come to the place where they can live without fear because they are secure in the love of God and they themselves are loving others.

In contrast... C.S. Lewis, *Abolition of Man*

"If man is made ultimate, causal force will eventually rule and thereby abolish humanity by making everything subject to the thrust of desire, the desires of some few who are able to gain the upper hand by force."

C.S. Lewis had prophetic insight into the meaning of *The Babel Imperative*; that it meant to abolish human beings as free people devoted to good through love and replace them with people under the domination of other people who live only in terms of their own desires.

The Divine Conspiracy, then, is God's aim to defeat this dreadful declension from God's world and God's kingdom by bringing out a world and history-wide community of people who have the character and power of Jesus Christ Himself.

HUMAN NATURE is built for that. The nature we have is built to become like Christ. To live in the Kingdom of God. The process of spiritual growth is the process of doing that.