What Does It Mean to Be Human?

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Socrates believed in a God who spoke to him and guided him.

Is there a human nature? _____!

"Any system of education that ignores the moral and religious nature of the student is fundamentally defective."

- This was the vision and hope of all universities – and it still is. People come to universities because they want to find truth.
- The deepest need is for the understanding of the human self.

"*The unexamined life is not worth living*." ~ Socrates
Coming to understand the self is the most important thing we have to do.

The purpose of human life is to _____ and _____ others, and to be loved and served by them.

- Human beings live in circles of sufficiency
- The one thing that is constant is the calling and the need, to know and to love, and to be known and to be loved.
- The problem is that all human circles of sufficiency are incomplete and broken.
    - They're meant to be completed under God.
    - God in Himself is a sweet society.

The nature of the human being is a nature that makes loving & knowing central to human life.
Love and knowledge lie at the heart of the human being. Love and knowledge go together, and they lead to being a creative will for good.

There Is a Human Nature.

We are in a context where desire, will and freedom want to be unlimited. In order to achieve that end, many people have misunderstood the role of nature and have said, "In order to have that as a goal, it must be that we have no nature."

What Is a Nature? A nature is a group of basic _____ which:

- Determines what is possible for the thing in question.
    - Example: PEN – color is not part of its nature, but rigidity is part of its nature
    - Important to identify the properties that are part of nature and those that are not.
- Determines the excellence and well-being of things of that nature.
    - PEN: that isn't rigid – Its parts and properties do not fit together to determine a whole of its kind.
    - The nature of a thing makes clear what the excellence and well-being of the thing in question, is.

Everything has a nature. Against that we're judged in terms of our _____ or not.

To Have a Human Nature Is:

To have parts with specific properties that constitute the whole person in such a way that its peculiar wholeness provides a standard for what a human being is, and provides norms for how a person is to be treated and what they are to do.

Illustrated by Plato's Republic –

- The parts of a human being are: reason, emotion, appetite
- Each of these has certain properties and because they have those properties, they relate to one another in a certain way.
- You want to be sure that reason is guiding appetite by enlisting emotion on its side otherwise you'll be in total chaos.

Addiction is a case of the tyranny of _____.

Emotions cannot redirect their appetites because their appetites have become so obsessive and so masterful over the whole being that nothing can correct them.

What 'No Human Nature' Does

- There's nothing they cannot do; there's nothing that is not appropriate to do to them.
- Makes desire and human will _____.
- But human desire is not self-limiting.
    - It must be restrained by the capacity to apprehend reality. Experience and reason have to be able to set the limits to desire.
    - Hence the glorification of a life without limits.
- The supremacy of _____ in life now.
    - "If it feels good, do it."
    - It's only because she was in a world where people did <u>not</u> do the things they felt they wanted to do, that it would be safe to wear a pair of pants like that.
- The supremacy of the body.
- The impossibility of satisfaction.
    - Dr. Faustus – you cannot, by desire, find fulfillment. It will always lead you wrong.
- "No nature" is a Renaissance idea.
    - Pico della Mirandola, *Oration On the Dignity of Man*

-->Humans have a nature where great possibilities are present *if he understands that nature!*

Nature Falsely Used

- Human nature has been used _____.
    - What was not nature was ascribed to nature, when it was just historical accident.
- One can correct these appeals only by getting the nature question right.
- That is what is done today by those who often say there's no nature. They're appealing to nature in the process of doing that.

The Disappearance of Moral Knowledge in the Western World

It didn't cease to exist! It has _____. The idea of a nature for a human being has been set aside.

Why Has Moral Knowledge Disappeared?

1) Rumors of Relativity: Moral judgment doesn't apprehend a _____ that's there regardless of what we think.
    a. If there's no human nature there's no reality to apprehend and relativity in terms of feelings takes over.
2) Rumors: Only the sense perceptible is knowable.
    a. The will and human character are not sense perceptible.
3) Rumors: Only the measurable is knowable.
    a. Scientism steps forward: no scientific knowledge of love, hatred, intentions, character.
4) The idea that moral truth suppresses _____ and diversity.
    a. Actually, they would be free to do what they want.
    b. They wouldn't be free to do what they want, *and it be okay*.
5) The idea that everyone should be able to do what they want "as long as nobody gets hurt."
    a. Demise of the emergency healthcare system in Los Angeles County primarily because people do what they want and say, "as long as it doesn't hurt anybody."
    b. This is true of nearly all areas of tremendous expense in public health today; being primarily drained by people doing what they want instead of what they ought to do.
6) Profound changes in the university – *The Making of the Modern University* – Julie Rueben
    a. There is no longer a body of knowledge to be taught about morality in the universities.

Political Correctness Is Then the _____ Correctness

- Having political correctness is not a conspiracy - there isn't any other kind of correctness left!
    - With human nature gone, all that is left is power, will, desire.
- Politics and law rule. Politics rules law.
    - Instead of law being based upon a foundation of moral truth about human life, it has to be based simply on what people _____.
- Desire degrades the person to the body.
    - He becomes a consumer; someone simply striving to satisfy their desires.
- Romans 1: People turned away from the knowledge of God; they were abandoned to their own desires.
    - If you turn away from a value structure that is there in reality -God – the only thing you have left to work on is your body.
    - _____ will be king and that is what has happened in our culture.

VIDEO BREAK…The teaching continues with video part two…

VIDEO PART 2:

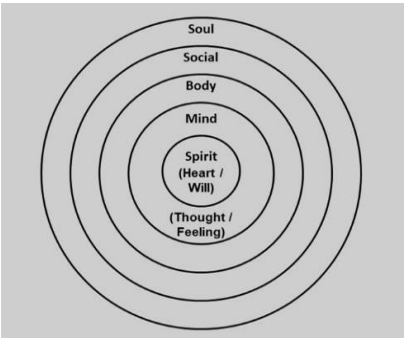
A Christian Reading of Human Nature

"Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 27:37-39 and Luke 10:27

- The call of the human being is to _____ and _____ others and to be loved and be served by them.
- If you understand the worth and dignity of a human being in relationship to God and the whole human community then you have a place to stand both individually and in society.

The Essential Parts of a Human Being: (based on Jesus' teaching in Luke 10:27 /Matthew 27:37-39)

- Will / Heart / Spirit: The capacity to make _____.
  - Humans are creative beings.
  - We want to create good.
  - …to have a will you have to have a mind…
- Mind (_____, _____)
  - You can't make a choice unless you have feelings about that choice and thoughts about how it's to be done.
  - Can't separate thoughts and feelings; both are required to be able to will.
  - Mind and will are essential to human beings.
- Body: Your body is your _____ pack for life.
  - It's a good thing to have a body!
  - It puts the capacity to act in your world; without it you wouldn't have that.
- Social Relations: No one stands alone. We live in a relationship to others.
- Soul: The part of the person that puts all of the other parts together (if it's not broken) and makes one life.



God comes to us through our mind. We respond to him with our spirit. He begins to pull us back toward wholeness.

The Order Proper to Human Beings

- Will subordinated to God.
  - I'm not _____ my world; God is _____ my world.
  - He's running the world anyway and I just come to terms with it, and I accept that.
  - The larger framework of things, in which he has placed goodness, I serve…gladly.
  - I don't try to be God.
- Mind subordinated to spirit (will) under God.
  - _____ comes into my mind.
  - I see things rightly and act in terms of them; my feelings are coherent with my thinking.
  - This is a process.
  - I'm freed. … I don't have to think those thoughts anymore.
  - I am now alive in God's kingdom, and I know that I'm taken care of!
- Soul to mind under God
- Body to soul under God.
- Social relationships then harmonize with the body under God.

This is a picture of human nature functioning _____.

- Out of this comes the norms that can guide us practically.
- Moral conduct is about knowing and loving.
- If you're running your world, you're going to need all the help you can get it!

***********We're Living a Spiritual Life FROM God*

(This set of bullet points is copied directly from Dr. Willard's corresponding slide presentation, although he doesn't speak to it verbatim in the talk.)

- *Life is self-initiating, self-sustaining, self-directing activity.*
- *Spiritual life is such activity enlivened by connection with God.*
- *"Eternal life" is interactive relationship with God who is spiritual substance.*
- *With this influx of God's life, we can begin to pull the wreck of the human-self back to its proper order.*

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'Great Commandment' Fulfilled in Real Life

- We can become whole persons—parts in proper order and function—by living a life of worship and service to God and others in a power beyond ourselves.
- The Great Commandment is basic _____ of how to live _____ and be a good person.
- What realistic alternatives are there?

Not Will Alone It can't be done just by human strength. It has to be touched by the grace of God as the life of God moves inward and gives us inward transformation.

The Place of Spiritual Disciplines

- Something you do, to enable yourself to do something you can't do by direct effort.
- The secret of spiritual discipline is _____.
- It doesn't try to correct behavior; *it changes the inner person.*
- We don't want to become people who do the right thing. We want to become the kind of person who does the right thing routinely and easily.

The aim is to become in all dimensions of the self, the kind of person who _____ and _____ does what is good and what is right. It is the person who does easily the thing that is right who has had the inward transformation that makes life whole.

Moral Life Must be Based on Knowledge

- The human self is meant to act in terms of what it believes.
- We will have beliefs about what is real. The task is to ensure they are real beliefs.
- The secular mind drove the spirit out of any reality it was willing to accept.
- Since the moral life is a matter of spirit (will and character), it was inevitable that moral knowledge would disappear from our culture.
- Nietzsche understood if you take the Christian foundations out from a culture, it will collapse.

Revelation as a Source of Knowledge

- **The _____ is the best information on the most important topics of human life.**
- No other body of information comes close to the adequacy achieved through the Biblical tradition.
- It is set up in such a way that if you're looking for what is wrong, you'll find it.
- This is the most vital knowledge on the most important topics.

The Treasure of Moral Knowledge - The Way of Christ contains <u>the</u> body of moral knowledge for which the world is dying.

- Knowledge: The ability to represent things as they are on an appropriate basis of thought and experience.
- (Chapter 13; *Renovation of the Heart*)
- Must be the **guiding _____** of humanity, including education and all of culture.
- We have to stand up in such a way, and lead our lives, **so that people will realize that there is something better in life than they had ever dreamed.**

"Ethics is certainly the study of ***how life may be full and rich****, not as often imagined how it may be restrained and meager. Those words of Jesus, announcing that* ***He had come in order that men might have life and have it abundantly, are the clearest statement of the purposes of both morality and religion,*** *of righteousness on Earth and in Heaven."* George Palmer, Harvard Professor, 1899