

Session 10

THE SEX OF HUMANITY: COMPLEMENTARIANISM

Created equal and different

What is Complementarianism?

Complementarianism: The Bible teaches that men and women are of equal worth, dignity, and responsibility before God (ontological equality). The Bible also teaches that men and women have different roles to play in society, the family, and the church. These roles do not compete but complement each other.

Adherents: Wayne Grudem, John Piper, Douglas Moo, Charles Swindoll, John MacArthur

Defense of Complementarianism:

1. The Bible illustrates male leadership from the beginning of creation.

- Adam named the animals (Genesis 2:20).
- Adam named Eve (Genesis 2:23).
- God approached Adam first after the fall (Genesis 2:9).
- There were no women priests.
- The God-ordained rulers of Israel were male.
- Jesus' apostles were all male.
- The bishops/presbyters/pastors were all male (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6).

2. Eve was created as a completer. In order for one to be incomplete, he or she must lack something. Adam lacked something that caused God to say, “It is not good for man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). Eve was created to complete that which was lacking. It is important to realize that she was not simply a second attempt at perfection. Eve was created with essential characteristics that Adam did not have. Likewise, Adam was created with characteristics that Eve did not have. They were created to complement each other. Therefore, the role distinction is essential for humanity to be complete.

3. Paul constantly had to address women who were failing to understand the importance of their role as women or who were in outright rebellion against it. These women were blurring the God-ordained roles and attempting to usurp the role of man. This rebellion is part of the curse.

Genesis 3:16

“To the woman He said, ‘I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; yet you will want to control you husband, and he will rule over you.’”

1 Timothy 2:12-15

“But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.”

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

“The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.”

1 Corinthians 11:3

“But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.”

Colossians 3:18

“Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”

Titus 2:5

“[Women are] to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.”

4. The New Testament writers constantly had to address men who abused their role as leaders. This is part of the curse. The instruction to men, however, is not to stop leading, but to lead in a way that is sensitive, encouraging, and loving.

Genesis 3:16

“To the woman He said, ‘I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.’”

Ephesians 5:25a, 28, 33a

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her. . . . So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself. . . . Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself . . .”

1 Peter 3:7

“You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”

Colossians 3:19

“Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.”

5. Most of church history has adhered to a complementarian view.

Response to Complementarianism:

1. These illustrations of male leadership were descriptive, not prescriptive. In other words, male leadership, like slavery, was a cultural phenomenon that God chose not to overthrow at the time.
2. While it is agreed that the woman was created to complete humanity (not man), this does not necessitate that God intended a functional hierarchy. Male leadership, rulership, domination, whatever name it goes by, was a product of the Fall, not creation.
3. Paul was writing to cultural situations that do not demand universal application. For example, when Paul wrote to Timothy in Ephesus, there were women who were formerly cult prostitutes and uneducated (typically only receiving secondhand instruction from their husbands) who were attempting to “fill the pulpit.” He uses Eve to illustrate how destructive secondhand information can be. He does not use the events in the Garden as a universal principle. Paul’s command here, is then purely cultural.
4. These passages in the New Testament do not regulate how husbands are to rule, but do instruct on how they are to relate. They are to love their wives and not rule over them.
5. It is a sad fact that the history of the Church is littered with abusive relationships coming from man’s sinful tendency to dominate. Christians abused the Jews, they justified slavery, and they forced people to convert during the Inquisitions. Any appeal to history carries little weight in these areas and might even work against the complementarian view.

"Of two-hundred and fifty cultures studies, males dominate in almost all. Males are almost always the rule makers, hunters, builders, fashioners of weapons, workers in metal, wood, or stone. Women are mostly care givers and most involved in child rearing. . . . The fact that these universals transcend divergent animal groups and cultures suggests that there must be predeterminants of gender-related behavior."

-Gregg Johnson

Wayne Grudem and John Piper ed. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 281

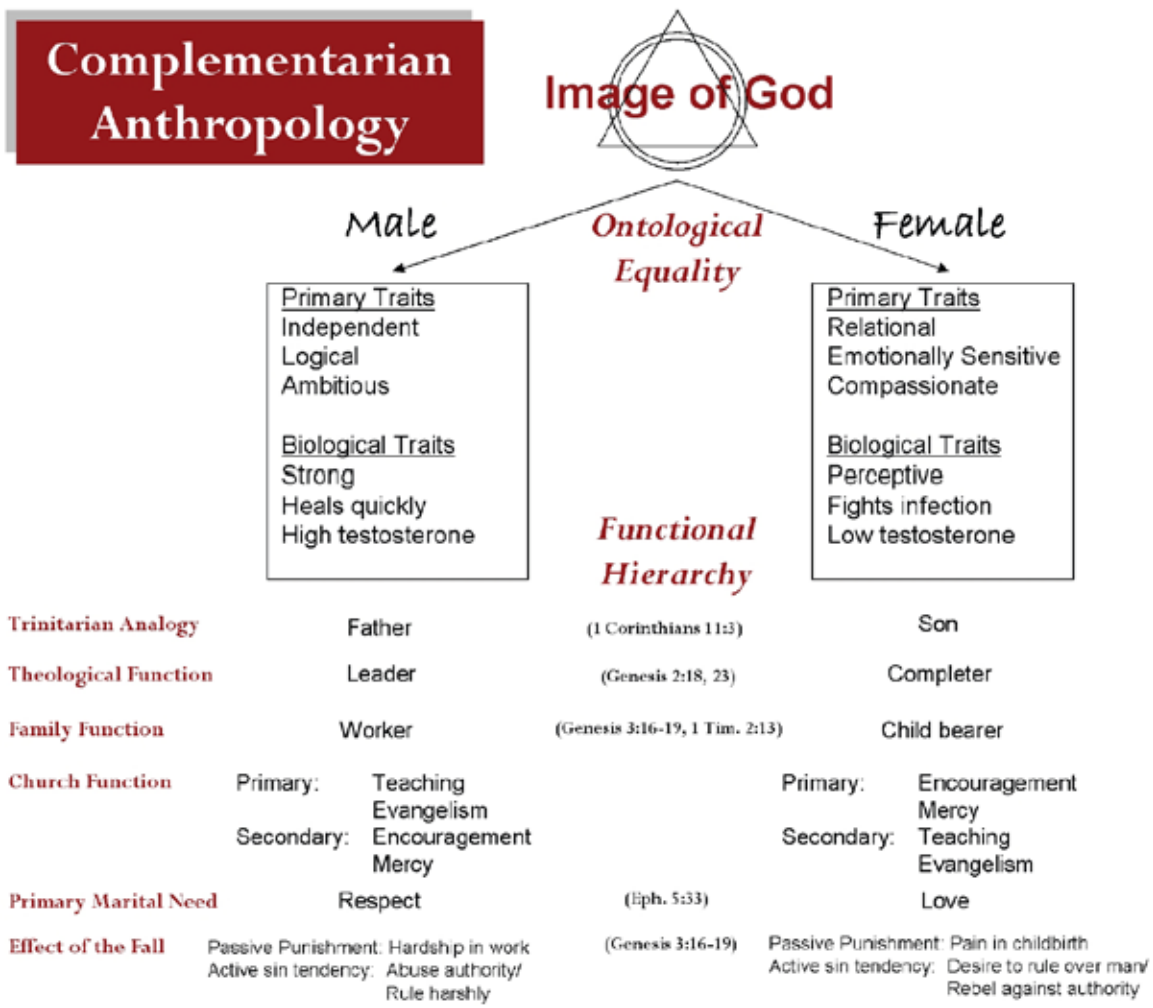
Biological Differences Between the Sexes

Women:

- Store more fat and retain more heat.
- Have more white blood cells and B and T lymphocytes (can fight off infection faster).
- Are more perceptive due to a more responsive sensory system: finer body hair, more acute sense of hearing, taste, touch, and smell.
- Can discriminate color better (particularly on the red end of the spectrum).
- Have less testosterone (are more patient, stay in immediate family longer).
- A baby's cry triggers involuntary responses.
- Produce more cortisol during prolonged stressful situations. (Cortisol reduces the serotonin which can lead to depression.)

Men:

- Have ten percent higher metabolic rate.
- Have fifty percent more muscle mass.
- Have more sweat glands to dissipate heat faster.
- Have ten percent more red blood cells (wounds heal faster).
- Have fifteen times higher testosterone after puberty (more aggressive, sexually active, enjoy competitive sports, leave immediate family earlier, and are prone to argue).
- Produce more testosterone during prolonged stressful times giving more endurance, but are more apt to have hypertension.



"God has given each sex special gifts to carry out its task. This is not to argue that these gifts should only find expression in child rearing in the case of women or providing and protecting in the case of men. Yet it is out of this God-given design that these gifts arose and flourished. While today's technology may have reduced the need for such rigid division of labor, the gender gifts and aptitudes remain. . . . Our culture has changed, and the demands for traditional roles may have varied, yet our basic, God-given physiological differences have not. We excel at different gifts, and all the gifts are needed. Let us hope that, by recognizing the existence of gender differences, we can better understand each other and help to maximize each other's potentials. Likewise, by accepting our God-given gifts, we can resist cultural pressures to become what we are not and seek to master gifts we don't possess."

-Gregg Johnson

Wayne Grudem and John Piper ed. *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 293

"People all around us are confused about who they are. Often in our attempt to honor God, we fail to realize the unique role God has given us in his kingdom. In this confusion, we vacillate between self-degradation and self-importance. Scripture, however, provides a balanced portrait of human beings. We are images of clay, but designed to represent the authority of the King of the universe. In this balanced perspective, we live with humility and dignity as images of God."

-Richard Pratt

Richard Pratt, *Designed for Dignity* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1993), 21

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you believe is the most compelling argument for the complementarian position?

2. Review this argument for complementarianism: “Eve was created as a completer. In order for one to be incomplete, he or she must lack something. Adam lacked something that caused God to say, “It is not good for man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). Eve was created to complete that which was lacking. It is important to realize that she was not simply a second attempt at perfection. Eve was created with essential characteristics that Adam did not have. Likewise, Adam was created with characteristics that Eve did not have. They were created to complement each other. Therefore, the role distinction is essential for humanity to be complete.” What are your thoughts?

3. Having now heard the arguments for both positions, which do you find most compelling?

4. Complementarians believe that their position is evidenced more prominently in Scripture and gives greater honor to women by recognizing their significance. Do you agree? Why or why not?

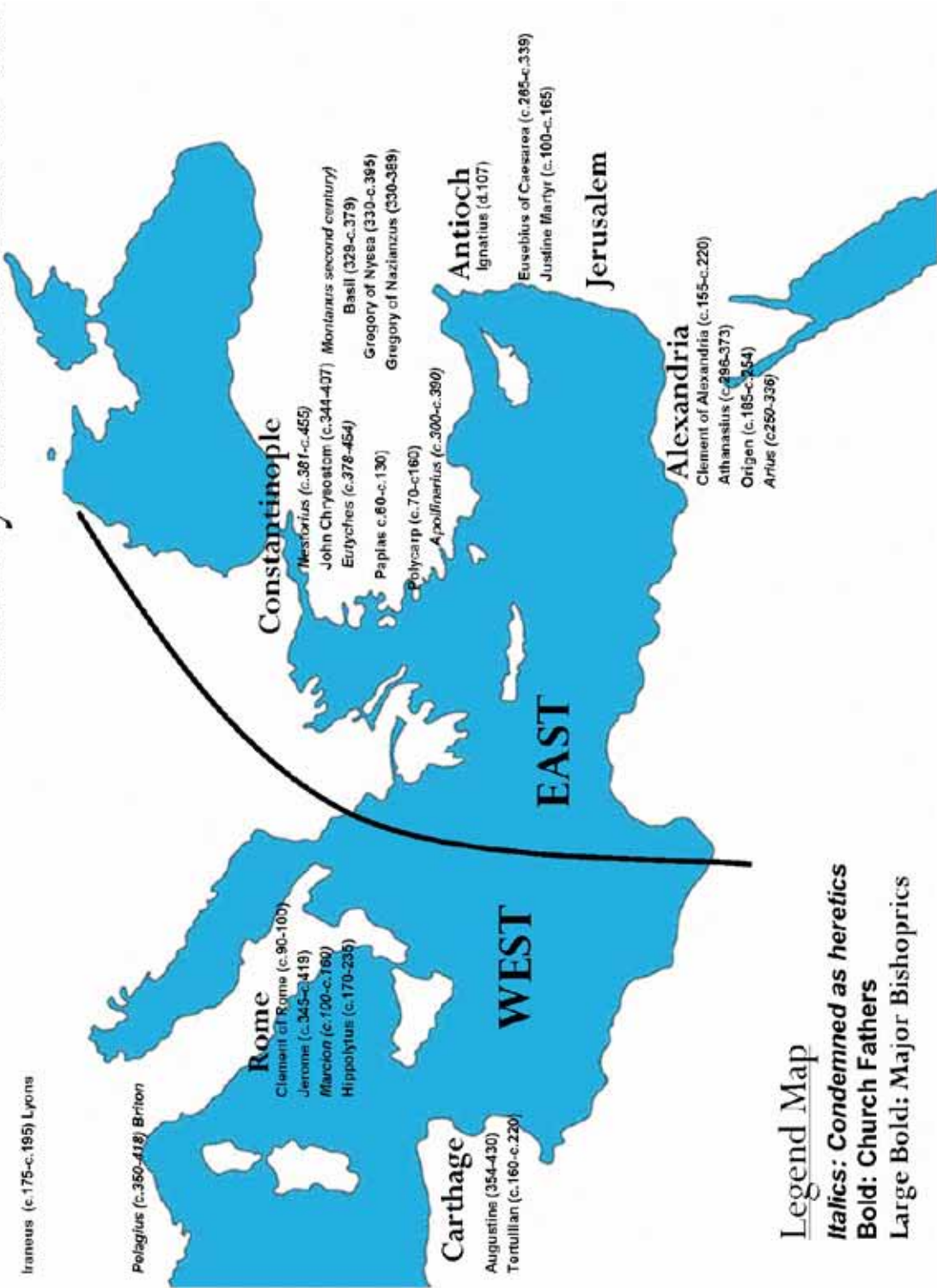
5. If men were to value the role of women as nurturers more, do you think that there would be a women's liberation movement like we see today? Please explain.

6. Men: How can you start honoring women more?

7. Women: How can you find more dignity in your role?

8. How was your thinking most challenged by the lesson? Please explain.

The Early Church Fathers 90-500



APPENDIX 1:

THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN

Are we really condemned for another man's sin?

The concept of “Original Sin” has long been a vital part of Christian Orthodoxy. Perhaps John Calvin defines Original Sin most concisely as “The depravation of a nature formerly good and pure.”¹ More specifically, it refers to the fall of humanity from its original state of innocence and purity to a state of guilt, depravation, and corruption. It is the cause of man's translation from a state of unbroken communion before God to one of spiritual death. The how and when of this transmission of corruption is more difficult to define. In fact, the term “Original Sin” is not found in Scripture; Saint Augustine coined it in the 4th century.² The primary passage used to defend the doctrine of Original Sin is Romans 5:12-21.

12“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—13for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. 15But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.16The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. 17For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. 18So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. 19For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. 20The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21so

¹ John Calvin, *Institutes*, book 2, 1:5 (Logos Electronic Database).

² Packer, J. I., *Concise Theology*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1993) Logos.

that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (NAS).

Most specifically, Romans 5:12 gives us the most explicit reference to this concept: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.” The “one man” is Adam. The “all men” is all of Adam’s posterity—the entire human race.

J.I. Packer clears up a possible misconception and further defines Original Sin:¹

The assertion of original sin means not that sin belongs to human nature as God made it (God made mankind upright, Ecclesiastes 7:29), nor that sin is involved in the processes of reproduction and birth (the uncleanness connected with menstruation, semen, and childbirth in Leviticus 12 and 15 was typical and ceremonial only, not moral and real), but that . . . sinfulness marks everyone from birth . . . it derives to us in a real . . . mysterious way from Adam, our first representative before God.³

This concept is not only hard to understand, but it is also quite disturbing. To state that we are condemned for the sin of another is not only offensive and unfair, but in the mind of most it is also ludicrous. It is because of this that Pascal wrote the following:

Without doubt, nothing is more shocking to our reason than to say that the sin of the first man has² implicated in its guilt men so far from the original sin that they seem incapable of sharing it. This flow of guilt does not seem merely impossible to us, but indeed most unjust. What could be more contrary to the rules of our miserable justice than the eternal damnation of a child, incapable of will, for an act in which he seems to have so little part that it was actually committed 6,000 years before he existed? Certainly nothing jolts us more rudely than this doctrine . . .⁴

It certainly does seem unfair for us to be blamed for the sin of another. My little niece used to commit various misdemeanors such as messing up the living

³ Ibid.

⁴ Blaise Pascal, *Pensees*, Trans A.J. Krailsheimer (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966), 65.

room. She would find solace in her younger brother, who was not yet able to speak and defend himself. She would blame him for the mess that she had made, which, of course, was not right. Unfortunately, she got away with it many times before her parents caught on. Her brother was therefore punished for crimes he did not commit. Is it the same with Adam and humanity? Are we being punished for a sin that we had nothing to do with?

Death, Paul says, is passed down to us from Adam. But there is more to it than that. As Pyne puts it, “We have no problem affirming that all people die, but what did Paul mean when he linked death to sin?”⁵ Furthermore, physical death is not the only consequence of Adam’s sin that we inherit. Romans 5:18 states that the transgression of Adam resulted in our condemnation. So then, we are not only destined to die because of Adam’s sin, but we are also condemned to eternal death.⁶

Was the sin of Adam transferred to us? If so, how? Are we condemned for the sin of another? Are Pascal’s concerns valid? If not, why does Paul say in Romans that, “Through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men” (Romans 5:18)? Let’s boil these down to the following two key¹ related questions: Did you or I have anything to do with Adam’s sin being so far removed from it? What does Paul mean when he said “all sinned”?⁷

Here we will attempt to answer these questions. First, we will look at how the Church through the centuries has dealt with this problem. Second, we will take a closer look at the passage in question and attempt to narrow our interpretive options. Finally, we will make a synthesis by taking into account the possible interpretations along with the theological implications of each.

⁵ Robert Pyne, *Humanity and Sin*, (Nashville, TN: Word, 1999), 164.

⁶ That condemnation and death are not the same is evident from Paul’s usage in this passage.

⁷ John Murray, *WTJ*, vol. 18, 150

History of Original Sin¹

Pelagianism

The doctrine of Original Sin was not adequately dealt with among the early Church Fathers. The first time substantial discussion arose was at the time of Augustine (354-430). Augustine held that man is unable to do any good because man is inherently depraved. Augustine believed that all men are born with a predisposition to sin. This is what led him to his strong promotion of the necessity of predestination. “Give what thou command,” said Augustine, “and command what thou wilt.” At this time, believing Augustine’s position to be unfair and extreme, a British monk named Pelagius (c. 354- after 418) denied that Original Sin was passed on from Adam to the human race. As to his interpretation of Romans 5:12, Pelagius believed that, “As Adam sinned and therefore died so in a like manner all men die because they sin.”² According to Pelagius, we inherit Adam’s sin neither by imputation of guilt nor by nature. The only effect that Adam had on the human race is the example he set. In the view of Pelagius, all men are born neutral in a like manner to Adam with no predisposition to evil. Pelagius was eventually condemned by two African councils in 416 and by the council of Ephesus in 431. In spite of his condemnation, the Pelagian doctrine of sin is still prominent in the Church today.

Arminians

Jacob Arminius believed that all men are considered guilty only when they partake in sin by their own free will in the same manner as Adam did. As Enns put it, “When people would voluntarily and purposefully choose to sin even though they had power to live righteously—then, and only then, would God impute sin to them

¹ Although many theories will be examined here, their separation does not imply complete and total distinction. It is understood that many of the following proposed explanations of Romans 5:12 are agglomerated and combined by many theologians to form various theories.

² Murray, 151

and count them guilty.”¹ Therefore, the sinful state is transmitted by natural generation, while the condemnation for the actual sin is only transmitted by partaking of sin in a like manner.

Augustinianism

Many theologians² have proposed a theory called Augustinianism (also called “realism,” or “seminalism”). This theory has traditionally been linked with Augustine and has most recently been staunchly defended by Shedd. According to an Augustinian interpretation of Romans 5:12, “all sinned” in that all humanity was physically present in Adam when he sinned.³ “[Those who hold to the Augustinian view of Original Sin] insist that we can be held accountable only for what we have actually done.⁴ As Shedd puts it, “The first sin of Adam, being a common, not an individual sin, is deservedly and justly imputed to the posterity of Adam upon the same principle which all sin is deservedly and justly imputed: namely, that it was committed by those to whom it is imputed.”⁵ This view is attractive in that it takes literally Paul’s statement that “all sinned.”

Federalism

The federal view of humanity’s relationship to Adam proposes that Adam was selected by God to be humanity’s federal representative. This view was first proposed by Cocceius (1603-1669) and is the standard belief of Reformed theology. As Achan’s family was held responsible for his sin (Joshua 7:16-26), so it⁶

¹Enns, Paul, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1996), 312.

² L. Chafer, Shedd, Calvin, Luther, Augustine.

³ Support for this theory given from Heb 7:9-10 where Levi is said to pay tithes to Melchizedek although Levi was still not born: “And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.”

⁴ Pyne, 166.

⁵ Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology Vol. 2* (Minneapolis, MN: Klock and Klock, 1979), 186.

⁶ Enns, 312.

is with Adam's family. By this view, the "all sinned" of Romans 5:12 would not be taken literally. As Ryrie puts it, "No one but Adam actually committed that first sin, but since Adam represented all people, God viewed all as involved and thus condemned."¹ The reason that Adam's sin is imputed to his posterity according to the federalist is because God imputes the guilt of Adam, whom He chose to represent mankind, to mankind.

Interpretation of Romans 5:12-21

The way in which one interprets this passage will determine which of the above options he or she adopts. The context of the passage has Paul explaining the believer's position in Christ by comparing it to our former position in Adam. The subject of the section is not the transgression, but the free gift (v. 15). Paul uses the analogy of Adam's sin and compares it to the free gift of Christ's righteousness.

The meaning of the phrase, "because all sinned"² (NAS) is the primary subject of debate. Read it once more. What is the meaning of "all sinned"? It cannot be that all people sin as an act of their own choice (contra Pelagius) or because of their inherited nature (contra the Arminian interpretation). Why? It is because of the force of the verb tense. If the Pelagian or Arminian interpretation were correct, the present tense would have been a much better choice for Paul. Then it would naturally read, "Because all sin." Then we could answer the question "Why are all people condemned?" with "Because all people sin." But this is not the case here in Romans. It clearly states that "all sinned" (past tense; Greek historic aorist tense). Therefore, we are connected with the past sin of Adam. As Morris has it, "The aorist

¹Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1982), 224.

² That *evfV w* - should be interpreted with the causal is seen in its idiomatic usage elsewhere in the NT: 2 Corinthians 5:4 "For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because (*evfV w*) we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed . . ." See also Douglas Moo, *NICNT The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 322; and Wallace, *GGBB* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 342-343.

[tense] points to one act, the act of Adam; we would expect the present or the imperfect [tense] if the Apostle were thinking of the continuing sins of all people.”¹

Verse 12 begins the comparison of Adam with Christ. Paul then feels inclined to break off on one of his all-too-common parenthetical statements in verses 13-14 to defend his statement “because all sinned.” This is important because Paul’s understanding of what “all sinned” means is wrapped up in his defense which follows. Verse 13 begins with the conjunction “for” (gar). This links it with the previous statement, “because all sinned.” It is as if someone got the impression that Paul was stating that all people sin, and therefore all people die as a consequence of their own sin. At this point (v. 13), Paul says that before the Law, there was sin. But people did not die on account of these personal sins, because they were not imputed as sin (“but sin is not imputed when there is no law” v. 13). Then the objection may be “How do you explain that all people still died before the law?” Paul is stating that the reason people died before they commit an act of sin is because they are suffering the consequences of a sin already committed. They died not for personal sin, but for imputed sin. This sin was the sin of Adam. All people die because of the one sin of Adam.

Paul returns to his comparison to expound further. This comparison is between two things:

1. The effects of Adam’s sin
2. The effects of Christ’s righteousness

Whatever one does with Christ’s righteousness, one must do to Adam’s sin.² First let us draw out the comparison so that it might be better seen.

¹ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 231-232.

² This of course must be limited to means or manner, not to the number of participants involved. Adam’s sin was given to all mankind, while Christ’s righteousness is limited to those who believe in Christ.

Through Adam's Sin	Through Christ's Righteousness
Judgment (16)	Free gift (16)
Condemnation (16)	Justification (16)
Death Reigned (17)	Life Reigned (17)
One Transgression=Condemnation of all (18)	One Act of Righteousness=Justification of all (18)
Adam's disobedience=many were made sinners (19)	Christ's obedience=many were made righteous (19)

The comparison is unmistakable. Whatever we do to inherit the free gift is the same thing we did to inherit judgment (v. 16). This is the force of the “just as” (hosper) in v. 12. Whatever we do to receive justification is the same thing we did to receive condemnation (v. 16). The effects of the “one act of righteousness” are brought about by the same means as the “condemnation of all men” (v. 18). The way in which believers are made righteous is analogous to the way all mankind was made sinners (v. 19). In order to answer the question as to how it is that “all sinned” and all were condemned in Adam, we must answer the question as to how Christ’s righteousness is applied to us to the end that we are justified by that righteousness.¹

If we were to adopt the view as held by Pelagius, that Adam’s sin has no effect upon us whatsoever and that only his example has given us trouble, this means that Christ’s righteousness has no effect upon us either. He simply came to set the example. But this is not what the text teaches. It states that the many were made sinners and that the many were made righteous. The effect of these two men’s acts goes far beyond that of an example.

If we were to state, as the Arminians do, that we have Adam’s sin imputed to us only when we act in the same manner as Adam did, then we must state that we

¹ See Murray, vol. 19, 36

have Christ's righteousness imputed to us only when we act as Christ acted. This cannot be true seeing as how we inherit Christ's righteousness while we are sinners (Rom 5:8, 10).

If one were to opt for a purely Augustinian interpretation of the passage in that we all actually and realistically sinned in Adam, then we would also have to concede that we all actually and realistically were righteous in Christ. This, of course, will not do for the analogy would be rendered meaningless and would contradict Paul's doctrine of justification by faith alone (Rom 3:28; Eph 2:8-9).

Paul is attempting to explain our relationship to Christ's righteousness by comparing it to the imputation of Adam's sin to us. This relationship is best seen in the federal headship view of imputation. As Moo puts it, "Throughout this whole passage what Adam did and what Christ did are steadily held over against each other. Now salvation in Christ does not mean that we merit salvation by living good lives; rather, what Christ has done is significant. Just so, death in Adam does not mean that we are being punished for our own evil deeds; it is what Adam has done that is significant."¹

Adam, as our chosen federal head, has represented us and passed on sin and all of its consequences. Christ, as the second Adam, represents those who believe and passes on righteousness along with all its benefits. Christ's righteousness is given to us without any participation of our own, just as Adam's sin is given to us without our consent.

Synthesis

At this point it is important to ask the same questions that troubled us at beginning. As Pascal put it, the flow of guilt seems unjust. Seeing as how the most difficult interpretation of this section has been adopted and defended, how does one dodge the stumbling block that this interpretation proposes? How do we avoid the

¹ Douglas Moo, *NICNT The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 232.

unfair conclusion that we are held guilty for the sin of another? Or do we just bite our tongue, hold our nose, and swallow it? Certainly, no one would complain about the fairness of the imputation of Christ righteousness, but the idea that condemnation is first imputed to all people with no distinction is difficult to grasp.

I would like to propose a possible explanation using St. Thomas Aquinas' hierarchy of angels. Aquinas developed a system of angels in which every angel is created of a distinct nature. According to Aquinas, there is no distinct species named "angels." What we refer to collectively as angels are actually all individually distinct creations of God with no spiritual or physical relation to one another. This is why Aquinas believed that there is no redemption for angels (Heb 2:16). If Christ were to redeem the angels, he would have to identify with the angels in all ways. Seeing as how each angel is a distinct species, he could not become one single species called "angels" in order to redeem the entire group, but he would have to become each individual angel and die for them one at a time.

Whether or not Aquinas' proposal about angels has any truth to it makes little difference for our present discussion. What is important is that Christ could become the species "man." Since man's being is linked with that of Adam in both physicality and spirituality, Christ could represent mankind all at once. Because we are vitally linked to the first Adam, we can be vitally linked to the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

At this point some may say that it is unfair because the proportions are different in those related to Adam and those related to Christ. While all men are related to the condemnation of Adam, not all men are related to the justification in Christ.

While this may be true, it might still be understood as a gracious act of God that we were all linked together with the first Adam. I propose that it was not a necessary act of God to link us with the first Adam. Nor do I believe that it was the natural outcome for Adam's posterity to be linked with him in death, sin, or

condemnation. God, in theory, could have let each individual person have the same chance in the Garden, as he did with Adam. He could have caused each person to be born without any connection to Adam. Each would have been an individual creation who, if and when they sinned, would not be connected to anyone before or after. In this manner, the fall would come on an individual basis. Each person would be linked to only one person—himself or herself. Each person's condemnation would be his or her own. There would be no linkage to the rest of humanity. Each person would be spiritually and physically autonomous. This being the case, Christ could not represent "mankind," because there would be no solidarity to make this representation functional. We would be like the angels of Aquinas' hierarchy—without a Redeemer.

God, in his grace, knowing that when given the chance, each individual would follow Adam in his sin, declared all people guilty of Adam's, sin thereby creating a solidarity which was redeemable by a representative. Christ could only redeem mankind all at once, because mankind fell in Adam all at once. Therefore, God caused all men to sin in and with ¹ Adam by an act of grace, knowing that all would choose the same as Adam. The "all sinned" in Romans 5:12 is as if Adam was in the Garden and held up the piece of fruit to a crowd which consisted of all mankind and shouted, "Should I eat it?" and the entire crowd shouted back, "Go for it!" In this, "all sinned."² God, then, in his grace, declared all guilty. The link was graciously made initially in Adam so that it might be made the second time in Christ.

¹ Terminology adopted from Moo, 326.

² It is understood that much of what has been proposed is speculative. It rests on the assumption that all men would have made the same choice as Adam, and that Christ would not have redeemed man any other way than through a representative fashion. Therefore, a disclaimer is made for the synthesis section of the paper, but no apology is necessary for the prior exegesis which created the stumbling block.

	Pelagius	Arminian	Augustinianism (Seminal/Realistic)	Federalism (Traditional Protestantism)
Meaning of “all sinned”	All sin in the same manner as Adam and therefore die.	All sin when they agree with Adam and sin thereby inheriting his guilt.	When Adam sinned, we sinned in him.	When Adam sinned, we sinned in and with him.
Mediate/ Immediate	Neither, no transferal of sin	Nature=Immediate Guilt=Mediate	Immediate	Immediate
Strengths	All people are responsible for only their own actions	We only inherit guilt by agreement	Recognizes the force of the passage. Heb 7:9-10 supports the idea.	Recognizes the force of the passage. Context and analogy supports this view.
Weaknesses	Does not recognize the force of the historic aorist nor the passage's emphasis on the one sin of Adam	Does not recognize the force of the historic aorist. Undue separation of guilt and nature.	The analogy of Christ and Adam does not support this view. If we actually sinned in Adam, we must have actually been righteous in Christ.	Difficult to see the justice in being punished for a sin that was not personally committed.

Appendix 2:

The Council of Orange

(529 AD)

Introduction:

The Council of Orange was an outgrowth of the controversy between Augustine and Pelagius. This controversy had to do with degree to which a human being is responsible for his or her own salvation, and the role of the grace of God in bringing about salvation. The Pelagians held that human beings are born in a state of innocence, i.e., that there is no such thing as a sinful nature or original sin.

As a result of this view, they held that a state of sinless perfection was achievable in this life. The Council of Orange dealt with the Semi-Pelagian doctrine that the human race, though fallen and possessed of a sinful nature, is still "good" enough to be able to lay hold of the grace of God through an act of unredeemed human will. The Council held to Augustine's view and repudiated Pelagius. The following canons greatly influenced the Reformed doctrine of Total Depravity.¹

CANON 1. If anyone denies that it is the whole man, that is, both body and soul, that was "changed for the worse" through the offense of Adam's sin, but believes that the freedom of the soul remains unimpaired and that only the body is subject to corruption, he is deceived by the error of Pelagius and contradicts the scripture which says, "The soul that sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:20); and, "Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are the slaves of the one whom you obey?" (Rom. 6:16); and, "For whatever overcomes a man, to that he is enslaved" (2 Pet. 2:19).

CANON 2. If anyone asserts that Adam's sin affected him alone and not his descendants also, or at least if he declares that it is only the death of the body which is the punishment for sin, and not also that sin, which is the death of the soul, passed through one man to the whole human race, he does injustice to God and contradicts the Apostle, who says, "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

¹ Taken from: http://www.reformed.org/documents/canons_of_orange.html

CANON 3. If anyone says that the grace of God can be conferred as a result of human prayer, but that it is not grace itself which makes us pray to God, he found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me" (Rom 10:20, quoting Isa. 65:1).

CANON 4. If anyone maintains that God awaits our will to be cleansed from sin, but does not confess that even our will to be cleansed comes to us through the infusion and working of the Holy Spirit, he resists the Holy Spirit himself who says through Solomon, "The will is prepared by the Lord" (Prov. 8:35, LXX), and the salutary word of the Apostle, "For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

CANON 5. If anyone says that not only the increase of faith but also its beginning and the very desire for faith, by which we believe in Him who justifies the ungodly and comes to the regeneration of holy baptism -- if anyone says that this belongs to us by nature and not by a gift of grace, that is, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit amending our will and turning it from unbelief to faith and from godlessness to godliness, it is proof that he is opposed to the teaching of the Apostles, for blessed Paul says, "And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). And again, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). For those who state that the faith by which we believe in God is natural make all who are separated from the Church of Christ by definition in some measure believers.

CANON 6. If anyone says that God has mercy upon us when, apart from his grace, we believe, will, desire, strive, labor, pray, watch, study, seek, ask, or knock, but does not confess that it is by the infusion and inspiration of the Holy Spirit within us that we have the faith, the will, or the strength to do all these things as we ought; or if anyone makes the assistance of grace depend on the humility or obedience of man and does not agree that it is a gift of grace itself that we are obedient and humble, he contradicts the Apostle who says, "What have you that you did not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7), and, "But by the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10).

CANON 7. If anyone affirms that we can form any right opinion or make any right choice which relates to the salvation of eternal life, as is expedient for us, or that we can be saved, that is, assent to the preaching of the gospel through our natural powers without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who makes all men gladly assent to and believe in the truth, he is led astray by a heretical spirit, and

does not understand the voice of God who says in the Gospel, "For apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5), and the word of the Apostle, "Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God" (2 Cor. 3:5).

CANON 8. If anyone maintains that some are able to come to the grace of baptism by mercy but others through free will, which has manifestly been corrupted in all those who have been born after the transgression of the first man, it is proof that he has no place in the true faith. For he denies that the free will of all men has been weakened through the sin of the first man, or at least holds that it has been affected in such a way that they have still the ability to seek the mystery of eternal salvation by themselves without the revelation of God. The Lord himself shows how contradictory this is by declaring that no one is able to come to him "unless the Father who sent me draws him" (John 6:44), as he also says to Peter, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17), and as the Apostle says, "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3).

CANON 9. Concerning the succor of God. It is a mark of divine favor when we are of a right purpose and keep our feet from hypocrisy and unrighteousness; for as often as we do good, God is at work in us and with us, in order that we may do so.

CANON 10. Concerning the succor of God. The succor of God is to be ever sought by the regenerate and converted also, so that they may be able to come to a successful end or persevere in good works.

CANON 11. Concerning the duty to pray. None would make any true prayer to the Lord had he not received from him the object of his prayer, as it is written, "Of thy own have we given thee" (1 Chron. 29:14).

CANON 12. Of what sort we are whom God loves. God loves us for what we shall be by his gift, and not by our own deserving.

CANON 13. Concerning the restoration of free will. The freedom of will that was destroyed in the first man can be restored only by the grace of baptism, for what is lost can be returned only by the one who was able to give it. Hence the Truth itself declares: "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36).

CANON 14. No mean wretch is freed from his sorrowful state, however great it may be, save the one who is anticipated by the mercy of God, as the Psalmist says, "Let thy compassion come speedily to meet us" (Ps. 79:8), and again, "My God in his steadfast love will meet me" (Ps. 59:10).

CANON 15. Adam was changed, but for the worse, through his own iniquity from what God made him. Through the grace of God the believer is changed, but for the better, from what his iniquity has done for him. The one, therefore, was the change brought about by the first sinner; the other, according to the Psalmist, is the change of the right hand of the Most High (Ps. 77:10).

CANON 16. No man shall be honored by his seeming attainment, as though it were not a gift, or suppose that he has received it because a missive from without stated it in writing or in speech. For the Apostle speaks thus, "For if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose" (Gal. 2:21); and "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:8, quoting Ps. 68:18). It is from this source that any man has what he does; but whoever denies that he has it from this source either does not truly have it, or else "even what he has will be taken away" (Matt. 25:29).

CANON 17. Concerning Christian courage. The courage of the Gentiles is produced by simple greed, but the courage of Christians by the love of God which "has been poured into our hearts" not by freedom of will from our own side but "through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5).

CANON 18. That grace is not preceded by merit. Recompense is due to good works if they are performed; but grace, to which we have no claim, precedes them, to enable them to be done.

CANON 19. That a man can be saved only when God shows mercy. Human nature, even though it remained in that sound state in which it was created, could be no means save itself, without the assistance of the Creator; hence since man cannot safeguard his salvation without the grace of God, which is a gift, how will he be able to restore what he has lost without the grace of God?

CANON 20. That a man can do no good without God. God does much that is good in a man that the man does not do; but a man does nothing good for which God is not responsible, so as to let him do it.

CANON 21. Concerning nature and grace. As the Apostle most truly says to those who would be justified by the law and have fallen from grace, "If justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose" (Gal. 2:21), so it is most truly declared to those who imagine that grace, which faith in Christ advocates and lays hold of, is nature: "If justification were through nature, then Christ died to no purpose." Now there was indeed the law, but it did not justify, and there was indeed nature, but it did not justify. Not in vain did Christ therefore die, so that the law might be fulfilled by him who said, "I have come not to abolish them, but to fulfill them" (Matt. 5:17), and that the nature which had been destroyed by Adam might be restored by him who said that he had come "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

CANON 22. Concerning those things that belong to man. No man has anything of his own but untruth and sin. But if a man has any truth or righteousness, it from that fountain for which we must thirst in this desert, so that we may be refreshed from it as by drops of water and not faint on the way.

CANON 23. Concerning the will of God and of man. Men do their own will and not the will of God when they do what displeases him; but when they follow their own will and comply with the will of God, however willingly they do so, yet it is his will by which what they will is both prepared and instructed.

CANON 24. Concerning the branches of the vine. The branches on the vine do not give life to the vine, but receive life from it; thus the vine is related to its branches in such a way that it supplies them with what they need to live, and does not take this from them. Thus it is to the advantage of the disciples, not Christ, both to have Christ abiding in them and to abide in Christ. For if the vine is cut down another can shoot up from the live root; but one who is cut off from the vine cannot live without the root (John 15:5ff).

CANON 25. Concerning the love with which we love God. It is wholly a gift of God to love God. He who loves, even though he is not loved, allowed himself to be loved. We are loved, even when we displease him, so that we might have means to please him. For the Spirit, whom we love with the Father and the Son (Rom 5:5)

CONCLUSION. And thus according to the passages of holy scripture quoted above or the interpretations of the ancient Fathers we must, under the blessing of God, preach and believe as follows. The sin of the first man has so impaired and weakened free will that no one thereafter can either love God as he ought or believe in God or

do good for God's sake, unless the grace of divine mercy has preceded him. We therefore believe that the glorious faith which was given to Abel the righteous, and Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and to all the saints of old, and which the Apostle Paul commends in extolling them (Heb. 11), was not given through natural goodness as it was before to Adam, but was bestowed by the grace of God. And we know and also believe that even after the coming of our Lord this grace is not to be found in the free will of all who desire to be baptized, but is bestowed by the kindness of Christ, as has already been frequently stated and as the Apostle Paul declares, "For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake" (Phil. 1:29). And again, "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). And again, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and it is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). And as the Apostle says of himself, "I have obtained mercy to be faithful" (1 Cor. 7:25, cf. 1 Tim. 1:13). He did not say, "because I was faithful," but "to be faithful." And again, "What have you that you did not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7). And again, "Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (Jas. 1:17). And again, "No one can receive anything except what is given him from heaven" (John 3:27). There are innumerable passages of holy scripture which can be quoted to prove the case for grace, but they have been omitted for the sake of brevity, because further examples will not really be of use where few are deemed sufficient.

According to the catholic faith we also believe that after grace has been received through baptism, all baptized persons have the ability and responsibility, if they desire to labor faithfully, to perform with the aid and cooperation of Christ what is of essential importance in regard to the salvation of their soul. We not only do not believe that any are foreordained to evil by the power of God, but even state with utter abhorrence that if there are those who want to believe so evil a thing, they are anathema. We also believe and confess to our benefit that in every good work it is not we who take the initiative and are then assisted through the mercy of God, but God himself first inspires in us both faith in him and love for him without any previous good works of our own that deserve reward, so that we may both faithfully seek the sacrament of baptism, and after baptism be able by his help to do what is pleasing to him. We must therefore most evidently believe that the praiseworthy faith of the thief whom the Lord called to his home in paradise, and of Cornelius the centurion, to whom the angel of the Lord was sent, and of Zacchaeus, who was worthy to receive the Lord himself, was not a natural endowment but a gift of God's kindness.

Key Terms for Humanity and Sin (1)

1. **Anthropology:** The study of the purpose and nature of humanity both in its pre-fall and post-fall state.
2. **Soul Sleep:** The belief that when people die their spirit/soul dies/sleeps also, with the result that they enter into a state of total unconsciousness until the resurrection.
3. **Monism:** The teaching that the spirit, soul, and body are all essentially the same or that the spirit and soul do not exist without the body. This often goes by the name “soul sleep.”
4. **Dichotomy:** The belief that man consists of two essential parts: material (body) and immaterial (soul/spirit).
5. **Trichotomy:** The teaching that man is made up of three essential parts: body, soul, and spirit.
6. **Conditional Unity:** This position affirms both the essential unity of the material and immaterial part of man and the existence of an intermediate state. A person does not have a body and a soul, but is a body and a soul, neither of which alone make up the whole person.
7. **Gnostic Dualism:** The belief that man’s constitution is physical and spiritual. The physical body is a burdensome temporary material confinement out of which we must escape.
8. **Creationism:** The belief that God creates each person’s soul individually and then unites the soul to the body at conception, birth, or sometime in between.
9. **Pre-existence Theory:** The theory that people’s souls/spirits preexisted the creation of their bodies. There may have been some former state in which the person sinned.
10. **Traducianism:** The belief that the soul is created in and with the body by the parents. While God is the ultimate creator of all things, he uses people intermediately or as secondary causes.
11. **Imago Dei:** The doctrine that man is created in the image of God.

Key Terms for Humanity and Sin (2)

1. **Original Sin:** A broad term that refers to the effects that the first sin had on humanity; the “origin” of sin.
2. **Imputed Sin:** Specifically refers to the guilt or condemnation of the first sin which was imputed to humanity. (Also: original guilt.)
3. **Inherited Sin:** Specifically refers to the transferal of the sinful nature. (Also: original corruption, original pollution, sinful nature.)
4. **Personal Sin:** Specifically refers to the sins that are committed by individuals.
5. **Pelagianism:** The belief that man is inherently good. The Fall not did bring condemnation upon any but Adam. As well, the disposition of the will is unaffected. Man sins as a result of bad examples that began with Adam.
6. **Fatalism:** Belief that a person’s life and choices are totally and unalterably the result of an endless series of cause and effects.
7. **Compatibilism:** Belief that a person’s actions are free, being determined by his or her own character and desires.
8. **Libertarianism:** Belief that a person’s actions are uncaused by any coercion whatsoever. The agent is the “first cause” in the effect of his action.
9. **Egalitarianism:** Position that the Bible does not teach that women are in any sense, functionally or ontologically, subservient to men. Women and men hold ministry positions according to their gifts, not their gender. The principle of mutual submission teaches that husbands and wives are to submit to each other equally.
10. **Complementarianism:** Position that the Bible teaches that men and women are of equal worth, dignity, and responsibility before God (ontological equality). The Bible also teaches that men and women have different roles to play in society, the family, and the church. These roles do not compete but complement each other.

A CALVINIST'S UNDERSTANDING OF “FREE-WILL”

There are many words and concepts in theology that suffer from misunderstanding, mis-characterization, and misinformation. “Predestination,” “Calvinism,” “Total Depravity,” “Inerrancy,” and “Complementarianism”, just to name a few that I personally have to deal with. Proponents are more often than not on the defensive, having to explain again and again why it is they don’t mean what people think they mean.

The concept of “free will” suffers no less with regard to this misunderstanding. Does a person have free will? Well, what do you mean by “free will”? This must always be asked.

Do you mean:

1. That a person is not forced from the outside to make a choice?
2. That a person is responsible for his or her choices?
3. That a person is the active agent in a choice made?
4. That a person is free to do whatever they desire?
5. That a person has the ability to choose contrary to their nature (who they are)?

Calvinists, such as myself, do believe in free will and we don’t believe in free will. It just depends on what you mean.

When it comes to the first three options, most Calvinist would agree that a person is not forced to make a choice, is responsible for their choices, and is the active agent behind those choices. They would reject the forth believing that a person is not free to do whatever they desire (for example, no matter how much one desires, he or she cannot read the thoughts of another person, fly without wings, or transport from one location to another just by thinking about the desired location).

It is important to note at this point, there is no conflict. No matter what theological persuasion you adhere to, most of historic Christianity has agreed that the first three are true, while the fourth is false.

It is with the fifth option there is disagreement.

Does a person have the ability to choose against their nature?

This question gets to the heart of the issue. Here we introduce a new and more defined term (hang with me here): “Libertarian Free-will” or “Libertarian Freedom.” Libertarian freedom can be defined briefly thus:

Libertarian Freedom: “The power of contrary choice.”

If you ask whether a person can choose against their nature (i.e. libertarian freedom) the answer, I believe, must be “no.” A person’s nature makes up who they are. Who they are determines their choice. If their choice is determined, then the freedom is self-limited. Therefore, there is no “power” of contrary choice for we cannot identify what or who this “power” might be. I know, I know . . . slow down. Let me explain.

First, it is important to get this out of the way. To associate this denial of libertarian freedom exclusively with Calvinism would be misleading. St. Augustine was the first to deal with this issue in a comprehensive manner. Until the fourth century, it was simply assumed that people were free and responsible, but they had yet to flesh out what this meant. Augustine further elaborated on the Christian understanding of freedom. He argued that people choose according to who they are. If they are good, they make good choices. If they are bad, they make bad choices. These choices are free, they just lack liberty. In other words, a person does not become a sinner because they sin, they sin because they are a sinner. It is an issue of nature first. If people are identified with the fallen nature of Adam, then they will make choices similar to that of Adam because it is who they are. Yes, they are making a free choice, but this choice does not include the liberty or freedom of contrary choice.

What you have to ask is this: If “free will” means that we can choose against our nature (i.e. the power of contrary choice), if “free will” means that we can choose against who we are, what does this mean? What does this look like? How does a free person make a choice that is contrary to who they are? Who is actually making the choice? What is “free will” in this paradigm?

If one can choose according to who they are not, then they are not making the choice and this is not really freedom at all, no? Therefore, there is, at the very least, a self-determinism at work here. This is a limit on free will and, therefore, a necessary denial of true libertarian freedom.

Think about all that goes into making “who you are.” We are born in the fallen line of Adam. Spiritually speaking we have an inbred inclination toward sin. All of our being is infected with sin. This is called “total depravity.” Every aspect of our being is infected with sin, even if we don’t act it out to a maximal degree.

But even if this were not the case,—even if total depravity were a false doctrine—libertarian freedom would still be untenable. Not only are you who you are because of your identification with a fallen human race, but notice all these factors that you did not choose that go into the set up for any given “free will” decision made:

- * You did not choose when you were to be born.
- * You did not choose where you were to be born.
- * You did not choose your parents.
- * You did not choose your influences early in your life.
- * You did not choose whether you were to be male or female.
- * You did not choose your genetics.
- * You did not choose your temperament.
- * You did not choose your looks.
- * You did not choose your body type.
- * You did not choose your physical abilities.

All of these factors play an influencing role in who you are at the time of any given decision. Yes, your choice is free, but it has you behind them. Therefore, you are free to choose according to you from whom you are not able to free yourself!

Now, I must reveal something here once again that might surprise many of you. This view is held by both Calvinists and Arminians alike. Neither position believes that a person can choose against their nature. Arminians, however, differ from Calvinists in that they believe in the doctrine of prevenient grace, which essentially neutralizes the will so that the inclination toward sin—the antagonism toward God—is relieved so that the person can make a true “free will” decision.

However, we still have some massive difficulties. Here are a couple:

A neutralized will amounts to your absence from the choice itself.

Changing the nature of a person so that their predispositions are neutral does not really help. We are back to the question What does a neutralized will look like? Does it erase all of the

you behind the choice? If you are neutralized and liberated from you, then who is making the choice? How can you be held responsible for a choice that you did not really make, whether good or bad?

A neutralized will amounts to perpetual indecision. Think about this, if a person had true libertarian freedom, where there were no coercive forces, personal or divine, that influenced the decision, would a choice ever be made? If you have no reason to choose A or B, then neither would ever be chosen. Ronald Nash illustrates this by presenting a dog who has true libertarian freedom trying to decide between two bowls of dog food. He says that the dog would end up dying of starvation. Why? Because he would never have any reason to choose one over the other. It is like a balanced scale, it will never tilt to the right or the left unless the weights (influence) on one side is greater than the other. Then, no matter how little weight (influence) is added to a balanced scale, it will always choose accordingly.

A neutralized will amounts to arbitrary decisions, which one cannot be held responsible for.

For the sake of argument, let's say that libertarian choice could be made. Let's say that the dog did choose one food bowl over the other. In a truly libertarian sense, this decision cannot have influences of any kind. Any decision without influences is arbitrary. It would be like flipping a coin. I chose A rather than B, not because of who I am, but for no reason at all. It just turned out that way. But this option is clearly outside a biblical worldview of responsibility and judgment. Therefore, in my opinion, the outcome for the fight for true libertarian free-will comes at the expense of true responsibility!

In conclusion: while I believe in free will, I don't believe in libertarian free will. We make the choices we make because of who we are. We are responsible for these choices. God will judge each person accordingly with a righteous judgment.

Is there tension? Absolutely. We hold in tension our belief in God's sovereignty, determining who we are, when we live, where we will live, who our parents will be, our DNA, etc. and human responsibility. While this might seem uncomfortable, I believe that it is not only the best biblical option, but the only philosophical option outside of fatalism, and we don't want to go there.

Acts 17:26-28

"From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. 27 God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. 28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.'"

WHAT COMPLEMENTARIANISM IS REALLY ALL ABOUT

The most common understanding of both Complementarianism and Egalitarianism goes something like this:

Complementarians: Do not let women be pastors over men.

Egalitarians: Do let women be pastors over men.

or...

Complementarians: The husband is the leader of the family.

Egalitarians: The husband and wife co-lead the family, with no priority.

or...

Complementarians: Wives submit to your husbands.

Egalitarians: Husbands and wives are to practice mutual submission.

While I think that these are characteristics of both groups, they are not foundational characteristics that define each group. In other words, I don't think that they are helpful in defining what it means to be a complementarian or egalitarian and they serve to cause a great deal of misunderstanding that leads to emotional bias that is very difficult to overcome once set.

In fact, I am going to say something very radical here and then explain. Here it goes:

It is possible to be a complementarian and believe that a women can serve in the position of head pastor over men.

Did you get that? Reread it. Reread it again...

Complementarianism is not first defined by it view of the roles of men and women in the

church, family, or society.

Here is what Complementarianism is:

Complementarianism is the belief that men and women have God given differences that are essential to their person. Men and women are ontologically (in their essential nature) equal, but often, functionally, take subordinate roles (like the Trinity). These differences complete or “complement” each other. Due to these differences, there will be some things that women are predisposed and purposed to do more than men. As well, there will be some things that men are predisposed and purposed to do more than women. Therefore, there are ideal roles for both men and women that should be celebrated, exemplified, typified, and promoted in the church, family, and society. To deny these differences is to deny the design of God and thwart his purpose.

Here is what Egalitarianism is:

The belief that God has created men and women equal in all things. Men and women are ontologically and functionally equal. The way the sexes function in the church, society, and the family is determined by individual giftedness, not role distinctions according to the sexes. Therefore, each person should be judged individually when being placed in a particular position. We should exemplify this reality by overcoming the stereotypical placement that has traditionally been a part of societies in human history, thereby giving freedom to individuals to follow the path that God has uniquely created them for, whatever that may be. In doing so, we should no longer educate or indoctrinate according to any of the former stereotypes, including those of basic masculinity and femininity.

These, in my opinion, are the foundational tenants of each position without giving examples on how this plays out in the family, the church, or society.

The case I am making here is that in order to be a consistent egalitarian, one must deny virtually all differences that typify men as men and women as women. It is not just about getting women behind the pulpit or the concept of mutual submission in the family. It is much more complex and, in my estimation, more difficult to defend with sensibility.

I had a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary who was an Egalitarian (he left because of this—I won’t mention his name). I loved this guy. Still do. Great teacher, thinker, and Christian. In fact, I had him come speak to our pastoral staff at Stonebriar to challenge us on why he became egalitarian and to defend his position. I wanted the staff to understand the “other side” from a very able defender. During his presentation, he painted himself into this very

typical corner that I find most all egalitarians end up.

He was advocating a foundational principle of egalitarianism: there are no essential differences between men and women other than reproductive stuff. We were all quite taken aback. Every example we brought up, he shot down by giving a counter-example in the form of an exception. His basic argument turned on finding exceptions to everything. Whether it was that men were less emotional, more aggressive, more one tracked in their thinking, less tender, more competitive, unable to nurture as well as women, or even liked the color blue more, he brought up exceptions that he believed neutralized the “pattern”. Finally, I thought I had him. I said “What about physicality? Men are stronger than women.” He would have none of that. He then brought up examples of German women who were stronger than men! We could not stump the guy!

The problem is that in order to defend egalitarianism consistently, he had to deny all of the common sense distinctions that people have made about men and women since the dawn of time. I won’t get into the science or psychology of this issue as there are many very good resources that do this. To me, it is rather bizarre that one would actually be inclined to produce evidence to prove that men and women are different!

I am of the opinion that many egalitarians would have been appalled by Peter who said that women are the weaker of the sexes (1 Pet. 3:7) citing every exception to this rule and bemoaning this stereotype until Peter cried “uncle.”

Complementarianism says that men and women are different by design. We are different and God did it. It is that simple.

However, most people would not be willing to go as far as my former professor. They realize that sustaining a proposition that men and women have no essential differences is a battle that cannot really be sustained in real life (only theoretical ideology). Men and women are different. Even most egalitarians that I know would give me this. Hear this again. Most egalitarians that I know would admit, when push comes to shove, that there are some essential differences between men and women. Most would even say that there are essential differences that go beyond reproduction and physicality. But I would argue that these people are not really egalitarians, at least in the way I have defined it. They would be complementarians because they would have given up what I believe to be a central driving tenant of egalitarianism and embraced the central tenant of complementarianism: men and women are different by design and their differences complement each other.

Now, having said this, I believe that it is theoretically possible to be a complementarian and

yet not take a traditional complementarian stand on the issue of women in ministry. In other words, someone could believe that men and women are different by design yet not think that these differences have any bearing on women in leadership in the church. They may be convinced that the Bible does not really teach that women should not teach men, and yet be complementarian in other issues and, broadly, in their theology of the sexes.

I am interested and committed to complementarianism for more than just the women in ministry issue. This is just one application. But (and here is where I get in trouble with fellow complementarians), I don't think that it is the most important issue in this debate. Neither do I think that it is the most "damaging" issue.

You see, when people are truly committed and consistent egalitarians, they have to defend their denial of essential differences. In doing so, they will advocate a education system in the home, church, and society which neutralizes any assumption of differences between the sexes. In doing so, men will not be trained to be "men" since there is really no such thing. Women will not be encouraged to be "women" since there is no such thing. The assumption of differences becomes a way to oppress society and marginalize, in their estimation, one sex for the benefit of the other. Once we neutralize these differences, we will have neutered society and the family due to a denial of God's design in favor of some misguided attempt to promote a form of equality that is neither possible nor beneficial to either sex.

We will have troubled men and women groping to find their way and feeling pressured to repress their instincts and giftedness. We will no longer be able to train up men and women in the "way" they should go since there is no "way" they should go. Women can act masculine and men can be feminine. Men can retreat in the face of responsibility because, in truth, they don't have any "responsibility" other than the one that they choose. This is to say nothing of the implications this has on the issues of homosexuality and gay marriage.

But in a complementarian worldview (even one that allows women to teach men in the church), men are taught to be men and women are taught to be women. They both have defining characteristics. Masculinity and femininity find their place and are exemplified and celebrated. Men protect women from physical danger and take their positions of leadership seriously, without trepidation or fear that they will be seen as power mongers. And women support this. Women take up their positions of nurturing and supporting the emotional well-being of the world. And men support it. No role distinction is seen as inferior because in a complementarian worldview both are seen as essential and of equal importance. Only in complementarianism do we not define the rule by the exceptions and bow to the least common denominator. Only in the complementarian worldview, in my opinion, can freedom to be who we are supposed to be find meaning.

The true spirit of complementarianism is that God has intentionally created men and women with differences and we are to celebrate this in every way. The true spirit of complementarianism is never domineering (that is a sinful corruption). The true spirit of complementarianism provides no shame only freedom. The true spirit of complementarianism speaks to God in appreciation.

When we attempt to neuter this design, we have lost much more than authority in the pulpit.

Complementarians, while I believe that the Bible teaches the ideal that women should not have authority over men in the church, let us promote the true spirit of complementarianism then simply defending its particular applications.

WHY WOMEN CANNOT BE HEAD PASTORS

I don't know of many more controversial issues in the church than issues regarding women in ministry. It is not controversial whether or not women can do ministry or be effective in ministry, but whether or not they can teach and preside in positions of authority over men. The most controversial issue aspect of this issue, of course, is whether or not women can hold the position of head pastor or elder in a local church.

There are two primary positions in this debate; those who believe that women can teach men and hold positions of authority over men in the church and those that do not. Those that do, normally go by the name "Egalitarians." Those that do not, go by the name "Complementarians." I am a complementarian but I understand and appreciate the egalitarian position. In fact, the church I serve at most often is an egalitarian church. (However, I don't want you to think that my complementarianism is not important to me. There is much more to complementarianism than whether or not a woman can preach!)

There are a lot of passages of Scripture which contribute to the debate, but one stands out more than all the others. 1 Tim. 2:11-15:

"A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. 12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. 13 For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. 14 And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 15 But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint."

I don't want to debate whether or not this passage teaches either position. I am simply going to assume the complementarian position and attempt to deal with the sting of "I don't allow a woman to teach." It does have quite a bit of sting.

I like to make the Scripture pragmatically understandable. In other words, I want to not only understand what it says, but to rationally understand why it says what it says. Why does God give this instruction or that? What practical rationale might be behind the instruction of God? I know that we cannot always find it and our obligation to obey transcends our understanding but, in my experience, more often than not, our understanding of the command can

accompany our obedience so that we are not so blind.

“I do not allow a woman to teach.” We think of this as coming from God. God says, “I do not allow a woman to teach.” Teaching is something that requires _____ therefore, women are not qualified. You fill in the blank:

1. Intelligence
2. Wisdom
3. Love
4. Concern
5. Rational
6. Persuasiveness

While I think the sting of this passage assumes that Paul is speaking about one of these, I don't choose any of them. I think Paul (and God) has something different in mind.

The other night, at 3am there was a sound in our living room. Kristie woke up, but I did not. She was looking out there and saw the lights go on. She got scared.

Pop quiz: What did she do next?

- a. Got a bat and quietly tip toed out there to see who it was.
- b. Got a gun and peeked around the corner.
- c. Woke me up and had me go out there.

Those of you who choose “c” are both right and wise. You are right because that is what happened. (It was my 2 year old Zach who decided it was time to get up.) You are wise because that is what normally happens and is typically, for those of you who have a man in the house, the best move. Why? Because men are better equipped to deal with these sort of situations. There is an aggression that men have, both physical and mental, that is more able to handle situations that might become combative. That is the way we are made.

Now, let me give my short and sweet answer as to why Paul did not allow women to teach:

Paul did not let women teach due to the often aggressive and combative nature that teaching must entail concerning the confrontation of false doctrine. Men must be the teachers when combating false teaching. However, because the role of a teacher in the church is so often to combat false doctrine, and because false doctrine is always a problem, generally speaking, the principles are always applicable. The “exercising of authority” is inherently tied to teaching and its necessary condemnation of false doctrine.

The combative nature of teaching is particularly relevant to a broader understanding of the characteristics of men and women.

The best illustration in the real world that I could use to help you understand what I am saying is that of a military commander in charge of leading troops into battle. Of course there might be an exception here and there, but do a study and you will find that no matter what the time or culture, men are always leading here. Why? Because men are simply better equipped and more followed. There are certain areas where men and women have a unique stature. I believe, like in military, the position of head pastor is the same. Not only are they better equipped for the issues that will arise, but they are followed more readily.

Let me give you another example: Two years ago, my wife was confronted by another couple who did not believe that she was doing what was right. She used to do princess parties where she would dress up as a princess (Cinderella, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty) and go to little girls’ homes and entertain them for an hour or so. She was really good at this. After we moved from Frisco to Oklahoma, she still had one party on the schedule. She called her boss and let her know that she could not do it since we had already moved. Her boss became very angry and began to threaten her. She also said that she was going to bring in her husband (who was a lawyer) and sue Kristie. Kristie became very scared and did not know how to handle this situation, especially since her boss was now using her husband as part of the threat. She told me about this and I told her not to speak to her boss anymore, but to let me handle it. I did. I stepped in and confronted both her boss and her husband’s threats concerning the issue. In the end, they backed off.

I felt that it was my duty and obligation to step in and be strong on behalf of my wife as the situation became confrontational. Kristie is both tender, gentle, and, in those situations, frightened. She was going to give in and travel back to Texas to perform this last party even though she would lose money in the gas it took to go there and back. Her boss refused to pay her mileage.

My point is that men are conditioned to handle confrontation better than women. It is not that Kristie could not have done the same thing as me, it is just that this was not her bent. Women, generally speaking, are not bent to deal with confrontation the same way as men. Teaching in the church involves, more often than not, confronting false understanding.

Can women teach? Absolutely! Can women understand and think as well as men? Most certainly. But the bent of a man is better able to handle the type of teaching that is always necessary in the church.

Would I let a woman teach from the pulpit from time to time? Yes. Paul is not restricting women teachers over men in the absolute sense. The infinitive here, “to teach” is in the present tense which suggests the perpetual role of teaching which exercises authority (confrontation).

The role of head pastor, I believe requires confrontation. That is not all there is, but it is there and it is very important. It is because of this, I believe, Paul said that women cannot teach or exercise authority over men.

THE PARABLE OF THE BOAT: ILLUSTRATING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PELAGIANISM, SEMI-PELAGIANISM, EASTERN ORTHODOX, ROMAN CATHOLIC, ARMINIANISM, AND CALVINISM

Here is a quick illustration that I hope you find helpful to distinguish between the various traditions with regard to divine sovereignty, free-will, and salvation. It is certainly not perfect, but I think it works sufficiently.

Pelagianism

All the people are on the boat with the God. At this point, in their natural condition, they don't need to be saved as they are not in danger. However, most (if not all) people will eventually jump in the water (sin) and find themselves in need of God's grace. The reason why they jump in the water is because they are following numerous example of those who jumped before them. This example goes all the way back to the first two who jumped into the water, setting the first bad example. God then offers them a life preserver when they call on him for help. If they respond they will be saved (synergism).

Semi-Pelagianism

All people are in the water drowning. They are born drowning. This is the natural habitation of all humanity since the first man and woman jumped into the water. Their legs are cramping and they cannot swim to safety on their own. However, they may desire salvation on their own. Though they cannot attain it, they can call, with a wave of their arm, to God who is ea-

gerly waiting on the edge of the boat. At the first sign of their initiative, God will then throw out the life preserver (grace). If they respond, they will be saved (synergism).

Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy

All people are in the water drowning. They are born drowning. This is the natural habitation of all humanity since the first man and woman jumped into the water. Their legs are cramping and they cannot swim to safety on their own. God, standing on the edge of the boat, makes the first initiative by throwing a life preserver to them (prevenient grace). Upon seeing this act, they make a decision to grab a hold (faith) or to swim away. If they grab a hold, God will slowly pull the rope connected to the life preserver. But they must do their part by swimming along with God's pull (grace plus works; synergism). If at any time they let go or quit swimming, they will not be saved.

Arminianism

All people are floating in the water dead in their natural condition (total depravity). They are born dead because that has been the condition of humanity since the first man and woman jumped into the water and died (original sin). Death begets death. There must be intervention if they are to be saved. God uses his power to bring every one of them back to life (prevenient grace), but they are still in the water and in danger of drowning. With the regenerated ability to respond to God, now God throws the life preserver to them and calls on them all to grab hold of it. They then make the free-will decision on their own to grab a hold of the life preserver (faith) or to swim away. If they grab a hold, they must continue to hold as God pulls them in (synergism). They don't need to do anything but hold on. Any effort to swim and aid God is superfluous (*sola fide*). They can let go of the preserver at any time and, as a consequence, lose their salvation.

Calvinism

All people are floating in the water dead in their natural condition (total depravity). They are born dead because that has been the condition of humanity since the first man and woman jumped into the water and died (original sin). Death begets death. There must be radical intervention if they are to be saved. While God calls out to all of them (general call), due to his mysterious choice, he brings back to life (regeneration) only certain people (election) while passing by the rest (reprobation). He does not use a life preserver, but grabs a hold of the elect individually and immediately pulls them onto the boat (monergism).

They naturally grab a hold of God as a consequence of their regeneration (irresistible grace; sola fide). They forever stay on the boat due to their perpetual ability to recognize God's beauty (perseverance of the saints).

