

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Systematic Theology Series

ANTHROPOLOGY

The Doctrine of Humanity

Created, Fallen, and Redeemable — What It Means to Be Human Before God

UNIT 1

Prolegomena — The Question That Defines Everything

Lesson 2

Humanity in the History of Doctrine

How the Church Has Understood What It Means to Be Human

“Two Thousand Years of the Church Wrestling with the Question God Alone Can Answer”

Key Texts: Romans 5:12–21; Ephesians 2:1–3; Psalm 51:5; Genesis 1:26–27

“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.”

Psalm 51:5, NASB 1995

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Introduction

The doctrine of humanity has not been developed in a vacuum. Every theological affirmation the church has made about human nature, human dignity, human fallenness, and human destiny has been hammered out in the furnace of controversy, refined through exegetical debate, and tested against the persistent pressure of alternative anthropologies, philosophical, cultural, and theological. To study the history of the doctrine of man is not a detour from the doctrine itself; it is an indispensable part of understanding it. The church fathers who first wrestled with the *imago Dei*, the medieval schoolmen who developed the faculties of the soul, the Reformers who recovered the radical implications of the fall, and the modern thinkers who dismantled the entire edifice, all of them are our conversation partners in this lesson, and their contributions, errors, and recoveries illuminate the doctrine at every turn.

The purpose of this historical survey is not merely antiquarian. The study of how the church has understood humanity across twenty centuries serves the student of today in three specific ways. First, it guards against the chronological arrogance that imagines the contemporary church is the first generation to grapple seriously with these questions. The church has been here before, has faced the Pelagian temptation to overestimate the human will, the Gnostic temptation to despise the human body, the Enlightenment temptation to exalt human reason as the measure of all things, and has, in each case, found its way back to the text of Scripture. Second, the history of doctrine teaches us where the fault lines run: the points at which anthropological error has most consistently recurred, the arguments that have most effectively been deployed against it, and the exegetical resources that have most reliably anchored the orthodox consensus. Third, it shows us that the battles of the present moment are not unprecedented. The gender ideology, therapeutic anthropology, and transhumanism of our day are new expressions of errors the church has fought before.

This lesson surveys the major epochs of anthropological reflection in the history of Christian doctrine, moving from the patristic era through the medieval synthesis, the Reformation recovery, the Enlightenment challenge, and the contemporary crisis. At each point the question is the same: how did the church understand what human beings are, and how faithfully did that understanding reflect the testimony of Holy Scripture? The answer to that question, charted across the centuries, provides the student of biblical anthropology with a map of the terrain, marking both the high ground that has been faithfully held and the lowlands where the church has repeatedly been pulled off course by the gravitational force of the surrounding culture's anthropological assumptions.

This lesson, the second of twenty-six in the Anthropology series, does not aim to provide an exhaustive history of anthropological theology. It aims to provide an orientation, a theologically informed account of the major movements and moments in the tradition that have shaped the doctrine of humanity as the Reformed tradition has received it, so that the student who has been equipped by this survey can read the primary texts with greater discernment, evaluate the contemporary alternatives with greater theological confidence, and bring to the remaining twenty-four lessons a richer understanding of where this doctrine has come from and why it matters that it be recovered with rigor and proclaimed with conviction in the church of our day.

I. The Patristic Era: Foundations and Fault Lines

How the Early Church Developed the Imago Dei and the Doctrine of the Soul

A. *The Early Fathers and the Image of God*

The patristic era bequeathed to the church its first sustained theological reflection on what it means for humanity to be made in the image and likeness of God. The early fathers approached Genesis 1:26–27 with a combination of exegetical seriousness and philosophical framework that produced genuine insights alongside genuine distortions, and disentangling the two remains an important task for the student of the history of doctrine. Irenaeus of Lyon, writing against the Gnostic dualism of the second century that despised the body and located the true self in an immaterial pneumatic spark, made the crucial affirmation that the imago Dei encompasses the whole person, body and soul together, and that the incarnation of the Son of God is the definitive vindication of the goodness of creaturely, embodied human existence. Against those who would evacuate matter of theological significance, Irenaeus insists that the flesh is capable of salvation because it was fashioned by the hands of God.

Origen of Alexandria, by contrast, imported significant Platonist assumptions into his anthropology, locating the true image of God in the rational soul alone and treating the body as the soul's instrument or prison, an accommodation to Platonic dualism that the church would eventually reject but that exerted considerable influence on subsequent patristic reflection. Gregory of Nyssa, the Cappadocian theologian of the fourth century, provided a more nuanced account: the image of God is not a static possession but a dynamic participation in the divine nature through virtue, intellect, and love, capable of infinite growth toward the infinite God. Gregory's account preserves the dignity and dignity of the imago Dei while recognizing its eschatological character, the image is not merely what we were made to be but what, in Christ, we are being conformed to become. What the fathers established collectively, even through their debates, is that the question of the imago Dei is the indispensable center of any responsible doctrine of humanity.

The most theologically sophisticated patristic anthropology is that of Augustine of Hippo, whose reflection on the human soul, the will, and the effects of original sin shaped Western theology so decisively that virtually every subsequent anthropological debate in the Latin tradition is, in some sense, a debate about Augustine. Augustine located the image of God primarily in the rational soul, and specifically in its Trinitarian structure: memory, understanding, and will as an analogue of Father, Son, and Spirit, while insisting, against Pelagius, that the fall so thoroughly corrupted the will that it is no longer free to choose the good without the prior, effectual grace of God. It is this Augustinian account of the will, the bondage of the will to sin, the necessity of prevenient and effectual grace, and the sovereignty of God in the rescue of fallen humanity, that the Reformers would retrieve and radicalize a thousand years later.

B. *The Pelagian Controversy and Its Permanent Stakes*

No controversy in the history of Christian anthropology has been more consequential than the dispute between Augustine and Pelagius in the early fifth century. Pelagius, a British monk of considerable moral earnestness and theological ambition, held that human beings retain, after the fall, the full natural capacity to choose the good and to obey the commands of God. Sin, on Pelagius's account, is imitation rather than inheritance: Adam's transgression set a bad example, but it did not infect the nature of his posterity with a corruption that makes righteous living impossible without the prior grace of God. Grace, on this account, is assistance, moral instruction, the example of Christ, the forgiveness of past sins, that aids a will already capable of choosing God. The decisive implication is that human beings can, in principle, merit salvation by their own free exercise of the natural faculties God has given them.

Augustine's response to Pelagius is the most comprehensive and exegetically grounded defense of the doctrine of original sin and the bondage of the will in the history of Christian thought. Drawing above all on Romans 5:12–21, Ephesians 2:1–3, and Psalm 51:5, Augustine argues that Adam's sin infected not merely the moral environment in

which his posterity lives but the very nature with which they are born. Every human being descended from Adam by natural generation inherits both the guilt of Adam's transgression and the corruption of nature that makes the unregenerate will incapable of rightly oriented love toward God. The will is not merely weakened by the fall; it is enslaved. It can still choose among created goods, but it cannot, apart from the prior, effectual, regenerating grace of God, choose the supreme Good, which is God Himself. This is the doctrine that the Council of Orange confirmed in 529, that the Reformers retrieved in the sixteenth century, and that the Westminster Confession enshrines in its account of the fall: "by this sin they fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body."

The Pelagian controversy is permanent in its stakes because Pelagianism is not merely an ancient heresy confined to the fifth century; it is the default anthropology of the human heart. The instinct that we are capable, with sufficient effort and moral determination, of presenting ourselves acceptable to God, that grace is assistance rather than resurrection, that salvation is cooperation rather than sovereign rescue, is the anthropological error that recurs in every generation, in every culture, and in every theological tradition that loses its grip on the radicality of the fall. The contemporary evangelical tendency to speak of the unbeliever as a seeker, the therapeutic culture's assumption that the deepest human problem is low self-esteem, the moralism that treats the Christian life as a matter of trying harder, all of these are, at their anthropological root, expressions of the Pelagian error that Augustine spent his last years refuting. The church that has not been formed by the Augustinian account of the will will always tend back toward Pelagius, because Pelagius flatters the creature's sense of its own capability.

"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."

Romans 5:12, NASB 1995

II. The Medieval Synthesis: Aquinas, Nature, Grace, and the Soul

How Scholastic Theology Developed and Distorted the Patristic Inheritance

A. Aquinas on the Soul and the Nature-Grace Relationship

The medieval synthesis reached its theological apex in the work of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), whose account of the human person drew on Aristotelian philosophy with a comprehensiveness and sophistication that no subsequent theologian has equaled and whose influence on the Western theological tradition, Catholic and, more indirectly, Protestant, is impossible to overstate. Aquinas understood the human being as a hylomorphic composite: a unity of matter (the body) and form (the soul), such that the soul is not an immaterial substance imprisoned in a material body (as Platonic dualism would have it) but the formal principle that makes the body to be a human body at all. This Aristotelian framework preserved the unity of the person and the theological significance of the body in ways that Platonic dualism could not, and it provided the scholastic tradition with a more adequate philosophical framework for articulating the doctrines of the incarnation and the resurrection of the body than the Platonist anthropology it gradually displaced.

On the nature-grace relationship, Aquinas developed the distinction between the natural and the supernatural that would prove both generative and problematic for subsequent theology. The natural order, including the natural capacities of the human intellect and will, remains intact after the fall in its essential structure, damaged by sin but not destroyed. Grace does not destroy nature but perfects it: *gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit*. The image of God in the broader sense, the intellectual and volitional capacities that distinguish human beings from other animals, is retained after the fall. What is lost is the *donum superadditum*, the supernatural gift of original justice that oriented the natural powers toward their supernatural end. The fall, on this account, is the loss of a

gift added to nature rather than the corruption of nature itself, a reading that the Reformers would contest with exegetical and pastoral force, arguing that it underestimates the radicality of what the fall actually did to the human creature.

Aquinas's natural law theory deserves particular attention as a contribution to the anthropological tradition that retains genuine value for the Reformed tradition despite its scholastic framework. The natural law, on Aquinas's account, is the participation of the rational creature in the eternal law of God: the moral order inscribed in human nature by the Creator, accessible in principle to human reason, and providing the foundation for a cross-cultural ethical discourse that does not depend on special revelation. This tradition resonates with Paul's account in Romans 2:14–15 of the Gentiles who “do instinctively the things of the Law” and thereby show “the work of the Law written in their hearts.” Reformed theology affirms the reality of the moral law inscribed in human nature by creation, while insisting that the noetic effects of sin, the darkening of the human mind by the fall, mean that natural reason alone cannot serve as an adequate guide to the full ethical demands of the Creator, and that the special revelation of Scripture remains both necessary and authoritative.

B. *Where the Medieval Synthesis Fell Short*

The medieval synthesis, for all its philosophical grandeur and exegetical care, harbored a structural weakness in its anthropology that the Reformers were right to identify and address. The Thomistic account of the fall as the loss of a supernatural gift rather than the corruption of nature itself produced an anthropology that was, as Luther perceived with theological instincts honed by pastoral experience and Pauline exegesis, insufficiently serious about what Paul actually says has happened to the unregenerate human being. The will that has merely lost a supernatural addition to its natural capacities is a very different creature from the will that Paul describes as enslaved to sin (Romans 6:17–20), darkened in its understanding (Ephesians 4:17–18), and incapable of submitting to the law of God (Romans 8:7). The medieval framework, for all its subtlety, consistently produced a soteriology in which human cooperation with grace, the *meritum de congruo* of late medieval nominalism, the semi-Pelagianism that Luther encountered in the piety of the monastery and the theology of the lecture hall, played a decisive role in the attainment of salvation.

The medieval sacramental system, which became the institutional expression of this semi-Pelagian anthropology, presented salvation as a process in which grace was infused through the sacraments and human merit, formed by that grace, constituted the grounds of God's acceptance. The sinner was not declared righteous on the basis of an alien righteousness imputed through faith; he was made progressively righteous through the infusion of habitual grace and the cooperation of the transformed will. The anthropological error at the root of this soteriological system is the underestimation of the radicality of the fall: if the natural will retains sufficient integrity to cooperate with grace toward merit, then grace is ultimately in service of human achievement rather than the sovereign, unilateral rescue of those who are dead in sin. It was Augustine against Pelagius, retrieved with greater exegetical sharpness, that Luther and Calvin brought to bear against the medieval system, and it was this Augustinian anthropology that made the Reformation, at its deepest level, a recovery of a proper doctrine of man.

The medieval tradition also generated, in the mystical stream running from Pseudo-Dionysius through Meister Eckhart and the Rhineland mystics, an anthropological tendency toward the dissolution of the creature-Creator distinction that the Reformed tradition rightly regards as a form of theological error with serious pastoral consequences. The mystical ideal of the soul's absorption into the divine, the union of the human spirit with the divine essence in which all creaturely distinction is overcome, represents a confusion of the image of God with God Himself that fundamentally misunderstands the Creator-creature relationship. The creature is not called to become God; it is called to fellowship with God, a fellowship that, even in its most intimate expressions, preserves the ontological distinction between the One who is and those who receive their being from Him. Biblical anthropology, precisely because it insists on this distinction, makes possible a doctrine of union with Christ that is real, intimate, and transforming without becoming pantheistic.

III. The Reformation Recovery: Total Depravity and the Bondage of the Will

How Luther and Calvin Restored the Biblical Account of Fallen Human Nature

A. Luther and the Bondage of the Will

Martin Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio* (On the Bondage of the Will), written in 1525 against Erasmus of Rotterdam's defense of human free will, is the most important anthropological document of the Reformation and one of the most important in the entire history of Christian thought. Luther himself regarded it as the work in which he had said something genuinely new, or rather, genuinely old, genuinely Pauline and Augustinian, in a way that the intervening centuries had obscured. Erasmus had argued, with the irenic moderation of Renaissance humanism, that the human will retains, even after the fall, a small capacity to turn toward grace and to cooperate with God in the work of salvation. Luther's response is a sustained, exegetically grounded demolition of this thesis. The will of the unregenerate human being, Luther argues, is not merely weakened by sin; it is in bondage to sin, enslaved to the sinful nature, incapable of genuine freedom with respect to God. It can choose among earthly things, but with respect to the things of God, it is as free as a stone or a log.

Luther's anthropological argument is grounded in a rigorous reading of Paul's anthropology in Romans, particularly chapters 1–8, and in the Old Testament's consistent testimony to the radical corruption of human nature after the fall. Genesis 6:5, “Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (NASB 1995), is not hyperbole on Luther's reading; it is a precise description of the unregenerate state. The fallen human being does not merely sin frequently; sin is the orientation of the will, the direction of the affections, the shape of the desires. And precisely because sin is this total and this deep, the grace of God that rescues the sinner must be equally total and equally sovereign: it must do for the sinner what the sinner cannot do for himself, which is to turn the heart from its bondage to the creature toward freedom in the Creator. This is why Luther insists, against Erasmus, that the doctrine of the bondage of the will is not a counsel of despair but the very foundation of Christian comfort: for if salvation depends even in the smallest part on the exercise of a free will that the fall has enslaved, then no one can be saved. But if salvation is entirely the work of a sovereign God who is free to have mercy on whom He will, then the sinner's only hope is exactly the hope that Scripture offers: the mercy of the God who raises the dead.

Luther's anthropological insight was not merely academic; it was born of intense personal spiritual experience. The monastery had taught him to pursue righteousness through the disciplines of penance, confession, and ascetic effort, and the monastery had produced in him not the peace of a man who had satisfied the demands of God but the terror of a man who had discovered that the demands of God are infinite and the resources of the creature are exhausted. It was the encounter with Paul's gospel of imputed righteousness, the righteousness of God that is given to the believer as a gift, not earned as a merit, that liberated Luther from the anthropology of the monastery, and it is no coincidence that the theological recovery of the gospel was simultaneous with the theological recovery of a proper doctrine of man. One cannot understand what justification is without understanding what the creature is, and the creature that Luther discovered in Romans is the creature that Paul describes: dead in trespasses and sins, under the wrath of God, without any resource of its own for the journey back to God.

B. Calvin and the Total Corruption of Human Nature

John Calvin's treatment of human nature in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Book II, chapters 1–5) is the most systematic and exegetically comprehensive account of the effects of the fall produced by the Reformation, and it remains the standard reference point for Reformed anthropology to this day. Calvin's account of total depravity, the doctrine that the fall has corrupted every faculty of human nature, leaving no part of the human person untouched by sin's deforming influence, is not a rhetorical exaggeration; it is a careful, scripturally grounded account of what Paul means when he says that the unregenerate person is darkened in understanding,

alienated from the life of God (Ephesians 4:17–18), and that the mind set on the flesh is hostile to God and cannot submit to His law (Romans 8:7). Total depravity does not mean that every human being is as sinful as possible, or that unregenerate human beings are incapable of civic virtue and natural affection; it means that no faculty of the fallen human person, intellect, will, conscience, or affection, functions as it was created to function in relation to God.

Calvin's account of the image of God after the fall is one of his most significant contributions to the anthropological tradition. He distinguishes between the image in the narrow sense, the original righteousness, true knowledge, and holiness with which Adam was created, and the image in the broad sense, the rationality, moral agency, and relational capacity that mark the human creature as distinct from all other creatures. The image in the narrow sense was lost in the fall; the image in the broad sense was damaged but not destroyed. This is why even fallen human beings retain a dignity that demands respect and protection: they still bear, however disfigured, the stamp of the Creator. But it is also why the fallen human being cannot, on the basis of the natural capacities that remain, find his way back to God: the natural image is insufficient for salvation, and the restoration of the full image requires nothing less than the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, who renews the mind, liberates the will, and reorients the affections toward the God from whom the fall has alienated them. “Put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth” (Ephesians 4:24, NASB 1995), the language of creation that Paul uses for regeneration is Calvin's proof that regeneration restores what creation originally gave.

The Reformation anthropology was codified in the great Reformed confessions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, and the Westminster Standards, in ways that have shaped Reformed piety and pastoral practice ever since. The Westminster Confession's statement that by the fall, Adam and his posterity became “wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body” is a direct inheritance from Calvin; the Canons of Dort's account of “total inability” in Heads III/IV is Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio* compressed into confessional form. These documents preserve the Reformation's anthropological achievement and bind the Reformed tradition to an account of human nature that takes seriously both the greatness of the creature as image-bearer and the radicality of what the fall has done to that image, an account from which subsequent departures have invariably produced soteriological distortion.

*“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,
in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world.”*
Ephesians 2:1–2, NASB 1995

IV. The Enlightenment Challenge: The Autonomous Self

How Modernity Dismantled the Christian Doctrine of Humanity

A. The Rejection of Original Sin and the Optimistic Anthropology of Modernity

The Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries represents the most sustained and far-reaching challenge to the Christian doctrine of humanity that the church has ever faced, and its effects have not diminished but intensified in the centuries since. The Enlightenment's anthropological revolution can be summarized in a single phrase: the autonomous self. Where the biblical and Reformation tradition understood the human being as a creature defined by relation to God, made in His image, accountable to His law, dependent on His grace, and destined for His glory, the Enlightenment proposed a human being defined by relation to himself: a rational agent whose dignity consists in his capacity for autonomous reason, whose morality is self-legislated, whose freedom is freedom from external authority including divine authority, and whose highest aspiration is not the worship of God but the realization of his own rational and moral potential.

The rejection of original sin was central to this Enlightenment anthropological revolution, and it was not merely a philosophical adjustment but a deeply pastoral one: the doctrine of original sin was perceived as an affront to human dignity, a counsel of pessimism that stifled moral progress, and a theological invention designed to keep humanity in subjection to ecclesiastical authority. Rousseau's noble savage, uncorrupted by civilization; Kant's autonomous moral agent, legislating the categorical imperative from the resources of pure practical reason; Locke's blank-slate individual whose nature is entirely the product of education and environment, all of these are alternative anthropologies constructed in explicit opposition to the Augustinian and Reformed account of human nature as radically and comprehensively corrupted by sin. What unites them, despite their many differences, is the conviction that the fundamental human problem is not interior, not a corruption of the will, a bondage of the affections, a darkening of the mind, but exterior: ignorance, oppression, unjust social structures, inadequate education, or insufficient rational development.

The consequence of this anthropological optimism for the church has been severe. Once the external environment rather than the interior corruption of human nature is identified as the fundamental human problem, the gospel ceases to be good news about the rescue of the dead and becomes instead a program of social improvement, moral education, or therapeutic self-actualization. The preaching of the cross as the solution to the problem of sin becomes incomprehensible to those who do not believe they are sinners in the Pauline sense, and the church that accommodates itself to Enlightenment anthropology will find that it has traded the foolishness of the cross (1 Corinthians 1:18) for the wisdom of the world, and received in exchange a gospel that has lost both its offense and its power.

B. *From Liberalism to the Present: Anthropological Dissolution*

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed the full working out of the Enlightenment's anthropological revolution in both the theology of Protestant liberalism and the philosophy of secular culture. Protestant liberalism, whose canonical expression is Friedrich Schleiermacher's account of religion as feeling of absolute dependence and whose social expression is the Social Gospel movement of Walter Rauschenbusch, effectively replaced the Reformation's forensic anthropology, the account of the human being as sinner under the just condemnation of a holy God, rescued by the imputed righteousness of Christ, with an evolutionary anthropology in which human beings are developing, progressively morally improving organisms whose fundamental problem is underdevelopment rather than guilt, and whose salvation is moral and social progress rather than forensic justification. The twentieth century's neo-orthodox response, associated above all with Karl Barth, recovered important elements of the Reformation anthropology while generating new distortions in its Christological concentration and its universalist tendencies.

The contemporary anthropological crisis is, in many ways, the final logical extension of the Enlightenment's rejection of the givenness of human nature. If the human being has no fixed nature given by a Creator, then there is no basis on which any account of what human beings are can be normative. Gender, sexuality, embodiment, and the moral order that flows from them are all subject to revision in accordance with the autonomous individual's self-understanding, which is precisely what the sexual revolution, gender ideology, and the transhumanist project propose. The trajectory from Enlightenment anthropological autonomy to contemporary gender self-identification is not a detour or an aberration; it is the logical consequence of the fundamental premise that the human being is self-defining. And the church that responded to the Enlightenment by accommodating its anthropological assumptions rather than confronting them with the full force of the biblical testimony now finds itself without the theological resources to respond to the cultural revolution that those assumptions have generated.

The Reformed tradition's response to the Enlightenment and its progeny is not cultural pessimism but theological confidence: the confidence that the God who made the human creature has not left the question of what the human creature is to the creature's own determination, that the answer He has given in Scripture is sufficient and authoritative, and that the account of humanity it provides, dignity grounded in creation, corruption diagnosed

by the fall, hope secured by redemption, destiny confirmed by glorification, is the only account that can bear the full weight of human experience without collapsing under the pressure of either the culture's optimism about human potential or its despair about human meaning. The recovery of this biblical anthropology is one of the most urgent theological tasks before the church of our day, and it begins with the recognition that the Enlightenment's autonomous self is not an advance beyond the biblical account but a retreat from it.

V. The Reformed Recovery: Returning to Scripture

The Ongoing Task of Retrieving a Biblically Faithful Doctrine of Humanity

A. *The Twentieth-Century Reformed Retrieval*

The twentieth century witnessed, alongside the dominance of liberal Protestant anthropology and its secular descendants, a significant retrieval of the Reformed anthropological tradition in the work of theologians who refused to accept the Enlightenment's terms and returned to the scriptural and confessional sources of the tradition with fresh exegetical and theological rigor. Herman Bavinck (1854–1921), whose Reformed Dogmatics remains the most comprehensive and philosophically sophisticated Reformed systematic theology in the modern era, developed a doctrine of humanity that engaged the philosophical and scientific challenges of his day with both theological confidence and intellectual seriousness, insisting that the biblical account of the image of God, the constitution of human nature, and the effects of the fall provides a more adequate account of human experience than any of the secular alternatives then on offer. Bavinck's engagement with evolutionary theory, his account of the organic unity of soul and body, and his treatment of the eschatological dimension of the imago Dei, the image as not merely what we were made to be but what, in Christ, we are being conformed to become, remain indispensable resources for the contemporary student of Reformed anthropology.

G. C. Berkouwer's *Man: The Image of God* (1962) represents perhaps the most exegetically careful twentieth-century Reformed treatment of the imago Dei, engaging critically with both the idealist and existentialist anthropologies of its moment and insisting that the image of God is not a structural property of the human person, not a faculty, a substance, or a capacity, but the whole person in his or her relational orientation toward God. Berkouwer's account has the advantage of preserving the comprehensive character of the imago Dei, the image is not located in one part of the person but characterizes the person as a whole, while emphasizing that the image is properly understood not as a static possession but as a dynamic relationship, a being-toward-God that was distorted by the fall and is being restored by the Spirit. Anthony Hoekema's *Created in God's Image* (1986) synthesizes these contributions with pastoral clarity and exegetical precision, making the twentieth-century Reformed account of the imago Dei accessible to the student of theology who is not a specialist in the tradition.

What unites these twentieth-century Reformed theologians, despite their significant differences of method and emphasis, is the shared conviction that the biblical account of humanity is not an embarrassment to be minimized in the face of modern science and philosophy but a treasure to be retrieved, defended, and proclaimed with intellectual confidence and pastoral urgency. They refused, each in his own way, the false choice between intellectual credibility and theological fidelity that liberal Protestantism had posed, and they demonstrated that the exegetical and theological resources of the Reformed tradition are fully adequate to engage the most serious challenges that the modern period has mounted against the biblical doctrine of man. Their work provides the student of Anthropology with models of how to hold the doctrine with both scholarly rigor and confessional conviction.

B. *The Present Task: Recovering the Doctrine for the Contemporary Church*

The task of the present moment is not merely historical retrieval; it is fresh proclamation. The church of the twenty-first century faces anthropological challenges that are in certain respects unprecedented in their reach and speed: the technological capacity to alter the human genome, the cultural normalization of gender reassignment, the replacement of a coherent doctrine of the human person with the therapeutic ideology of self-

actualization, and the transhumanist project of transcending the biological limitations of creaturely existence altogether. Each of these challenges presses upon the church the question that has been the constant thread of this lesson: what is man? And each of them requires, for an adequate response, the full resources of the biblical and Reformed anthropological tradition, not merely its conclusions but its method, its epistemology, and its theological confidence that the Creator of the human creature is also the Author of the only authoritative account of what the creature is.

The recovery of biblical anthropology for the contemporary church requires three things above all. First, it requires exegetical confidence: the willingness to take seriously what the text of Scripture actually says about human nature, even when that account conflicts with the consensus of the surrounding culture, and to ground the church's anthropological affirmations in the grammatical-historical interpretation of the relevant biblical texts rather than in the cultural assumptions of the moment. Second, it requires historical depth: the ability to read the current moment in light of the tradition's two-thousand-year engagement with the question of what humanity is, drawing on the insights of Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and their Reformed successors as conversation partners in the present task rather than as museum pieces to be admired from a distance. Third, it requires pastoral courage: the willingness to proclaim what Scripture teaches about human dignity, human fallenness, and human redemption in a cultural moment that finds the first flattering, rejects the second as oppressive, and regards the third with incomprehension.

The remaining twenty-four lessons of this series are devoted to that recovery, locus by locus and text by text. The historical survey of this lesson has been designed to equip the student with a map of the terrain, a sense of where the tradition has gone right and where it has gone wrong, of where the fault lines run and where the high ground lies, so that the exegetical work of the lessons to come is carried on with the kind of informed theological judgment that only historical consciousness can provide. We stand on the shoulders of those who have thought carefully and often sacrificially about these questions before us, and we owe them the respect of engaging their work seriously. But we are bound, finally, not to them but to the text that they were themselves seeking to interpret, and it is to that text, the sufficient, authoritative, inerrant, and perspicuous Word of God, that every lesson in this series will return.

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 8:38–39, NASB 1995

VI. The Doxological Conclusion: History in Service of Worship

The Story of Anthropological Doctrine Ends Where All Good Theology Ends, at the Throne

The history of the doctrine of humanity is, at one level, a story of controversy, error, recovery, and ongoing debate. But at a deeper level, the level at which theology is not merely academic but devotional, not merely informative but transforming, it is a story of the church's persistent, often painful, never finally successful effort to hear what the Holy Spirit says in the Scriptures about the creature whom God has made, loved, and redeemed. The fathers who fought Gnosticism's contempt for the body were defending the incarnation and the resurrection. The Reformers who fought Pelagianism's inflation of the will were defending the grace that makes the gospel good news for those who have no good news of their own to bring. The twentieth-century Reformed theologians who retrieved the biblical imago Dei against the reductions of liberal anthropology were defending the dignity that no social Darwinism, no therapeutic ideology, and no transhumanist project can provide. In every generation, the fight for a biblical doctrine of man has been a fight for the gospel itself.

The appropriate response to this survey is not merely intellectual satisfaction at having mastered the terrain but the particular quality of gratitude that belongs to those who have inherited, at great cost to others, a treasure they did not earn. We are the heirs of Augustine's exegetical toil, Luther's spiritual anguish, Calvin's pastoral and theological labor, and the confessional tradition that preserved their insights for subsequent generations. We stand in a line of witnesses who held the doctrine of human dignity and human fallenness with both hands against every attempt to diminish one at the expense of the other, and we carry that treasure forward into a moment that needs it more desperately than many of them could have imagined.

The doctrine of humanity, recovered from the tradition and grounded afresh in the text of Scripture, will produce in those who receive it not the despair of those who know what they are without the gospel, but the astonished gratitude of those who know what they are with it. What is man? He is the creature whom God has crowned with glory and majesty (Psalm 8:5). He is the creature who, in Adam, fell from that glory into ruin. And he is the creature whom the Son of God, the Last Adam, has redeemed from that ruin and is presently conforming, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to the image of His own glory, until the day when the work begun in regeneration is completed in glorification, and the whole redeemed humanity stands before the throne of God in the fullness of the image for which it was made. That is the end of anthropology. That is the end of all theology. And it is worthy of every effort, every controversy, every century of patient and costly theological labor that has brought us to the place where we can receive it.

“For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.”

Romans 8:29, NASB 1995

Theological Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Pelagianism	The theological position associated with Pelagius (c. 354–420), which holds that human beings retain after the fall the full natural capacity to choose the good and obey God's commands without the prior, effectual grace of God. Sin is imitation rather than inheritance on this account; grace is assistance to a will already capable of turning toward God. Condemned at the Council of Carthage (418) and the Council of Orange (529), Pelagianism is the recurrent default anthropology of the unregenerate heart and the persistent temptation of every theology that loses its grip on the radicality of the fall.
Semi-Pelagianism	A position mediating between Pelagianism and Augustinianism that holds the human will to be damaged but not destroyed by the fall, capable of taking the first steps toward God (the <i>initium fidei</i>) to which divine grace then responds. Associated with John Cassian and the monks of southern Gaul in the fifth century, and condemned at the Council of Orange (529). Semi-Pelagianism recurs in the late medieval soteriological tradition (<i>facere quod in se est</i>) and in various forms of Arminianism and contemporary evangelical synergism.
Total Depravity	The Reformed doctrine, grounded in Romans 3:9–18, Ephesians 2:1–3, and Genesis 6:5, that the fall has corrupted every faculty of human nature, mind, will, affections, conscience, and body, so that no fallen human being is able, apart from the prior, regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, to exercise saving faith, to will what is genuinely pleasing to God, or to merit any aspect of salvation. Total depravity does not mean that fallen human beings are as evil as possible, but that every part of the person is affected by sin's corruption.
Bondage of the Will	Luther's term, drawn from his <i>De Servo Arbitrio</i> (1525), for the condition of the unregenerate will as enslaved to sin and incapable of genuinely free choice with respect to God and salvation. The will remains free in the realm of earthly things but is not free, by its own natural power, to turn toward God, to exercise saving faith, or to do what is spiritually good. The liberation of the will is the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, who does not compel but transforms the will, making the person freely willing to turn toward God.
Imago Dei	Latin for 'image of God' (Genesis 1:26–27). The defining characteristic of human beings that distinguishes them from every other creature. Reformed theology distinguishes between the image in the broader sense (rationality, moral agency, personhood, damaged but not destroyed by the fall) and the image in the narrower sense (original righteousness, holiness, and true knowledge, lost in the fall and restored in regeneration). The true image is Christ (Colossians 1:15), and conformity to His image is the goal of both sanctification (2 Corinthians 3:18) and glorification (Romans 8:29).
Donum Superadditum	Latin for 'the superadded gift.' The Thomistic term for the gift of original justice that God added to human nature at creation, orienting the natural powers of the soul toward their supernatural end. On the Thomistic account, the fall is primarily the loss of this superadded gift, leaving the natural powers of the soul substantially intact. The Reformers disputed this framework, arguing that it underestimates the radicality of the fall: Paul's language of death, slavery, and

	enmity toward God (Ephesians 2:1–3; Romans 8:7) implies not merely the loss of a supernatural gift but the thoroughgoing corruption of nature itself.
Nature-Grace	The Thomistic distinction between the natural order (the realm of creation, natural reason, and natural law) and the supernatural order (the realm of grace, special revelation, and the beatific vision). Grace does not destroy nature but perfects it (<i>gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit</i>). Reformed theology affirms a distinction between nature and grace while insisting that the noetic and moral effects of the fall mean that natural reason is not an adequate guide to the full truth about God, humanity, and salvation, and that special revelation remains both necessary and authoritative even for matters within the scope of natural reason.
Hylomorphism	The Aristotelian-Thomistic account of the human person as a composite of matter (<i>hyle</i>) and form (<i>morphe</i>), in which the soul is the formal principle that makes the body to be a human body. Hylomorphism preserves the unity of the human person against both Platonic dualism (which treats the soul as the true person and the body as its prison) and modern materialism (which reduces the person to the body). Reformed theology affirms the unity of the person while rejecting the specific Aristotelian philosophical framework, grounding the soul-body relationship in the exegesis of texts like Genesis 2:7 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23 rather than in Aristotelian metaphysics.
Natural Law	The moral order inscribed in human nature by the Creator and accessible in principle to human reason, providing the foundation for a cross-cultural ethical discourse that does not depend on special revelation. The biblical basis is Romans 2:14–15: the Gentiles who do 'instinctively the things of the Law' show 'the work of the Law written in their hearts.' Reformed theology affirms the reality of natural law while insisting that the noetic effects of sin, the darkening of the human mind by the fall, mean that natural law reasoning alone is insufficient as an ethical guide, and that the special revelation of Scripture remains the ultimate and authoritative norm for moral theology.
Noetic Effects of Sin	The effects of the fall on the human mind and intellect. While the fall did not destroy the capacity for rational thought, it has corrupted the orientation of the mind, producing a systematic bias against the knowledge of God (Romans 1:18–23), an inability to receive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:14), and a tendency to suppress the truth in unrighteousness. The noetic effects of sin mean that fallen human beings, even when reasoning with logical rigor, will systematically distort their conclusions about God, humanity, ethics, and ultimate reality, because the fundamental orientation of the mind has been corrupted by sin.

Practical Application

A. *For the Mind: What Must We Believe?*

We must believe that the history of the doctrine of humanity is not an antiquarian curiosity but a theologically indispensable resource. The church has been here before, has faced, in every generation, the temptation to accommodate its anthropology to the assumptions of the surrounding culture rather than to the testimony of Scripture, and the consistent result of that accommodation has been the dilution of the gospel and the impoverishment of the church's pastoral resources. The student of biblical anthropology who has not read Augustine on the will, Luther on bondage, Calvin on total depravity, and the confessional tradition that preserved their insights will be perpetually vulnerable to the errors that these teachers fought, because those errors are not merely historical but perennial: they are the default positions toward which the unregenerate heart and the accommodating church will always tend.

We must believe, above all, that the Reformation's anthropological recovery was not a polemical distortion of the Christian tradition but a recovery of its Pauline and Augustinian center. The doctrine of total depravity, the bondage of the will, and the sovereign grace of God in the rescue of the spiritually dead are not peripheral theological opinions; they are the necessary anthropological foundation of the gospel of grace. A church that holds these doctrines with conviction will preach a gospel that is genuinely good news for those who know they have no good news of their own to bring, the dead who need resurrection, not the sick who need medicine; the enslaved who need liberation, not the confused who need direction; the guilty who need justification, not the underdeveloped who need education. This is the anthropology that makes the gospel necessary, and it is the gospel that makes this anthropology precious.

B. *For the Heart: What Must We Feel and Desire?*

Let the great line of witnesses surveyed in this lesson press upon your imagination: Augustine weeping over the ruins of his own will in the garden at Milan, finally broken before a God he had spent his youth evading; Luther discovering in Paul's gospel of imputed righteousness the release from the monastery's endless, exhausting program of self-justification; Calvin turning the full resources of his formidable intellect to the exegetical task of hearing what the Spirit actually says in the Scriptures, undeterred by the philosophical consensus of his age. These were not comfortable men; they were men who had been undone by the truth about themselves and rebuilt by the truth about God, and it shows in everything they wrote.

Desire that quality of theological seriousness, the willingness to be undone by the text before you are rebuilt by it, the refusal to read the Scriptures in ways that flatter what you would like to be true about yourself and your own capabilities. The history of doctrine is, in the end, a history of what happens when individuals and communities either submit to the full testimony of Scripture about human nature or find ways to soften it, domesticate it, or explain it away. The outcomes of those two paths are not equivalent. The path of submission produces, in the end, the freedom of those who have stopped pretending and started receiving, the freedom of those who know what they are, know what God has done about it, and can therefore live without the exhausting pretense that they are more than they are or less than they are.

C. *For the Hands: What Must We Do?*

- Read Augustine's Confessions as the devotional companion to this lesson. The Confessions is the most searching and honest account of the bondage of the will ever written, and it is a theological argument as much as it is a spiritual memoir: Augustine is demonstrating in his own experience what he argues in his anti-Pelagian treatises, that the will left to itself is incapable of finding God, and that the grace that finally turned him was not the result of his own striving but the sovereign action of the God who had been pursuing him all along. Ask, as you read: where do I recognize my own will in what Augustine describes?

- Read Luther's preface to his Latin writings (1545), in which he describes the Reformation breakthrough in terms of his discovery of Paul's meaning in Romans 1:17. Notice how Luther's anthropological discovery, the recognition that the righteousness of God in the gospel is not the righteousness that judges and condemns but the righteousness that is given and received, is simultaneous with his soteriological discovery. The doctrine of man and the doctrine of grace cannot be separated.
- **Read Calvin's Institutes Book II, chapters 1–5.** This is the locus classicus of Reformed anthropology. Read it not merely as a historical document but as a pastoral one: Calvin is writing for people in the pew, not just for scholars in the academy, and his account of total depravity is designed to drive his readers to the gospel of grace that follows it. Ask yourself: does the congregation I serve understand the nature of sin with the comprehensiveness and seriousness that Calvin describes?
- Evaluate the implicit anthropology of the ministry context you inhabit. Listen to the preaching, the counseling conversations, the language of the small group, the assumptions behind the evangelism strategy. Is the anthropology operative in those contexts Augustinian or Pelagian? Does it treat the unbeliever as a dead person who needs resurrection or as a confused person who needs information? Does it treat the believer as someone who has been radically freed by grace or as someone who merely needs moral improvement? The answers to these questions will tell you more about the theological health of a ministry than any doctrinal statement.
- Identify one contemporary expression of Pelagianism in the culture or in the evangelical church, and trace its anthropological roots. It may be the prosperity gospel's assumption that faith is a mechanism by which the believer achieves desired outcomes; it may be the therapeutic culture's assumption that the fundamental human problem is low self-esteem; it may be the moralism that treats the Sermon on the Mount as a program for self-improvement. Wherever you find it, practice the exegetical and historical skills developed in this lesson: identify the precise anthropological error, locate its historical precedent, and formulate the scriptural response.

Study and Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- Before this lesson, what figures in the history of the doctrine of humanity were you most familiar with, and which were entirely new to you? As you surveyed the tradition from the patristic era to the present, which moment or figure struck you as most significant for the contemporary church's task of recovering a biblical anthropology? Share your answer, and plan to revisit it at the end of the lesson to see whether it has changed.

Observation Questions (What Do the Texts Say?)

- Read Romans 5:12–21 with particular attention to the parallel between Adam and Christ. What precisely does Paul say sin did when it “entered into the world” through Adam? What does the phrase “death spread to all men, because all sinned” (v. 12) imply about the relationship between Adam's sin and the guilt and corruption of his posterity? How does this text serve as the biblical foundation for both the Augustinian doctrine of original sin and the Reformed doctrine of federal headship?
- Read Ephesians 2:1–3. What three terms or phrases does Paul use in these verses to describe the pre-regenerate condition of the Ephesian believers? What does the phrase “dead in your trespasses and sins” imply about the capacity of the unregenerate will? How does Paul's language here compare with what Luther says in *De Servo Arbitrio* and what Calvin says in *Institutes* II.1? Is the Reformation's account of total depravity a reading into the text or a reading out of it?
- Read Psalm 51:1–5. In what context does David write this Psalm? What does verse 5, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me”, add to the picture of original sin? Is David saying that his conception was sinful, or that he was sinful at the moment of conception? How does Augustine use this text in his anti-Pelagian writings, and does that use represent a legitimate reading of the text?
- Read Genesis 1:26–27 and then Colossians 3:9–10 side by side. What does the language of Colossians 3:10, “renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him”, imply about what was lost in the fall? How does this text support Calvin's distinction between the image in the narrow sense (lost in the fall) and the image in the broad sense (damaged but retained)? What does the text imply about the relationship between regeneration and the doctrine of creation?
- Read Romans 1:18–23. What does Paul say human beings have done with the knowledge of God available to them in creation? What does the phrase “suppressing the truth in unrighteousness” (v. 18) imply about the state of the unregenerate mind? How does this text serve as the biblical basis for the doctrine of the noetic effects of sin? What are the implications for the church's apologetic engagement with secular thought?

Interpretation Questions (What Does It Mean?)

- The lesson argues that the Pelagian controversy is permanent in its stakes because Pelagianism is the default anthropology of the human heart. Do you agree? Can you identify expressions of Pelagian anthropology in contemporary evangelical culture, not necessarily in explicit theological statements, but in the implicit assumptions of the preaching, the worship, the evangelism, and the pastoral care? What specific theological corrections would be required to move a congregation from a functionally Pelagian to a functionally Augustinian anthropology?
- The lesson describes the Thomistic *donum superadditum* as a framework that underestimates the radicality of the fall. Is this a fair characterization? Are there elements of the Thomistic account, the affirmation of natural law, the unity of body and soul, the distinction between nature and grace, that Reformed theology should retain, even while rejecting the specific way Aquinas frames the effects of the fall? How should a Reformed theologian engage the Catholic tradition on these questions?

- Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio* argues that the bondage of the will is not a counsel of despair but the foundation of Christian comfort. Unpack this claim. How is it possible that the doctrine that the will is enslaved to sin is more comforting than the doctrine that the will retains some capacity for free choice? What does this tell us about the pastoral function of a proper doctrine of human nature? Can you think of specific pastoral situations in which the doctrine of the bondage of the will provides more genuine pastoral help than its alternatives?
- The lesson traces the line from Enlightenment anthropological autonomy to contemporary gender ideology and transhumanism. Is this a legitimate intellectual genealogy, or does it overstate the connection? Are there features of the contemporary anthropological crisis that require analysis in terms other than the Enlightenment's rejection of the Creator-creature relationship? What resources does the Reformed tradition offer for engaging the specific form that anthropological error takes in the twenty-first century?
- The lesson describes three requirements for recovering biblical anthropology for the contemporary church: exegetical confidence, historical depth, and pastoral courage. In your judgment, which of these three does the contemporary evangelical church most need? Which does your own ministry most need? What specific steps would developing each of these three capacities require?

Application Questions (What Does It Demand of Us?)

- The lesson argues that the church's accommodation to Enlightenment anthropology has left it without theological resources to respond to the contemporary anthropological revolution. Evaluate this claim in relation to a specific ministry context you know well. In what ways has the ministry's anthropology been shaped more by the therapeutic culture than by the Augustinian-Reformed tradition? What specific changes in preaching, counseling, or discipleship would a recovery of biblical anthropology require?
- Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings cost him significant ecclesiastical relationships and personal peace; Luther's recovery of the bondage of the will cost him the institutional church of his day; the Reformed confessions cost their framers freedom and sometimes life. What does this history suggest about the cost of holding the doctrine of human nature with fidelity in a cultural moment hostile to it? Is the contemporary evangelical church prepared to pay that cost? What would that cost look like in the specific cultural context where you minister?
- The lesson describes the noetic effects of sin as producing a systematic bias against the knowledge of God in the unregenerate mind. What are the practical implications of this doctrine for the church's apologetic engagement with the culture? Does it mean that rational argument is useless in evangelism? Or does it mean something more specific: that rational argument, however rigorous, cannot overcome the spiritual blindness of the unregenerate mind apart from the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit? How should this shape the church's approach to cultural engagement?
- The twentieth-century Reformed theologians surveyed in this lesson, Bavinck, Berkouwer, Hoekema, engaged the philosophical and scientific challenges of their day with both theological confidence and intellectual seriousness. What would it look like to engage the specific philosophical and scientific challenges of our day, evolutionary biology, gender theory, artificial intelligence, neuroscience's account of consciousness, with the same combination of exegetical confidence and intellectual rigor? What would you need to read, learn, or develop in order to do this well?
- As you conclude this lesson's survey of the history of anthropological doctrine, identify the one insight from the tradition that you most need to appropriate more deeply in your own theological thinking and pastoral practice. It may be Augustine's account of the will, Luther's discovery of imputed righteousness, Calvin's comprehensive account of total depravity, or the twentieth-century Reformed account of the eschatological dimension of the *imago Dei*. Name it specifically, and identify one concrete step you will take to appropriate it more fully.

Prayer Focus

Open this second lesson of the Anthropology series with a reading of Psalm 51, the great Davidic psalm of penitential confession that stands as one of the clearest and most personal biblical testimonies to the doctrine of original sin. Read it not as an academic text to be analyzed but as a prayer to be prayed, a prayer that belongs as much to the student of systematic theology as it did to the shepherd-king who wrote it. “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5, NASB 1995) is not merely a proof text for a doctrine; it is the cry of a creature who has seen himself in the light of the holiness of God and found that the problem runs deeper than any single act of sin can account for. It runs all the way down, to the very moment of conception, to the nature he received from Adam. And the only adequate response to that depth of need is the depth of mercy that David then invokes: “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin” (Psalm 51:2, NASB 1995).

Spend time in Trinitarian adoration, allowing the history of the doctrine surveyed in this lesson to deepen the gratitude with which you approach the throne of grace. Begin with the Father, who did not leave the creature He had made in the ruin of the fall but determined from before the foundation of the world a redemption more glorious than the original creation, who gave Augustine the grace that Augustine could not give himself, who gave Luther the reformation that the church could not achieve by its own moral effort, who has given His church in every generation, however faithfully or faithlessly that church has handled it, the truth about what human beings are and what He has done about it. Move to the Son, who is the Last Adam, the true image of God, the one human being who lived from within the fallen human condition without being defined by it, and who bore in His body and soul the full weight of what the fall had made of the creature He had come to rescue. Conclude with the Spirit, who illumines the Scriptures, breaks the bondage of the will, renews the image in those who receive the gospel by faith, and sustains the church in every generation in its task of proclaiming the truth about humanity against every distortion the surrounding culture proposes.

Pray together for this series in three specific directions. First, for theological depth: that the study of the history of doctrine would not produce in this community a merely historical knowledge, an ability to name positions and dates and controversies, but the kind of understanding that descends from the intellect to the will and transforms the student into a wiser, more humble, more scripturally formed theologian and pastor. Second, for ecclesiastical courage: that the Lord would raise up in the contemporary church men and women of the caliber of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, not in terms of genius but in terms of willingness to hold the doctrine of man with the full seriousness that the text of Scripture requires, at whatever cost that fidelity demands in the cultural moment they inhabit. Third, for personal humility: that the study of the church's failures of accommodation, the accommodation to Platonism, to semi-Pelagianism, to the Enlightenment, to therapeutic culture, would produce in each student a sober awareness of their own vulnerability to the same accommodating pressures, and a renewed resolve to take the whole counsel of God as their only sufficient guide.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

Psalm 51:10, NASB 1995

Key Texts: *Romans 5:12–21; Ephesians 2:1–3; Psalm 51:1–10; Genesis 1:26–27; Romans 1:18–23; Colossians 3:9–10*

Soli Deo Gloria
To God Alone Be the Glory

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

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