

1: THE MAJOR ISSUES IN THE AUGUSTINIAN - PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY

"Cardinal" Ratzinger Denies Catholic Teaching on Original Sin: For Ratzinger, Original Sin is not a Deprivation of Sanctifying Grace in Human Souls Transmitted by Natural Generation but a Damage in Human Relationships Encountered by Every Human Being In a Lenten sermon given in in the.

To understand what it means to be human, then, one needs to understand something of the divine life. Christians also believe that God is personal, not simply an impersonal force of nature, and rational, that God acts with intention. To say that humanity bears the image of God, then, means that human beings were created to live in loving, just relationships with one another. It also means that our capacity to think and act rationally are crucial markers of our humanity and that true rationality is inseparable from love and justice. To say that human beings bear the image of God, though, also highlights the fact that human beings are not God; they are creatures: Christianity affirms the fundamental goodness of creation. Being human entails living as an embodied soul, as ensouled flesh, and this union of body and soul is both essential to our humanity and good. In other words, Christians celebrate the goodness of embodiment and reject the notion that the soul is trapped in the body from which it hopes to escape at death. Likewise, Christians do not accept the idea that souls can migrate from one body to another. To be human is to live an earthly life, body and soul. Christians extend this affirmation of the goodness of earthly life, body and soul to their vision of redemption. Instead, we use our rational powers for destructive purposes and live in communities that do not display the love and justice God intended for humanity. Sin indicates two things for Christians. First, it names the particular ways and specific acts through which we violate the will of God. Second, sin indicates an underlying condition, a brokenness of the spirit, which expresses itself in particular sins. This underlying condition is known as Original Sin, a condition of separation from God shared by all people that prevents humanity from living as God intends. Sin leads to spiritual and physical death. Original Sin is also, therefore, the origin of our particular sinful acts, which emerge from the underlying brokenness the way that a disease manifests itself in particular symptoms. One theologian, Augustine, described Original Sin as a prideful rejection of our status as creatures. The first human beings, said Augustine, wanted to be gods and not creatures; they wanted to live for themselves, rather than living for the glory of God. When they rejected their status as creatures, they damaged the image of God in themselves with the result that they and all of their descendants now suffer from Original Sin. The human condition, then, is one of living as the fallen image of God so that humanity suffers both spiritual and physical death. Human salvation is achieved through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, whom Christians affirm to be perfect in humanity and perfect in divinity. Christians believe that in Jesus Christ God entered human existence in order to restore humanity to the image of God. She formerly taught at Calvin College. Mathews of *Shaping the Christian Life: Worship and the Religious Affections* and coauthor of *Transforming Care: A Christian Vision of Nursing Practice* The book will be available for purchase in December

2: The Doctrine of Sin | www.enganchecubano.com

all human beings are disposed to sin; all humans beings do sin; must be considered a mystery that is related to the mystery of theodicy (the problem of why there is evil and suffering in the world) References "The Doctrines of Human Nature, Sin, and Grace," Chapter 14 in: Christian Theology. An Introduction.

Why might that be? As much as we might not want to, we must talk about the judgment of God. At the end of the story Luke includes the painful words of Jesus about the utter destruction of Jerusalem and the massive suffering that will result. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. The good news is that Jesus is the rightful king of Jerusalem who comes in the name of the Lord to offer salvation. The bad news is that Jerusalem rejects the things, or rather the One, that make for peace, and the consequences will be disastrous. Luke portrays Jesus as standing in the tradition of Old Testament prophets who pointed Israel in the direction of the saving ways of God. But these prophets also declared that if Israel did not choose these saving ways, then God would send devastating judgment. How many of us like to hear sermons that focus on the judgment or wrath of God? I have painful memories of preachers who proclaimed, with far too much joyous zeal, the fierce judgment of God. Such preaching can be psychologically manipulative, emotionally damaging, and inappropriate for other reasons as well. I struggle with how to understand the judgment of God. Far too often Christians attribute disasters to the judgment of God. Such simplistic explanations are attractive because they seem so biblical. They follow the precedent of the prophets and numerous biblical writers who regularly interpret natural and human-made disasters as divine judgment, just as Luke does in his triumphal entry story. I believe that such explanations are profoundly inappropriate. I do not believe that God sends or causes human suffering in order to enact judgment. I realize, with considerable anxiety, that what I am saying puts me somewhat out of step with the prophets, with Luke, and with many other biblical authors. Attributing disaster to divine judgment on human sin is another form of blaming the victim. A community already shattered by earthquake is told by a preacher that they have only themselves to blame. Is this really what people need from God as they struggle to rebuild their lives, their homes, and their communities? A woman just diagnosed with multiple sclerosis is counseled by a Christian friend to examine her life to see how she has displeased God. Is this what a hurting woman needs from a sister in Christ? I recognize that our human choices and actions have consequences, and when we make bad choices, i. We never know when we might inadvertently step in the wrong place and say something inappropriate or insensitive. The judgment of God is a major theme in the Bible. In short order human sin reaches such proportions that God decides to exterminate all of humanity with a flood, except for the family of Noah. The prophets and historical books declare over and over that God is punishing Israel by means of plague, or drought, or military defeat, or foreign oppression. From Genesis through Revelation the judgment of God is a central theme. The Bible is far more complex and profound than that. In both testaments God is first and foremost gracious. That is why already at the beginning of the Bible God embarks on the grand project of offering divine grace and wholeness to a broken world. But the grace of God does not eliminate the judgment of God. In the heart of God grace and wrath live side by side in a paradoxical relationship. God is infinitely gracious. But God also has a wrathful side, which manifests itself in acts of judgment. The Bible does not resolve or relax this paradox. There is a contradiction here which we cannot fully understand nor should we seek to explain it away. As a result many people experienced God as somewhat of a tyrant, always keen to punish and to consign the wicked to eternal damnation. Some of us here have been deeply hurt by this kind of inappropriate teaching and preaching. In response, we have sent the pendulum swinging in the opposite direction and we virtually never speak of the judgment of God. Even the lectionary, which is supposed to give us a balanced diet of biblical texts, steers us away from judgment passages. So what happens to our understanding of God when we relax the paradox too much in favor of the grace of God? God becomes a God of infinite love and grace who always affirms, supports, and comforts us no matter what we do. God becomes a cosmic teddy bear always prepared to give us warm fuzzies. Of course God is infinitely gracious, and of

course God comforts, affirms, and supports. But this is only half of the paradox. When amazing plant and animal species, that God has so lovingly created, are being obliterated from the face of the earth because of our human greed and wasteful western lifestyle, God is absolutely enraged, and is ready to kick some serious butt. When the cupboard for inner city schools, public transportation, and healthcare is bare because we are too selfish to pay taxes, then God is enraged, and prepared to kick some serious butt. We need the biblical texts of divine judgment to remind us that God is no cosmic teddy bear. The judgment of God reminds us of how seriously God takes human sin. The Jewish scholar Abraham Heschel offers a wonderful description of the Israelite prophets. So what if somewhere in Palestine powerful landowners are dispossessing some Israelite peasants of their ancestral land? So what if some Israelites worship Canaanite fertility gods at the local shrines? These are minor events. No, God declares, these are massive catastrophes that merit the destruction of the nation. God is raging in the words of the prophets. The basis for distinguishing between the faithful and the wicked will be whether people have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, welcomed the stranger, visited the sick. These things happen all the time. They are minor matters. Living under the judgment of God reminds us of how seriously God takes human sin. One of the fascinating things about the Old Testament prophetic books is that they were preserved at all. Prophets like Amos, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel declared that Israel had sinned grievously by worshipping other gods and by oppressing the poor. Therefore, God was about to send horrible judgment in the form of military defeat and conquest by foreign empires. After this message of judgment was fulfilled, why go to all the work of writing down and preserving these messages? The community of faith must always be clear about which God it will worship and be loyal to. It must always ensure that widows, orphans, and sojourners are cared for. If not, then the community will again experience the judgment of God. Jeremiah and Ezekiel both condemn false prophets because they have no message of judgment. These prophets say little about the sins of the nation. Instead they announce the grace of God and promise the people well-being. Ezekiel calls it slopping whitewash onto a crumbling wall. The message of judgment is a wake-up call. It is a summons to commit our lives every more fully to Jesus, and thereby become disentangled from our sinful actions and from the larger sinful structures in this world. Palm Sunday is an appropriate time to reflect on both. Later this week Jesus will be tortured and killed. Surely here human sin reaches a highpoint. But God sends grace and forgiveness. God raises Jesus from the dead, thereby unleashing the power of resurrection and new life into our world, a new life that is now offered to you and to me. Harper and Row, , 46”5. He has served as a pastor and also worked with Mennonite Central Committee in the Philippines.

3: The Original View of Original Sin

Because of Original Sin all persons are in need of God's redeeming grace, even children who have not yet committed any actual or particular sins. Original Sin is also, therefore, the origin of our particular sinful acts, which emerge from the underlying brokenness the way that a disease manifests itself in particular symptoms.

Pieces of wreckage were carefully removed and stored for further analysis. Since that time, the cause of the crash has been the focus of extended research, analysis, and even litigation. Understandably, the cause of such a tragedy is of great concern. Few could deny that something seems desperately wrong with the world in which we live. This very day Kurdish people endure unimaginable suffering at the hands of the Iraqi army and even of nature itself. Innocent children starve to death. The Nazi regime cruelly slaughtered millions of Jews not so long ago, while the world knew better and chose to look away. Rampant crime, cruelty, corruption, and injustice exist side by side. Pollution, nuclear waste, disintegration of the ozone layer, acid rain, and a host of other maladies are bringing the earth itself to the brink of disaster. Among the informed, little optimism remains. The desperate plight of our planet has convinced some that there is no God. Those who do believe in a God find God somehow responsible for all that is painful. They think God is either cruel or that He is not in control. But God is in control. His perfect plan does include the suffering and agony we see all about us. In this lesson we will trace sin and suffering to its earthly origins and causes. By divine permission Satan tempted Adam and Eve; they sinned, and God has graciously pronounced upon all creation a curse for which He has provided the cure. We begin our study at the outset of human history as recorded in the first few chapters of Genesis. We will consider the biblical account of creation, the fall, and its consequences for mankind. The Scene is Set: Genesis 1 and 2 The more I study the early chapters of Genesis the more convinced I have become of their purpose. Providing a scientific explanation of creation 39 is not the purpose of chapters 1 and 2. Rather, their purpose is to set the scene for the fall of man, a major turning point in the history of creation. Man was created by God to rule over His creation: And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day Genesis 1: Adam and his wife were to rule over the earth. Genesis 1 portrays the big picture, the role Adam and Eve were to play in relation to the entire creation. Genesis 2 narrows the focus to the garden of Eden. Adam was placed in the garden to cultivate or keep it. Eating its fruit would give the partaker a knowledge of good and evil, but it would also certainly produce his or her death. When God formed every creature from the dust of the ground, He caused each to pass before Adam for him to name. Each had its own mate, its counter-part. These pairs of creatures were able to procreate and fulfill the mandate to multiply and fill the earth. Not so with Adam. He too needed a counterpart--a wife. God wanted Adam to sense this need, and then joyfully receive the one whom He fashioned to meet his need. After showing Adam his need for a helper, God created one. Neither Adam nor Eve had parents. Eve had no tie to her parents, but only union with her husband. Because of the nature of this first relationship between Adam and Eve, Moses parenthetically interjects the principle that when a man and woman come together, the husband must subordinate the tie he once had with his parents to the tie he now has with his wife verse Before studying the fall of man in Genesis 3, let us pause to reflect on the setting described in the first two chapters. Genesis 1 serves as a commentary on the fall of man in chapter 3. According to this account, all of creation came into existence in response to one thing: God spoke creation into existence. Genesis 2 likewise is most significant when read in light of chapter 3. But all of chapter 2 denies what Eve assumed about God. Chapter 2 has a prominent theme: God provides what is lacking and necessary. No shrubs or trees were yet on the earth in chapter 2 verse 4. There was no rain to water the plants or a man present to cultivate the land. God therefore planted a garden with trees providing all that was needed, a river for irrigation, and a man to cultivate the land. There was also a need for a helper for Adam, and so God fashioned the perfect mate. At every point of legitimate need, God created what was needed. How, then, dare Satan suggest or Eve believe that God had withheld something from her which she needed? The Fall of Man: Genesis 3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together

and made themselves loin coverings. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? And the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life Genesis 3: This lesson seeks to view the fall of man in the light of the overall plan of God for creation. Therefore, although a more detailed exposition of the text would be most profitable, we must limit ourselves to a few observations and comments. Hopefully, they will serve as a stimulus for your additional study. Genesis 3 appears to have no struggle at all. Neither Eve nor Adam raise so much as one word of protest or argument against Satan. They appear to be easy prey for his cunning attack. Adam, come over here. Even in his unfallen state, man was no match for the wiles of Satan. The leader followed, and the followers led. Adam, Eve, creature which surely includes the serpent. The order of actions related to the fall are: When God confronts those responsible for the fall, the order is that of His chain-of-command: Adam verse 9 , Eve verse 13 , the serpent verse Eve did not know what she was doing as Adam did. Rather than assume responsibility for their own actions, Adam and Even passed the responsibility on. From their actions in Genesis 3: The forbidden fruit was now seen as desirable even though it was deadly. The tree of life was overshadowed by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Word of God which so recently brought the universe into existence see 1: Why was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil forbidden? The tree of the knowledge of good and evil enabled one to know good and evil see 3: Eve only needed to know that God had forbidden the fruit of this tree. Had Eve trusted God, she would have found His Word sufficient. She needed only to know who had forbidden the fruit, not why the fruit was forbidden. Eve needed only to know what God had said--she did not need to understand why the fruit of that one tree was forbidden. There is an important principle to be seen here: God desires from us the obedience of faith. Such obedience is not based upon our understanding of why we are to act as God requires, but simply because it is God who requires it. The obedience of faith is based on our faith in God, not on our understanding of why God calls one thing good and another evil. Parents teach their children to obey on the same basis. You cannot explain to a young child why an electrical outlet is dangerous. You can only forbid them to touch it, because you said so, and because they trust your word. How quickly we shake our heads and point our finger at Eve. We say we desire to obey God, but we want to understand why we should obey Him before we do. We want to understand why God has commanded some things and prohibited others. One example relates directly to our text. Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says.

4: Karl Rahner (Boston Collaborative Encyclopedia of Western Theology)

Valerie Saiving () was a feminist www.enganchecubano.com is the author of the influential essay The Human Situation: A Feminine View.. Biographical details. Valerie Saiving Goldstein was born in , and received her BA from Bates College, Maine, United States in , studying both theology and psychology.

Related Media Introduction Any treatment of Christian doctrine would be incomplete if the biblical statement concerning sin were omitted. Modern Philosophy denies the existence of sin, but any such denial is part of a false philosophy. All refusal to admit the existence of sin can neither be controverted nor challenged. Sin is not a myth, it is not a figment of the mind; sin is a fact. The Explanation of Sin What is sin? When one seeks the answer to this question in the many and varied definitions of men he is left somewhat confused. There is a difference between the way God describes and explains sin, on the one hand, and the way, on the other hand, that men describe and explain sin. God tells us in His Word what sin is. But when any man exalts the human mind to the place of deity and goes so far as to rule God out altogether, that man is on the brink of destruction. The Bible condemns human intellect as the supreme court. Charles Ryrie has given a listing of Hebrew and Greek words which describe sin. He says that in the Hebrew there are at least eight basic words: The usage of these words leads to certain conclusions about the doctrine of sin in the Old Testament. In other words, sin was not simply missing the right mark, but hitting the wrong mark. Kakos, bad Romans From the uses of these words several conclusions may also be drawn. The word that is used most frequently is hamartia, missing the mark. It is the most comprehensive term for explaining sin. Let no man ever think that he comes anywhere near the standard set by God. God has demanded absolute perfection, and no matter how one measures himself, he falls far short. Some men measure themselves on the basis of human intelligence, some by educational attainment, some by financial success, some by cultural environment, and others by religious performance. But God refuses to accept man on any of these grounds. He has established His perfect standard, and by that standard He measures every man. The left-handed marksmen in the Tribe of Benjamin rarely if ever fell short of their target. On the other hand, the Bible contains no record of a man, save Jesus Christ, who never missed the moral standard of Almighty God Every man has failed to do what he ought, therefore the term is fittingly applied to sins of omission. Every man can be charged with the sin of the Pharisees whom our Lord charged with leaving undone the things they ought to have done Matthew Actually God has placed the standard so high so that none can ever reach it. And why do I believe this? I believe it because I know the pride of my own heart, and I am but one member of a fallen and depraved race. Now suppose that we were able to meet the demands of God. Those who made it would never cease to boast about how they did make it, and the unfortunate one who could not make it because of inability or some special inferiority on his own part would be lost forever. But God is not so cruel and compassionless. The thought here is not merely that of doing what is unlawful according to the standard of men, but of a flagrant defiance of the known law of God. Sin, then, is that which is contrary to God Himself. How easily we deceive ourselves and our friends! Both the philosophy and morality of this statement are alike sound and rational. The man who does not decide his actions on the basis of that which he knows is right is deserving of condemnation, because he did not act according to his conviction. The decision of a growing or mature Christian is based upon his love for an obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. The actions and attitudes which do not proceed from faith in Christ are accounted as sin. If one has doubts about a certain matter, he should abstain from it, but if he goes on to do it anyhow, he acts out of faith, and such an action is sin. We commenced the Christian life by faith, and so we should proceed by faith. Are you wavering between two decisions, to eat or not to eat, to drink or not to drink, to go to a certain amusement or not to go, to say certain things or not say them, to conform to a style of dress or not to conform? If you do something despite strong scruples and convictions against that thing, this is sin which you must judge as sin, for surely God will judge it as sin. What is not done by faith cannot be done to the glory of God. Even though there is no law which says we may not do a certain thing, we may be fully persuaded that the thing is not right, and consequently by doing it we will offend God. In such a case we sin against God and self when we do it. According to Scripture sin first made its appearance in the world in the

angelic creation. The obvious deduction is that the sin of these fallen angels was a free act on their part, arising from their dissatisfaction with the place God assigned to them when He created them. Lucifer, who became the Devil, appears to have been the leader of the rebellion Isaiah They were angels who rose up in rebellion against God. Exactly how such dissatisfaction and rebellion could arise in beings whom God created is not revealed by the sacred writers. We assume that they possessed personality and freedom of will and thereby had the capability of making right or wrong choices. At this point in our study the chief concern is with the entrance of sin in the human race, and this receives a different explanation from that which applied to angels. Sin is a very real and terrible fact of human life. The problem as to its earthly origin is solved in Romans 5. The most tragic chapter in the Bible Genesis 3 contains the inspired account of how sin came into the world. So important is this account to human understanding that God preserved it for all mankind. It is not to be found in the traditions and writings of the various races and antiquities on the earth. The critics of the Bible have referred to the early chapters of Genesis as Babylonian myth, and yet no one has ever found a Babylonian version of the entrance of sin into the human race. Genesis 3 is a divinely inspired account of the facts related to the Fall of man as they actually took place, and this historical record is approved in the New Testament See II Corinthians How did it all happen? And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? The chief agent in the Fall of man was an evil spirit of unusual power and cleverness, no other than Satan himself Revelation Satan did not appear to Eve as one writhing, slithering, hideous creature, but as a creature of grace and beauty with the power to appear as an angel of light II Corinthians He suggested that God did not mean what He said. God had given His Word, and now Satan appears on the scene to sow his tares. Our Lord exposed this method of Satan in His parable in Matthew The fact that Adam and Eve had access to all of the trees except one was minimized by Satan, and the fact that they were restricted from partaking of the one tree was magnified as a harsh and unwelcome restraint imposed by God. The temptation involved a direct attack against the Word of God. Today Satan still uses the familiar suggestion that to obey God is to take out of life all of the possible joy and happiness. All the while he knew that he was leading the human race to death. Thus we see the killer at work in Eden luring the human race to its death by means of his lie. Speaking of the Devil, Dr. Did God know that Satan would deceive Eve and the disastrous results that would follow? Certainly He knew, because He is omniscient. Could God have prevented Satan from entering Eden and deceiving Eve? He could, because He is omnipotent. There is no doubt that the whole experience in Eden was a part of the pre-determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God. As we pursue this series of studies in Biblical Doctrines, it will become clearer that, evil being already present in the universe, the creation and fall of man might have been steps toward the final defeat of Satan and the redemption of man and the earth. But whatever view one takes of the foreknowledge, purposes and permissions of God, we are left with the indisputable fact that Adam and Eve made a wrong moral choice. They disobeyed God and chose to follow evil, knowing full well what the consequences would be. Adam was the first man and the father of all men, so by virtue of the solidarity of the race, when Adam sinned the entire race sinned in him. It is true that we all are sinners by choice, but this is not the point of discussion here. God has made it clear in His Word that this all came about through the disobedience of the first man who stood and acted as the representative of his entire posterity. Now we know that David is not so much as suggesting that the sexual relation between his mother and father, whereby he was conceived, was a sinful act. In substance he is saying the same thing that Paul is saying in Romans 5: The connection is natural and real. The account given in Genesis 3 is the basis for the whole argument, so that David and Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit as was Moses, are in agreement that sin entered the human race through the one man Adam. Sin entered through the disobedience of one man and thereby penetrated to all men. All men commit sins because all are infected with the sin principle. And he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Only those who repudiate the authority of the Word of God will challenge the fact of transmitted and inherited sin. None can deny that every individual is free to sin or not to sin, but all choose to sin. Why does every member of the race choose to do wrong? Certainly one person could be found who obeyed God in everything if that person existed. Adam and Eve did this after the Fall. This kind of excuse-making is typical of all mankind. The sovereignty of God and the seduction by the Devil do not eliminate the fact that man perpetrates and

perpetuates sin, therefore he cannot be relieved of the responsibility for it. Adam and Eve were beguiled by Satan, yet they were pronounced guilty and punished by God Genesis 3:

5: Survey of Theology The Doctrine of Human Nature, Sin, and Grace

Human nature has the tendency to pull the human being further and further into sin. If God does not execute His wrath and His justice immediately against a person and instead gives him grace, He gives that person an opportunity to continue to live longer in order that grace may be able to work in his life, and that he be led to repentance instead.

Beliefs Human Nature and the Purpose of Existence Christianity teaches that the universe was created through love by an intelligent power, namely the God of the Bible. Creation was purposeful, not arbitrary, and therefore the universe is not morally neutral, but fundamentally good. In this purposeful creation, everything and everyone is intrinsically valuable. God works in human history to fulfill that purpose. But a complete understanding is beyond human reach. To fulfill the goal of wholeness in an existence perfected by both justice and love, something more is needed. Humans are not expected to accomplish the divine plan alone. Reason is a good gift, sometimes misused for selfish, willful, or prideful purposes. The Christian concept of sin originates in the story of Adam and Eve found in chapters of the Book of Genesis, a story that has central importance for Christians. The story relates the creation by God of the first humans, a man and woman. God placed them in a beautiful garden called Eden, which provided for all their physical needs, as well as companionship with each other and fellowship with God. For these first humans, God had but one rule. In the garden stood "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," whose fruit Adam and Eve should not eat. When Adam and Eve later broke the rule and ate the fruit, God banished them from the garden, condemning them and their descendants to a life of hard work, pain, disease, and eventual death, and submitting the earth itself to "bondage. Some Christians believe that these events actually took place, while others understand this story to be symbolic of the human condition. But all Christians tend to view the story as essentially meaningful for all of humanity—that God is in a personal relationship with humans who must decide how to respond to God. The story illustrates the Christian belief in the inevitability and universality of sin. Some believe in the doctrine of original sin, following Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, who theorized that the rebellion of the first human parents is physically passed on to all human beings from one generation to the next. Others believe that sin originates with Satan, who first tempted Eve and now preys on humankind, seeking souls to devour. Many contemporary Christians seek ways of understanding sin separately from the story of Adam and Eve, believing that we must take responsibility for our tendency to sin and the harm it does to our loving fellowship with both God and each other. Christianity teaches that everyone is equally prone to sin and so it focuses not only on human behavior, but also on human nature. In his letter to the Romans, Paul wrote that "there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" Romans 3: Why might Christians argue that humanity is inherently good? What is meant by reason? Why must it be coupled with grace? Where do Christians believe sin originated? Why is sin part of everyday life? How is it overcome? Try our 3 most popular, or select from our huge collection of unique and thought-provoking newsletters. You can opt out of these offers at any time.

6: "The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr"

You can begin living in God's grace and accept His ongoing, unconditional forgiveness for the sins you still battle, or the memory of past sin in your life. Realize that as a Christian, you still need to recognize and confess sin in your life.

What does Divine Grace do for us? Grace is a sharing in the divine life. It is the infused presence of God, a presence that is supernatural, not merely natural. Human persons are not born in a state of grace. And there is nothing we can do ourselves to earn grace. Rather, divine grace is favor, and it is freely bestowed. It is true that we can reject grace. And so we have to cooperate with it. But it is grace that renders the human person holy and favorable to God. So the first effect of grace is that it sanctifies. No one can be truly holy unless he is in a state of grace. Grace renders the soul beautiful. For whatever is holy is beautiful. If grace is a sharing in the divine life, then grace can only beautify the soul. It has been said that the eyes are the windows of the soul. There is a great deal of truth to this statement. One can readily see the difference between the soul that is elevated by divine grace. There is a splendor in the countenance, a superabundance of a certain humane quality in the eyes that renders the person very attractive. Nor are we strong enough to resist evil. But divine grace enables us to resist evil, and it strengthens the will to do good. In order to do good or resist evil, we have to be able to discern what is truly good and evil. To the perverted mind unenlightened by grace, what is evil appears as good, and what is good appears as evil. Dulling of the intellect is an effect of Original Sin. So grace enlightens the mind, enabling us to see intuitively all sorts of things that we would otherwise be in the dark about. Grace inspires us to good works of all sorts, but most importantly it inspires us to draw closer to God. Grace inspires us to pray, to praise God, to adore God, to trust Him, to petition Him, and to thank Him. And of course, the more we enter deeply into prayer, the more beautiful the soul becomes, which manifests physically in the eyes, and the stronger we are made to resist evil and do good, and the more enlightened the mind becomes. The Gravity of Sin: Through mortal sin, a person turns his back entirely on God and rejects His friendship. Three Conditions of Mortal Sin: Deliberate consent - one must consent freely and deliberately, as opposed to being momentarily overcome by passion. Venial sin is forgiven through holy communion. A number of unrepented venial sins can lead to mortal sin. Between these two is serious sin. Serious sin does not completely destroy grace, but seriously deprives a person of grace. It is more than venial sin and one should not receive communion without Confession. It depends upon the three conditions of sin. The first condition, serious matter, is obvious. But perhaps he was not as free in his decision as he otherwise would have been. He is the past president of the Canadian Fellowship of Catholic Scholars. Deacon Douglas studied Philosophy at St. Visit his website here.

7: Understanding the Human Condition: Christianity - explorefaith

PART THREE LIFE IN CHRIST. SECTION ONE MAN'S VOCATION LIFE IN THE SPIRIT. CHAPTER ONE THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON. ARTICLE 8 SIN. I. MERCY AND SIN. The Gospel is the revelation in Jesus Christ of God's mercy to sinners. The angel announced to Joseph: "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Made in the Image of God The most basic principle of the Christian moral life is the awareness that every person bears the dignity of being made in the image of God. He has given us an immortal soul and through the gifts of intelligence and reason enables us to understand the order of things established in his creation. God has also given us a free will to seek and love what is true, good, and beautiful. Sadly, because of the Fall, we also suffer the impact of Original Sin, which darkens our minds, weakens our wills, and inclines us to sin. Baptism delivers us from Original Sin but not from its effects—especially the inclination to sin, concupiscence. Within us, then, is both the powerful surge toward the good because we are made in the image of God, and the darker impulses toward evil because of the effects of Original Sin. Thus we speak of the value, dignity, and goal of human life, even with its imperfections and struggles. Human life, as a profound unity of physical and spiritual dimensions, is sacred. It is distinct from all other forms of life, since it alone is imprinted with the very image of its Creator. The Responsible Practice of Freedom The second element of life in Christ is the responsible practice of freedom. Without freedom, we cannot speak meaningfully about morality or moral responsibility. Human freedom is more than a capacity to choose between this and that. It is the God-given power to become who he created us to be and so to share eternal union with him. God gave us intelligence and the capacity to act freely. Ultimately, human freedom lies in our free decision to say "yes" to God. In contrast, many people today understand human freedom merely as the ability to make a choice, with no objective norm or good as the goal. The Understanding of Moral Acts Another important foundation of Christian morality is the understanding of moral acts. Every moral act consists of three elements: For an individual act to be morally good, the object, or what we are doing, must be objectively good. Some acts, apart from the intention or reason for doing them, are always wrong because they go against a fundamental or basic human good that ought never to be compromised. Direct killing of the innocent, torture, and rape are examples of acts that are always wrong. Such acts are referred to as intrinsically evil acts, meaning that they are wrong in themselves, apart from the reason they are done or the circumstances surrounding them. The goal, end, or intention is the part of the moral act that lies within the person. For this reason, we say that the intention is the subjective element of the moral act. If we are motivated to do something by a bad intention—even something that is objectively good—our action is morally evil. It must also be recognized that a good intention cannot make a bad action something intrinsically evil good. We can never do something wrong or evil in order to bring about a good. This is the meaning of the saying, "the end does not justify the means" Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. When the existence of sin is denied it can result in spiritual and psychological damage because it is ultimately a denial of the truth about ourselves. The Formation of Conscience The formation of a good conscience is another fundamental element of Christian moral teaching. Conscience represents both the more general ability we have as human beings to know what is good and right and the concrete judgments we make in particular situations concerning what we should do or about what we have already done. Moral choices confront us with the decision to follow or depart from reason and the divine law. A good conscience makes judgments that conform to reason and the good that is willed by the Wisdom of God. A good conscience requires lifelong formation. Each baptized follower of Christ is obliged to form his or her conscience according to objective moral standards. The Word of God is a principal tool in the formation of conscience when it is assimilated by study, prayer, and practice. The prudent advice and good example of others support and enlighten our conscience. The authoritative teaching of the Church is an essential element in our conscience formation. Finally, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, combined with regular examination of our conscience, will help us develop a morally sensitive conscience. The Excellence of Virtues The Christian moral life is one that seeks to cultivate and practice virtue. An effective moral life demands the practice of

both human and theological virtues. Human virtues form the soul with the habits of mind and will that support moral behavior, control passions, and avoid sin. Virtues guide our conduct according to the dictates of faith and reason, leading us toward freedom based on self-control and toward joy in living a good moral life. Compassion, responsibility, a sense of duty, self-discipline and restraint, honesty, loyalty, friendship, courage, and persistence are examples of desirable virtues for sustaining a moral life. Historically, we group the human virtues around what are called the Cardinal Virtues. The four Cardinal Virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. There are a number of ways in which we acquire human virtues. They are acquired by frequent repetition of virtuous acts that establish a pattern of virtuous behavior. There is a reciprocal relationship between virtue and acts because virtue, as an internal reality, disposes us to act externally in morally good ways. Yet it is through doing good acts in the concrete that the virtue within us is strengthened and grows. The human virtues are also acquired through seeing them in the good example of others and through education in their value and methods to acquire them. Stories that inspire us to want such virtues help contribute to their growth within us. They are gained by a strong will to achieve such ideals. The Theological Virtues of faith, hope, and charity love are those virtues that relate directly to God. These are not acquired through human effort but, beginning with Baptism, they are infused within us as gifts from God. They dispose us to live in relationship with the Holy Trinity. Faith, hope, and charity influence human virtues by increasing their stability and strength for our lives. Each of the Ten Commandments forbids certain sins, but each also points to virtues that will help us avoid such sins. Virtues such as generosity, poverty of spirit, gentleness, purity of heart, temperance, and fortitude assist us in overcoming and avoiding what are called the seven deadly or Capital Sins—pride, avarice or greed, envy, anger, lust, gluttony, and sloth or laziness—which are those sins that engender other sins and vices. Love, Rules and Grace Our culture frequently exalts individual autonomy against community and tradition. This can lead to a suspicion of rules and norms that come from a tradition. This can also be a cause of a healthy criticism of a legalism that can arise from concentrating on rules and norms. Advocates of Christian morality can sometimes lapse into a legalism that leads to an unproductive moralizing. There is no doubt that love has to be the essential foundation of the moral life. But just as essential in this earthly realm are rules and laws that show how love may be applied in real life. In heaven, love alone will suffice. In this world, we need moral guidance from the Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the Precepts of the Church and other rules to see how love works. Love alone, set adrift from moral direction, can easily descend into sentimentality that puts us at the mercy of our feelings. Popular entertainment romanticizes love and tends to omit the difficult demands of the moral order. In our permissive culture, love is sometimes so romanticized that it is separated from sacrifice. Because of this, tough moral choices cannot be faced. The absence of sacrificial love dooms the possibility of an authentic moral life. Scripturally and theologically, the Christian moral life begins with a loving relationship with God, a covenant love made possible by the sacrifice of Christ. The Commandments and other moral rules are given to us as ways of protecting the values that foster love of God and others. They provide us with ways to express love, sometimes by forbidding whatever contradicts love. The moral life requires grace. The Catechism speaks of this in terms of life in Christ and the inner presence of the Holy Spirit, actively enlightening our moral compass and supplying the spiritual strength to do the right thing. The grace that comes to us from Christ in the Spirit is as essential as love and rules and, in fact, makes love and keeping the rules possible.

8: What does Divine Grace do for us?

It is easy for us to think of sin only in terms of I John , "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." This verse, however, is a good place to begin. This verse, however, is a good place to begin.

However, since these texts are not our main concern, I give them only brief attention. Here Rahner analyzes a single question in St. How can the human intellect know any non-sensible thing or God? Thomas provides three modes of this type of metaphysical apprehension: Thus we understand truth by considering a thing of which we possess the truth; and God, as Dionysius says Div. Other incorporeal substances we know, in the present state of life, only by way of remotio [remotio] or by some comparison [comparatio It is clear that Rahner focuses his attention in SW on excessus. He writes, The excessus to metaphysics, which takes place in a conversion to the phantasm, is considered as a condition of the truth of the human experience of the world and metaphysics, insofar as it is on the one hand related to the world possessed in sensation and so always consists in a consideration of the thing through a conversion into phantasm, and yet on the other hand it contains a being-set-apart from knowledge and thing, and only in this does the knowledge become truth and the thing become object. In this being-set-apart, truth appears over against the world and thus is possible only in an excessus beyond the world which is possessed in sensation. Therefore it already belongs in the realm of metaphysics. The pre-apprehension itself is the condition of spirit transcending itself toward the infinite being, while still remaining in the world. Rahner also holds that we cannot distinguish knowing from being. It is human being or spirit that knows the worldly reality as well as the infinite absolute or God. Yet, in his theological works we find that Rahner maintains that God is both known and unknown more on this below. Thus, God is both the origin and goal of all reality. In short, God is the horizon of all beings. His other book, HW, deals with the same issues and problems, but it establishes a transition from his more philosophical work to his later theological writings. Theological Methods Philosophizing within Theology As we have seen, Rahner is so eager to put theology into dialogue with philosophy that one cannot find in his writings any position that is not informed by his philosophical perspective. Thus, philosophy refers to the question of human beings within their infinite horizon without any reference to the revealed sources. For Rahner the fact that Christianity can be the answer requires that we do theology. Transcendental-Anthropological Method How does Rahner develop this philosophical theology? It is clear that in building his own system, Rahner always starts from the human as an existential unity, who is simultaneously historical and transcendental. In this sense, categorical experience is a posteriori experience. This condition orients us not only in the direction of experiencing God but also in the direction of experiencing ourselves as transcendental subjects. God that is beyond any category, Rahner now applies it to human beings as well. For Rahner it is important to remember that we do not experience our transcendental without also experiencing our historicity. Human transcendental experience of the infinite always takes place within real history and thus makes human beings always return to themselves. But because we know the world objectively, we are always already present to ourselves in a complete return; in turning out to the world we have turned back to ourselves. SW, Therefore, there is a dynamic oscillation Schweben between transcendental and historicity within human life. We are all fundamentally paradoxical, if not ambivalent. We swing from one pole to another all the time. By dialectical analogy he means the method through which Rahner, oscillated constantly between unifying dynamism and conceptual distinction and therefore united dialectically while still holding in distinction the traditional antinomies of Christian thought—God and the world, spirit and matter, grace and nature viii. Unlike the traditional view of analogy of being, Rahner understands the analogous language about God in his perspective of Schweben. To do this, I choose to mine his brief yet richly stated views in FCF about the central truth of the Christian faith. Interestingly, Rahner also expands this short statement into three brief creedal statements theological, anthropological, and future-oriented in the last part of FCF , formulating them within a Trinitarian scheme. Rahner eventually expands the meaning of divine self-communication into four dyadic groups: In this context, Rahner distinguishes efficient causality from formal causality. In efficient causality the effect is always different from the cause. Thus, once again, we find here a typically Rahnerian Schweben. I only need to

add an important point here regarding the issue of sin. He rejects the traditional understanding of original sin as biologically transmitted through Adam and Eve. Rather, original sin refers to the fact that guilt is universal and ineradicable. While the former refers to the ontological dimension, the latter to the everyday categorical dimension. When Rahner talks about supernatural existential he criticizes both traditional scholasticism and the nouvelle theologie particularly of Henri de Lubac of his own era. Yet, it is not merely an ideal reality in the future. They are not to be equated, since there is also the history of guilt within the world history. Yet, they are also not to be separated, as if the history of salvation is another extramundane reality unrelated to human concrete history. With regard to the notion of revelation, Rahner maintains that the universal history of salvation is also the history of revelation. He distinguishes two kinds of revelation: While the first refers to the experience of God that could happen anywhere and for everyone, the latter is an expression of the former within special and categorical ways, which culminates in the revelation of Jesus Christ. This leads Rahner to say that there should be a possibility for all persons to be saved. Yet, on the other hand, the Catholic tradition holds a belief that salvation is possible only through faith in Jesus Christ and the membership into the Church. There are some limitations of classic Christological formula suggested by the Council of Chalcedon A. Rahner feels that it does not reflect on "the contemporary mentality which sees the world from an evolutionary point of view" Rahner , by focusing on the person of Christ in his unique individuality and ignoring any possibility of combining the event of Christ with the process of human history as a whole. Furthermore, the Chalcedon formula adopted strange philosophical concepts such as nature and hypostatic union which are no longer used to explain and interpret our experiences. Thus, Rahner introduces transcendental Christology which interprets the event and person of Christ in relation to the essential structure of the human person, reflecting on the essential conditions of all human experiences, conditions which transcend any one, particular kind of experience Rahner, Before beginning with his transcendental Christology, it will be helpful for us to look at his basic insights on Christology within an evolutionary view of the world. According to Rahner, Christian faith claims that all things in the world come from the one same origin, God. It means that in spite of their differences, there is "an inner similarity and commonality" among things, which forms a single world. This commonality is most clearly disclosed in a human being in a form of the unity of spirit and matter. In other words, it is only in a human person that spirit and matter can be experienced in their real essence and in their unity. On the other hand, matter is the condition which makes human beings estranged from themselves towards other objects in the world and makes possible an immediate intercommunication with other spiritual creatures in time and space. Of course, there is an essential difference between spirit and matter, but not understood as an essential opposition. The relationship between the two can be said as "the intrinsic nature of matter to develop towards spirit" Rahner, This kind of becoming from matter to spirit can be called as self-transcendence which "can be only understood as taking place by the power of the absolute fullness of being" Rahner, Furthermore, as Rahner asserts, the evolutionary view of the world allows us to consider that humanity is nothing but the latest stage of the self-transcendence of matter. It is in a human being where the nature becomes conscious of itself. It is in a human being where the specific characteristic of the reality which are "his presence to himself and his relationship to the absolute totality of reality" comes to be Rahner, The uniqueness of the status of a human being in the cosmos is that this cosmic self-consciousness takes places in its own unique way in each individual person. And if the evolution explained in this way has any ultimate and one-way direction at all, this process must also have a final result and it must exist. Christian faith claims that the cosmos reaches its final fulfillment when it receives the immediate self-communication of its own ground in the spiritual creatures which are its goal and its high point Rahner, What, then, is the place of Christ in this whole process of self-transcendence of the world? According to Rahner, the whole process of the self-consciousness of cosmos has always and necessarily to do with the process of the intercommunication of spiritual subjects for otherwise, there is no way to retain the unity of the process. It takes place only if the subjects freely accept it, and only then forms a common history in a sense that "it is addressed to all men in their intercommunication" Rahner, In this scheme, the saviour refers to a historical person "who signifies the beginning of the absolute self-communication of God which is moving towards its goal, that beginning which indicates that this self-communication for everyone has taken place irrevocably and has been victoriously

inaugurated" Rahner, In order to be fulfilled, this event should have "a concrete tangibility in history" Rahner, According to Rahner, a transcendental Christology "presupposes an understanding of the relationship of mutual conditioning and mediation in human existence between what is transcendently necessary and what is concretely and contingently historical" Rahner, It is a kind of relationship between the two elements in such a way that "the transcendental element is always an intrinsic condition of the historical element in the historical self" while "in spite of its being freely posited, the historical element co-determines existence in an absolute sense" Rahner, What is the starting point for a transcendental Christology? Rahner claims that it is "the experiences which man always and inescapably has" Rahner, What, then, are these experiences that a human being always have? How does Rahner develop his transcendental Christology? First, a human being was created to freely transcend himself or herself and objects in the world towards the incomprehensible Mystery called God. Here Rahner suggests two possibilities of human salvation either as "fulfillment in an absolute sense" which means the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth or as "a historical event within history" Rahner, Here, Rahner makes a significant claim with respect to the character of the savior as exemplary and absolute: We are presupposing here the anti-individualistic conviction that, given the unity of the world and of history from the view point of both God and the world, such an "individual" destiny has "exemplary" significance for the world as a whole. Such a man with this destiny is what is meant by an "absolute saviour. Rahner, Strangely enough, Rahner says that the task of a transcendental Christology is not to claim that this savior "has been found precisely in Jesus of Nazareth" because it "belong[s] to the experience of history itself which cannot be deduced" Rahner, , but that it "allows one to search for, and in his search to understand, what he has already found in Jesus of Nazareth" Rahner Rahner feels that the savior described by his transcendental Christology is not different from the one expressed by the classic Christological formulations of Chalcedon which used a concept of hypostatic union to claim Jesus as the Christ. Then, the next task for Rahner is to articulate the meaning of the hypostatic union. What does it mean to say that God became man? Does it mean that God is dressed up as a man or as a strange mixture of the divine and the human? Here the issue again is how to understand the meaning of being a human being. At this point, one may raise a question about how God become something other than Godhead for God is the immutable One who is not subject to change. Rahner escapes from this dilemma by emphasizing "the self-emptying of God, his becoming, the kenosis and genesis of God himself" Rahner, He says that He can become insofar as, in establishing the other which comes from him, he himself becomes what has come from him, without having to become in his own and original self. God "assumes by creating" and also "creates by assuming," that is, he creates by emptying himself, and therefore, of course, he himself is in the emptying. He creates the human reality by the very fact that he assumes it as his own. Therefore, it is legitimate for Rahner to assert that God "who is not subject to change in himself can himself be subject to change in something else" Rahner, This is what the doctrine of the Incarnation teaches us:

9: Grace in Christianity - Wikipedia

JUDGMENT AND GRACE. Luke's version of the triumphal entry is a story of both God's grace and God's judgment. Palm Sunday is an appropriate time to reflect on both. Later this week Jesus will be tortured and killed. Surely here human sin reaches a highpoint. Humanity nails Jesus to the cross and thereby rejects God's offer of salvation.

To help us understand those 3 categories—imagine in our modern world what the penalties would be if you: These are what we might even call misdemeanors. It has to do with "missing the mark. To get the real feeling for the meaning of this word sin, read this short piece written by a Jewish Rabbi. There was a death penalty for these sins. It also had a death penalty. It meant to "break away from authority. It is the sin of "rebellion against God," which at the end of the day, is really the worst sin of all because it is willful sin, which is never repented of This sin is not unpardonable because God refuses to forgive. It is only unpardonable because it is based upon a deep spirit of willful permanent rebellion. Nor did animal sacrifices cover the sin of rebellion on a daily basis. These had a stronger penalty than an animal sacrifice. You could not take a dove down to the temple for murder! There was a death penalty in ancient Israel for capital offences such as these. But God had a greater purpose for David and when David confessed His sins to God and repented deeply—he was forgiven. God still required that David pay for his sin with the loss of the baby he and Bathsheba had. Grace from God is not a free license to sin Also, Paul listed certain types of sins as being the ones which keep people out of the Kingdom of God. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. Had David not repented, he would not have received forgiveness from God at all. Even Paul himself had committed "murders. Before God called him, Paul was the reason that a lot of Christians were dragged off and executed. The eloquent Stephen was one of the martyrs that Paul stood by and saw murdered at his behest. A symbolic gesture indeed! Yet, we know that Paul will be in the kingdom of God. Like David, He did not continue to repeat his old bad behavior and sins. It is the repeat offenders that refuse to repent that are in big trouble, especially after they understand the truth. We have to stop sinning before we can get grace or pardon. We know that Paul is talking about people being kept out of the kingdom of God because of chronic sins. It is true that all sins can be forgiven by God if repented of, but the hard part is getting the sinner to repent first. Thankfully, God is always ready to forgive us when we do repent. Most importantly to remember is that grace is given to the humble. It is not given to those who are deep down evil such as serial killers or those who are knowingly and blatantly rebellious against God. Grace is given to those who want to repent and are struggling against their own human weakness, no matter what they have done in the past. The writer of Hebrews gives us the correct view of sin and of grace. The word grace is used 8 times in the book of Hebrews, so we know that the writer was very familiar with the subject. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? How does it do that? Willful sin done with a rebellious attitude is tantamount to rebellion or treason against God. If willful sinners have full knowledge of God and what He requires of them and yet, they have a rebellious attitude then they have entered the dangerous area called "the unpardonable sin. It is not possible. In Hebrews, chapter eight, God describes the New Covenant, which you must be under to receive eternal life. The New Covenant is about repentance. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. If we were to ask God for the most important thing that He could possibly give us, it would not be for a single incidence of grace but it would be for a repentant heart and that He write His law in our hearts and in our minds because that my friend, is the New Covenant

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