

Ephesians 2:3: Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and **were by nature children of wrath**, even as the rest.

Consider the following chart in light of the biblical truths we have just studied.

| Semi-Pelagian | | Augustinian | |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Man is naturally able to understand and believe the Gospel apart from Divine enablement. | Natural Ability | Natural Inability | Man is naturally unable to understand and believe the Gospel apart from Divine enablement. |

Question #119: Does Scripture support the idea that man is “naturally able” to understand and believe the Gospel apart from divine enablement? _____ List specific statements from Scripture to support your answer. _____

The fact is that divine enablement given by God’s grace is **necessary** to understand and believe the Gospel. This divine enablement is called **regeneration**. We will discuss regeneration at length below.

The following statements reflect the biblical basis of the Augustinian view of Salvation.

Westminster Confession of Faith - Of Free Will

3. Man, by his Fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

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Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and are by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto; and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, or to dispose themselves to reformation

Not sick, but dead

The Bible plainly declares that unredeemed sinners are thoroughly corrupt in their whole being. It describes unredeemed humanity as not good, unable to do good, hating God’s truth, drinking in sin like water, defiled in both conscience and mind, and unable to please God or submit to the law of God.

Romans 7:18: For I know **that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh**; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

Isaiah 64:6: For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And **all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment**; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Job 15:14-16: ¹⁴What is man, that he should be pure, Or he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? ¹⁵Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, And the heavens are not pure in His sight; ¹⁶**How much less one who is detestable and corrupt, Man, who drinks iniquity like water!**

John 3:19-20: ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and **men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil.** ²⁰**For everyone who does evil hates the light,** and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

Titus 1:15: To the pure, all things are pure; but to **those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.**

Romans 8:6-8: ⁶For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷because **the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so;** ⁸**and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**

Question #120: Based on the verses referenced above, write a brief character sketch of a fallen sinner. _____

Sin has thoroughly corrupted the nature of mankind. It has not simply inflicted serious wounds; it has killed our ability to respond to God. **The Bible plainly declares** that, apart from a divine working of new life, we are **dead in transgressions and sins** and wholly insensitive to spiritual things.

Colossians 2:13-14: ¹³And when **you were dead in your transgressions** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Ephesians 2:1-2: ¹And **you were dead in your trespasses and sins,** ²in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

All Christian believers **were dead in trespasses and sins** before God gave them new life. The Lord Jesus Himself frequently refers to unbelievers as “dead” and in desperate need of regeneration. Without regeneration **no one can see the kingdom of God** and come to faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:3-6, 6:65). The just consequence of Adam’s original sin was the spiritual death of all his descendants (Romans 5:12-19). All human beings are physically born **spiritually dead** and thus live **in bondage to trespass and sin**. In that condition, they are unable to hear, understand, and respond to the things of God and His kingdom (1 Corinthians 2:14; Romans 8:5-8). The Bible speaks clearly and definitively on human depravity, i.e., natural inability to respond rightly to God.

Romans 5:12-19: ¹²Therefore, just as through **one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men,** because all sinned—. . . ¹⁷For if **by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one,** much more those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸So then as **through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men,** even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. ¹⁹For as **through one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners,** even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

John 5:21-24: ²¹For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so **the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.** ²²For not even the Father judges anyone, but He

has given all judgment to the Son, ²³in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. ²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but **has passed out of death into life.**

Matthew 8:22: But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me; and **allow the dead to bury their own dead.**"

Luke 15:22-24, 32: ²²But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; ²³and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and us eat and be merry; ²⁴for **this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again;** he was lost and has been found." And they began to be merry. . . .

³²"But we had to be merry and rejoice, for **this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live,** and was lost and has been found."

1 John 3:14: We know that we have **passed out of death into life,** because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

Consider how well this image of physical death corresponds to our sinful state apart from regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Dead people cannot see, hear, move, talk, think, understand, or respond to any kind of stimulus in any way. They are wholly unresponsive and unable to change.

John 11:43-44: ⁴³And when He had said these things, **He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."** ⁴⁴**He who had died came forth,** bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Romans 5:6: For **while we were still helpless,** at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Jeremiah 13:23: **Can the Ethiopian change his skin Or the leopard his spots?** Then you also can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil.

Consider the statement by **Albert Barnes** concerning man's dead condition: "*A corpse is insensible. It sees not, and hears not, and feels not. The sound of music, and the voice of friendship and of alarm, do not arouse it. The rose and the lily breath forth their fragrance around it, but the corpse perceives it not. The world is busy and active around it, but it is unconscious of it all. It sees no beauty in the landscape; hears not the voice of a friend; looks not upon the glorious sun and stars; and is unaffected by the running stream and the rolling ocean. So with the sinner in regard to the spiritual and eternal world, he sees no beauty in religion; he hears not the call of God; he is unaffected by the dying love of the Saviour; and he has no interest in eternal realities. In all these he feels no more concern, and sees no more beauty, than a dead man does in the world around him. Such is, in fact, the condition of a sinful world. There is, indeed, life and energy and motion. There are vast plans and projects, and the world is intensely active. But, in regard to religion, all is dead. The sinner sees no beauty there; and no human power can arouse him to act for God, any more than human power can rouse the sleeping dead, or open the sightless eye-balls on the light of day. The same power is needed in the conversion of a sinner which is needed in raising the dead; and one and the other alike demonstrate the omnipotence of him who can do it.*"²⁵

Question #121: In your own words, describe the meaning and consequences of being dead in trespasses and sins. _____

²⁵ (from Barnes' Notes on Eph 2:1, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc.)

Plainly stated, mankind is dead and in need of new life. Correcting our sinful state requires resurrection from the dead, something only God can do. The Bible plainly declares that salvation is the *monergistic* work of God,²⁶ by which He infuses spiritual life into the spiritually dead. The theological term for this is regeneration.

Ephesians 2:4-6: ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵even **when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ** (by grace you have been saved), ⁶and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

John 5:21: For **just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.**

Note how the Bible attributes salvation *wholly to the work of God* by affirming the inability of fallen sinners to come to Christ apart from divine grace. Note well from these verses that no one can be saved apart from God's saving work of *regeneration*.

John 6:44, 65: ⁴⁴**No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him;** and I will raise him up on the last day. . . . ⁶⁵And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, **that no one can come to Me, unless it has been granted him from the Father.**"

Matthew 19:23-26: ²³And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴And again I say to you, **it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.**" ²⁵And when the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁶And looking upon them Jesus said to them, **"With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."**

Titus 3:4-7: ⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, ⁵He saved us, **not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,** ⁶whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Note also how the Bible attributes salvation *wholly to the work of God* by affirming God's divine enablement to be a *monergistic* work.

Deuteronomy 30:6: Moreover **the LORD your God will circumcise your heart** and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live.

Ezekiel 36:26-27: ²⁶Moreover, **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.** ²⁷**And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes,** and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

1 Peter 1:3: ³Blessed be **the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**, who according to His great mercy **has caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Matthew 11:27: **All things have been handed over to Me by My Father;** and no one knows the Son, except the Father; **nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.**

John 3:27: John answered and said, **"A man can receive nothing, unless it has been given him from heaven."**

²⁶ *Monergism* holds that the "grace of God is the only efficient cause in beginning and effecting conversion." It is the opposite of *synergism*, which affirms "the doctrine of divine and human cooperation in conversion." (*The Evangelical Dictionary of Salvation*, Walter A. Elwell, editor. 729, 1063)

Question #122: In your own words, describe what the Bible teaches about: (1) man's inability;
(2) God's monergistic work of conversion. _____
