

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE **(LESSON NINE)**

THE RADICAL CORRUPTION OF MAN **(PART THREE)**

It is important for us to consider what the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has said concerning the radical corruption of fallen, unregenerate human beings. We have already considered a part of His statement to Nicodemus in **John 3:3-8** in support of the view that an individual who is *“dead in trespasses and sins”* must first be born again or regenerated by the Holy Spirit in order for his or her radical corruption to be overcome.

We will now examine a few verses in the **sixth** chapter of the Gospel according to **John** in which our Lord expresses a definitive position regarding the doctrine of the radical corruption of the human race.

In **John 6:63-65**, our Lord says, *“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.”*

In verse **65**, He makes a very emphatic statement. He says, *“No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.”*

The **New English Translation** renders the words of Jesus as follows: *“No one can come to me unless the Father has allowed him to come.”*

The **Message** offers the following translation: *“This is why I told you earlier that no one is capable of coming to me on his own. You get to me only as a gift from the Father.”*

The first two words of the statement convey a universal negative. Jesus says, **“No one”** or **“No man.”** A universal negative is a proposition that denies something of all members of a class. It is all inclusive and therefore, there are no possible exceptions. What we have here is an absolute negative. What our Lord is saying is that **it is not possible** for any person to come to Him unless that person is allowed or enabled to do so by the Father!

The third word is also an important one in helping us to appreciate the full significance of the statement of Jesus. It is the word **“can.”** The word is a translation of the Greek word **dumi** which has reference to ability or possibility. Please note that our Lord does not say, **“No one may come to me.”** He says, **“No one can come to me.”** The word **“may”** is generally used in the context of permission. The word **“can”** on the other hand is used in the context of ability. In saying that no one **can** come to Him, Jesus is not conveying the idea that persons have the ability to come to Him but do not have the permission to do so. He is stating unequivocally that no person has the ability to come to Him!

Now what is it that Jesus says no one has the ability to do? He says that no human being has the ability **“to come to Him.”** My brothers and sisters, human beings in and of themselves do not have the ability to come to Jesus. These are not the words of John or Paul or Peter or Luther or Calvin or Bartlett. These are Jesus’ own words printed in red lettering in many of your Bibles!

Beloved ones, let us think carefully. Did our Lord say that there are a few persons who do not have the ability to come to Him? Did He say that many persons do not have the ability to come to Him? Did He say that the vast majority of persons do not have the ability to come to Him? The answer to these questions is No, no and no! What He said was that not even one person has the ability to come to Him! **“Unless.”**

The word **“unless”** introduces an exception. It points to a necessary condition that must be met in order for any person to come to Him.

What is it that Jesus identifies as the necessary condition that must be met in order for anyone to come to Him? The necessary condition is the Father enabling that person, or giving that person the ability to come. Without that condition being met, it is impossible for any person to come. It is important for us to understand that this necessary condition cannot be met by human beings. It can only be met by God!

Why is this so? It is so because of the radical corruption of fallen unregenerate human beings. In **Lesson 7**, we explained that the word “radical” has its root in the Latin word **radix**, which means “root or core.” We noted that the word refers to something that permeates to the root or core of a thing. The Biblical view is that the effects of the Fall extend and penetrate to the very core of our being, rendering us incapable of any spiritual good including the ability to come to Jesus Christ. If any person does come to Jesus, it is only because the Father has given to him or her the ability to do so!

Let us look again at verse **65**. What does our Lord say? He says, *“Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.”* The words *“therefore I said unto you,”* indicate that he had made a similar statement earlier in His discourse. Where is this similar statement found? It is found in **John 6:44**. In this verse, our Lord made the following statement: *“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

As in verse **65**, the first two words of verse **44** convey a universal negative - *“No man.”* Remember that a universal negative is a proposition that denies something of all members of a class.

As in verse **65**, the word *“can”* in verse **44** refers to ability or possibility. Jesus states that it is an impossibility in the nature of the case for any person to come to Him. **“Except.”**

In verse **65**, the word *“unless”* introduced an exception. Similarly, in verse **44**, the word *“except”* introduces an exception and points to a necessary condition that must be met in order for anyone to come to Him. The necessary condition stated in verse **44**, is the father *“drawing”* that person. The **Message** renders verse **44** as follows: *“You’re not in charge here. The Father who sent me is in charge. He draws people to me — that’s the only way you’ll ever come. Only then do I do my work, putting people together, setting them on their feet, ready for the End.”*

Brothers and sisters, the Lord Jesus Christ in this verse makes an emphatic and definitive statement. He categorically denies the possibility of any human being coming to Him if that human being has not first been *“drawn”* by Almighty God!

Again, we ask why is this the case? Why does Jesus say that it is impossible for any person to come to Him unless they are drawn by the Father? The inescapable answer is that because of the radical corruption that human beings inherit by virtue of original sin, all persons are born with a moral inability to receive the gospel by faith. Every human being has by nature a hostility to God and to the things of God, and they will not - indeed they cannot - come to Jesus Christ. This moral inability and hostility must be overcome by the Holy Spirit in His work of regeneration. The Lord God must give fallen human beings the ability to believe before they can believe.

Now, what exactly does Jesus mean when He says that the Father has to *“draw”* a person to Jesus Christ? There are persons who argue that the word *“draw”* here means to *“woo,”* or *“entice,”* or *“invite,”* or *“attract.”* As far as the persons who hold this view are concerned, the verse could properly be translated in the following way: *“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me woo, or entice or invite or attract him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

According to this view, every single human being is wooed or enticed or invited or attracted by the Father. Those who are of this persuasion believe that those who are so wooed, enticed, invited or attracted by the Father, may successfully resist His wooing, enticing, inviting or attracting. Those who resist are lost while those who do not resist are eventually saved.

But does the Greek word that is translated “draw” in **John 6:44** mean to “woo, entice, invite or attract,” or does it mean something else? The word “draw” in verse **44** is a translation of the Greek word **helkuo** which both literally and figuratively means “to drag!” If we consider other verses in the New Testament where this Greek word **helkuo** is used, it may help us to appreciate the meaning of our Lord’s statement in verse **44**.

John 2:7-8

*“Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, **Draw** out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.”*

John 4:7

*“There cometh a woman of Samaria to **draw** water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.”*

John 4:15

*“The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to **draw**.”*

John 12:32

*“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will **draw** all men unto me.”*

John 21:6

*“And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to **draw** it for the multitude of fishes.”*

Acts 16:19

*“And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and **drew** them into the marketplace unto the rulers.”*

James 2:6

*“But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and **draw** you before the judgment seats?”*

Beloved ones, if we are honest, we would have to admit that there is no possibility of applying any meaning remotely similar to wooing, enticing, inviting or attracting to the words “draw” or “drew” in any of these verses, except **John 12:32**. You will, no doubt, notice the similarity between that verse and **John 6:44** as it relates to the radical corruption of fallen human beings. In every other instance, we get the sense that some force or compulsion is meant.

This “drawing” of the Father is not to be understood of moral persuasion, or of being prevailed upon by miracles or other signs. This “drawing” refers to the internal and powerful influence of the grace of God, for this act of drawing is something distinct from, and superior to, both doctrine and miracles. The persons to whom Jesus was speaking had heard the doctrine of Christ and had seen his miracles and yet they did not believe. Something more than doctrine and miracles is necessary to overcome the radical corruption that prevents human beings from desiring God and believing Him for salvation. God in His drawing of fallen, unregenerate persons who are “dead in trespasses and sins,” makes them willing in the day of His power (**Psalm 110:3**).

It should be clear to us then, that when Jesus says in **John 6:44**, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him,” He is referring to a Divine compulsion. This verse all by itself should be enough to settle the issue once and for all in respect of the radical corruption of fallen, unregenerate human beings and their absolute inability to come to Jesus Christ, because He Himself has said it is impossible for them to do so unless the Father compels them! We must bear in mind Brothers and sisters, that it was, “when we were yet **without strength**, in due time Christ died **for the ungodly** (**Romans 5:6**),” and that it was when we “were **dead in trespasses and sins**” that God made us alive.

Christians may argue vehemently about whether or not to accept the teachings and opinions of even the most learned theologians, but no Christian who is in his or her right mind would dispute the teaching of Jesus Christ Himself, would they?

In **John 3:6-7**, our Lord said to Nicodemus, *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”* Here we have the fundamental point of the radical corruption of fallen, unregenerate human beings: *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh,”* and according to **John 6:63**, *“The flesh profiteth nothing.”* If it is true that God woos, or entices, or invites, or attracts persons to Him and all we have to do is cooperate and yield to God’s wooing or enticing or inviting or attracting, while we are still in the flesh, then the flesh would profit something! In fact, the flesh would profit a great deal because our choice made while we are still in the flesh would be the deciding factor without which we could never be saved, no matter how much God wanted to save us!

Now the following questions may be asked: “Does the Father “draw” every single individual to Jesus, or is it only a certain number?” “Are the persons who are drawn to Jesus by the Father able to successfully resist His drawing, or will they all come to Him without fail? What is our Lord’s view in respect of these questions? Let us recall what our Lord said in verse **44**: *“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”* In verse **37** He says, *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”* Did you hear that beloved? *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me!”* Every single person who is “given” or “drawn” to Jesus by the Father will come. There are to be no exceptions! Those who come are not able to successfully resist the “drawing” of Almighty God!

Again, beloved ones, if we are honest, will we not see the obvious inference? If **every** person who is given to Jesus by the Father actually come to Him, then is it not reasonable to assume that those who do not come were not “given” to Him or “drawn” by the Father? The words of Jesus in the two verses immediately preceding verse **37** are very interesting: *“And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.”* The persons to whom Jesus addressed these words had seen Him in the flesh and had witnessed His miracles yet they did not believe Him, they did not “come” to Him. He then says to these unbelievers, *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”* It is as though our Lord was saying in effect, “In contra-distinction to you who do not believe, there are those who will believe in me. They will believe in me because the Father, by the working of His mighty power, has given them the ability to do so.”

In **John 10:24-28**, we have the record of a similar scenario: *“Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. **But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”***

Brothers and sisters, God will lead to saving faith all those who He plans to redeem. Their redemption is certain because it is secured by the sovereign purpose and power of God Himself to “draw” them to Jesus. This is a necessity in the nature of the case because the radical corruption of fallen human beings renders them entirely incapable of responding to God without the prior operation of his mighty power in their inner-heart life.