What is human nature?
**Introduction**

The previous lesson focused on the fact that Satan holds sway over the nations. As prince of the power of the air, he broadcasts moods, feelings and attitudes such as hostility, lust and greed around the globe, affecting and influencing all people.

But, can all the world’s evils be attributed solely to the direct actions of Satan?

Although Satan is the catalyst who stirs up violence, crime, wars and insolvable dilemmas, we also find his very nature operating in a place that has traditionally been overlooked by mankind. Inside every human being we find what is called human nature. Human nature is somewhat of a misnomer, for it is Satan’s very nature operating in the mind of every human.

The Bible reveals precisely when and how human nature first manifested its presence. We now begin this lesson by showing the origin of human nature.

**LESSON 18**

The Origin of Human Nature

(1) Did God give Adam a choice as to which tree—the Tree of Life or the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—he could eat from? Genesis 2:8-9.

(2) Did God specifically warn Adam which tree not to eat from, and of the consequences of eating from it? Genesis 2:16-17.

(3) Later, when Satan appeared to Eve in the form of a serpent, did she understand the instructions that God had originally given concerning which tree was forbidden? Genesis 3:2-3.

Comment: The fact that Adam and Eve were not to touch this tree was revealing.

(4) Should God’s warnings as to what we are to avoid be regarded with the same seriousness as avoiding the forbidden tree? Proverbs 4:14-15; II Timothy 2:23; 3:5; Romans 16:17.

Comment: Anything that God specifically forbids should be avoided with extra caution.


Comment: Satan directly contradicted God by his assertion in verse 4, “you shall not surely die.” Satan was saying in effect, “you can’t rely on God’s word.” Influenced by Satan’s convincing argument, Eve was persuaded to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

(6) After eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, what change came over Adam and Eve? Genesis 3:7.

Comment: The statement “the eyes of them both were opened” pertained to a new awareness that they did not have before eating from the forbidden tree. Even Satan told Eve, “your eyes shall be opened and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (vs. 5). God alone has the prerogative to determine what is good and what is evil. Mankind has the choice as to whether or not to comply with God’s will. Satan’s goal is to pervert man’s perception of his duty to keep God’s laws.

Adam and Eve’s awareness went far beyond their realization of being naked. Genesis 2:25 indicated that before this event, they were naked and were not ashamed. This new mindset brought with it a sense of shame.

When Adam took of the tree that God had forbidden, he took it upon himself to decide between what was right and what was wrong—between good and evil. His decision did “open his eyes,” and the spirit of Satan’s influence did enter the minds of Adam and Eve at this time. Their decision precluded the opportunity to acquire spiritual knowledge and understanding that they could have had by eating from the Tree of Life. Their understanding was now limited to what they could learn through the five physical senses, and human nature came into being for the first time.

(7) Was the sin that Adam and Eve committed the “original sin”? Ezekiel 28:15-16.

Comment: The verses cited in Ezekiel 28 pertain to Satan’s sin, which predated the sin of Adam and Eve by many millions—possibly billions—of years. The one who committed the original sin was Satan.

(8) Besides the physical curses brought upon Adam and Eve and their descendants, what was the immediate, as well as long-term, consequence of their sin? Genesis 3:22-24.

Comment: Their sin resulted in their being cut off from the Tree of Life—along with all mankind.

(9) What other consequence resulted from the sin of Adam and Eve? Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23; Hebrews 9:27.

Comment: Through their actions, Adam and Eve brought the death penalty upon themselves and all mankind.

**The Spirit in Man**

(1) Did God create a spirit in man—a dimension of innate capability empowering the mind to acquire intelligence—making mankind different from animals? Job 32:8; Zechariah 12:1.

Comment: This spirit in man does not refer to the Spirit of God; neither does it refer to what some mistakenly consider a “soul.” The spirit in man is what gives him the ability to reason, dream, hope, and think. The personality of every human being is unique.

(2) Since the spirit in man is limited to the five senses, can he understand spiritual matters? I Corinthians 2:9-11, 14.

(3) Is the spirit in man subject to the laws of God? Romans 8:7.

Comment: Here, we see that because human beings are influenced by Satan, human nature is hostile to God.

(4) Were Adam and Eve hostile toward God from the moment they were created?

Comment: As we have already seen, they were not imme-
diately disobedient or hostile to God. Rather, their minds were neutral until corrupted by Satan. The change in their awareness and their acquisition of human nature did not occur until after they had disobeyed God.

Comment: As children are subjected to the influence of Satan’s broadcast, they eventually take on the spirit of this world. At some point in every youth, the imagination of the heart becomes evil (Gen. 8:21). From such time forward, they become more firmly under the influence of the god of this world. But, as little children, their minds are mostly neutral and more open, honest and humble—representative of the mindset that those called out of this world must acquire.

In summary, the spirit in man gives one the capacity for thought, intelligence and personality. Mankind is physical and carnal, though made in the image of God. After the initial years of childhood in mostly a neutral state of mind, everyone’s human nature is significantly molded and influenced by Satan. God allows these circumstances to continue, as they provide fertile ground for the development of character within those whom He chooses to call.

The Pull of Human Nature

(1) Is the heart (the innermost mind) of man deceitful and wicked? Jeremiah 17:9.
Comment: God uses strong language in describing the heart of man as “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”

Comment: In this account, the Pharisees first asked why Christ’s disciples never followed the tradition of their elders by washing their hands in the manner prescribed by Pharisaical tradition. Christ pointed out that they put their manmade traditions ahead of the Commandments of God. He proceeded to show that it is a man’s thoughts that defile him. All of the attributes mentioned in the above verses are ingrained into human nature.

Comment: Paul listed 17 distinct (though partially overlapping) attributes of human nature. Since these various aspects of human nature are acquired and developed over time from exposure to Satan’s wavelength, the cumulative effect is that human nature reflects SATAN’S NATURE. After these characteristics of Satan’s nature are acquired, they become natural to people—accepted as their own human nature.

(4) How do we know that human nature is acquired and not inherited? II Corinthians 11:2-3.
Comment: Before the serpent beguiled Eve, her mind was neutral. Once she sinned, her mind became corrupted. Paul mentioned that the minds of others could likewise become corrupted by Satan. Thus, we see that human nature is acquired, not inherited.

The World Corrupted

(1) What conditions in the pre-Flood world brought about the necessity of its destruction? Genesis 6:5-6, 12-13.
Comment: The wickedness of mankind was so prominent that all of civilization was corrupted. The definition of corrupt includes: “debased in character; depraved; perverted; wicked; evil; putrid; infected; tainted.” Since God saw that wickedness so dominated civilization, He knew that man had to be destroyed.

Comment: Although Scripture does not explicitly state that Noah preached a warning to the world for 120 years, the timeframe is implied in Genesis 6:3: “…yet his [man’s] days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” Josephus refers to this time as “the 120 years of God’s patience (perhaps while the ark was preparing) till the Deluge…” (Antiquities, Bk. 1, ch. 3). I Peter 3:20 also shows that “the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.” It is unthinkable that Noah would have remained silent during this time before such a calamity to strike the world, especially since he was “a preacher of righteousness” (II Pet. 2:5). The very construction of the ark was a powerful witness, although the pre-Flood world perceived it as fanatical or laughable—until the Flood struck.

From Josephus, we find more about the depravity of the people of this time and of Noah’s response: “But Noah was very uneasy at what they did; and, being displeased at their conduct, persuaded them to change their dispositions and their acts for the better; but, seeing they did not yield to him, but were slaves to their wicked pleasures, he was afraid they would kill him, together with his wife and children, and those they had married; so he departed out of that land” (Ibid., text)

Comment: The depravity and perversion of Sodom and Gomorrah are also representative of the state to which the world will degenerate by the time of Christ’s Return. We find that Lot was “vexed with the filthy [conduct] of the wicked” (II Pet. 2:7). Those who seek God’s way should be vexed by such conduct. We find that those in the prophecy of Ezekiel 9 who are given an identifying mark, and therefore spared, are shown in verse 4 to be those that “sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst [of Jerusalem, typifying all of modern Israel, vs. 9] thereof.” God’s people must be sorely grieved and repulsed by the wickedness of this present world.

(5) What are some of the characteristics of mankind in the last days? II Timothy 3:1-5.
Comment: The inclinations of human nature have culminated in civilization being essentially corrupted, just as we read in Genesis 6:12.

(6) What instructions does God give His people as to how they should receive this world? John 15:19; 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4.
Comment: In 1 John 2:16, the apostle John wrote, “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.”
These lusts appeal to human nature, but are all temporal and will pass away along with this temporal world—“but he that does the will of God abides forever” (vs. 17).

(7) By what means can one avoid being corrupted along with the world? II Peter 1:4; James 1:27; Romans 12:2.
Comment: Partaking of the divine nature means to be molded by God’s Spirit, becoming more like Christ. There is no other way!

(8) How does the world affect God’s people in the last days? Matthew 24:10, 12.
Comment: Due to the pressures and influences of the world, many will become offended, and will betray one another and will hate one another. Their motive will be self-preservation, as opposed to being willing to die for other brethren or those of the world at large.
The reason for this is given in verse 12: “because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” Many will lose the love of God when they tire of swimming against the current of this world, and choose to conform to modern society, with its spirit of lawlessness, self-will and self-preservation. Those who accept such worldly standards become corrupted.

Society Under Satan’s Influence

(1) Where does the influence that inspires human nature come from? Ephesians 2:2-3.
Comment: Before responding to the truth, everyone has walked according to the course of this world, responding to Satan’s broadcast.

Verse 3 discloses the usual pattern of carnal tendency of the lust of the flesh and being “by nature the children of wrath,” even as others—all society.

(2) But is society not a source of enlightenment that heralds the truth wherever it is found? John 3:19.
Comment: Society and public opinion are molded by Satan’s wavelength. Therefore, the general public could never accept or delight in the truth, since the truth would only serve to reprove them (vs. 20).

(3) Though society is corrupt, does the world as a whole aspire to higher levels of morality? I John 5:19.

(4) Does the world perceive the true servants of God as misrepresenting the world? Acts 17:6.
Comment: The whole world has long been upside down. From their inverted perspective, the way of truth appears to be downside up.

In Summary
Satan and his angels manifested their influence upon mankind in the pre-Flood world—“Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished” (II Pet. 3:6). Satan and his angels still dominate this current world, referred to as “this present evil world” in Galatians 1:4. However, all this will change in the near future. Notice: “For unto the angels has he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak” (Heb. 2:5). It is the WORLD TO COME that is the hope of every true Christian. Humanity will learn the way of truth and willingly change with God’s help.

Human nature, within each individual and in all society, works against God’s purpose. Everyone called to the truth has to overcome his own human nature and swim against the current of a hostile society. This is why it can be said that every Christian has three enemies to overcome—Satan, self, and society.

Our booklets UNKNOWN UNTIL NOW — Why Mankind Cannot Solve His Problems and Did God Create HUMAN NATURE? provide more information on this vital subject that everyone must come to recognize.