

# God's Will & Human Nature

by Hilmar von Campe

St. Paul stated in his letter to the Romans (VII, 15 ff.) that his own behavior baffles him, since he finds himself not doing what he really wants to do but doing what he really loathes. His mind, he said, embraces wholeheartedly the commandments of God but in his human nature he observes an entirely different principle at work.

The principle he refers to is the fact that human nature is opposed to God and His will. It is important to realize that it is not the intellect in the first place which rejects God but the inclinations of human nature or lower nature, as some call it. They aim at the satisfaction of one's own desires and not at the satisfaction of God's purposes. There is an inborn conflict within each person - the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, between what one wants for oneself and what is right for others - and there are many different approaches to deal with that conflict. Wrong approaches have disastrous consequences.

Many people eliminate the conflict or even deny that there is one because they consider those desires to be normal expressions of life which need to be satisfied and then they live accordingly. They call that freedom, I am free to do as I please. Others adjust their thinking and argumentation to those inclinations and come up with philosophies which justify giving in to them, they put a nice label to something which is in reality dirty. They call love what is lust, they call good business what is theft, legitimate lifestyle what is perverse, democratic what is cheating, national interest what is a multiplication of the selfishness of their nationals - only to name a few. The result of these approaches is rampant hypocrisy and social chaos since any society which tries to organize itself outside the order of God and on the basis of the lower nature of man cannot last.

Man on his own is unable to prevent himself from following the dictates of human nature as much as he might want to and therefore is bound to do evil and offend God. Evil is everything a person does, plans or thinks which violates God's commandments. It doesn't matter whether it is "little" evil or "much" evil, total and conscious rejection of God or partial and unconscious rejection. This rejection, consequence of the pull of human nature, not only brings man up against God but has destructive consequences in a person's life since it destroys God's loving plan for him or her. It also hurts relations to other people because stepping outside the

moral order of God always happens at the expense of somebody else and very often many other people are affected.

**T**o redeem man God sent His Son Jesus Christ to live in that very human nature which causes all that trouble and connect man through Him with the power of God and enable him to live above his sinful human nature. Jesus took the sins of all humanity upon himself and paid for them with His blood therewith wiping them out.

**T**his of course does not mean that a person who believes in Jesus Christ can now sin to his human nature's delight because he is forgiven. Faith in Jesus implies following in his footsteps, living in the way he lived and taught his followers, "living above sinful human nature".

**H**ow can that be done having just said that man is unable by himself to abstain from doing evil? It can only be done by putting God in charge of one's human nature, allowing Him to control a person in the core of his or her being, substituting the motives directed at self with motives directed at the satisfaction of God. With other words I open myself to God and decide that I want to be ruled by Him and then He can take care of me. This is anyway what He wants to do from the very beginning of my life. He cannot do it when I don't want it because He gave all human beings a free will. Who wants it however must define precisely the motives inside so that it is clear what needs to be substituted. This definition must include the consequences to others of having acted according to them. It means calling a spade a spade in one's own life in order for the specific spade to be eliminated. Another word for spade is sin. Instead of living for myself I begin living for God. Part of it means to make restitution for the damage caused to others by acting on the basis of selfish motives and this applies to governments as well.

**F**rom this follows that God can only come in and control me when I put him in charge of my motives which is not the same as proclaiming a dogma of faith or referring in general terms to Satan. Most people who believe in God still run their own lives, kind of partial allegiance, and fence Him off when He gets close to the core of their being. They don't want anybody, very often including themselves, to know what is going on deep inside. It is the ultimate fear of having to give up oneself. But that is precisely what is needed. Most people have hidden deep down many things they would like to forget - broken relationships, things which have hurt or something they would rather not have done. All of that has to come to the open so that God can heal it and create a new person. The new person is not

chained to sinful human nature but free to do what is right, to care for others and set the nation on God's road. That is real freedom.

**W**hat is it in the core of a person that motivates him or her, what are the motives which run his or her life? Most people live in great illusions about themselves because human beings have the tendency to identify themselves with their good intentions while they judge others according to their deeds. But that is not the reality. What do we find inside ourselves when we are absolutely honest? Is it big self motivated by hate, greed, lust, the fear of what other people think, comfort, the urge to control others? Or is it selfless love for the best in other people, one's own country and other nations? Uncontrolled anger, bad moods, ridiculing the weaknesses of others, self-righteousness, are some expressions of a person centered in self. Love on the other hand is patient, forgiving, always constructive and not out for recognition.

**T**here are three major carnal motivational forces in the core of every human being: 1. the drive for security, 2. the drive for sexual satisfaction, and 3. the drive for control.

1. **T**hat includes the adoration of money and success, to adjust to what other people might think of one, the passion to be right (which is normally accompanied by fear of being wrong). The ambition to be a success destroys many families. The lust for money is an even deadlier force. What about America - a nation under God or a nation running after money? The craving for being loved is a strong force causing countless people to self-destructive behavior. Something similar can be said about the desire to be recognized. People who are governed by any of these forces are not only getting themselves into trouble but bound to hurt others and destroy human relationships. It means that what is right and what is best for other people becomes a secondary if any consideration.

2. **W**hat is meant to be an expression of love within marriage with the principal purpose of procreation is perverted to an act of passion stripped of responsibility in which two people exploit each other for the pleasure of their own bodies. "Don't you realize that you yourselves are temples of God, and that God's spirit lives in you? God will destroy anyone who defiles His

temple, for His temple is holy - and that is exactly what you are", states St. Paul.

3. That is the driving force in totalitarian systems but not much different in today's democratic societies, where politicians lie for personal power and through their dishonesty pervert the democratic process causing democracy and the state of law to perish. That is the consequence of driving God and His commandments out of society. But the lust for control can also express itself in any family or any association of people. There are millions of dictators in this world who are in the way of their fellow men to achieve greatness.

Small dictators create big dictators. Money can also become an instrument to control people and nations.

Living for God's purposes and not for self does not mean to become saintly or ascetic. It just means loving one's neighbor - every human being - as one loves oneself. I do not enrich myself at the expense of others. I don't step on others to get ahead. I don't exploit the body of another person to his or her damage. I don't appease evil in myself or others. I crucify my arrogance which makes me believe that I am superior to others. Instead I am committed to produce the best in and for my fellow human beings. It is a much more exiting and satisfying way of life. Human relationships can only last when they are based on the respect for the other. Where one makes what is best and right for the other his or her own principal concern. In a marriage God comes first, the spouse comes second. A relationship where two people cling to each other without having a common commitment to God is bound to be empty if not self destructive because it does not create a family where children will receive what they need for life. Real love means to fortify the moral strength and the character of the other and not tearing it down for one's own pleasure and convenience. Where one tears down the other there is no love. "Our action should mean the good of others - should help them to build up their characters", says St. Paul. That means on government level that the good of other nations, what is right for the world should be the guiding principle of any foreign policy and not what brings the most business to us at whatever cost to others.

Nobody can love somebody else who does not love himself, which means in the first place to accept oneself as God has created one and to be responsible for one's actions not blaming them on others or on circumstances. But it also means stretching one's responsibilities beyond the personal sphere to national and global

issues. This is indispensable because the moral and social fabric of the nation and the basis of international relations and associations are more and more filled with godless concepts which are being made obligatory for everybody by godless government establishments. It is difficult to live straight when the social environment is organized to encourage selfishness and immorality. Everybody especially parents have to make themselves responsible for this environment and fight for God's standards.

**I**nside each person there is the voice of the lower nature, the voice of the lie, which says: get for yourself whatever you can lay your hands on regardless of the consequences for others who are not your business. And then there is the voice of the spirit, the voice of truth which steers us into the direction God wants us to follow. There are people who pray for hours asking God to bless their undertakings but they never listen to Him. We have one mouth and two ears we should listen therefore twice as much to God as we talk to Him. How do I listen? I sit down in silence every day and write my thoughts down, beginning with measuring my actions according to God's moral absolutes of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. Does everything I write down come from God? Of course not, but this way I take on a regular basis a close look at my motives and purify them, understand more and more of the workings of the spirit and give God the opportunity to control my innermost motivation and so direct my life. Those sincere Christians who mistakenly believe that the Bible and prayer comprise all what is necessary for a Christian life need to get into a further spiritual dimension and grow into God's concept for the world of today.

**T**here is no mess which cannot be cleaned out. There is no life without hope. God has joy and richness in store for everybody regardless of what he or she may have done to offend Him. A nobody is who lives for himself. Great is who lives for others and for a great purpose. And this has nothing to do with money or social status. Every human being is called to greatness. And that is what life is all about. And everybody by allowing God to change his motives can have a part in remaking the world according to God's purposes.

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