

APPLYING TRUTH TO LIFE

Grace Gatherings

THEOLOGY NIGHTS | June 14, 2023

**** You need at least one piece of paper and pen/pencil 😊 ****

GRACE CHURCH
WILLIAMSBURG



Quiz (from last week's Question 4)

1. True or False? **General revelation** is the knowledge of God's existence, character, and moral law that is revealed to humanity.
2. How (i.e., in what two ways) does God disclose (or, **reveal**) Himself to humanity?
3. True or False? The term "general" (in **general revelation**) refers to the fact that God has revealed common (general) information about Himself.
4. What book and chapter in the Bible is a commonly used reference that states how sinful man has **suppressed the truth**?
5. What is **special revelation**?

Quiz (from last week's Question 4)

6. What does *inspiration* literally mean? (Bonus points for the Greek word!)
7. **Natural revelation** is another term for _____.
8. To whom is **special revelation** given?
9. True or False? Both **general revelation** and **special revelation** reveal how an unbeliever may be saved from their sins.
10. What Psalm reflects references to both **general revelation** and **special revelation**?

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of **common grace** as it relates to the **limitations** of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the **human condition**.

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of **common grace** as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the human condition.

Common grace is God's undeserved goodness to all persons

“**Common grace** is the good kindness of God that He shows to all people regardless of whether they have experienced the salvation that comes through Jesus Christ alone.” (Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 67)

- “common” – because it comes to **all** people (i.e., believers and unbelievers alike)
- “grace” – this kindness from God is **undeserved**

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of **common grace** as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the human condition.

- Psalm 145:9, 15-16
- Genesis 39:5
- Matthew 5:44-45
- Acts 14:16-17

*“John Murray defines **common grace** as ‘every favour of whatever kind or degree, falling short of salvation, which this undeserving and sin-cursed world enjoys at the hand of God.’” (John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology*, 247)*

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of **common grace** as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the human condition.

- John 1:9 - *The true light, which **enlightens** everyone, was coming into the world.*
 - All people are able to have some grasp of truth
 - Jesus allows enlightenment and understanding to come to all people in the world

“Jesus Christ is the living Word who **illumines** all the thoughts of everyone in His world. The minds of people work properly – even the minds of unbelievers – because Jesus Christ gives **common grace** that allows them to function.”

(Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 69)

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of **common grace** as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the human condition.

“The **common grace** of God in the **intellectual** realm also results in an ability to grasp truth and distinguish it from error, and to experience growth in knowledge that can be used in the investigation of the universe and in the task of subduing the earth. This means that *all science and technology carried out by non-Christians is a result of common grace*, allowing them to make incredible discoveries and inventions, to develop the earth’s resources into many material goods, to produce and distribute those resources, and to have skill in their productive work.” (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 659)

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of **common grace** as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the human condition.

Some benefits of God's common grace:

- Enables all persons – believers and unbelievers – to **enjoy beauty and goodness** in this life
- Allows sinners time to hear the gospel and repent; i.e., **delays judgment**
- Temporarily **restrains sin** and **mitigates sin's damaging effects** by not allowing the full expression of man's depravity
- Allows any “good thing” to occur (including unbelievers to do good things). While creation became corrupt at the fall and therefore man experiences pain, toil, thorns, and thistles (Gen. 3:16-18), God also allows genuine enjoyment of good things **through His common grace**.

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of common grace as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the **human condition.**

GCW Statement of Faith (V. Man and Sin) – 1 of 3

We believe and teach that man was created for the purpose of glorifying God (Isa. 43:7; Rom. 11:36; Col. 1:16). Like the angels, man was created perfect with untested innocence and was included in God's description of "very good" (Gen. 1:31). Man was also created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27). After man fell into sin, he still retained the image of God (Gen. 9:6; James 3:9) although this image and likeness has become marred by the effects of sin.

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of common grace as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the **human condition**.

GCW Statement of Faith (V. Man and Sin) – 2 of 3

Adam, as mankind's representative, sinned by disobeying God in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:6). Because he was man's representative (Rom. 5:12-21), everyone, aside from Jesus, is **born a sinner** (Psalm 51:5), **dead in trespasses and sins** (Eph. 2:1-3), and **alienated from God** (Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:21).

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of common grace as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the **human condition**.

GCW Statement of Faith (V. Man and Sin) – 3 of 3

Because of the fall, man is **totally depraved** (Gen. 6:5; Eccl 9:3; Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:14-23; Rom. 3:9-23; Eph. 4:17-19). This does not mean that man is as sinful as he can be but that **every aspect of his being is distorted by sin**. Sin reveals itself in man's actions, words, thoughts, attitudes, emotions and will. Sin is disobeying God either by what you do or fail to do (1 John 3:4; James 4:17). It makes man **spiritually helpless and incapable of choosing God** (Jer. 13:23; John 6:44, 65; Rom. 3:11; 5:6-10; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3).

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of common grace as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the **human condition**.

In summary, sin is:

- **Universal** in that all humans are sinners
- **Pervasive** in that all components of a person are polluted by sin
- **Total** in that man is incapable of pleasing God on his own

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of common grace as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the **human condition**.

ACBC Standards of Doctrine – VII. The Doctrine of Sin:

“God created mankind in a state of sinless perfection, but the human race fell from this state when Adam willfully chose to rebel against God and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Since that time, **every human being**, except Jesus Christ, has been **born in sin** and **separated from God**. **Every element of human nature** is inherently **corrupted by sin** so that mankind stands in **desperate need** of the grace of God to be cleansed from sin by the Holy Spirit through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Sin increases the need for all counseling as people seek ministry to resolve problems in living caused by their own sin, the sin of others, and the consequences of sin in the world. Genesis 3:17; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:1-21; 5:12-21”

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of common grace as it relates to the **limitations** of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the human condition.

Observation

Information/data that all people come to know through God's **common grace**

Interpretation

Seek to **understand** the information produced by their observations

Intervention

Efforts to **employ** interpreted observations in helping people in counseling

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of common grace as it relates to the **limitations** of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the human condition.

- Doctrine of common grace grants all mankind intellectual provisions, regardless of their status in God's election.
- Therefore, God's common grace does allow secular psychologists to make correct **observations**. They can know correct, true things about what they observe in life and in people. They can discover helpful things which can contribute to counseling.
- However, secular psychologists' **interpretations** and resulting **interventions** are distorted because of their unbelieving worldview and typically address symptoms rather than the real problem of the human condition (sin).

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of common grace as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the human condition.

General Revelation vs. Common Grace – so what exactly is the difference??

- **General revelation** – the reality that God shows (or, reveals) Himself to the world in the things He has made so that the world is without excuse in their rejection of Him
- Therefore, **general revelation** condemns mankind by an obvious declaration of the existence and goodness of God, which they reject in their sin (Rom. 1:18-20)

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of common grace as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the human condition.

Four truths about general revelation:

1. General revelation is **revealed** by God – “God has shown”
(**Not discovered by man**)
2. The **object** of general revelation is **God** – His character, attributes, etc.
(It is not general truth about the world, but specific truth about God to a general human audience)

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of common grace as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the human condition.

Four truths about general revelation (cont.):

3. This **truth** about God through general revelation is **suppressed by unbelievers** (Rom. 1); they reject this revelation
(They cannot admit the truth that all that exists point to a God who made it, because such an admission would reveal their accountability to God)
4. Therefore, general revelation leads to **condemnation**
(Unbelievers reject God's disclosure (or, revealing) of Himself to the world, so God reveals His wrath against them)
 - Wrath – immediate term: giving people up to more and more sin (Rom. 1:24-32)
 - Wrath – long term: judged forever in hell for their rejection (Rom. 2:5)

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of common grace as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the human condition.

“God reveals His existence and His glory in the beating of a human heart, in the wonder and joy of animals, and in all the ways that human beings function. Unbelievers are likely to know a great deal about these things, often knowing far more than Christians. **The ability of people to know these things is not due to the theological reality of general revelation, but rather to the doctrine of common grace.** The doctrine of common grace allows unbelievers to know true things about the world even as they reject the God who creates those truths and reveals Himself in them.”

(Health Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 328)

Question 5

Explain the doctrine of common grace as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding true information about the human condition.

“It is not an abstract theological point of order to insist that we place the findings of psychology under the category of **common grace** rather than general revelation. General revelation is an **authoritative display** of the character of God in the things that have been made. It is **binding** on all people ...

If we were to place the findings of psychology under the doctrine of general revelation, we would imbue it with a sense of authority that it does not deserve. We must be clear that secular psychologists can know accurate information because of God’s common grace, but we also must insist that their thinking can be corrupted because of the noetic effects of sin.”

(Health Lambert, A Theology of Biblical Counseling, 328)

Question 5

References:

- Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*
- Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology, An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*
- John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth*
- John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology, An Introduction to Christian Belief*

Next week ...

6. Explain the doctrine of the **noetic effects of sin** as it relates to the limitations of secular psychologists in understanding **true information** about the human condition.

GRACE CHURCH
WILLIAMSBURG