

Join us in being on mission with God!

OUR VISION

To continually mature and grow as a united body of Jesus-imitators who live out God's greatest commandment to "Love" by exalting God and serving one another, and His greatest commission to "Go" by reaching into and shaping our local, regional, and global communities.

"A Physician's Tale"

Four Views of Man

Ephesians 2:1

Getting Started

After an introductory time, discuss the following questions in your group or class.

The Voluntary VHEMT (pronounced vehement) is a movement that cares about life on planet earth. It presents an alternative to the callous exploitation and wholesale destruction of earth's ecology. It believes that the alternative to the extinction of millions of species of plants and animals is the voluntary extinction of one species: Homo sapiens... us. It encourages humans not to reproduce, not to add one more person to the burgeoning billions already squatting on this ravaged planet. Members argue that when every human chooses to stop breeding, Earth's biosphere will be allowed to return to its former glory, and all remaining creatures will be free to live, die, evolve (if they believe in evolution), and will perhaps pass away, as so many of Nature's "experiments" have done throughout the eons.

1. What truths about the nature of man do you think members of this movement believe? Where do you think their assumptions come from?

Thinking about Man

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

2. Movies reflect different views of man. What kinds of attitudes about people do you see in some of the following films: *On the Beach*, *Planet of the Apes*, *Braveheart*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Sound of Music*, *Bourne Supremacy*, *It's a Wonderful Life*?

3. Are there other movies that you can think of that seem to say something significant about the human condition?



4. We can picture mankind as noble, sacrificial, and principled. Or we can see him as dangerous, deceitful, and corrupt. Some people are optimistic and hopeful about those around them. Others are skeptical and distrusting. Our view of man shapes the way we look at ourselves and the way we relate to others around us. What factors do you think shape our general attitudes about people?

5. Some evolutionists teach that man evolved from apes, and that this can be traced back to other forms of life that ultimately link back to microbes. In your opinion, what significance does this perspective give to the worth of man?

6. Secular materialism argues that we are the blind product of cause and effect. All our decisions are simply the byproduct of our unique genetic design we inherit and the conditioning (through experiences) that shapes the choices we make. Free choice is an illusion. Everything is the result of impersonal factors that make us what we are. What would be the implications of this teaching for the following realities:

Love = _____

Stealing = _____

Sacrifice = _____

Mercy = _____

Religion = _____

7. Some educators and social engineers believe that most problems in the human race can be minimized or eliminated through education. If we teach people the right skills, they will act in ways that are more constructive and beneficial. What is good and bad about this approach to human development?

8. The Bible insists that we are the special creation of God. What does Genesis 1:26 say about the origin of man?

9. God is not physical, though he can manifest himself to us through a visible form (See Genesis 18.) In what ways do you believe Adam and Eve were created in the *image of God*? What do they share that is like God?

Something Else Here

10. You don't have to live very long to discover that people are far from perfect. They exist in a broken condition. How widespread is this reality according to Psalm 14:2-3?

11. What do you think Jesus means when he insists that no one is good? (See Mark 10:18.) What would you say to someone who believed that Jesus' statement is too harsh?

12. Christians insist that Adam and Eve and all their descendants live in a fallen state. What is the consequence of that condition according to Romans 5:12?

13. We sometimes describe our condition as one of "total depravity." That does not mean we are as bad as we could be. It means that all parts of our being have been touched by the reality of our sinful state. For example, our emotions are no longer pure and perfect. We can love things that in ways that are not good for us (like popularity, overeating, pornography, or control). Give examples of other parts of our being that are damaged by our fallen nature—besides emotions—and do not always work flawlessly.

14. Thomas Aquinas taught that our minds were not fallen. He believed that our thinking could attain perfection. How does this assumption change the way people look at the Bible?

15. In Ephesians 2:1-2 Paul tells the believers in Ephesus, "you were dead in your transgressions and sins." Paul obviously was not speaking of their physical state because they were very alive. In what way were they "dead"?



Reaching Up and Reaching Out

Harvest Evangelical Free Church

524 River Hills Dr. P.O. Box 291

Phone: 515-733-5360
Web: www.harvestfree.org
E-mail: office@harvestfree.org



- 16. What does the declaration that we were spiritually dead say about our ability to fix ourselves spiritually?
17. Why do you think so many people embrace the idea that they can repair their lives to a place where they are acceptable to God? What do they overlook?
18. Optimists look at the good and man and declare that with enough time and education, we can evolve into a perfect race. On the opposite end, some argue that we are so flawed that we will decay and destroy our race and the planet. What kind of future does 1 Corinthians 15:49 offer the person who has been reconciled to God through Christ?
19. How does believing that man is morally fallen and broken beyond self-repair help the Christian develop principles for establishing law, government, and justice in society?
20. How does believing that man is intrinsically valuable because he is made in God's image change the way Christians relate to others in the world? How is this different from those who think man is naturally good?
21. In the history of the church there have been those who felt the body is evil and that our problem is centered in our material parts. What do they ignore according to 1 Timothy 4:3?
22. What implications does the condemnation of our physical nature as evil have about Jesus and his incarnation?