

How a better understanding of depravity might help us ...

3) Understanding depravity helps us to better understand and live mercy and grace.

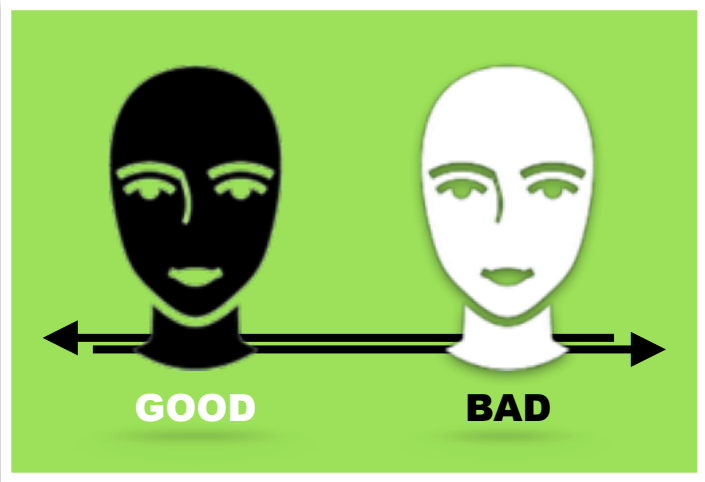
Knowing who we are, honestly confronting our darkness, we become more enduring of other people. The gentle hand of mercy and grace that brought us through our dark moments can now more easily and accurately work through us in touching others.

4) Understanding depravity gives us a more biblical, realistic understanding of our world.

Understanding our depravity helps us make some sense of the good and bad in our relationships. Good as in our wonderful neighbor or friend or grandma or husband. Bad as in countries warring against each other and hundreds of thousands die, or how a person can deviate so far from God to murder, or to destroy a life with ridicule.

5) Understanding depravity may reduce our accusations of hypocrisy.

A hypocrite is someone who is putting on a mask, acting like someone she isn't. It is very possible that the person we might accuse of being a hypocrite is merely reflecting her depravity. She is not putting on and taking off a mask but merely being who she is, both good and bad.



1) We don't have to be afraid of the darkness.

NO FEAR!

- Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1 NIV).
- Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1 NIV).

The guilt trip is over, finished. We are justified through Jesus Christ and there is now no condemnation because we are in Christ Jesus. Our adversary can no longer reach into our past, present or future, threatening to expose our great sins because Christ took those sins and nailed them to the cross, and we are growing in our awareness of that fact. Awful stuff still lurks deep inside even after we come to know Christ. The lingering effects of depravity may remind us of **who we were** but we must never allow our "before Christ" past to define **who we are now in Christ**.

- When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross (Colossians 2:13-14 NIV).

It is time to stop being afraid that the skeletons of our past are going to slip out of the closet. It is time to carefully open the door and live transparent, faith-filled lives and risk letting people know who we really are. It is time to start accepting each other for whom we are. God has the whole story and doesn't love us any less. We must do the same and create a more realistic spiritual environment for growth.

2) We can better understand how being pathetic and wonderful can coexist during God's sanctification process.

Sanctification is the ongoing work of God, the continuing work of salvation in our lives, the process by which he completes and perfects us. Sanctification is part of the salvation package for which Christ paid the full price with his shed blood at the cross. During this holy process as we are transformed into the image of Christ, we sometimes act anything but holy. But we are not surprised because we understand depravity. And even if we are surprised by the villain lurking within, God isn't.