

# THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

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## **Deacons:**

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**David Witherspoon**

## **Preacher:**

**John C. Robertson**

## **The Nature of Man**

A casual observance of the society we live in will result in a picture of good and bad people. One may watch the evening news or read the daily paper only to find headlines that indicate sociological problems and consequential criminal behavior. A mother has drowned her children in the bathtub. A sixteen year old is caught with drugs. Gang members have shot and killed a father and his young son. A woman is raped while crossing a college campus. You get the picture. But then there are those who would never do any such civil unlawful things yet live morally unlawful. Such a one may curse, commit fornication, occasionally attend a church service, drink alcohol, and show little respect toward their parents or those in positions of authority. The picture that one may see within the mind is that of good and bad people. It seems that some people's natural bent on doing sinful things and others on doing good.

Many blame sinful behavior on their nature that has been developed by their environments they grew up in. Still others may blame a natural bent of sinful behavior on being young. These explanations; however, cannot be true because we have Bible examples of those who were young, grew up with sinful influences about them, had the opportunity to do sinful things, and yet chose Godly living. Moses records, "*Joseph, being **seventeen years old**, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and he was a lad with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought the evil report of them unto their father*" (Gen. 37:2). Joseph could have participated in the sinful acts of his brothers but these things rather bothered him. Josiah was one who grew up in wicked times and influences (see II Kings 21-22). His father Manasseh had established the worship of Baal, Asherah, and all the host of heaven. Josiah; however, rejected the practices of his father and, "*While he was yet young (**16 years old**), he began to seek after the God of David his father; and in the twelfth year (**20 years old**) he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the Asherim, and the graven images, and the molten images*" (II Chron. 34:3). What caused Joseph and Josiah to overcome sinful ways and examples that were around them to do the will of God? What caused Joseph's brothers to be so wicked? Was it that some have good natures and others are naturally bad?

The Bible tells us that God created man good (Gen. 1:31). We scan through the pages of God's word and find further details about the makeup of a man. Man has been created with the **innate ability to determine right from wrong**. Man does not need someone to tell him that taking things that

## Local News:

### Welcome to all our visitors:

We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please come back at your every opportunity.

Congratulations to **Thomas and April Gresham** for the birth of their new son. **Benjamin Michael Gresham** was born on December 20<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM weighing 6 pounds 14 ounces. Mom and baby are now home doing well.

**Nell Hulsey's** eye surgery went well and she is home resting.

**Nina Gray** took a fall this past week and is very sore.

Continue to keep **Pam Husak** in your prayers. Pam continues a regiment of going to the doctor to have her wounds cared for.

**Nicholas Long** will be preaching this morning on "Shining Lights" (see the outline on page 3 of this bulletin).

### Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

**Stella Davidson**  
696-1030 (Home)

**Calvin York**  
692-0489 (Home).

**Bessie Murphy**  
4600 Taft Blvd, Apt. 538

do not belong to him is wrong. Man does not need someone to tell them that adultery is wrong. We know these things by divine design. Paul addressed this subject to the Romans saying, "*for when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them*" (Rom. 2:14-15). Man is thereby born with the ability to determine right from wrong. When the subject of homosexuality comes up man makes the immediate decree that such is not what we are designed to participate in. To do otherwise is to go against nature (see Rom. 1:26-27).

**Personal observation** is another part of man's nature that all have at their disposal. The man who conscientiously steals, fornicates, adulterates, forsakes, and or participates in drugs can see with their minds eyes the consequences of said actions. Likewise, man is given the innate ability to observe this physical world that we live in and conclude that God is (see Rom. 1:19-20). Man is also endowed with the ability to know that there is an **eternity** (see Ecclesiastes 3:11). When man can find no satisfaction or fulfillment in this world's activities it is a sign of our natural knowledge of an eternal existence.

God's created beings have the ability to identify right from wrong, use personal observation to determine reality, and they naturally know of an eternal existence. When we add **revelation** to this mix we find that God's inspired word truly appeals to created man. Man will accept revelation because it divinely discloses truths that the heart already accepts due to our divinely created nature. The word nature is defined by the American Heritage Dictionary as, "the essential characteristics and qualities of a person or thing" (832). Man's essential character is created good in that we have been divinely endowed with the ability to determine right from wrong, know that there is an eternal existence for all, and the ability to look at our surroundings and make determinations based upon personal observation. When we add revelation to our divinely endowed nature it is easily accepted as truth because it confirms what we know to be right by nature.

Why then do some people sin? Why are some people murderers, rapists, thieves, fornicators, use filthy language, have no spiritual care, gossips, slothful, and so forth? Did these people get left out when God passed out good natures? Did these people sin because they are young? Have these people taken the wicked routs in life because of the environment they grew up in? It is plain to see that when people go wrong in life it is not because God did not make them good but rather because they have gone against the natural order of God's creation. One who sins goes against his created purpose. Some take their sin so far as to sear their conscience from making the distinction between right and wrong (I Tim. 4:2). As long as they look for fulfillment in life through sinful acts they can in no way distinguish good from bad (see Rom. 8:7-8). Joseph and Josiah were two young men who determined to do right even though they were young and there was sin all about them. We too can cast off sinful dead works and allow the power of the gospel to save our souls from eternal condemnation (Rom. 1:16). You know this is the right thing to do!

*John C. Robertson*

**Shining as Lights**  
**by**  
**Working Out Our Own Salvation**  
**Nicholas Long**

1. Introduction
  
2. Develop a Christ Like “Character”
  - A. By growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ  
II Peter 3:17-18; II Peter 1:5-11
  
  - B. By putting off the old man, and putting on the new man.
  
3. Develop a Christ like “Service”
  - A. Fulfill your function in the body of Christ  
Romans 12:1-8
  
  - B. Minister your “Gift” as a good steward of God’s manifold grace  
I Peter 4:10-11, Matthew 25:14-30
  
4. Conclusion  
  
Titus 3:8; 2:14