

The Statesman Overcoming Our Sin Nature

William Wilberforce is one of the few that everyone views as a Statesman for his vision and the sacrifices he made to achieve it. He wrote from his vantage point:

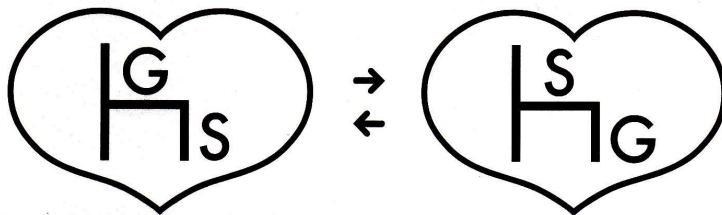
*the majority of Christians overlook, deny or, at the very least, minimize the problems of what it means to be a fallen human being.*¹

I submit to you that the problem is more universal than Wilberforce wrote. His conclusion applies not only to insincere Christians. It is an issue that everyone of us must recognize and deal with if we desire to be the kind of leader our Creator intended.

It is this issue that presents a challenge to governance because it impacts both governed and governors. For now, let us consider the issue as it applies to governors.

We must continually recognize that there are two natures within each of us. Understanding them is essential in our effort to operate as a Statesman. These two natures battle within our life continuously:

1. a God-sensitive nature (**G**) that cares about the needs of the people; and
2. a selfish nature (**S**) willing to collect some personal benefits as a “reasonable” perk of office.



Our Creator described what Wilberforce terms our fallen or sinful nature this way:

The heart is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable—who can understand it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

The battle that this causes within us is described by the Apostle Paul:

For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it. (Romans 7:18)

The net effect is that my sinful, or selfish, nature neutralizes any good that my better nature would wish to do:

For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want. (Galatians 5:17)

As a result, I am rendered unable to do the good I desire to do. The Statesman also understands the solution our Creator has provided for us:

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:19-20)

We must apply Jesus' sacrificial work on the Cross on our behalf to the issue of the deeds of our sinful nature. This, we must actively and aggressively do. We must actively take advantage of the solution He has provided for us as described in Romans 8:13:

But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."

The key is the phrase "by the Spirit". We must take advantage of the power of the Holy Spirit to put to death the deeds of our sinful nature that would misuse the authority of office and deprive it from being used solely for the benefit of the people. It is only when we allow our Lord and Master to put to death the desires of our human nature that literally God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit can live through us. This we must do with each and every decision we make. It is only then that we can operate as our Lord's instrument, accomplishing what He desires. This is summarized in our Lord's teaching through the Apostle Peter:

His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. By these He has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desires. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

It is only as the decision-maker relies on his/her Creator's help that one can stop interfering with our Creator's plan and to operate as a Statesman. May we seek His help and His power in being His instrument.

References

1. William Wilberforce, *Real Christianity (A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in This Country, Contrasted with Real Christianity)*, 1797; Revised and Updated by Bob Beltz, 2006.