

The Fallen Nature of Mankind as It Impacts the Statesman

The reality is that the objective of the Statesman is to achieve well-being for the people in an imperfect world. As we seek to be just and fair leaders, it is essential that we are realistic about what we are dealing with. We need this realism in our understanding and expectations. It is essential to understand the obstacle that the fallen nature of mankind will play in achieving this well-being for our people. This fallen nature will impact three groups essential in achieving our goals as Statesmen:

1. Those we serve.
2. Those we serve with.
3. Ourselves.

What is this fallen nature and how does it impact the governing process? It is expressed quite bluntly, in God's Words:

There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away; all alike have become useless. There is no one who does what is good, not even one (Romans 3:10-12).

Our Creator, out of His love, has given us the freedom to choose to obey His clear instructions, or not, in our decisions. All too often, we choose to follow our own desires in defiance of His way. Let us consider how this impacts the three parties:

1. **Those we serve.** Although we are called to serve the people, because of their fallen nature, we cannot rely upon their ability to express to us what they really need. This is where the analogy of shepherding becomes relevant. As their shepherds, we must recognize their needs and be sensitive to them, even if the sheep are unable to properly identify those needs. As good shepherds, we must listen to the sheep carefully. However, we must also listen for what their fallen nature prevents them from being able to express.
2. **Those we serve with.** Recalling what it means to be a Statesman, one of the many voices has reminded us:

A politician thinks of the next election, a statesman of the next generation. A politician looks for the success of his party; a statesman for that of his country. The statesman wishes to steer, while the politician is satisfied to drift (James Freeman Clarke).

The reality is that the vast majority of those involved in the governing process will not likely be Statesmen. They will be, as this critique describes: politicians. And yet, democratic governance makes us dependent upon their cooperation. Realistically, they will tend to be driven by self-promoting motivations. Realizing that every human has two natures – one desiring to do good, and the other driven for personal advancement – we must appeal to the good that is available within these imperfect humans. We must persuade and help them to do the right thing.

3. **Ourselves.** Our most formidable enemy is the fallen nature within ourselves. We also have a selfish nature that we must continually overcome. Although we are committed to doing good, our own fallen nature can blind us to what the sheep really need and what we should be working to achieve. As one servant of God expressed:

For I do not understand what I am doing, because I do not practice what I want to do, but I do what I hate. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree with the law that it is good. So now I am no longer the one doing it, but it is sin living in me. 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. For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do. Now if I do what I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but it is the sin that lives in me. So I discover this principle: When I want to do what is good, evil is with me (Romans 7:15-21).

This servant of God went even further in describing the battle within:

But I see a different law in the parts of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner to the law of sin in the parts of my body (Romans 7:23).

We must be alert every moment to the battle going on inside us – within our minds. God has given us the promise of victory over our fallen nature:

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).

Furthermore, God has instructed us with His principles for victory over our fallen nature that would interfere with making the decisions appropriate for a Statesman:

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).

And then, putting to death each deed of our fallen nature must be done with the help of God's Holy Spirit:

So then, brothers, we are not obligated to the flesh to live according to the flesh, for if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live (Romans 8:12-13).

God has given us His Holy Spirit to live within us to guide us but also to give us the power to overcome the temptation to give in to our fallen nature. His Holy Spirit shows us when we are about to stumble, i.e., give in to our fallen nature. And His Holy Spirit gives us the power to put to death one fruit at a time of our fallen nature. Victory is assuredly available, but we can never rest in victory. Victory must involve a continuous response to our fallen nature's active effort to pull us into its seductive web.

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! (1 Corinthians 15:57)

Let us experience this victory. Let us live in the victory our Maker provides for us, allowing us to be the Statesman He intends us to be.