

# The Doctrines of Grace

## 2. Total Inability



Nothing to boast  
about... it's all about  
Grace

Ephesians 2:8-9



## PELAGIUS

*Accurst Pelagius with what false pretence  
Durst thou excuse Mans foule Concupiscence ?  
Or cry down Sin Originall, or that  
The Love of God did Man predestinate .*



Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609)  
(Jakob Hermanzoon)

## **The Arminians' 'Remonstrance' (formal objection) against the teachings of the Belgic Confession (1566)**

### **Two principles:**

- 1. Divine sovereignty is incompatible with human freedom (and therefore, human responsibility)**
- 2. Ability limits obligation – no one can be held accountable for what he is incapable of doing**

# The Reformed Synod of Dort (1618-19)



"Synode van Dordrecht" by  
Pouwel Weyts

**Point One (Total Inability) is not about a person's standing before God; it's about the natural condition of our hearts.**

**Important principles...**



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**Don't let what you DON'T understand upset what you do.**

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**Don't let what you DON'T understand upset what you do.**

**Not all the answers to our questions will be given in this life.**

## **“Free will”**

**God created us and gave us free will: the ability to make choices in accordance with our nature.**



**The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”**

**Genesis 2:15-17**

**He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”**

**Genesis 3:10**

**The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.”**

**Genesis 8:21**

**“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”**

**Psalm 51:5**



**“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.  
Who can understand it?”**

**Jer.17:9**

**In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”**

**John 3:3**

**“For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’ ”**

**Mark 7:21-23**

**As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins... remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.**

**Eph.2:1, 12**

**The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**

**2Cor.4:4**



**You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

**Rom.5:6-8**

