

Freewill vs. God's Sovereignty

This chapter taken from the book *When Faith Came* by Franklin Whittenburg © 1998-2006

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The first two pages of this chapter and the last part of this chapter have been repeated in other chapters but it is needs to be repeated here for this study. Man was created with the freedom of choice (freewill), but not the knowledge of good and evil (free moral agent). Before Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, everything that God created was considered be Adam and God as good. After eating of the tree then everything good that God created for Adam, he considered bad including himself (nudity). Eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is where man received the “ability to judge”, but not the “right to judge”! The knowledge of good and evil was reserved for God alone, like God told Adam. In fact, whenever man does exercise the ability to judge good and evil (free moral agent), God declared man a god.

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken (Genesis 3:22,23 KJV).

Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? (John 10:34-36 KJV).

There is a big difference between “freewill” and “free moral agent”. Man was created with “freewill”, but man was not created with “morals”. This is where everybody misses this when studying freewill doctrine. Man attained “morals” by eating of the tree that God commanded him not too. Today, man still runs around with the knowledge of good and evil while proudly proclaiming that he is a “free moral agent”, but actually the only thing that a “free moral agent” is free from is God and eternal life.

For example when eating pork the Christian has a choice (freewill) on whether to eat or not eat because there is no harm in either choice, because God has cleansed their conscience. He gives God thanks for the meat (1 Timothy 4:4,5 KJV). A “free moral agent” on the other hand can judge for himself the meat defiled and try to abstain from it to keep from sinning.

Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? (1 Corinthians 8:7-11 KJV).

For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:20-23 KJV).

See the knowledge of good and evil has never brought man wisdom like Satan told Eve. All that the knowledge of good and evil has ever brought man is death (through self-condemnation) like God told Adam. But since we are stuck with this knowledge of good and evil, then we need to understand it's correct usage.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil (Genesis 3:4,5 KJV).

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:16,17 KJV).

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself (Titus 3:9-11 KJV).

Remember that it is your knowledge of good and evil that actually first separated you from the source of life, which is God and keeps you out of the Garden of Eden.

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in YOUR mind by wicked works, yet NOW hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable (unconvictable) in his sight: (Colossians 1:21,22 KJV).

As you can see by this verse, sin doesn't cause God to hide from you, but it causes you to hide from God, just like Adam in the Garden of Eden.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat (Genesis 3:6-11 KJV)?

To help explain Freewill vs. God's sovereignty, I want to revisit my early religious years. The harder I tried to make the Christian life work, the worse life would become. God did not answer any prayers, but when I prayed things usually got worse. If I ever got a step ahead, it would not be but for a moment and something would come along and knock me two steps back. Why did my life not show any fruits of salvation? Why was I not at peace with God? Why no "abundant life"? Where was the victory over sin? What was I missing?

I didn't find out till after my spiritual conversion, God's purpose behind this. As I said before, you may have the freedom to make choices in your life, but God has the control over whether your choices prosper or not. I believe that He controlled my circumstances to bring me to the point of total surrender to Him. God had done this very thing before! It was His way of separating me from the world and to get me to the point of total surrender to him and forsaking this world. Let me share a quick story.

God did this same thing to the children of Israel when they were under the bondage of Egypt. In the Bible, Egypt is a representation of the world. When this started out, the children of Israel were getting fed and had a simple life under the protection of Egypt. But they were still in bondage and they didn't have the freedom to serve God, because they had to serve Egypt. Egypt was their source of life. They prayed for a deliverer to free them from the bondage of Egypt. Now when God finally sent Moses to deliver them from bondage, God knew that they were not ready to forsake the life in Egypt to follow Moses across the wilderness to a promise land. In fact, even when they were out of Egypt into the wilderness, they wanted to go back to Egypt when things got tough. So God turned up the heat until they hated their life in Egypt. If you read the story, the more the children of Israel would cry out for salvation, the harder Pharaoh would make life on them. It finally got to the point that Moses questioned the Lord about this.

And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all (Exodus 5:22,23 KJV).

Finally after several plagues on Egypt and cruel bondage imposed on the children of Israel by the Egyptians, Pharaoh had enough of the plagues and told Moses to take the people and go. It seemed like their prayers for deliverance were finally answered. The LORD then did a very unique thing. The Bible says that the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart so he would not let the people go. And the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart again and again until He knew the children of Israel were in such distress and misery (like you may be in now) that they were ready to completely forsake Egypt and follow Moses into the wilderness, to a promise land (Exodus 4:21, 7:13, 9:12, 10:1, 10:20, 10:27, 11:10, 14:4, 14:8 KJV). As you can read in these scriptures, Pharaoh did not have any control over the choices in his life.

The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will (Proverbs 21:1 KJV).

Let me stop right here and use this story to correct a false teaching before we move on. I have heard many people say that God is a gentleman and will not force you to do anything against your will. That teaching is in direct contradiction to this Bible example. Pharaoh's "will" was to finally let the people go, but God changed Pharaoh's will and hardened his heart against his will to accomplish a greater purpose with the children of Israel. God finally destroyed Pharaoh when He was done proving His point. Sorry folks, that is the sovereignty of God. We are His creation and as such, we are subject unto the will of our Creator as the Bible plainly teaches!

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, (Romans 9:14-23 KJV).

But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace (Romans 11:4,5 KJV).

When God chose me, He would not leave me alone until He had me. This is the meaning of biblical predestination. God decides He is going to do something and then He does it.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures (James 1:17,18 KJV).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will (Ephesians 1:3-5 KJV).

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Romans 8:28-30 KJV).

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (Romans 8:33,34 KJV).

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: (Isaiah 46: 9,10 KJV).

It was even God's will that I was born again! I have an eternal inheritance not only because I wanted it, but also because He wanted me to have it!

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: (Ephesians 1:11 KJV).

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12,13 KJV).

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the

Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed (Acts 13:46-48 KJV).

In Acts 13:48 it states that there are certain people that are ordained to eternal life. If that is true, then the exact opposite would also have to be true, that God ordained some to condemnation. Is that possible? Please read the chapter "It's About Time" for a deeper explanation on predestination.

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not (Jude 4,5 KJV).

But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve (John 6:64-71 KJV).

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10 KJV).

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (1 Peter 2:7-9 KJV).

I love Bible study because I believe there is only one truth. Many verses speak of predestination as I have just shared a few, but many verses also speak of freewill.

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon ALL men unto justification of life (Romans 5:18 KJV).

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that ANY should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9 KJV).

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16 KJV).

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And WHOSOEVER will, let him take the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17 KJV).

Some people will embrace either one view and reject the other outright even though both doctrines are spoken of in the same Bible. I believe that predestination and freewill can both exist in harmony even though they seem to stand in contradiction. There are other doctrines in the Bible that I use to think stood in direct contradiction until the Holy Spirit later revealed them to me. The verses then flowed together. I have always believed that the Bible had the answers but I just could not understand them yet, so I left the door open for an explanation. I later I learned some beautiful biblical truths that I was previously blinded too. I believe if it is in the Bible then there is a reason and I study and pray to find it. But if I was to reject the predestination doctrine completely like almost everybody I know, then I leave myself no chance to later learn the true reason those verses are in the Bible. By rejecting it I have already decided that there is no true answer because the doctrine is now considered invalid to me in my current state of understanding. People ask me if I believe in predestination and I say, “yes” because it is spoken of in the Bible. People also ask me if I believe in freewill and I say “yes” because it is spoken of in the Bible. This answer usually makes me very unpopular with both groups of people.

Take the story of Jonah for an example. God’s will was that Jonah was to go to Nineveh to preach, but Jonah exercised “freewill” and went the other way. God sent a fish to swallow Jonah and spit him out on the shores of Nineveh and so he preached to the city just like God planned. I started to write a book on God’s sovereignty and call it “Two Ways to Nineveh”. This story shows that if God wants to use you for a purpose, He will manipulate your circumstances to fulfill His will. There are two ways to Nineveh; you can either ride in a boat or in the belly of a fish! In fact, some of the very best things God has done in my life have been done against my will; because my will was “self-destructive” and God’s will is that “none should perish”! Because I didn’t do some of those things willingly I will not receive a reward for those things even though I did them later.

For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:16-18 KJV).

Another example is the story of Abraham telling Abimelech that Sarah was Abraham's sister instead of his wife. Abimelech then took Sarah to be his wife, but God stopped Abimelech from having any relationship with Sarah.

And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her (Genesis 20:6 KJV).

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will (Proverbs 21:1 KJV).

Once again in the book of Revelation we find God manipulating man's will for the sole purpose of fulfilling prophecy, which also proves that man, cannot stop God's purpose for His creation.

For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled (Revelation 17:17 KJV).

The story of Joseph is another great example of how freewill and predestination can flow together in unison and not contradictory. In the life of Joseph, from his years as a boy until his ruling over Egypt, many choices were made that were both good and bad. One of the good choices was running from Potipher's wife, but one of the bad choices was made by Joseph's brothers to sell him into slavery. Through all the choices both good and bad made in Joseph's life actually brought him to God's predestined future outcome for the purpose of saving Egypt from a future famine.

And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. (Genesis 50:19,20 KJV).

Stories like these kind of take the "free" out of "freewill". What I found out later that my "freewill" was the actually bondage and not freedom, because it gave me the ability to act independent of God. Paul even said that he could do no good thing, "for to will" is present with him.

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not (Romans 7:18 KJV).

Your "freewill" and the choices you make without God, will drive you into destruction because they are driven by your lust and desires, just like Pharaoh mercilessly drove the children of Israel. The victory that you seek is not in "your will" but in "God's will". In fact, "I will" is what got Lucifer thrown out of Heaven. Lucifer said "I will" five times in Isaiah 14, but God would not let him practice "freewill" in the Kingdom and

threw Lucifer out. The reason for this is only “God’s will” is permitted in God’s Kingdom, other wise there would be confusion like on earth.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners (Isaiah 14:12-17 KJV)?

“I will” is what is still keeping man out of the Kingdom. What is the difference between Lucifer saying, “I will” and mankind saying, “I will”? Nothing, it is still separate from the will of God. In fact, there are actually only two “wills” in this world, “I will” and “God’s will”. When “I will” dies, all that is left is “God’s will” for your life.

And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts (Galatians 5:24 KJV).

Mankind can still have hope in this world because “God’s will” is greater and encompasses “I will”. Please read the chapter “The Spiritual World” for a deeper explanation of this.

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure (Philippians 2:13 KJV).

This is the main stumbling point for religion. Religion says, “I will in the flesh do something that can only be accomplished by the Holy Spirit”. Paul rebuked the Galatians for this very same thing.

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? (Galatians 3:1-3 KJV).

A perfect example of this is the story of Abraham and Sarah. “God’s will” was that Abraham have a child through Sarah who could have no children. Sarah exercised “freewill” and tried to bring “God’s will” to pass in the power and reasoning of her flesh (I will). Sarah had Abraham father a child through another woman because this is the only way Sarah could figure out in her flesh how to bring “God’s will” to pass. If Sarah had just left things alone and said “Thy will be done”, 12yrs later, “God’s will” and the promise would have still come to pass with the birth her own son Isaac.

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing (James 1:4 KJV).

For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry (Hebrews 10:36,37 KJV).

Instead Sarah started a war by any act of “freewill” that is still raging to this day between Israel and the Arabs over who has the birthright to the land of Israel. This is the reason God cannot allow our “freewill” and our “freedom of choice” into His Kingdom. Many churches today are ignoring this fact and trying to take the inheritance (Kingdom of God 1 Corinthians 15:50 KJV) by force instead of waiting on the fulfillment of the promise by God. They have a desperate desire to “control” the power of God.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force (Matthew 11:12 KJV).

There are many other instances where God overrides man’s will to accomplish a greater purpose. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life”. I have a question for you? Where does our choice fit into His way? We have no choice, but His way! In fact, man will usually only yield to God when he has no choice. The “free moral agent” theology in a nutshell says that our power of choice binds God’s power of choice. This arrogance of man also causes them to think that their will binds God’s will, and somehow they can use this to control or manipulate God. This then gives humanity a great sense of power. They believe they “allow” God to do things in their life, or they don’t “allow” God to do things in their life, as if God is powerless to do anything unless we “allow” Him. They, as the creation, believe they now have power to manipulate and control God’s will by an act of their will. This now makes them the Creator instead of God. In their world the creation controls the Creator. If our “freewill” has such tremendous power, then why didn’t those that were crying out for deliverance from demons in the Bible just choose not to be possessed? The free moral agent feels that just because they are breathing air in this world, that they have certain rights, which have to be obeyed by God. What did God have to say about this?

(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy (Romans 9:11- 13 KJV).

What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day (Romans 11:7,8 KJV).

Religion also teaches that you are in control of God's plan for your life. The only place I have really found this is when the prophets are given power over their spirits (1 Corinthians 14:32,33 KJV). In ministry, you don't use the Holy Spirit to do service for God, the Holy Spirit uses you! In fact self-control (temperance) is listed as a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:23 KJV), which would actually make self-control in the Christian, Holy Spirit control!

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Romans 8:13 KJV).

Point to ponder: If a demon can possess a person and cause them to do things against their will, why can't the Holy Spirit that is more powerful take control of a Christian and cause them to do God's will?

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them (Ezekiel 36:26,27 KJV).

I have also heard pastors argue that God's will and plans can be messed up by man, because the Bible says that it is God's will that "none should perish", yet many people perish everyday. God has not had to sit by with His hands tied and watch men perish. On the contrary, God did something about it when gave His own Son to atone for the sins of any that will accept that atonement.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16 KJV).

But what causes us to "choose" to believe in Jesus in the first place to receive the salvation spoken of in John 3:16 KJV? Why God of course!

And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, AND THAT OF GOD. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; (Philippians 1:28,29 KJV).

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (Ephesians 2:8 KJV).

By looking at John 3:16, we can see that God not only did not stand by and was somehow helpless to stop mankind from perishing, but He was very active in making a way of escape for mankind. This verse is so good I have to quote it again!

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-19 KJV).

I want to share another interesting experience that I have. After the circumcision event, I could hear Jesus' voice and I received constant revelations of His Word. God is always present in our hearts through the Holy Spirit (the Comforter). You can grieve the Spirit, but you can't leave the Spirit!

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30 KJV).

That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1:12-14 KJV).

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: (Philippians 1:6 KJV).

When I go to bed, I sense His presence, and He talks to me when I am asleep (Job 33:14-18 KJV), when I wake up he is there, all day long he is there. In my experience, I have not been able to escape Him! I don't understand how Christians say that they must chase God to find Him.

And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, BY the Spirit which he hath given us (1 John 3:23,24 KJV).

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent (John 6:28,29 KJV).

But one day all this did stop. One day I didn't hear his voice anymore. Then the next day came, and He was again silent. I could always feel His presence, but He would no longer speak. I went into a panic! What could I have done that could have made Jesus stop speaking to me? Since I was not under conviction for any sin, I started to ask for forgiveness for anything that I might have done that I thought would cause a break in

fellowship. The next day came and I still did not hear His voice. By this time I thought that He might have given up on me and I was really down. The next day, the revelations started again just like always, but then Jesus revealed what had happened.

Jesus used that experience to show me that the reason He was fellowshiping with me and showing me the secrets of the kingdom, was not because of anything that I was doing, whether good or bad, but just because He wanted to!

John answered and said, *A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven (John 3:27 KJV).*

This taught me a valuable lesson. No matter what I tried to do, good or bad, I could not manipulate God. He was fellowshiping with me because He wanted to, not because He had to. Talk about feeling special! That experience made me feel like my purpose in life and my relationship with Jesus, was the most important purpose ever bestowed upon man. I also realized that He must also do this with all of His disciples. This has happened other times since then, but I don't panic anymore and the revelations eventually return.

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that *he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: (Philippians 1:3-6 KJV).*

I have heard people say that they have bound God to His Word. By using the Word of God, they believe that they can control the actions of God or force God's hand to move in their life by applying His Word. In my experience, I have not found anyway to manipulate God with His Word or otherwise. If I don't "allow" God to do something in my life, He does it anyway. If I "allow" God to do something He doesn't. I have never found anyway to eclipse God's sovereignty. In my experience, God decides to do something in my life and then does it, whether I "allow" Him to or not. If I stray from God's will, he steps in against my will with correction of disobedience, not condemnation of sin, because condemnation of sin always demands the death penalty, and that has already been paid in full by Jesus Christ.

What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost (Luke 15:4-6 KJV).

A shepherd that has a sheep that goes astray doesn't slaughter it when he finds it, but carries it back to the flock REJOICING! Apparently Jesus seeks His sheep out if they stray.

An example of this is, if you found your child playing with a loaded gun, you would step in as a parent and take away the gun whether your child wanted to "allow" you or not. It would be your duty as a parent if you loved that child not to let them continue in

destructive behavior. In fact the Bible says that God corrects and chastens the sons and daughters whom he receives. If you are without this correction, then the Bible says that you are not children of God. You have to have a heavenly Father first before you receive correction from a heavenly Father!

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons (Hebrews 12:5-8 KJV).

The Bible even says that Christians are chastened many times by God (Hebrews 12:11 KJV). God once chastened me for letting someone in a church anoint me with oil after God showed me that He alone would anoint me for ministry.

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (2 Corinthians 1:21,22 KJV).

I went one night to hear a man speak that was supposed to be a “prophet”. I had never heard of his name before and I didn’t know if he was a prophet or not. The “prophet” commanded that everyone in the service be “anointed” on the forehead. This was supposedly an anointing for ministry. I declined because of what God had shown me. The other people in the church that were sitting around me became adamant that I receive this “anointing” because the visiting “prophet” had commanded it. I told them that God alone anointed me for ministry not a prophet. That was an Old Testament practice for the prophets. Their response to me was that God would not tell the prophet to have everyone in the church be anointed with oil and tell me something different. The pastor then started the service by saying that anyone that hasn’t yet been “anointed” must be brought up to the front of the church and be anointed before the service could begin. This was starting to get ridiculous, so I agreed to get one of the people I knew with the oil to anoint me so I could stay and listen to the prophet. He anointed me with the oil, but instead of praying for ministry, he prayed for healing. Anointing with oil for healing is a valid New Testament practice (James 5:14,15 KJV). So I thought it were no big deal and no harm done.

I listened to the “prophet” speak but he didn’t say anything that I thought was spiritual revelation and I still don’t think he was a real prophet. The next day God chastened me and it was not fun. At no time during this chastening was I ever under any condemnation of sin even though I had been disobedient. A Father deals with their child through correction out of love not condemnation out of wrath. I did learn some things from this experience though, which is the true purpose of chastening and rebuking. I do not think many Pentecostal and Charismatic pastors understand just how serious God considers the anointing for ministry!

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby (Hebrews 12:11 KJV).

The Lord showed me again that it was Him that had personally chosen me for ministry and He alone would handle my anointing and equipping for ministry not some “prophet”.

These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of HIM abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him (1 John 2:26,27 KJV).

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (2 Corinthians 1:21,22 KJV).

The scriptures (Hebrews 12:5-8 KJV) also prove that sons and daughters of God can be disobedient and still be sons and daughters. This is because we are sons and daughters of God by the spiritual newbirth, not by obedience. The obedience comes as a result of the new birth! The divine order is first becoming sons and daughters of God and then the chastening. It is the “goodness of God” not the “wrath of God” that leads you to repentance. This is just like your natural children, they didn’t chose you as their parent, whether born naturally to you or adopted into your family, you chose them. My heavenly Father knows how to make better decisions for my life than I do. I have already experienced a messed up life created out of my decisions. It was a living hell.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-3 KJV).

The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath. (Proverbs 15:24 KJV)

And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. (John 8:23 KJV)

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