

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY – PART 3: WHAT ABOUT FREE WILL?

Do some thinking while we wait to begin...

“But what about free will?” What things were you talking about when you heard that phrase being used? Why?

Read Romans 6:15-23.

1. What do you learn about the non-believer?
2. What do you learn about the Christian?

1. THINK: AM I REALLY FREE?

2. WE ARE ALWAYS SOMEONE'S SLAVE

- (a) **EITHER you are a slave of sin, the world & the devil (Rom. 6:15-23, John 8:34)**

“We declare on scriptural authority that the human will is so desperately set on mischief, so depraved, so inclined to everything that is evil, and so disinclined to everything that is good, that without the powerful, supernatural, irresistible influence of the Holy Spirit, no human will ever be constrained toward Christ.” (Spurgeon, Sermons, Vol. 4, p.139)

“I will go as far as Martin Luther, where he says, “If any man ascribes anything of salvation, even the very least thing, to the free will of man, he knows nothing of grace, and he has not learned Jesus Christ rightly.” (Spurgeon, Sermons, Vol. 1, p.395)

- (b) **OR, you are a slave of righteousness/God... which is true freedom (Romans 6:15-23, Ephesians 2:8, John 3:5, Acts 5:31)**

Acts 5:31, “God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.”

3. THE BIBLE HOLDS TOGETHER THE DOCTRINES OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

The Bible holds together the following two principles:

1. God is absolutely sovereign, but his sovereignty never functions in Scripture to reduce human responsibility.
2. Human beings are responsible creatures – that is, they choose, they believe, they disobey, they respond, and there is moral significance in their choices; but human responsibility never functions in Scripture to diminish God's sovereignty or to make God absolutely contingent.

(D.A. Carson, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation*, p148.)

= the doctrine of *COMPATIBILISM*

E.g. Acts 4:27-28, “for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.”

4. UNDERSTANDING HUMAN FREEDOM: A WRONG ANSWER – AND A RIGHT ANSWER

(a) A wrong answer: “liberty of ability” (a.k.a. “liberty of indifference”)

“I am a responsible human if... I am uninfluenced and able to choose other options.”

NO!!!

- We KNOW we are never un-influenced
- The BIBLE tells us we are not free
- GOD is the only un-moved mover.

(b) A better answer: “liberty of desire” (a.k.a. “liberty of spontaneity”)

“I am a responsible human if... I can do what I desire to do.”

- **The non-believer**

John 8:44. “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires.”

(The non-believer sins necessarily, but voluntarily)

Genesis 3:6, “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.”

An illustration: a man builds a room...

Another example: Judas – Matthew 26:14-16, John 17:12

Also Eph 2:1-3, 4:22, Gal 5:16-17, 1 Jn 2:16-17, Jude 1:16.

- **The Christian**

Romans 6:17, “... obedient from the heart...”

Deuteronomy 29:4, “But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.”

Deuteronomy 30:6, “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.”

Ezekiel 36:26, “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”

Jeremiah 31:33, “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

