

About Free Will

Whenever we deal with God's sovereignty, the question of free will is always brought up. "If God is sovereign, then are we just puppets? The answer is no. We are always responsible for our choices. However, we must recognize that our choices are always influenced by what is in our heart.

"For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh." (Lu 6:44-45 AV)

If the heart is bad, it will produce bad fruit. You don't gather figs from a thorn bush! Neither do you choose God from a heart of rebellion. The will is always at the mercy of the heart. *The London Baptist Confession of Faith* does a good job of describing the issue of free will.

London Baptist Confession of Faith

Chapter 9: Of Free Will

1. God hath [has] endued the will of man with that natural liberty and power of acting upon choice, that it is neither forced, nor by any necessity of nature determined to do good or evil. {#Mt 17:12; Jas 1:14; De 30:19}
2. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good and well-pleasing to God, {#Ec 7:29} but yet was unstable, so that he might fall from it. {#Ge 3:6}
3. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath [has] wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; {#Ro 5:6; 8:7} so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, {#Eph 2:1,5} is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto. {#Tit 3:3-5; Joh 6:44}
4. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He freeth [frees] him from his natural bondage under sin, {#Col 1:13; Joh 8:36} and by His grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; {#Php 2:13} yet so as that by reason of his remaining corruptions, he doth [does] not perfectly, nor only will, that which is good, but doth [does] also will that which is evil. {#Ro 7:15,18-19,21,23}
5. This will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone in the state of glory only. {#Eph 4:13}

Friends, this understanding should cause us to humbly seek the Lord at all times. While we have the ability to choose good now, we also have the ability to choose evil. To practice the latter would call the genuineness of our salvation into question. Therefore let us strive to walk with God every day. Be thankful that God intervened and translated you into this state of grace, but continue to walk by faith.

Also, understand that the loved ones for whom you are praying are bound by their hearts. Pray that God would quicken them unto life for without God's intervention there is no hope. No amount of reasoning will ever save a person. It takes the grace of God to regenerate a man.

Therefore, never abandon your prayers for the lost or for your own obedience. We all need grace that our will would mirror God's will.

Prayer

Father, we don't understand everything. In fact, we know very little compared to you. Please take our humble prayers and make them what they need to be. We trust in your promise that the Holy Spirit will intercede for us as needed. Have mercy on our loved ones, and lead us by your Spirit, amen.