

Ephesians Transformed by Grace, Empowered by Peace

Study 2

Discussing Doctrine: Predestination and Free Will

Ephesians 1:1-6

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Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,
 To God’s holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:
 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

1) Comprehension question. Based on points from the video lecture, fill in the blanks.

a) Bible/Scripture contains what God wants to reveal to us

We are committed to biblical revelation (what God is revealing to us), there is no	contradiction	in the bible from Genesis to Revelation
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b) The Tension between what we find in the bible and the philosophy of free will

The tension	
Biblical Exegesis	Philosophy
God’s Sovereignty Unconditional election	Man’s Accountability Free Will

c) Bible passages supporting the unconditional election

John 15:16 (ESV)	You did not choose me, but _____ and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.
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John 6:37 (ESV)	_____, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.
John 6:44 (ESV)	No one can come to me _____. And I will raise him up on the last day.

d) Bible passages supporting the free will of man

John 3:16 (ESV)	“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that _____ should not perish but have eternal life.
Acts 16:31-32 (ESV)	And they said, “_____” you and your household.” And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.
Romans 10:9 (ESV)	because, _____ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

e) Bible passages supporting the accountability of man

John 3:18-19 (ESV)	Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever _____, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.
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f) Two major camps on the concepts of election

Name of founder	John Calvin	Jacobus Arminius
Name of concept	Calvinism	Arminianism
	God chooses unconditionally whom he will mercifully bring to faith and whom he will justly leave in their rebellion.	God chooses all those whom he foreknew will have the necessary faith for salvation
Origin of faith	Faith is granted by God	Faith comes from man
The extent of God’s	God totally sovereign	God has chosen to limit the exercise of His sovereignty in certain

sovereignty		respects, particularly in relation to human freedom.
Concepts of Being Born Again	God brings about new birth or spiritual regeneration that enables saving faith	God brings about new birth in response to our own saving faith

g) Problem with the Arminian View

i)

Scripture never speaks of _____ (man's faith) as the reason God chose us.
It would be salvation by _____ (works) not grace
Romans 11:5-6 English Standard Version So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

ii) Problem with the using "foreknowledge" to support Arminian View

Foreknowledge:	
General Definition: Mental knowledge	Definition according to Rom 29-30, 1 Cor 8:3., Matt 7:22-23 : It is knowing somebody intimately and experientially in a saving manner
Therefore, it is not _____ (mental knowledge), it is _____ (saving relationship)	

iii) More reasons against the Arminian View

Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."	It does not say God knew Jeremiah was gonna _____ (decide to be a prophet) in the future and therefore God appointed him
Proverbs 21:1	Man's will is _____ (subject to

In the Lord's hand the king's heart is a stream of water that he channels toward all who please him.	God), not the other way round
Romans 3:10-12 As it is written: "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, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."	On his own, _____ (man does not seek God)
Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.	"Many were _____ (appointed) to eternal life

2) Discussion question. Human's concept of free will is "the supposed power or capacity of humans to make decisions or perform actions independently of any prior event or state of the universe" Are human decisions really independent of God? Can they control all of their desires? Even their desire for God? (refer to Romans 8:7-8, Eph 2:1-3, Rom 3:10-12 to help you answer)

Takeaway
A. The two major views on predestination vs free will is the Calvinist view and the Arminian View
B. There is a tension between God's total control of this world (sovereignty) and human free will/accountability in decision-making.
C. God is sovereign over everything, yet men are still accountable for their own decisions.
D. God's dispositional will is for everyone to turn back from their evil ways and turn to God (Ezekiel 33:11)

Case Study

Case 1 – Predestination and Free Will

You just learned about predestination and free will from Gamma Ephesians.

You decided to join an inter-church event as a Baptist and met Will who comes from a Wesleyan/Methodist/Pentecostal background and thinks the predestination of God is unfair. He thinks that salvation is totally up to the man.

1) a) Discussion question. Would you start a debate with Will? Why or why not?

b) Discussion question. Does the motive of the debate matter? Whether it is to prove you are right and he is wrong? Or is the motive to have a godly discussion about the struggle of tension between predestination and free will?

Case 1.1

Will is against the Calvinist view and asks: “If Calvinism is true, how can a man be morally accountable?”

c) Discussion question. How would you respond to Will? (Isa 10:13, Joseph’s slavery Gen 50:20)

Case 1. 2

Will is then asked: “If God loves us why doesn’t He save everyone?!”

d) Discussion question. How would you respond to Will? (Prevent crime metaphor, John 21:21-22, Romans 9:19-21)

e) Reflection question. Have you ever thought that if you were God, you would have made a “better” decision?

KX answer:

When we question God's decisions, there are four facts to remind ourselves as limited creatures questioning an infinite God:

- i) God knows all things and is competent, He knows what he is doing
- ii) God is morally good and perfect
- iii) I don't know a lot of things and am not competent in running the whole universe, I cannot see what one decision's domino effect on another thing in the future
- iv) I am morally imperfect, and I am less "good" than God.

Therefore I will surrender to God's competence and good perfect will in how He wants to run this world.