



**Family Devotion #29**  
For the Week of May 6, 2018

Beloved,

Over the past weeks we have been in the book of Romans chapter eight. This chapter is rich in doctrine. Below you will find information on varying doctrines. Included in this family devotion are articles filled with Scripture along with other helpful information to aid you in your personal study of chapter eight. Please take time to read the information and discuss it with your family.

The following two articles are from [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org) please read over these and use them for launching pads into deeper study of God's Word!

**Question: "Do human beings truly have a free will?"**

**Answer:** If "free will" means that God gives humans the opportunity to make choices that genuinely affect their destiny, then yes, human beings do have a free will. The world's current sinful state is directly linked to choices made by Adam and Eve. God created mankind in His own image, and that included the ability to choose.

However, free will does not mean that mankind can do anything he pleases. Our choices are limited to what is in keeping with our nature. For example, a man may choose to walk across a bridge or not to walk across it; what he may *not* choose is to fly over the

bridge—his nature prevents him from flying. In a similar way, a man cannot choose to make himself righteous—his (sin) nature prevents him from canceling his guilt ([Romans 3:23](#)). So, free will is limited by nature.

This limitation does not mitigate our accountability. The Bible is clear that we not only have the *ability* to choose, we also have the *responsibility* to choose wisely. In the Old Testament, God chose a nation (Israel), but individuals within that nation still bore an obligation to choose obedience to God. And individuals outside of Israel were able to choose to believe and follow God as well (e.g., Ruth and Rahab).

In the New Testament, sinners are commanded over and over to “repent” and “believe” ([Matthew 3:2](#); [4:17](#); [Acts 3:19](#); [1 John 3:23](#)). Every call to repent is a call to choose. The command to believe assumes that the hearer can choose to obey the command.

Jesus identified the problem of some unbelievers when He told them, “You refuse to come to me to have life” ([John 5:40](#)). Clearly, they could have come if they wanted to; their problem was they chose not to. “A man reaps what he sows” ([Galatians 6:7](#)), and those who are outside of salvation are “without excuse” ([Romans 1:20-21](#)).

But how can man, limited by a sin nature, ever choose what is good? It is only through the grace and power of God that free will truly becomes “free” in the sense of being able to choose salvation ([John 15:16](#)). It is the Holy Spirit who works in and through a person’s will to regenerate that person ([John 1:12-13](#)) and give him/her a new nature “created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” ([Ephesians 4:24](#)). Salvation is God’s work. At the same time, our motives, desires, and actions are voluntary, and we are rightly held responsible for them.

**Recommended Resource:** [Chosen But Free, revised edition: A Balanced View of God's Sovereignty and Free Will by Norm Geisler and The Potter's Freedom by James White](#)

**Question: "How does God's sovereignty and mankind's free will work together in salvation?"**

**Answer:** It is impossible for us to fully understand the relationship between God’s sovereignty and man’s free will and responsibility. Only God truly knows how they work together in His plan of salvation. With this doctrine, probably more so than with any other, it is crucially important to admit our inability to fully grasp the nature of God and our relationship with Him. Going too far to either side results in a distorted understanding of salvation.

Scripture is clear that God determines who will be saved ([Romans 8:29](#); [1 Peter 1:2](#)). [Ephesians 1:4](#) tells us that God chose us “before the creation of the world.” The Bible repeatedly describes believers as the “chosen” ([Romans 8:33](#), [11:5](#); [Ephesians 1:11](#); [Colossians 3:12](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:4](#); [1 Peter 1:2](#), [2:9](#)) and the “elect” ([Matthew 24:22](#), [31](#); [Mark 13:20](#), [27](#); [Romans 11:7](#); [1 Timothy 5:21](#); [2 Timothy 2:10](#); [Titus 1:1](#); [1 Peter 1:1](#)). The fact that believers are predestined ([Romans 8:29-30](#); [Ephesians 1:5](#), [11](#)) and elected for salvation ([Romans 9:11](#), [11:28](#); [2 Peter 1:10](#)) is clear.

The Bible also says that we are responsible for receiving Christ as Savior. If we believe in Jesus Christ we will be saved ([John 3:16](#); [Romans 10:9-10](#)). God knows who will be saved and God chooses who will be saved, and we must choose Christ in order to be saved. How these facts work together is impossible for a finite mind to comprehend ([Romans 11:33-36](#)). Our responsibility is to take the gospel to the world ([Matthew 28:18-20](#); [Acts 1:8](#)). We should leave foreknowledge, election, and predestination up to God and simply be obedient in sharing the gospel.

**Recommended Resource:** [Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God by J.I. Packer](#)

Beloved,

As we continue this study I would like for you to turn your attention to a message that was brought by Dr. John MacArthur. It is entitled, *Twin Truths: God's Sovereignty and Man's Responsibility*, on the Grace To You webpage. From this site you may choose to listen to or read the manuscript of this message.

The acrostic, T U L I P, is often used to describe major tenets of Calvinism.

Total depravity  
Unconditional election  
Limited atonement  
Irresistible grace  
Perseverance of the saints

For more information please go to the below website and check out this article.

SBCLIFE  
JOURNAL OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

**April 2006 Issue**

**The TULIP of Calvinism**

*In Light of History and the Baptist Faith and Message*

*by Malcolm B. Yarnell III, Ph.D.*

Finally beloved,

The doctrines of foreknowledge, election, predestination, glorification, and calling are deep theological truths. Two biblical truths remain: God's sovereign control over man's eternal destiny and man's responsibility to believe.

Man's responsibility is to believe, then he or she is to carry out the Great Commission that the Lord Jesus Christ gave to **all** of His disciples which can be found in

**Matthew 28:18-20:**

***18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."***

Blessings,

Pastor Gary