

Family Devotion #33

For the week of July 22, 2018



Rich,
young
Ruler

Beloved,

Below you will find excerpts from two books by different authors. Both authors present food for thought. My purpose in our study of Romans is not to tell anyone what to think about predestination and human response/responsibility. Along with previous Scripture, information from sermons, and family devotions; take the following information into consideration to use in your process of rightly dividing the Word of God to better grasp God's teaching on this doctrine. Remember, when working through this process it is essential that a clear definition of terms is established. What one person may think or mean when they define a certain aspect of this doctrine may be entirely different from what you have determined. So, be sure to work on solid biblical definitions and as always be prayed up and ask the Lord to lead you in your studies. This study is not to be done by logic or reason, this is done by faith and with an understanding that the Bible is the infallible Word of God and it is reliable.

Dig deep!

In a book by Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights, New Testament Commentary of Romans*, p.234, the following is found:

Furthermore, everyone is responsible to meet the standard of the gospel- belief- because the good news is intended for everyone. Some theologians object to this because responding in faith to the gospel appears too much like a good deed. By their reasoning, if we have the ability to believe in Christ of our own free will, then we can claim credit for our own salvation. Because we know that no one can be declared righteous except by the gracious act of God, it follows that our belief in Christ must not be freely and independently chosen but compelled by the Holy Spirit. This doctrine (called "irresistible grace" by theologians) is the result of reasoning that sounds logical but finds no direct support in the Bible.

If we continue this line of reasoning, we must conclude that only those who are compelled by the Holy Spirit have the ability to accept the gift of Christ's atonement. Therefore, (these same theologians conclude), Christ died only for those who were predestined to believe . . . and no one else. This is known as the "doctrine of limited atonement." And this is nothing less than contrary to Scripture.

The riches of His grace abound to "all who call on Him" (Romans 10:12). Again, Paul quoted the Old Testament: "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (10:13; quoting Joel 2:32). Paul is proclaiming the free offer that we find throughout the rest of the New Testament: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (I John 2:2). (p.229)

God is sovereign; people are responsible. These two truths must be held simultaneously or evangelism suffers. The Lord's sovereignty gives me great comfort in two respects. First, I rest secure in the fact that my

relationship with Him cannot be severed by my unfaithfulness. Inhibited? Yes. Grievous to both of us? Undoubtedly. But dissolved? Not a chance! That's because He has chosen me and will faithfully equip me to enjoy eternal life with Him.

Second, I rest secure in the fact that the salvation of others is His accomplishment, not mine. I can only imagine the unbearable pressure of holding the eternal destiny of another in my feeble hands. I would continually worry that a slip of the tongue, a poorly chosen word, or a zig instead of a zag in my approach would push someone closer to the edge of damnation. I think I would be paralyzed by the awesome consequences of failure on my part and then fail to speak a word.

Because the sovereign control of God determines the destiny of another, I can boldly proclaim the truth without fear. I am not responsible for the salvation of people; however, my responsibilities are considerable . . . as are yours, if you are a believer. And those responsibilities are vital to the success of God's plan. While He does not need us, He has given us a genuine stake in His redeeming the world.

In a book by John MacArthur, *The John MacArthur New Testament Commentary Romans 9-16*, p.84, the following is found:

Changing from a note of great rejoicing to one of great sorrow. Paul reminds his Jewish readers that **They did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, "Lord who has believed our report?"** (see Isa. 53:1). **Heed** translates *hupakouo*, which has the basic meaning of listening attentively and the derived meaning of submission or obedience. Tragically, the offer of salvation that is proclaimed to all men is not heeded by all men.

As do other passages of Scripture, this verse makes clear that, even in His omnipotent sovereignty, God chooses not to exercise absolute control over human affairs. Contrary to the idea of a divine determinism, such as that of ultra-Calvinism, God's **glad tidings** must be received in faith by those who hear it. Only lopsided and unbiblical theologies put everything on God's side or everything on man's side. In order to produce salvation, God's unmerited grace demands man's positive response. Inherent in God's eternal plan of salvation is man's obedient faith. In perhaps the most concise and beautiful statement of the gospel, Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever believes in Him* should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16, emphasis added).

Blessings,

Pastor Gary