

Free Will

Introduction:

Today, we gather to explore the profound gift of free will that God has bestowed upon us. It is a gift that comes with immense power and responsibility, shaping not only our lives here on earth but also our eternal destiny. As we delve into the intricate connection between our free will and God's sovereignty, we may better understand our role in the divine plan.

Joshua 24:15

But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

1. The Gift of Free Will: Understanding the Power and Responsibility.

From the beginning of creation, God granted humanity the ability to make choices. Our free will allows us to decide our actions, shaping the course of our lives and influencing the world around us. It is a gift that sets us apart from the rest of creation, **empowering us to be co-creators with God.**

2. Embracing Free Will in Faith: Shaping Our Spiritual Journey

Our actions and decisions are not mere accidents but integral parts of our spiritual journey. By embracing our free will in faith, we are able to deepen our relationship with God and align our lives with His will.

1 Kings 18:21

²¹ Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him."

3. The Consequences of Free Will: Reflecting on Our Choices

With the gift of free will comes the weight of responsibility. Our choices have consequences both in this life and the next. As we reflect on the potential outcomes of our decisions, may we strive to choose wisely and align our will with God's.

4. Free Will and Divine Providence: Finding Balance

While we have the freedom to make choices, we also acknowledge God's sovereignty over our lives. In this delicate balance lies the beauty of the divine dance between our

free will and God's providence. Trusting in His plan, we navigate our decisions with humility and faith.

5. Overcoming Temptation through Free Will: Resisting and Choosing Righteousness

Temptation is a constant presence in our lives, challenging us to stray from God's path. Through the strength of our free will, we can resist temptation and make righteous choices that honor God and uplift our souls.

Luke 22:42

“Father, if you are **willing**, take this cup from me; yet **not my will, but yours be done.**”

6. Free Will and Salvation: Playing a Role in Our Relationship with God

Our choices play a pivotal role in our salvation and relationship with God. By following His will and embracing His grace, we grow in our faith and draw closer to His loving presence.

7. Honoring God with Our Free Will: Seeking His Guidance.

As we navigate the complexities of decision-making, let us seek God's guidance and wisdom. By aligning our will with His, we honor God with our choices and further His kingdom on earth.

John 7:17

¹⁷ Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

The Freedom to Love, Worship, and Forgive

Responding to inquiries about the existence of evil and justifying God's goodness in light of human choices.

Human free will also raises questions about the existence of evil and the goodness of God in the face of human choices. The presence of evil is a consequence of human misuse of free will, and it challenges us to wrestle with difficult philosophical questions. Despite this, God's goodness remains unwavering. Even when faced with the consequences of human choices, God continues to offer grace and redemption, demonstrating His unyielding love for His creation.

These principles emphasize free will's complex yet profound nature and its interaction with God's sovereignty and grace. They remind us of the divine gift of autonomy and the

significant responsibility that comes with it, urging us to exercise our free will in alignment with God's will for our lives.

The concept of free will extends to three vital aspects: the freedom to love, the freedom to worship, and the freedom to forgive. This freedom invites us to love sacrificially, serve selflessly, and exhibit compassion towards others. It also empowers us to worship authentically, cultivating a deep and intimate communion with God through prayer, praise, and devotion. Furthermore, free will calls us to extend and receive forgiveness, foster reconciliation, and nurture a spirit of grace and humility within our relationships.

Deuteronomy 30:19

¹⁹ This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life so that you and your children may live.

Call to Action

1. The Gift of Free Will: Understanding the Power and Responsibility

Practical Application: Take time each day to reflect on the choices you make and consider how they align with God's will for your life. Seek guidance through prayer and scripture to make decisions that honor Him.

2. Overcoming Temptation through Free Will: Resisting and Choosing Righteousness

Practical Application: Identify areas in your life where you are facing temptation and develop strategies to resist it. Surround yourself with supportive community and accountability partners to help you make righteous choices.

3. Honoring God with Our Free Will: Seeking His Guidance

Practical Application: Set aside dedicated time for prayer and meditation to seek God's guidance in your decision-making process. Trust in His providence and plan for your life, surrendering your will to His divine purposes.

4. Free Will and Divine Providence: Finding Balance

Practical Application: Take time to reflect on the balance between your free will and God's sovereignty in your life. Trust in His plan and providence, surrendering any doubts or fears to Him. Practice surrendering control and embracing faith in His divine guidance.

5. Embracing Free Will in Faith: Shaping Our Spiritual Journey

Practical Application: Engage in regular spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, and reading scripture to deepen your relationship with God. Make intentional choices that align with your faith and values, actively shaping your spiritual journey through your free will.

6. The Consequences of Free Will: Reflecting on Our Choices

Practical Application: Reflect on past decisions and their consequences, both positive and negative. Use these reflections to make more informed choices in the future, considering the potential outcomes of your actions and striving to make choices that are in line with God's will.

7. Free Will and Salvation: Playing a Role in Our Relationship with God

Practical Application: Actively participate in your own spiritual growth and salvation journey by making intentional choices to follow God's will and seek His grace. Engage in practices such as repentance, forgiveness, and service to strengthen your relationship with God and deepen your understanding of salvation through free will.

Church Father Quote: "God does not will that anyone should perish but that all should come to repentance, yet not so as to take away free will." - St. John Chrysostom

Conclusion:

In the intricate dance between our free will and God's sovereignty, we discover the beauty of divine collaboration. As we embrace the gift of free will, may we use it wisely, aligning our choices with God's will and trusting in His providence. Let us honor God with our decisions, shaping our lives in faith and love.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we come before you with hearts open to the gift of free will that you have given us. Grant us the wisdom and guidance to use this gift responsibly, aligning our choices with your will. Help us navigate the complexities of decision-making with faith and love, always seeking to honor you in all we do. Amen.

Benediction:

May we embrace the gift of free will, aligning our choices with God's will and trusting in His providence. Let our decisions reflect honor, faith, and love as we walk in divine collaboration. Amen.