

FREE WILL

Request: I understand that some Christians don't believe in free will. Could you explain the biblical concept of Free Will?

There are two Greek words used to describe free will in the Bible.

The first Greek word is *thelema* (*ma* is the suffix of results of *thelo*). *Thelema* emphasizes the motive, desire, and emotions associated with choices.

The second Greek word is *boulomai*. It emphasizes absolute determination, purpose, and resolve of the mind apart from emotions associated with choices.

Notice that both Greek words are different approaches to CHOICES associated with free will.

Both of these Greek words are found in our lesson text – “*Father, if Thou art willing (boulomai/ p.m.ind), remove this cup from Me; yet not My will (to thelema), but Thine (boulomai) be done (22:42, NAS/ part of Gethsemane prayer).*”

- Protasis – If (1cc / true) **Thou art willing** (*boulomai* - I know that this is the *divine will* for My life) - “And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.” (22:20/ stated earlier at Last Supper)
- Apodosis – remove (*paraphero / a.a.impv.2ps / you bear or carry it away*) this cup from (apo+abl of separation Me; yet (plen / adversative conjunction / nevertheless) **not My will (to thelema), but Thine (boulomai) be done.**” (*Heb.4:14-16; 5:7-9*)

This lesson will study Five aspects of the FREE WILL of man.

1. An important principle is established regarding divine will and human will in our lesson text.

The principle is that human emotions (*thelema / other plans*) associated with God's will (*boulomai*) must be surrendered mentally to the truth regarding God's will no matter how difficult the circumstances may appear regarding it.

If God does not remove the obstacle preventing your desire or will to be done (answer your prayer), you will need to remove the human emotions associated with your desire that are in conflict with the will of God (nevertheless not my will but Thine be done.).

You will need to remove human emotions by surrendering your desires and motives associated with your will as if the will of God was already done deal (Eph.4: 22-24; Rom.12: 2).

Jesus identified his human struggle with the task set before Him in the will of God by the first command (*paraphero / a.a.impv.2ps / remove*) and identified his surrender to the will of God in the second command (*ginomai / p.a.impv.3ps / be done*). [Note the change of tenses from aorist to present.]

2. Some believe that God has predetermined all of man's choices and that man operates like a robot in regards to them.

It is based on an interpretation of two aspects of God's sovereignty, foreordination and predestination.

"Predestination is that aspect of foreordination whereby the salvation of the believer is taken to be affected in accordance with the will of God, who called and elected him in Christ unto eternal life." (ISBE, pg.2435)

"Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." (2 Cor.5:17; Eph.1:4-7; 2 Thess.2:13-14)

"Adam had a free will and a mind capable of weighing choices." (Basic theology by Ryrie, pg.231)
(1 Cor.15: 22, 45; Rom.5: 12; 1 Tim.2: 14)

3. If choices are predetermined and man can do nothing about it, there shouldn't be any guilt or remorse of conscience regarding it (Gen.2: 16-17; 3:7-10).

The target of the angelic conflict is the free will (volition) of mankind (Gen.3; Matt.4:1-11; 13:18-23). Because of free will, Satan tries to get man to act independent of God's revealed will (2 Cor.2:11).

"Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He has been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders." (Matt.27: 3) the unbeliever (Luke 16:19-31)

4. The following three classifications of God's will would be in conflict if there was no free will of man.

Direct will of God – It is the revealed will of God for every dispensation of believers that must be cycled through the faith system (Jonah 1:1-2).

Permissive will of God – It allows the believer to believe or reject the revealed will of God (Jonah 1:3). God doesn't decree the believer commit sin but does decree that he confess it (James 1:14-15; 1 John 1:9).

Over-ruling will of God – It can supercede all other categories (mental, operational, and geographical) and classifications of the will of God (Jonah 1:4-17).

5. Mosaic judicial system like our own was based on the concept of free will.

Without man's free will of choice, God's divine legal system would be unjust and the majority of non-criminal people would know it.

"Was it not certain that Christ would, according to the Scriptures, be by wicked hands crucified and slain, and yet were not His murderers free in all they did?" (Systematic Theology by Charles Hodges, pg.319)

"This Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death." (Acts 2:23; 3:13-18; 4:9-12)