

# ***How To Give Away Your Faith***

***HANDOUT #5***

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44. The Gospel of John, written that men might be saved (John 20:30-31), supports the conclusion that while God's divine initiative is essential, faith logically precedes regeneration rather than resulting from it.
45. In classical Calvinism, people do not perish because they "refused to love the truth" as the Apostle Paul says (2 Thessalonians 2:10), but because God rejected them before they were ever born.
46. They enter life unable to believe the gospel and unwilling to desire it because of a corrupt nature God chose not to remedy on the unchosen.
47. In classical Calvinism — God passes over those who are not chosen, He then decrees the very path they will want to follow — and then punishes them eternally for actions they had no real control over.
48. In racism, someone is judged for the color of their skin over which they have absolutely no control over — and similarly in Calvinism people are judged for something they have absolutely no control over.
49. For the Calvinist, you are simply born elect or reprobate—you either win "the divine lottery" or you do not—which would force me to conclude that we are left with *no real basis for human responsibility* or blameworthiness.
50. Classical Calvinists would accuse pastors like me of being man-centered, or trying to elevate human ability — but it is actually the opposite.
51. Essentially, non-Calvinists are arguing *that people are more* blameworthy, because they are rejecting a God who truly loves them, and a Christ who genuinely died for them, not a God who never intended to save them.
52. This makes man's guilt even greater because they really could have come to Christ—but they refused God's work & provision.
53. Lost man in the end is judged for having rejected a truly bonified offer, which is why they are truly blameworthy because he chose not to believe.
54. Those of us who recognize man's depravity resulting in an inability to save himself, affirm that despite God's revelation, God's goodness & the Spirit's work, man is left more blameworthy because of unbelief.
55. It is not possible for a lost person to reject a salvation he could never receive, or a Savior who never died for him—only a God who never intended to save him and created him to be rejected.

**All people have chosen to sin against God.**

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

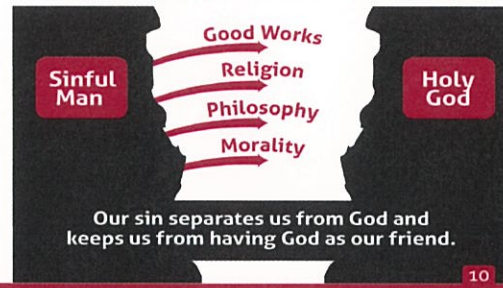
**Our sin brings death and separation.**

"For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23).

**Our sin brings eternal judgment, for God warns that someday He will be:**

"dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

**Our best attempts fall short of reestablishing a friendship with God.**



56. We have seen thus far that the doctrine of “**total depravity**” does not mean that man is ‘**as bad as he can be**’ but that man is ‘**as bad off as he can be**’ making him totally incapable of being his own physician to save himself.

57. We have also seen that unlike in Classical Calvinism & Reformed theology, that regeneration does not precede conversion but follows conversion.

58. This gives us confidence as we share Jesus, knowing that as we rely on the Holy Spirit, He will convict all people of their need for salvation (John 16:8–11), enabling them to freely respond.

59. This stands in contrast to the Reformed view of total depravity, which teaches that even under the Spirit’s conviction the will remains bound in sin, requiring God to first choose a person in order for salvation to occur.

60. They teach that God created some to display His grace and others to display His wrath, a view commonly known as double predestination.

*“We call predestination God’s eternal decree, by which he determined with himself what he willed to become of each man. For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others.*

*Therefore, as any man has been created to one or the other of these ends, we speak of him as predestined to life or to death.”*

*(Institutes of the Christian Religion, III.21.5) Vol. 2, p. 926.*

61. While many evangelicals claim to be “**Reformation**” believers, the term has been redefined over time — and now often means something quite different—much like the way “predestination” is frequently misused.

62. Today — many Christians unknowingly approach the Scriptures with pre-formed definitions of — predestination & election — often inherited from systematic theology textbooks or from pastors under whom they have sat.



63. When we approach the Bible with such presuppositions, we fail to discover what the Scripture plainly teaches & instead we end up importing \_\_\_\_\_ the Bible texts ideas we have & so potentially flavoring our interpretation.
64. However, if you carefully study *how this word* is actually used in Scripture, I think you will discover that it often functions very differently than it is described in many theological \_\_\_\_\_ written by classic Calvinists.
65. When Scripture is allowed to speak for itself, predestination emerges as a concept that functions differently from the way Calvinists portrays it in their systematic theologies \_\_\_\_\_ in their many commentaries.
66. The challenge arises when a biblical term is encountered and an external theological definition is read back into the \_\_\_\_\_.
67. And so Millard Erickson, from his famous systematic theology known as Christian Theology writes, “**By predestination we mean that God \_\_\_\_\_ not merely decided what will happen, but has chosen to bring it about**” (Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed., p. 841).
68. And so in many systematic theologies the authors even begin their chapters on predestination by stating that it is God’s choice of persons for eternal life \_\_\_\_ eternal death (e.g. Wayne Grudem, Michael Horton, R. Latham).
69. When a pre-existing definition is read into a passage of Scripture, one will commit what is known as — “**eisegesis**” — by failing to let the Bible’s own usage determine the meaning of the \_\_\_\_\_.
70. A sounder approach is to start with the Bible and then to allow God’s word to speak as you draw your definition from the verse(s) \_\_\_\_\_.
71. This is true “**exegesis**” as you determine theology out of Scripture—rather than “**eisegesis**” — which reads a pre-existing theology \_\_\_\_\_ the passage.
72. When biblical usage is our first guide, we begin to see how predestination \_\_\_\_\_ functions in the New Testament.
73. When the reader slows down and examines the biblical occurrences \_\_\_\_\_ “**predestination**” (προορίζω/proorizo) — a different picture emerges.
74. This theological term — appears \_\_\_\_\_ times in the New Testament, never carrying the definition classical Calvinists often assign to it. (Acts 4:28; Romans 8:29; 8:30; 1 Cor. 2:7; Ephesians 1:5; 1:11).

75. In Acts 4:28, we see that God's hand and plan predestined the events surrounding Jesus' death—simply put, God predestined the \_\_\_\_.
  76. Twice in Romans 8:29–30, we learn that believers are “**predestined**” to be conformed to the image of Christ, so that everyone \_\_\_\_ is “**called**” is also “**justified**” and “**glorified**” (8:29; 8:30)
  77. In 1 Corinthians 2:7, we learn that God “**predestined**” the inclusion of the “**Gentiles**” among His people—the “**mystery**” of the gospel—again, this word having with nothing to do with \_\_\_\_ choosing individuals.
  78. Likewise, in Ephesians, believers are “**predestined**” for “**adoption as sons**” through Christ (1:5) and we as believers are also “**predestined according to His purpose**” to receive \_\_\_\_ inheritance (1:11).
  79. Across these passages, God's concept of predestination is \_\_\_\_ about Him arbitrarily selecting certain individuals from eternity to become believers.
  80. Apart from God's plan for the cross of Christ—predestination consistently concerns what God has *determined in advance* for those who already \_\_\_\_.
  81. If someone begins with a skewed view of “**total depravity**” then they end up creating a system in which God must rescue the elect independently of human free will—and they \_\_\_\_ this “**predestination.**”
  82. For someone embracing classical Calvinism, because man cannot and is unable to respond to the Holy Spirit due to total depravity, God must \_\_\_\_ unconditionally choose him for salvation.
  83. The Calvinist essentially denies the Spirit's universal conviction, so the opportunity for salvation is unequal as it granted \_\_\_\_ to those whom God the Father uniquely “**draws**” (John 6:44).
- 44 “**No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day** (John 6:44).
84. Calvinists see this verse & others like it as describing God's sovereign act of regeneration — that brings only those — who are elected to \_\_\_\_.
  85. Calvinists teach that the word “**draws**” (helkō) — found in John 6:44, means — “**to compel or to draw irresistibly**” such that those whom God elects — cannot possibly resist — God's sovereign \_\_\_\_.
  86. Reformed theologian John Piper writes in What We Believe (p. 76):



*“If our doctrine of total depravity is true, there can be no salvation without the reality of irresistible grace. If we are dead in our sins, totally unable to submit to God, then we will never believe in Christ, unless God overcomes our rebellion.”*

87. We have seen that he & others says that the word “draws” (Jn. 6:44) means — “to compel or to draw irresistibly” such that those whom God elects — cannot possibly resist — God’s sovereign \_\_\_\_\_.
88. If one as a stilted view the doctrine of “total depravity” — then they are forced to embrace the doctrine of “unconditional election” because man cannot \_\_\_\_\_ for himself thereby making God’s grace “irresistible.”
89. Most Evangelicals believe God is able to “draw all men” through the Spirit as He \_\_\_\_\_ “the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”
90. At the same time this does not mean that “all men” will turn to Jesus, but that “all men” have sufficient opportunity to do so if they so will to do so, as John makes \_\_\_\_\_ in his prologue & as Jesus specifically stated:

9 There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man (John 1:9).

32 “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself” (John 12:32).

91. Non-Calvinists say that this understanding of the word ‘draws’ (helkō), certainly gives God the credit for taking the initiative with us while also maintaining His absolute sovereignty in giving man freedom of \_\_\_\_\_.
92. Since the power of choice — is an aspect of God’s person — God in His sovereignty who created man in His own “image” endowed humanity with the capacity to choose rather than making us \_\_\_\_\_ beings.
93. This understanding of John 6:44 is clear from the immediate context, where \_\_\_\_\_ had just stated, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and I will never cast out” (John 6:37).
94. Calvinists teach that a person can believe \_\_\_\_ after being first regenerated.
95. They further maintain that regeneration is granted only to those chosen or elected by God, while the rest are left unable to believe and destined for God’s eternal wrath in \_\_\_\_\_.
96. So, having addressed their misconstrued doctrine of what it means to \_\_\_\_ predestined, we must also address their misconstrued doctrine of election.