

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

***HANDOUT #5***

409. That is why many Calvinists interpret the Bible's statement that salvation "**the gift of God**" (Rom. 6:23) includes even the faith required to believe.
410. They would teach that God—first grants spiritual life to those He has chosen, and only then—without any resistance—will one respond with faith in Jesus.
411. Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) was a famous English Baptist pastor often called the "**Prince of Preachers**" — recognized the folly of saying that the sinner must first be regenerated before he can believe when he taught:

*"If I am to preach the faith in Christ to a man who is regenerated, then the man, being regenerated, is saved already, and it is an unnecessary and a ridiculous thing for me to preach Christ to him, and bid him to believe in order to be saved when he is saved already, being regenerate. Am I only to preach faith to those who have it? Absurd, indeed! Is not this waiting till the man is cured, and then bringing him the medicine? This is preaching Christ to the righteous and not to sinners."*  
 ("The Warrant of Faith" *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Volume 9).

412. A Calvinist teaches that if anyone is going to believe in Christ—God must first change that person's heart — by first giving them the new birth, and then and only then will that the individual be able to believe.
413. Again, non-Calvinists view this differently in that while they also believe that people are sinful and unable to save themselves, they maintain that God, in some measure, works in us all so that all can freely chose or reject Jesus.

7 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8 "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; 11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged (Jn. 16:7–11).

414. In Traditionalist view — God graciously reaches out to all people and enables them to believe without forcing them to do so such that faith is understood as a genuine human response rather than something irresistibly caused by God.
415. A person can freely either accept—or reject God's offer of salvation, that is to say—they can resist the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.

51 "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did (Acts 7:51).

416. A major point of contention for Traditionalists vs. Calvinists is precisely how one understands the nature of "**faith**" found in Ephesians 2:8-9:

**8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.**

417. The point of disagreement is about \_\_\_\_\_ the grace of God works & unfolds in our lives—such that one will be compelled—to place their faith in Jesus.
418. The real disagreement is not about whether God in His grace works in the lives of unbelievers before they are saved—because Calvinists, Arminians, Traditionalists and Provisionists—all believe salvation \_\_\_\_\_ with God.
419. Calvinists believe that God’s grace “**irresistibly**” brings a person to faith and guarantees the response—while non-Calvinists believe God’s grace enables all to believe — while still allowing \_\_\_\_\_ of us — the freedom to resist.
420. The non-Calvinist believes that before conversion—a person can resist the grace of God that brings salvation \_\_\_ an unwillingness to believe.
421. By contrast, the Calvinist teaches because someone is \_\_\_\_\_ regenerated or born again by God’s choice of him—that saving grace cannot be resisted.
422. The Calvinistic doctrine of “**Irresistible Grace**” is closely tied to their view of depravity requiring that the “**faith**” to believe all by itself a gift from \_\_\_\_\_.
423. We have seen that by their definition of “**Total Depravity**” that fallen people are so intensely dead—that they are unable to come to Christ on their \_\_\_\_.
424. Because of this inability—God must *do more than simply* offer salvation—and He must *do more than* just convict them of “**sin righteousness and judgment,**” (John 16:2?), but God \_\_\_\_\_ irresistibly bring the sinner to faith.
425. For the Calvinist, when God calls one of those individuals that He has elected to be saved, that call is \_\_\_\_\_ merely persuasive—it actually changes the heart.
426. The Calvinist believes—God overcomes the sinner’s resistance, regenerates them by giving them new spiritual life, which in turn produces \_\_\_\_\_ faith.
427. The crux of the “**I**” in “TULIP” being “**Irresistible Grace**” is \_\_\_\_\_ an individual — comes to the point of — exercising genuine faith.
428. As we study the specifics of evangelizing the lost, one important truth to emphasize is that salvation is received through \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus Christ.
429. Because faith is so central to the gospel, an important theological question naturally arises, \_\_\_\_\_ does faith actually come from?

430. Since the Bible says we were “**dead in trespasses and sins**” (Eph. 2:1) before conversion — we must consider the question — “**Does God give faith to sinners so that they are \_\_\_\_\_ to believe?**” — as Calvinists maintain.
431. Or, “**Does God call all people to place their faith in the gospel in order to receive the \_\_\_\_\_ of eternal life?**” — as non-Calvinists teach?
432. And in answering these—we must also ask—if faith is something a person exercises, does that make faith a meritorious work that \_\_\_\_\_ salvation?
433. These are all very important questions because they affect how we understand \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel and the nature of saving faith.
434. According to Reformed theology — because a person is spiritually “**dead**” in their “**trespasses and sins**” — no individual has the ability on his own to respond to God, even when the Holy Spirit is convicting him of \_\_\_\_\_.
435. Therefore, if anyone is to believe, God must \_\_\_\_\_ sovereignly enable that person to do so; this is what is referred to as “**Unconditional Election.**”
436. For this reason, Reformed theology views faith itself as a gift, given by God — to those He has chosen — or elected to \_\_\_\_\_.
437. Otherwise, if faith originates in the sinner rather than in God, it is argued that “faith” becomes a human contribution to salvation — and therefore — a meritorious \_\_\_\_\_.
438. Virtually all evangelical Christians agree that the evidence of genuine salvation is not merely a — “**profession of faith**” — but a lifestyle that demonstrates trust in Jesus Christ \_\_\_\_\_ for salvation (Titus 2:12).
439. The key \_\_\_\_\_ of disagreement is where that faith originates.
440. Does God grant the ability to — “believe” — exclusively to those He \_\_\_\_\_ chosen—the elect—as Calvinism teaches?
441. If He does as some say, then it follows that the same God who gives a person the ability to believe, will also enable that person to display the transformed \_\_\_\_\_ that accompanies genuine faith.
442. In this system, both faith and the evidence of faith ultimately flow from God’s sovereign \_\_\_\_\_ in the believer.
443. Again, for those who call themselves “Reformed” God first acts in the heart of a person, enabling and drawing him \_\_\_\_\_ respond to the gospel.

444. Where Calvinists and non-Calvinists differ is not over the reality of God’s enabling work — but over its extent of God’s \_\_\_\_\_.
445. Non-Calvinists would argue that this enabling grace is given to \_\_\_\_\_ people — because God desires — all to be saved.
446. In that view, because \_\_\_\_\_ wishes “**all to come to repentance**” every person is genuinely *enabled to respond* to the gospel, though not all ultimately do so.
447. A Calvinist would not \_\_\_\_\_ that human beings make real choices or exercise — what is often — referred to as — “**free will.**”
448. Rather, he would argue that the human will is always influenced by the person’s nature and desires — and that in salvation — God so works in the heart of the sinner that he willingly and \_\_\_\_\_ comes to Christ.
449. As a result, the individual says “\_\_\_\_\_” to Christ because God has already done an inward — effective work of grace — that secures that response.
450. In other words, the believer’s decision to trust Christ is understood to be the result of God’s prior action in the heart, which for the Calvinist makes their response \_\_\_\_\_ genuine and certain.
451. As we have already noted earlier in this handout, most Reformed theologians believe that God gives faith itself as a \_\_\_\_\_, enabling a person to believe in Jesus Christ for their personal salvation.
452. This is important in their system—because it ensures that salvation is entirely God’s work and leaves no room for human pride or for the idea that a person \_\_\_\_\_ contributed to — his own salvation by making — a personal decision.
453. On the other hand—others argue that while—faith is necessary and enabled by God’s gracious work, God does not “**infuse**” faith into a person as a \_\_\_\_\_.
454. Instead—the individual is responsible to respond to the gospel message in faith, and this act of believing is \_\_\_\_\_ considered a meritorious work.
455. Those who argue that “faith” is a “gift” that God imparts to people who \_\_\_\_\_ spiritually dead and totally unresponsive to God appeal to several passages.
456. The principal passages often \_\_\_\_\_ in this discussion include John 6:28–29, John 6:44–45, Romans 12:3, Acts 3:16, Philippians 1:29, and 2 Peter 1:1.

457. However—the primary text most frequently used to support the position that “faith” must be given as a “gift” because individuals are spiritually dead and \_\_\_\_\_ to respond independently to the work of the Spirit is Ephesians 2:8.
458. As we have noted previously — non-Calvinists would argue that \_\_\_\_\_ is not itself a divine gift in the sense of being directly granted by God.
459. Both sides would agree that people are spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1), but non-Calvinists maintain that spiritual death does not mean a “**total inability**” to respond to the Holy Spirit’s convicting & drawing \_\_\_\_\_.
460. When Jesus said of the Spirit He said, “**He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment**” (Jn. 16:8) the \_\_\_\_\_ reading would lead most to believe that His influence can impact everyone.
461. This is why non-Calvinists maintain that “**spiritual death**” does \_\_\_\_\_ mean a “**total inability**” to respond to the Spirit’s convicting and drawing work.
462. The traditional view affirms—that people are separated from God, but when the Spirit comes to convict them of “**sin, righteousness, and judgment,**” \_\_\_\_\_ are then able to respond in faith by believing in the finished work of Jesus.
463. With this framework in mind, we can now carefully study Ephesians 2:8-9, the key passage often cited in this discussion — what we might call \_\_\_\_\_ “headquarters verse” used to support the Calvinistic perspective.
464. As we have worked through — the various points of the acronym TULIP, we have — already touched on — some of these \_\_\_\_\_ indirectly.
465. Whether you believe faith is a “gift” that God gives only to certain people, or whether you believe everyone has the ability to place their “faith” in Christ when aided by God, largely depends on how you answer \_\_\_ key questions.
466. First, are the lost so “**dead**” that they are “**unable to respond**” to the gospel unless God gives them a special gift beyond the Spirit’s convicting \_\_\_\_\_?
467. Second, one must ask & answer is faith itself a “work” that we \_\_\_\_\_?
468. And third, do any passages of Scripture actually teach that faith is a gift given \_\_\_\_\_ to certain individuals that God chooses?
469. I will not belabor the first question because we have seen that while we are born “**dead in our trespasses and sins**” — we have \_\_\_\_\_ within ourselves the ability to respond to general revelation (Romans 1:18-20; 2:14-16).

470. In addition, the spiritual deadness of unbelievers is adequately addressed by the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11).
471. When people are exposed to God’s truth—the Spirit does exactly what Jesus promised — He convicts — “**the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment,**” enabling people *to understand their need* for Jesus & to respond to the \_\_\_\_\_.
472. If total depravity is understood to mean that not only every part of \_\_\_\_\_ being has been affected by sin, but also that we are incapable of responding in faith apart from divine enablement, then faith must be regarded as a gift bestowed.
473. The Calvinistic doctrine of total depravity is often better described as “**total inability**” — because it teaches that fallen humanity is spiritually unable \_\_\_\_\_ respond positively to the Spirit apart from first being granted faith by God.
474. By contrast, those who reject Calvin’s understanding of “**total inability**” still affirm that humanity is deeply corrupted by sin and unable to save itself, yet hold that the convicting work of the Spirit is sufficient to enlighten the \_\_\_\_\_.
475. In this view, no one can take credit, since God initiates the work, yet He does so in a manner that enables anyone who hears the gospel to respond \_\_\_\_\_.
476. The Bible does not teach—that people are completely unable to respond \_\_\_\_\_ the Holy Spirit’s conviction and invitation—in fact, it teaches the opposite.
477. Throughout the Bible, God calls people to \_\_\_\_\_ to Him and believe.
478. For instance—there are several places in the Old Testament where \_\_\_\_\_ extends an invitation — beyond Israel’s faithful remnant — calling raw sinners & idolaters & pagan Gentiles to turn, come, seek, and live.
479. While the wording “**believe in Me**” is more explicit in the New Testament, the Old Testament repeatedly uses parallel language: **come, seek, turn, return, listen, and live** — let me give \_\_\_\_\_ a sample of such passages.
480. We find in Isaiah 45:22 one of the strongest Old Testament calls to the nations to \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord to receive His salvation.

**22 “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth;  
For I am God, and there is no other.**

481. In Isaiah 55:1–3 God gives an invitation to the spiritually \_\_\_\_\_:

1 “Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost.  
2 “Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance. 3 “Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you,  
According to the faithful mercies shown to David.

482. This is a free invitation to “**everyone**” and not just to the people of Israel, as this verse centers on coming — listening — and — receiving \_\_\_\_\_.

483. Likewise in Ezekiel 18:30–32, God explicitly appeals to the wicked house of Israel, but the logic is universal—God’s posture is that—He takes \_\_\_ delight in judgment which is why He gives an invitation to turn & to live.

30 “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct,” declares the Lord GOD. “Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you. 31 “Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel? 32 “For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,” declares the Lord GOD. “Therefore, repent and live.”

484. In fact, the entire Book of Jonah functions as an OT illustration that \_\_\_\_\_ sends His prophet to a pagan city, and the Gentiles respond in repentance.

5 Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them. . . . 10 When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it (3:5,10).

485. The Prophet Joel gives a promise that is later quoted in Romans 10, that is in its original context is universal in \_\_\_\_\_ (Joel 2:32):

32 “And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

486. The Old Testament consistently portrays God as calling the wicked to repent (Ezekiel 18), inviting the thirsty & needy to come (Isaiah 55) & commanding the nations to turn and be \_\_\_\_\_ (Isaiah 45:22) & so King David can write:

8 O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him (Psalm 34:8)!

487. Repeatedly, God uses the language of experience— “**taste**,” “**see**,” “**take refuge**”—indicating this is not restricted to priests or to an elite \_\_\_\_\_.

488. So while “**believe in me**” is New Testament language, the Old Testament absolutely contains real invitations to come, to turn, to seek, and to live, directed even beyond the people of Israel inviting \_\_\_\_ people to come.
489. As we come to the New Testament — we encounter numerous passages that either explicitly state or directly imply a universal gospel invitation in which all people are called to come to Christ \_\_\_\_\_ forgiveness and salvation.
490. For example, on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus stood up \_\_\_\_ proclaimed, “**If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink**” (John 7:37).
491. Notice that the invitation is open to — “**anyone**” — who recognizes his \_\_\_\_, as expressed in numerous other passages throughout the New Testament.

**28 “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden,  
and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).**

**16 “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).**

**3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:3–4).**

**11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men (Titus 2:11),**

492. Because the invitation is open to all people—we are to share the gospel to every person—because anyone \_\_\_\_ be saved (Mark 16:15; Acts 17:30).

493. If people had absolutely no ability to respond to God’s drawing and convicting work — then these invitations would make \_\_\_\_\_ sense.

494. God does not continually call people to come if they were incapable \_\_\_\_ responding which is why Jesus also rebuked some people by saying:

**“You are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life” (John 5:40).**

495. He did not say they were unable to come—He said they were “**unwilling**” for their problem was \_\_\_\_\_ a lack of ability — but a refusal to believe.

496. Together—both the Old & New Testaments—form the strongest \_\_\_\_ for the idea that the gospel invitation is genuinely extended to all without distinction.

497. So in answer to the first of these three critical questions, for the non-Calvinist spiritual deadness does not mean a person is incapable of believing when the Spirit confronts the \_\_\_\_\_ sinner with the truth of the gospel.