

Words of GRACE

**Understanding the
Language of Salvation**

Keith S. Andrews

WORDS OF GRACE

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Lesson 1

PREDESTINATION

What is your destiny?

- **Your ultimate destination**

- Dan. 12:2-3 – *“Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”*
- Heb. 9:27 (NLT) – *“Each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment.”*
- With God forever or separated from God forever.

- **The path to your ultimate destination**

- Jer. 1:5 – *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”*
- John 15:16 – *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit— fruit that will last.”*
- Consider Php. 2:12-13 (NLT) – *“Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.”*

How is your destiny determined?

- **From the secular perspective**

- Fate
- Chance
- Hard work and determination (i.e., self-determination)

- **From the biblical perspective**

God’s will and purpose

- Jer. 10:23 – *“I know, O LORD, that a man’s life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps.”*
- Prov. 16:9 (NLT) – *“We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps.”*
- Prov. 21:30 (NLT) – *“No human wisdom or understanding or plan can stand against the LORD.”*
- Isa. 46:10 – *“I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.”*

Your spiritual walk

- Isa. 30:21 – *“Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’”*
- Gal. 5:16, 25 – *“I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. . . Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”*

- Rom. 8:5 – “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.”
- Ps. 25:8-9 – “Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.”
- Prov. 3:5-6 – “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Can you change your destiny?

- **Re: Your ultimate destination**

- Matt. 13:24-30 (NLT) – “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer who planted good seed in his field. But that night as the workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat, then slipped away. When the crop began to grow and produce grain, the weeds also grew. The farmer’s workers went to him and said, ‘Sir, the field where you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come from?’ ‘An enemy has done this!’ the farmer exclaimed. ‘Should we pull out the weeds?’ they asked. ‘No,’ he replied, ‘you’ll uproot the wheat if you do. Let both grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to put the wheat in the barn.’”
- Matt. 13:47-49a – “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a fishing net that was thrown into the water and caught fish of every kind. When the net was full, they dragged it up onto the shore, sat down, and sorted the good fish into crates, but threw the bad ones away. That is the way it will be at the end of the world. . .”

- **Re: Your life-path**

- Ps. 119:11 – “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”
- Lk. 9:23-25 – “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?”
- 1 Cor. 15:32b-34a (NLT) – “. . . Let’s feast and drink, for tomorrow we die!” Don’t be fooled by those who say such things, for “bad company corrupts good character.” Think carefully about what is right, and stop sinning.”

Who is ultimately in charge?

- **Is “free will” biblical?**

- Jn. 8:34 – “Jesus replied, ‘I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.’”
- Rom. 6:17-23 – “Thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap

leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- **What is Christian liberty?**

- 2 Cor. 3:17 – *“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (KJV and NASB, liberty).*

- Rom. 8:2 – *“Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.”*

Lesson 2

ELECTION

What is a person “elected” to (i.e., selected for)?

- **A relationship with God**

- Deut. 7:6 – “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.”

- 1 Peter 2:9 – “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

- **Service to God**

- Jn. 15:16 – “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit. . .”

- 1 Cor. 6:19-20 – “. . . You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

- **Personal Sanctification and Holiness**

- Eph 1:4 - “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”

- 1 Peter 1:1-2 - “To God’s elect, strangers in the world . . . who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood. . .”

- 2 Tim. 1:9 – “God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time — to show us his grace through Christ Jesus.”

- **Eternal life**

- Jer. 31:3 – “The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.’”

- Acts 13:48 (NASB) – “. . . as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.”

What is the purpose of election?

- **God’s glory**

- Php. 2:5-11 – “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- **The fulfillment of God's purpose and promise**
 - Deut. 7:7-8 – “The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers. . . . “
 - Eph. 1:4-5 – “He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will. . . .”
- **The restoration of the *imago dei* in man**
 - Rom. 8:29 (ESV) – “Those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son . . .”
- **God's blessing in your life**
 - Ps. 23:1 – “The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
 - Lk. 12:30-31 – “Your Father already knows your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give you everything you need.”

How is election accomplished?

- **Through God's gracious choice**
 - Eph. 1:11 – “In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.”

What happens to those who aren't elected?

- **They continue to benefit from God's common grace**
 - Ps. 145:9 – “The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.”
 - Ps. 36:6 – “Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep. O LORD, you preserve both man and beast.”
 - Acts 17:25 – “. . . he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.”
- **They continue to live out their own nature**
 - Rom. 8:5, 7 – “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires. . . the sinful mind is hostile to god. It does not submit to god's law, nor can it do so.”
 - 1 Cor. 2:14 (ESV) – “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”

- **They remain eternally separated from God**

- Those who have lived apart from God in this life continue to do so in the life that is to come.

- Mt 22:13 - "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

- In several of His parables, Jesus refers to the destination of the lost as "outer darkness." Darkness in Scripture usually symbolizes an absence of the knowledge of God.

Does election = salvation?

- No. Salvation is by grace through faith

- It could be correctly understood that election leads to salvation. However the two should not be equated.

- Eph 2:4, 8 – "*But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions . . . by grace you have been saved through faith . . .*"

Lesson 3

REGENERATION

What is “regeneration”?

- **Regeneration is being born again, born from above, born of the Spirit**
 - The word “regeneration” means rebirth, being born again.
 - Ezk. 36:26 - “I will give you a new heart and put a *new spirit* in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”
 - Jn. 3:6-7 - “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the *spirit gives birth to spirit*. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘*you must be born again.*’”
- **It is a new beginning**
 - 2 Cor. 5:17 - “If anyone is in Christ, he is a *new creation*; the old has gone, the new has come!”
 - 1 Peter 1:3 - “Praise be to the god and father of our lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us *new birth into a living hope* . . .”
- **It is the “first resurrection” – moving from death to life**
 - Eph. 2:4-5 - “Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, *made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions* . . .”
 - Rom. 6:4 - “Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now *we also may live new lives.*”

Why is it necessary?

- **We are dead in trespasses and sin**
 - Eph. 2:1 - “As for you, *you were dead in your transgressions and sins.*”
 - Jn. 5:24 - “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; *he has crossed over from death to life.*”
- **In our natural state, we are unresponsive to God**
 - Unable to see the kingdom
 - Jn. 3:3 - “I tell you the truth, *no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.*”
 - Unable to enter the kingdom
 - Jn. 3:5 - “I tell you the truth, *no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the spirit.*”
- **The unregenerate person is unable to benefit from the atoning work of Christ**
 - Rom. 8:9 - “If anyone does *not have the Spirit of Christ*, he does not *belong to Christ.*”

How is it accomplished?

- **Rebirth is a work of God**
 - Jn. 1:12-13 – “To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”
- **It involves the interaction of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God**
 - Titus 3:5b – “He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”
 - 1 Peter 1:23 – “You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.”
- **It also involves the work of Jesus who “came that they might have life.”**
 - Jn. 5:26 (NLT) – “The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son.”
 - Jn. 10:10 – “I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”
 - 1 Jn. 5:12 (NLT) – “Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God’s Son does not have life.”
- **It is based on the purpose and the mercy of God.**
 - Titus 3:4-5a – “When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.”
- **Its outcome is a “new creature.”**
 - Rom. 7:6 – “Now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.”
 - Col. 3:9-10 – “Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”

Can one choose to be regenerated?

- **No, although it may seem like it.**
 - Jn. 15:16 – “You didn’t choose me. I chose you.”
 - 1 Jn. 4:19 – “We love because he first loved us.”
 - Jn. 6:65 – “He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.”
- **The desire to trust and/or obey God is the consequence of, not the cause of, regeneration.**
 - Eph. 2:8-9 – “it is by grace you have been saved, through faith— and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of god— not by works, so that no one can boast.”
 - Rom. 9:15-16 (NLT) – “For God said to Moses, “I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose.” So it is God who decides to show mercy. We can neither choose it nor work for it.”

Lesson 4

EFFECTUAL CALL: THE EXTERNAL CALL

The message of general revelation

- **General revelation is God announcing His existence to all mankind**
 - General revelation refers to the basic truths about God that can be known by all men. These things are most clearly seen through creation and the laws of nature.
- **It teaches them:**
 - God's glory
 - Ps. 19:1 (NLT) – “The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship.”
 - His common grace
 - Acts 14:7 – “He has not left himself without testimony: he has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.”
 - His eternal power and divine nature
 - Rom. 1:20 – “Since the creation of the world god's invisible qualities— his eternal power and divine nature— have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”
- It leaves men without excuse
 - Rom. 1:19 (NLT) – “They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them.”

The power of God's Word

- **It is truth**
 - Jn. 17:17 – “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”
 - Ps. 19:7-10 – “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.
- **It gives us hope**
 - Rom. 15:4 – “Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”
- **Living, active, effective**
 - Heb. 4:12 – “The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”
 - Jer. 23:29 (NLT) – “Does not my word burn like fire?” says the LORD. “Is it not like a mighty hammer that smashes a rock to pieces?”

- Isa. 55:11 - "... so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

- **Useful for teaching and spiritual growth**

- 2 Tim. 3:16 - "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."

- Mk. 12:24 - "Jesus replied, 'Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?'"

The attractiveness of the Gospel

- **The Gospel is God's gracious response to every man's greatest need.**

- Lk. 19:10 - "For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."

- **When the heart has been prepared to receive it, it always produces repentance, faith, and life.**

- Jn. 6:37 - "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out."

- Acts 13:48 - "... all who were appointed for eternal life believed."

The example of the Church

- **The word "church" in Gk (ekklesia) means "called out."**

- It refers to those who have been called / chosen by God.

- "ek" = out, "kaleo" = to call.

- This word is used in the Septuagint (i.e., the Greek Old Testament) to replace the Hebrew for "congregation of Israel."

- It appears in the New Testament 115 times, sometimes referring to a portion of the people of God coming together and sometimes to the people of God as a whole.

- Rom. 16:5 - "Greet also the church that meets at their house."

- Col. 1:18 (NLT) - "Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body."

- **The church consists of those who have been called out of the world and into relationship with God through faith in Jesus**

- No one becomes part of the invisible church apart from the call of God.

- The church only participates in the external call of God when it is living out its faith through obedience to God's Word and Spirit.

- Lk. 6:46 - "'Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?'"

- **Authentic worship is the testimony of those who know God.**

- When unbelievers see the authentic worship of the church, they know that they are with people who have an authentic relationship with a true and living God.

- Jn. 4:23 - "A time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks."

Lesson 5

EFFECTUAL CALL: THE INTERNAL CALL

The knowledge of sin

- **Even one violation of God's will is disobedience**
 - James 2:10 – “Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.”
 - 1 Jn. 3:4 – “Sin is lawlessness.”
- **The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin**
 - Jn. 16:7-8 – “Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment . . .”
- **The knowledge of sin is confirmed by the Law of God**
 - Rom. 3:20 – “Through the law we become conscious of sin.”
- **Anything that does not come from faith is sin**
 - Rom. 14:23 – “Whatever is not from faith is sin.”

The weight of guilt

- **Guilt leads to repentance**
 - Ezk. 18:30-31 – “Repent! Turn away from all your offences; then sin will not be your downfall. Rid yourselves of all the offences you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit.”
- **This is the call of Jesus**
 - Luke 5:32 – “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

The draw of the Spirit

- **The Holy Spirit is the “Spirit of truth.”**
 - Jn. 16:13 – “When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.”
 - 1 Cor. 2:12 – “We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.
- **The Holy Spirit testifies about Jesus**
 - John 15:26 – “I will send you the Advocate — the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me.”

The desire to experience God

- **The sinner's natural tendency is to hide from God.**
 - Gen. 3:8 – “Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.”
 - Job 34:2 – “There is no dark place, no deep shadow, where evildoers can hide.”

- Jonah 1:3 – “Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish.”

- **The Christian’s natural tendency is to seek God.**

- Ps. 42:1 (NLT) – “As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God.”

- Isa 26:9 – “My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you.”

- Heb 10:22 – “Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith. . .”

The ability to worship

- **It is right for God’s people to worship Him.**

- Ps. 29:2 – “Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.”

- Ps. 92:1-5 (NASB) – “It is good to give thanks to the LORD and to sing praises to your name, O most high; to declare your lovingkindness in the morning and your faithfulness by night, with the ten-stringed lute and with the harp, with resounding music upon the lyre. For you, O LORD, have made me glad by what you have done, I will sing for joy at the works of your hands. How great are your works, O LORD! Your thoughts are very deep.”

- **He is worthy of our worship**

- He is Holy

- He is Glorious

- He is Gracious

- He is Merciful

- He is Faithful

- He is Powerful

- Only those who are born again can be authentic worshippers

- Ps. 64:10 (NLT) – “The godly will rejoice in the LORD and find shelter in him. . .”

- 1 Peter 2:9 – “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

- 1 Cor. 2:14 – “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

- God seeks authentic worshippers (Jn. 4:23)

- John 4:23 – “True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.”

- It is important for the church to worship together

- Heb. 10:25 (NLT) – “let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.”

Lesson 6

REPENTANCE

Why is repentance necessary?

- **It is the consequence of the new birth**
 - Jn. 3:3 – “Jesus declared, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.’”
 - Acts 11:18 – “God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life.”
- **It reflects a change of character/nature**
 - Eze 11:19-20 – “I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.”
 - 1 Cor. 6:9-11 (NLT) – “Don’t you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don’t fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people — none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
- **It is believer’s response to the leading of the Holy Spirit**
 - Gal. 5:17 – “The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other.”
- **It is a transition from death to life**
 - Ezc. 18:31 – “Rid yourselves of all the offences you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel?”
 - Lk. 13:3 – “And you will perish, too, unless you repent of your sins and turn to God.”
 - Acts 3:19-20 (ESV) – “Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,
 - 2 Cor. 7:10 (NLT) – “The kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There’s no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.

Turning from our own way

- **Our way leads to death/destruction**
 - Prov. 14:12 – “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.”
 - Rom. 6:21 – “What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!”
- **Our way is sin in God’s eyes**
 - Isa. 53:6 (NLT) – “All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God’s paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all.”

Turning toward God's way

- **God's way leads to life and hope**
 - Acts 11:18 - "When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, 'Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.'"
 - Heb. 10:22-23 - "Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.
- **God's way leads to blessing**
 - Ps. 1:1-3 (ESV) - "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."
 - Ps 89:15 - "Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD."
- **God's way is a righteous path**
 - Ps. 23:3 - "He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake."
 - Isa 42:16 - "I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them."

Abandoning self-sufficiency

- **No man can save himself**
 - Acts 4:12 (NLT) - "There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."
 - 1 Jn. 5:12 - "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."
- **No man can sustain himself**
 - Acts 17:28 - "For in him we live and move and have our being."
 - Ps. 104:29 - "When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust."
 - Matt. 5:45 - ". . . He gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike."
- **Everyone always falls short**
 - Rom. 3:23-24 - "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
 - Gal. 3:22 - "The Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin . . ."

Embracing Christ's sufficiency

- **"In Christ" alone**
 - Jn. 14:6 - "Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
 - Jn. 6:28-29 - "They asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

Lesson 7

FAITH

Why is faith in Christ so important?

- **It is the source of our righteousness**
 - Rom. 1:17 – “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’”
 - Php. 3:8-9 – “I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.
- **It is the basis for our justification**
 - Rom. 5:1 – “Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - Gal. 2:16 – “Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.
- **The Christian life is lived in the atmosphere of faith**
 - Eph. 6:16 “. . . take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.”
 - 1 Tim. 1:19 - “Cling to your faith in Christ, and keep your conscience clear. For some people have deliberately violated their consciences; as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked. ”
 - 1 Tim. 6:12 - “Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”
 - Heb 10:22 - “Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.”
 - Heb 11:6 - “Without faith it is impossible to please God . . . ”
- **Christ is God’s only provision for man’s salvation**
 - Jn. 3:18 – “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”
 - 1 Jn. 5:12 – “He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.
 - Acts 4:12 (NLT) – “There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.”

Trusting Christ’s atoning work

- **His incarnation and mission**
 - Matt. 1:21 – “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”
 - Luke 5:32 – “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinner to repentance.”
 - Luke 19:10 – “For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.”
 - 1 Tim. 1:15 – “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners . . . ”

- **His righteous life**
 - 1 Jn. 3:5 – “He appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.”
 - 2 Cor. 5:21- “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”
 - Jn. 8:29 – “The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.”
- **His sacrificial death**
 - Jn. 1:29 – “The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”
 - 1 Pet. 1:18-19 – “You know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”
 - 1 Jo 2:2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins . . .
 - Col. 1:21-22 – “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.”
- **His resurrection from the dead**
 - Rom. 10:9 (NLT) – “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”
 - 1 Pet. 1:3 – “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

Following the Spirit’s lead

- **Repentance necessitates faith**
 - Acts 20:21 – “I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.”
 - Gal. 2:20 – “The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”
- **Step-by-step**
 - Gal. 5:16 (NASB) – “I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.”
 - Rom. 6:4 – “We have been buried with him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”
 - 2 Cor. 5:7 (NASB) – “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”
- **The fruit of the Spirit**
 - Gal. 5:22-23 – “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

Abandoning all confidence in the flesh

- **The works of the flesh**

- Gal. 5:19-21 – *“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

- **The inadequacy of self**

Rom. 3:23 (NLT) – *“Everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.”*

Jer. 9:24 (NLT) – *“Those who wish to boast should boast in this alone: that they truly know me and understand that I am the LORD who demonstrates unfailing love and who brings justice and righteousness to the earth, and that I delight in these things. I, the LORD, have spoken!”*

- **Trusting faithfully**

- Matt. 24:13 – *“He who stands firm to the end will be saved.”*

- Heb. 10:39 – *“We are not like those who turn away from God to their own destruction. We are the faithful ones, whose souls will be saved.”*

Lesson 8

JUSTIFICATION

A Judicial act of God's grace

- **Not the consequence of our works**
 - Rom. 3:23-24 – “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”
 - Rom. 4:4-5 – “Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.”
- **Based on Christ's obedience and death**
 - Rom. 5:19 – “For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”
 - Rom. 8:3 – “For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.”
 - 2 Cor. 5:21 – “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”
- **Affirmed by Christ's resurrection**
 - Rom. 4:25 – “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”
 - 1 Cor. 5:17 – “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”

Pardon

- **Not a denial of guilt**
 - Rom. 4:5 – “To the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.”
 - Rom. 5:8 – “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- **A pardon from punishment**
 - Eph 2:3 – “All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.”
 - Rom. 5:9 – “Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!”
 - 1 Thess. 5:9 – “God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- **Based on Christ's acceptance of the Father's wrath**
 - Isa. 53:6, 10 – “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . . it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

Righteousness

- **Not earned righteousness**

- Gal. 2:16 – “Know that a man is not justified by observing the law.”

- Rom. 3:10 – “As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one. . .’”

- Ps 53:2-3 – “God looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. Everyone has turned away, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

- **Imputed righteousness**

- Jer. 23:6 – “In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.”

- Rom. 1:17 – “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last.”

- Rom. 4:23-24 – “The words “it was credited to him” were written not for [Abraham] alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness— for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Acceptance

- **We are accepted by God**

- Rom. 8:1 – “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

- Rom. 8:38-39 – “I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- **Based on faith in Christ alone**

- Php. 3:7-9 – “Whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.”

Lesson 9

ADOPTION

One of God's people

- **Part of the household (family) of God**
 - Eph. 1:4-5 – “. . . In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.”
 - Jn. 1:12 – “To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”
 - Eph. 2:19 – “You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household.”
- **Under His care**
 - Matt. 6:31-32 – “So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.”
 - 1 Peter 5:7 – “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”
- **Under His authority**
 - 2 Cor. 6:18 – “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”
 - Rom. 8:14 – “Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”

A true heir

- **An eternal inheritance**
 - Heb. 9:15 – “Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.”
- **A valuable inheritance**
 - Lk. 12:24 – “Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!”
 - Php. 4:19 – “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”
- **A rightful heir**
 - Gal. 4:7 – “You are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.”
 - Rom. 8:17 – “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.”

In relationship with Abba

- **Comfortable**
 - Rom. 8:15 – “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’”

- **Secure**
 - 2 Thess. 2:13-14 – “We ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - Heb. 3:14 – “For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.”
- **Welcome**
 - Gal. 4:6 – “Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’”
 - Eph. 3:12 – “In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.”
- **Peaceful**
 - Rom. 8:1 – “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
 - Ps. 103:13 – “As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.”

Receiving love, discipline, and provision

- **Chesed** (= Absolute devotion, lovingkindness)
 - Ps. 13:5 – “I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation.”
 - Ps. 23:6 – “Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”
- **Agape** (= an unconditional and sacrificial love)
 - 1 Jn. 3:1 – “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!”
 - Rom. 8:38-39 – “I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- **God corrects those He loves**
 - Prov. 3:12 – “The LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.”
 - Jn. 14:23 – “Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”
- **God provides for those He loves**
 - Mt 7:11- “If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”
 - Lu 11:13- “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Lesson 10

SANCTIFICATION

What is sanctification?

- **Sanctify**
 - To make holy (something only God can do), to set apart as holy, to ritually set apart for holy use.
- **Positional Holiness**
 - Every “saint” of God (believer) is holy because God has called them and set them apart for His own purposes.
- **Experiential Holiness**
 - Sanctification is a process by which the believer learns more and more to walk according to the direction of the Holy Spirit and at the same time learns to walk less and less according to the desires of his own sinful nature.
 - Through the Spirit and His Word, God is working to make our experience match our position. This requires us to yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit. NOTE: “Progress in the Christian life comes through yielding, not through striving.”

Off with the Old and On with the New

- **The new self must replace the old self**
 - Eph. 4:22-24 – “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”
 - Lk. 9:23 – “Then he said to them all: ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.’”
 - Col. 3:9-10 – “. . . You have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”
- **New creatures**
 - 2 Cor. 5:17 – “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”
 - Gal. 6:15 – “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.”
- **New character**
 - Eph. 1:4 (NLT) – “Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.”
 - Rom. 8:29 – “Those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.”

The mortification of the flesh

- **Crucify the old self**
 - Rom. 6:6 – “We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.”
 - Gal. 5:24 – “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.”
 - Col. 3:5 – “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.”
- **Sinful, but not bound by sin**
 - Rom. 6:12-14 – “Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master.”
 - Col. 3:2 – “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”
 - Ps 119:133 – “Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.”

The spiritual walk

- **Spirit-led**
 - Rom. 8:9 – “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.”
 - Rom. 8:13 – “If you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.”
 - Gal. 5:16 (NASB) – “I say, walk by the spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.”
- **Christ-honoring**
 - Col. 1:9-10 – “Since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way.”
 - Php. 1:27 – “Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.”
 - 1 Peter 1:15 – “Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.”
 - Eph. 5:8 – “You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.”

Lesson 11

GLORIFICATION

The death of Christians

- **Not personal punishment**
 - Rom. 8:1 - "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."
 - Jn. 3:18 - "Whoever believes in him is not condemned."
- **Never untimely**
 - Ps. 116:15 - "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."
 - Ps. 39:4 - "Show me, O LORD, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life."
- **Is the completion of the "mortification of the flesh"**
 - Col. 3:5 - "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry."
- **Death is the final remnant of the fallen world**
 - 1 Cor. 15:25-26 - "He must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death."
 - Rev. 20:14 - "Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire."

A renewed body

- Php. 3:20-21 - "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."
- 1 Cor. 15:49 - "Just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven."
- 1 Cor. 15:42-44 - "So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body."
- 1 Jn. 3:2 - "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

Life everlasting

- **An accomplished fact for believers**
 - Jn. 5:24 - "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."
 - Jn. 6:47 - "I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life."
 - 1 Jn. 5:13 - "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

- **The resurrection body is immortal**

- 1 Cor. 15:53-54 – “For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

- Lk. 20:35-36 – “Those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God’s children, since they are children of the resurrection.”

- Rev. 21:4 – “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Face-to-face

- **God’s Covenant Promise**

- Lev. 26:11-12 – “I will put my dwelling-place among you, and I will not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.”

- Eze. 37:27 – “My dwelling-place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

- Rev. 21:1-3 – “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.”

Life as it was meant to be!

- **SEE attached Genesis/Revelation chart**

Lesson 12

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

The Sovereignty of God. What do we mean by this expression? We mean the supremacy of God, the kingship of God, the god-hood of God. To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that God is God. To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is the Most High, doing according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, so that none can stay His hand or say unto Him what are you doing? (Dan. 4:35). To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is the Almighty, the Possessor of all power in Heaven and earth, so that none can defeat His counsels, thwart His purpose, or resist His will (Psa. 115:3). To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is "The Governor among the nations" (Psa. 22:28), setting up kingdoms, overthrowing empires, and determining the course of dynasties as pleases Him best. To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is the "Only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15). Such is the God of the Bible. --- A.W. Pink

What if God isn't in charge?

- **Either man's wisdom or blind chance or the "lucky stars" are in charge**
 - Eccl. 9:11-12 NLT) – *"I have observed something else under the sun. The fastest runner doesn't always win the race, and the strongest warrior doesn't always win the battle. The wise sometimes go hungry, and the skillful are not necessarily wealthy. And those who are educated don't always lead successful lives. It is all decided by chance, by being in the right place at the right time. People can never predict when hard times might come. Like fish in a net or birds in a trap, people are caught by sudden tragedy."* [NOTE: In Ecclesiastes the phrase "under the sun" means "in the world" and refers to the way those who do not know God view things.]
 - 1 Cor. 1:27 (NLT) – *"God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful."*
 - Prov. 16:33 (NLT) – *"We may throw the dice, but the LORD determines how they fall."*
- **Creation has no purpose and the flow of history has no goal**
 - Rev. 4:11 (KJV) – *"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."*
 - Isa. 46:10-11 – *"I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do."*
- **Life has no value beyond pleasure and self-satisfaction**
 - Eccl. 12:8,13 – *"Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "completely meaningless. . . That's the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty."*
 - Php. 3:18-19 – *"As I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.*

What does “sovereignty” really mean?

- **It is God’s ability to do and command, to resist and restrain whatever He pleases according to His own nature and purpose.**
 - Ps. 135:6 – “The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.”
- **It is kingship; lordship; the authority, right, and ability to rule.**
 - Ps. 29:10 – “The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD is enthroned as King forever.”
 - Ps. 47:2 – “How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth!”
- **Because God is sovereign He cannot be overruled by anyone or anything.**
 - Dan. 4:35 – “All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: ‘What have you done?’”
 - Deut. 4:39 – “Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.”
- **God’s sovereignty implies a corresponding need for servanthood, allegiance, and devotion to the King on the part of His people.**
 - Ps. 47:6-9 – “Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted.”
 - 1 Sam. 12:12-15 – “You said to me, ‘No, we want a king to rule over us’—even though the LORD your God was your king. Now here is the king you have chosen, the one you asked for; see, the LORD has set a king over you. If you fear the LORD and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the LORD your God—good! But if you do not obey the LORD, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your fathers.”
- **“The holy and loving God has the right to be sovereign. With reference to God, sovereignty means that without the counsel or consent of anyone outside himself, God acts in accord with his nature and will to accomplish his benevolent and redemptive purpose”** --- Hershel Hobbs, *Axioms of Religion*.

What about evil?

- **Anything that doesn’t conform to the will and purpose of God is evil.**
 - Gen. 2:9 – “And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”
 - 1 Jn. 3:4 – “Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.”
- **The fall didn’t make it possible for Adam to sin, it made it impossible for Adam not to sin; he lost the ability to act in righteousness. Nevertheless, men sin by freely acting out of their own nature, doing what seems good to them, and are, therefore, responsible.**
- **The first “sinner” was Lucifer / Satan / the Devil.**
 - Isa 14:13-14 – “You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the

Sin is the lack of moral perfection.

sacred mountain. *I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.*"

- **Is God the "author" of evil?**

- Isa. 45:6b-7 (NASB) – "I am the LORD, and there is no other, the one forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these."
- Deut. 32:3-4 – "I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he."
- Ps. 5:4 – "You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell."

God created angels with the ability to obey or disobey – He did not make them evil, he made them free. God created Adam in the same way. It is not the creator who made evil, it is the fallen creature that produced evil. God did not create evil, but he allows it to exist so that love and obedience may exist.
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What about suffering?

- **Does God cause men to suffer?**

- Isa. 53:10 – "Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer . . ."
- Gen. 50:20 – "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

- **Is temporal suffering = the punishment of God?**

- Acts 5:41 – "The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name."
- Does sin lead to suffering? Yes. [Fall] Does my sin lead to suffering? Yes. [Continuing effects of the fall] Does my sin lead to my suffering? Maybe, but probably no.

- **What purpose can suffering serve?**

- Rom. 5:1-4 – "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."
- 1 Pet. 4:12-14 – "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you."

Is God's rule limited in any way?

- **God's nature limits God's actions**

- Nu 23:19 – "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind."

- **God's purpose limits God's actions**

- Isa 14:24 – "The LORD Almighty has sworn, "Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand."