

# The Doctrines of Sovereign Grace (Calvinism or Reformed Theology) T-U-L-I-P

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Salvation is accomplished by the almighty power of the triune God. The Father chose a people, the Son died for them, the Holy Spirit makes Christ's death effective by bringing the elect to faith and repentance, thereby causing them to willingly obey the Gospel. The entire process (election, redemption, regeneration) is the work of God and is by grace alone (even though God has given man the responsibility to believe). Thus God, not man, determines who will be the recipients of the gift of salvation. Salvation is all of God from beginning to end. To God be the glory!

## Total Depravity

Romans 3:9-20; 8:7; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-10; Genesis 6:5; 8:21; 2 Timothy 2:25-26

The effect of the fall upon man is that sin has extended to every part of his personality -- his thinking, his emotions, and his will. The unregenerate man is dead in his sins. He is spiritually blind and deaf and stubbornly rebellious. His will is not free, but is in bondage to sin. He loves darkness. He refuses to come to the light and continues to do so unless God changes his mind.

## Unconditional Election

Matthew 11:25-30; 13:10-17; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Romans 9:6-24; 8:28-39

God chose those whom He was pleased to bring to the knowledge of Himself, not based upon any merit shown by the object of his grace and not based upon his looking forward to discover who would "accept" the offer of the gospel. God has elected, based solely upon the counsel of his own will, men and women for his glory (Romans 9:15, 21). He has done this act before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4-8).

This doctrine does not rule out, however, man's responsibility to believe in Christ. Scripture presents a tension between God's sovereignty, and man's responsibility which it does not try to resolve. Both are true -- to deny man's responsibility is unbiblical, and to deny God's sovereignty is also unbiblical. God uses means (i.e., prayer, evangelism, etc.) and we are commanded to faithfully carry out our responsibilities. God's *desired will* (2 Peter 3:9), *revealed will*, *invitation*, or *command* is that all must repent and come to faith in Christ. God's *decreed will*, *sovereign will*, or *predestined will* is that those he has chosen will be saved.

## Limited Atonement (Sufficient For All, But Especially Intended For The Elect)

1 Timothy 4:10; John 10:11, 14-15; 17:9; Ephesians 5:25

Jesus died for all of mankind, but particularly to save the elect. In other words, Jesus died for everyone (elect and non-elect, 2 Peter 2:1). The price was paid for all. His shed blood was sufficient for all of mankind. However, the purchase price is not put on the account of any, but the elect (limited in intent and application). Because of God's general love for all of mankind (common grace) Jesus died for all. Because of God's special love for His chosen ones Jesus died in a special way for the elect. Only those who believe have Christ's righteousness credited to them (and of course only the elect will believe). No one (not even one of the elect) is saved until he is justified. Christ's redemption is credited to the account of a sinner when that sinner repents and not until.

## Irresistible Grace

John 1:13; 6:37, 39, 44, 45, 65; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:9; 2:10; 2:25-26; Acts 9:1-6; 16:14; James 1:18

This is also referred to by theologians as the efficacious or *effective call* or inward call of God. When the outward call or invitation is given by the evangelist the elect respond. They respond because of the inward call of the Holy Spirit. God works in the stubborn hearts of the elect until they repent. He doesn't stop until they respond in faith. He "draws" them to himself (John 6:44) and He grants repentance (2 Timothy 2:25-26). It is in that sense irresistible. Apart from the irresistible grace of God, no one would be saved. All the "whosoever wills" in the Bible must be understood in light of total depravity. Only those who are graciously drawn unto repentance will be saved. When tempted to question the fairness of this truth, ask yourself this question: "What could God possibly do to sinners who deserve hell that would be unfair?" Rather than ask why God doesn't choose to save all, ask why He chooses to save any. It's only because of His grace. We deserve wrath. Praise the Lord for irresistible, efficacious grace.

## Perseverance of the Saints

Philippians 1:6; John 10:27-29; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Romans 8:37-39; 9:16; 11:6, 29; Jude 1, 24; Colossians 1:21-23; 2 Peter 1:5-11

Perseverance of the saints is a doctrine which states that the saints (those whom God has saved) will remain in God's hands until they are glorified. God won't stop until He has His own in heaven with Him. The saints are *eternally secure*. However, the way the saints know they are saints is that they see the obvious signs of God's grace in their lives. The reality of their salvation is demonstrated by fruit of the Spirit in their lives.

## Conclusion:

The doctrines of sovereign grace put all the credit where it belongs. We can take no credit for our salvation. We don't deserve it. We can't merit it. We would have died in our sins if God had not intervened in His grace. We chose God because God first chose us. We are truly the chosen ones or the elect. We are the recipients of God's grace. We will be forever grateful and will glorify God for all of eternity for our salvation totally by His sovereign grace. All the glory goes to God!