

GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

ARTICLE 5

V. God's Purpose of Grace

“Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end.

“It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

“All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end.

Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.”

(Baptist Faith and Message 2000, Article 5)

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39–12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

Verses for Reflection:

“But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one" (Jesus Christ, in John 10:26–30).

The Gracious Purpose of God

“Election is a central doctrine of the Bible...” (p. 78).

“Election affirms that God took the initiative in our salvation” (p. 78).

1. Election is a fact of the Bible. To deny it is to ignore what the Bible teaches about salvation.
2. Godly people sometimes disagree on how election works.
3. Godly people do not have permission from the Lord to act in an ungodly way over this mysterious and wonderful doctrine.

4. This is a Southern Baptist congregation. We are not a Freewill Baptist congregation. This means that we will be, in some degree, more Reformed in our theology than Arminian.
5. There will be varying degrees of commitment to the theology of the Reformers. To call people “evil” or “lost” over this is just wrong!

6. It is not truthful to claim that people with Reformed/Calvinistic theology do not care about evangelism and missions. History refutes such baseless claims. (William Carey, Lottie Moon, Charles Spurgeon, Jonathan Edwards, John Broadus, George Whitefield etc.)

Reformed and Non-Reformed

Calvinistic (Reformed)

- Man has free-will, but original sin has corrupted him so that he will not choose Jesus.
- The atonement is particular/personal, and is only for those whom God calls “the elect.”

Arminian (Non-Reformation)

- Original sin has made man lacking in original righteousness, but not corrupted (depraved).
- The atonement of Jesus is universal, and God has given grace that enables them to trust in Jesus.

Calvinistic

- If God did not graciously elect any, then no one would come to Jesus.
- God's call through the Gospel to the elect is always effective. The elect are not forced to believe, but the regeneration of the heart results in the desire to believe.

Arminian

- Humans will decide whether or not they will elect God as Savior or not. God does not interfere.
- The call of God through the Gospel has the same power/potential for everyone. All hearts are the same.

Calvinistic

- A person's belief is the result of God's election.
- God decreed a relationship with the elect in eternity past.
- Since faith in Christ is based upon God's election, believers will persevere in faith through eternity.

Arminian

- God's election is a result of a person's belief.
- God chooses people based upon His foreknowledge of whether or not they will choose Him.
- Since faith is completely by the free-will of man, man may choose to abandon faith in Christ and revert to a state of lostness.

Conclusion:

1. Baptists believe in both the sovereignty of God and the free-will of man.
2. Baptist individuals vary in their emphasis on the Reformed position.
3. Southern Baptist doctrine does not accept pure Arminianism.

4. Southern Baptists reject Hyper-Calvinism.
5. Southern Baptists believe that God alone saves sinners, and that sinners must hear and respond to the Gospel to be saved.
6. If we believe in the grace of God, then show it to one another.

Another way to explain election is this:

People are free to choose to reject the Gospel. However, we will only choose what we love. In our natural state, we love ourselves and hate God. Unless He changes our hearts, we will not love Jesus and choose Him. Election means He has intervened and opened our eyes to love Jesus and choose Him.

Eternal Security

“Eternal security does not mean that all who claim to believe in Jesus will be saved” (p. 82).

“Believers sin and may fall into grave and awful sin that brings disrepute on themselves and the church. True believers can never remain in such a state of sin and rebellion but will repent” (p. 83).

“Make your calling and election sure”
(2Peter 1:3)

“The doctrine of final perseverance, properly understood, gives no encouragement to sluggishness or negligence in duty; much less does it lead to licentiousness. He who takes occasion from it to sin against God, or to be indolent in his service, not only misunderstands, and misapplies the doctrine, but has reason to fear that his heart is not right before God.”

(John L. Dagg, *Manual of Theology*, 298-99)

Go to page 83 in your workbook. Or
turn to Romans 8:38-39 in your Bible.

Underline the 10 powers that cannot
separate you from the love of God that
is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Sources:

James P. Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology*.

John L. Dagg, *Manual of Theology*.

Charles Kelley, Richard Land, and Albert Mohler, *The Baptist Faith and Message: 6-session Bible study*.

John A. Aloisi, “Jacob Arminius and the Doctrine of Original Sin,” in *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*, vol. 21, 2016.