

## How Important is Free Will?

Free will, the ability to make choices that shape our lives and destinies, is one of the most significant gifts God has given to humanity. From the beginning of creation, God's design for mankind has always been for us to have a relationship with Him based on choice, not coercion. This free will is not just a philosophical concept, but a deeply spiritual reality embedded throughout Scripture.

### **The Gift of Free Will in Creation**

From the very first pages of the Bible, we see that free will is part of God's good creation. In **Genesis 2:16-17**, God places Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and commands them not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Notice that this command implies a choice — a choice that Adam and Eve could either obey or disobey. God did not create humans as mere puppets or robots; rather, He gave them the ability to choose, demonstrating His desire for love to be freely given, not forced. As **Deuteronomy 30:19** reflects, "I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live."

### **Free Will and the Fall**

The story of Adam and Eve in the Garden also illustrates the tragic consequences that free will can have when it is misused. **Genesis 3:6** records that Eve saw the fruit was "good for food" and "desirable for gaining wisdom," so she ate it, and then gave some to Adam. This pivotal choice led to the corruption of human nature and the introduction of sin and death into the world. However, even after the Fall, God did not take away human free will. He allowed people to choose their path, even though the consequences of sin had become more severe.

### **The Role of Free Will in Redemption**

While free will has been marred by sin, God, in His grace, has made a way for redemption. Through Jesus Christ, God offers humanity a choice to be reconciled to Him, and to choose life in Him. In **John 7:37-38**, He invites all who are thirsty to come to Him and drink, promising that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life, but it is ultimately up to the individual to choose whether or not to accept this invitation.

### **Free Will in the Christian Life**

For believers, once a person accepts Christ, they are still faced with choices every day: to follow God's will or to follow their own desires. **Galatians 5:16-17** describes this internal struggle: "So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh." Paul speaks of the freedom believers have in Christ, but also emphasizes that this freedom is not a license for sinful behaviour. In **Galatians 5:13**, he writes, "You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love." Free will is meant to be used in a way that honours God, which leads to growth in holiness.

The Apostle Peter also speaks to this in **1 Peter 2:16**, urging believers to live as "free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves." The Christian's freedom is not to be taken lightly, as it carries with it the responsibility to make choices that reflect Christ's character.

### **The Final Choice: Eternal Life or Eternal Separation**

The Bible makes it clear that free will has eternal consequences. **Matthew 7:13-14** contrasts the broad path that leads to destruction with the narrow path that leads to life. "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many

enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." This passage illustrates the reality that every person has the ability to choose their eternal destiny — whether they will follow the world and its desires, or follow Christ. The ultimate choice lies in whether we accept or reject Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

### **Conclusion**

The Bible teaches that free will is both a gift and a responsibility. It is a gift because it allows us to freely choose a relationship with God, to love Him, and to follow His commands. However, it is also a responsibility because the choices we make have eternal consequences. God created us with the freedom to choose, but He also offers us the wisdom and grace to choose rightly. The most important choice any person will ever make is whether to accept or reject Jesus Christ.

***May we all use the gift of free will to choose to follow Him and live in His grace, now and forevermore.***

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