

# THE OLD PATHS

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## “Does Man Have Free-Will?”

Jarrold Jacobs

**T**he belief that man is inherently sinful from birth, and has no ability to choose to do what is right is a tenet of the false doctrine called “Calvinism.” One who lives in Morgantown contacted me recently about this belief. Below is one of our exchanges. It is edited for space, and I pray that this will be helpful in our study, and prepare us to answer questions like this when we are asked.

### Question To Me:

Hello, Mr. Jacobs after listening to your radio program and your invitation to converse in doctrine, I feel pressed to oppose ... that salvation is determined by the will of the creature and not the Creator .... I believe that a complete exegesis will affirm that Free Will in scripture will be weighed in the balances and found wanting compared to Free Grace as the will of man is in bondage to sin, Verily, Verily, I say unto you, whosoever committed sin is the servant of sin 8:34, .... Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye WILL do John 8:44 ,and of course .... Romans 9:21. While the will of man makes choices every day, and has a freedom, it's limited and always determined by his nature, There are many devices in a man's heart', nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand. Proverbs 19:21.

### My Response:

Hello,

The fact that man has free will to choose to obey or disobey God is a fact that is seen ... in Scriptures....

- 1) Genesis 2-3 – ... man choosing ... to disobey God (3:1-6).
- 2) Genesis 4:7 – Cain was told he could still “do well and be accepted” ....
- 3) Deuteronomy 30:15-19 – the encouragement to “choose life.”
- 4) Joshua 24:15 – “choose ye this day whom ye will serve”.
- 5) II Samuel 24:12; I Chronicles 21:10 – God gave David the option ....
- 6) Proverbs 1:29 – Some did not choose to fear the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way ...” (Jer. 6:16).

- 7) Isaiah 1:18-20 – “willing and obedient” ... vs. “refuse and rebel”.
- 8) Isaiah 56:4 – speaks of folks who chose the things that pleased God.
- 9) Matthew 11:28-30 – Christ calling on folks to come to Him.
- 10) John 6:68 – Peter’s (and the other apostles) choice to go or stay....
- 11) John 7:17 – someone who “wills to do” (or is willing to do) His will.
- 12) Revelation 22:17 – “whosoever will...”

**John 8:34** is making the point I am making. This is because whoever commits sin implies the person has done it. I.E., he made a choice to obey/disobey. He chose disobedience, and therefore has become the slave to sin. I would also add James 1:14-15.... The man committing sin has made a choice to yield (give in) to temptation and has sinned, and then made himself a slave of sin. This was not God’s choice, nor something forced upon him. This was this man’s personal choice to get entrapped in sin. He did it to himself.

**John 8:44** speaks of the Pharisees who had denied Jesus is the Son of God. They are Satan’s children because they rejoice in doing what Satan wants. This is not saying they have no free will.... Any of those people could choose to repent and follow Christ (and some did -- Acts 2:36-38). However, at this point in history, they followed Satan. It was their decision and Christ condemned them for it.

**Romans 9** ... (do) not assume that just because God has made choices means man has none.... This illustration is not meant to be a complete parallel in man’s life in every nuance, though. This is because man has certain decisions to make, and he must come to the Lord on his own in the first place. This is made clear in 1:16 when Paul said the gospel is God’s power unto salvation. Once accepting the Lord’s will, then let Him fashion us as He pleases, but not to say that God does things without our will/consent ....

## How Will You Endure?

Joel Raulerson

**E**nduring suffering as a Christian is often something that is easier said than done. We recognize God’s numerous promises of blessings that we will receive if we endure trials and temptations faithfully. Hebrews 10:36 says, *“For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.”* However, recognizing the need for endurance and remaining faithful in the face of adversity is not an easy task. Recently, my family and I have

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recognized the need to endure since my father has been diagnosed with Leukemia. It is not the first time that illness has suddenly hit a loved one, and I know most are familiar with that pain. Many will come up to you and offer encouragement; prayers will be offered up on behalf of the loved one; but this doesn't completely take away the pain and harsh reality we face. The question we have to ask ourselves anytime something like this comes up is, "How will I endure?"

### **Will Your Endurance Be Exhausted?**

It is hard to go through life for very long without facing at least a few trials. We have all come through them. There were likely even times in our lives that we felt nearly impervious to the trials we faced. The book of Hebrews shows us Christians who began running their race amidst great struggles. Hebrews 10:32-34 recounts how, as new converts, these Christians were mocked, imprisoned, lost property, and shared their goods with other persecuted saints. We look at faithful brethren like this and think that they will remain faithful. Yet, according to Hebrews 10:23-25, those same brethren that faced various trials found their endurance exhausted. They went from being faithful saints who would at one time be willing to go to jail or die for the sake of Christ, to brethren who wouldn't even attend worship! I'm sure we have all at one time or another been able to endure persecutions, trials, sickness, and various other tragedies in the short-term. We cannot let that be the end of our story. We must endure and strive to finish the race. Hebrews 12:1 reads, *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."*

### **Will Your Endurance Be Encouraged?**

One of the greatest lessons for me and for anyone that faces various trials is to remember that I am not alone, and that I am not the only one who has gone through this (1 Pet. 5:9). This is exactly what the Hebrew writer was saying in Hebrews 11. We have countless examples of those in the scriptures who faced all kinds of trials and temptations and have come out strong. Every one of the "heroes of faith" recounted in Hebrews 11 sinned and suffered at some point, but they were able to endure to the end. The greatest example that we have is Christ in Hebrews 12:2-3: *"Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners*

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*such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.*” Remember in times of various trials to rely on brethren, to take courage from Biblical examples, and to cast our cares upon Christ (Heb. 10:36, 39; I Pet. 5:7). How will we choose to endure the trials and temptations that come our way? Are we in this for the “long haul” or is our endurance only temporary?



## Spotlight On A Bible Verse: Matthew 17:5

***“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”*** The context of this verse records the event when Christ was transfigured. At this time, He was joined by Elijah and Moses, as Peter, James, and John stood by. When Peter suggested that three tabernacles or tents be made for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, God’s voice thundered from the cloud (v. 4-5).

Peter learned a lesson we need to learn. He needed to listen to Jesus Christ the Son of God. We need to do this as well! It is His voice that is authoritative (Matt. 28:18). It is His words that have life (Jn. 6:63). It is His words that will judge us one day (Jn. 12:48). Therefore, let us “hear Him” in everything and be blessed (Heb. 1:1-2, 2:1-3, 5:9, 12:25-26).

- Jarrod Jacobs



**“I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!”**

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