



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

"Character of God" Series Lesson 19 – January 8, 2017

Communicable Attribute of Freedom and Omnipotence

I. Lesson Starters:

Last lesson we looked at the Communicable attribute of Jealousy and Wrath. *God's jealousy means that God continually seeks to protect his own honor. God's wrath means that he intensely hates all sin.*

Today we will continue our review of Communicable Attribute of Freedom and Omnipotence.

II. Attribute of Freedom



PATRICK HENRY (MAY 29, 1736 – JUNE 6, 1799) SERVED AS COLONIAL GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA, FROM 1776 TO 1779 AND FROM 1784 TO 1786. HE IS REGARDED AS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL CHAMPIONS OF REPUBLICANISM AND AN ENTHUSIASTIC PROMOTER OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND ITS FIGHT FOR FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE.

HE IS MOST OFTEN REMEMBERED FOR HIS "GIVE ME LIBERTY, OR GIVE ME DEATH!" SPEECH.

THE
INDEPENDENT

ARTICLE FROM THE INDEPENDENT (AN INDEPENDENT NATIONAL MORNING NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED IN LONDON)...

"FREE WILL COULD ALL BE AN ILLUSION, SCIENTISTS SUGGEST AFTER STUDY SHOWS CHOICE MAY JUST BE BRAIN TRICKING ITSELF" (SATURDAY 30 APRIL 2016)...RESEARCH ADDS TO EVIDENCE SUGGESTING 'EVEN OUR MOST SEEMINGLY IRONCLAD BELIEFS ABOUT OUR OWN AGENCY AND CONSCIOUS EXPERIENCE CAN BE DEAD WRONG'

God's Will Is Never Thwarted

When we say that one of God's attributes is freedom, what we are saying is that God is able to do whatever he *wills*. This statement implies that nothing in all of creation can hinder God from doing his *will*. Therefore, God's freedom of will is never constrained by any other authority or circumstances.

Job 42:2 ² "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."

Psalms 115: 3-9 ³ *Our God is in the heavens; he does whatever he pleases*. ⁴ *But their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands.* ⁵ *They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see.* ⁶ *They have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell.* ⁷ *They have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk, nor can they utter a sound with their throats.* ⁸ *Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.* ⁹ *All you Israelites, trust in the Lord—he is their help and shield.*

Proverbs 21: 1 ¹ *The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.*

Ephesians 1:11 ¹¹ *In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ...*

God's Freedom of Will Is Perfect

Because God is omniscient (all knowing), He knows what He will accomplish in us. He knows what we will do, and what we would do, in any given circumstance. Thus, His will for us is perfect. It will never be flawed by some missing piece of information, or incomplete in its purpose.

Romans 12:2 ² *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Romans 8:28 ²⁸ *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

Man's Freedom of Will Is Imperfect

When we consider the "communicable attributes" of God, we should keep in mind that we show in our lives some faint reflection of each of them...including freedom of will.

Genesis 1:26-27 ²⁶ *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

²⁷ *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

We are a snapshot or facsimile of God. He has created us with a "will". We exercise choice and make real decisions regarding the events of our lives. While our will is not "absolutely free" in the way God's is, He nonetheless has given us relative freedom within our spheres of activity.

However, this freedom of will can also be a pitfall. In our hubris, we often confuse being *like* God, with *being* God.

Daniel 4:34-35 ³⁴ *At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. 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?"*



Summary Points on God's Attribute of Freedom

- When we say that one of God's attributes is freedom, we are saying that He is free to do whatever he wills
- God's will is perfect, both in its purpose and in its execution
- No human can stand against God or oppose his will
- Our will and ability to make choices is one of the most significant marks of God-likeness in our existence
- Our will and desire to be totally free from restraint, manifests itself in our sinful ways
- When we make choices that reflect God's character and bring him glory, we please God

III. Attribute of Omnipotence

Omnipotence is derived from two words meaning “all powerful”. God’s omnipotence means that God lacks nothing in his ability to accomplish all of his *holy will*. In essence, His holy will is always accomplished.

Jeremiah 32:17 ¹⁷ *'Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.*

Mathew 19:26 ²⁶ *But Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*

Genesis 18:14 ¹⁴ *Is anything too hard for the Lord?*

What if we rephrased the question posed to Abraham above as...Is there anything the Lord cannot do?

The answer would be yes. Actually, there are some things that God cannot do, which would be anything that is against or denies his own character. This is why the definition of omnipotence is stated in terms of God’s ability to do “all His holy will”.

For example...God cannot lie...

Titus 1:2 ² *in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began*

Hebrews 6:18 ¹⁸ *so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.*

God cannot be tempted by evil or tempt anyone with evil...

James 1:13 ¹³ *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.*

God cannot deny himself...

2 Timothy 2:13 ¹³ *if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.*

So, in essence God cannot lie, sin, deny himself or be tempted by evil. Additionally, he cannot cease to exist or cease to be God, or act in anyway inconsistent with any of his attributes.

IV. **Group Questions:**

1. How can we reconcile the definition of “God’s freedom” with a creation filled with sin, suffering and depravity?
2. Would you agree with the statement that our will is not absolutely free? Why?
3. Think about your own experiences in raising your children and in training them in their ability to exercise their own individual “will and freedom” away from your direct parental control. What similarities can you identify between this process and the process God uses with respect to us?
4. If we say that God is omnipotent, why is it possible that there are things God cannot do? Doesn’t all powerful mean...all powerful?
5. Talk about our own will in the context of God’s Sovereignty? Discuss the degree of “freedom” we have or do not have in our choices?