

## FREE WILL VERSUS GOD'S WILL

Sunday  
January 13, 2013

Have you ever noticed that anytime something tragic happens, we do 1 of 2 things? We either turn to God and ask Him why He allowed it to happen, or we turn to Him and ask for Him to do something to change the expected outcome. If we want the ability to exercise free will, then we need to be willing to accept both the good and the bad that accompanies such a choice. We can't choose to have it when it suits us, and then ask for His intervention when it doesn't. Free will simply doesn't work that way. To do so would create such a conflict, that free will would be absolutely meaningless.

Imagine it like this: as you raise your children, you struggle to instill in them a strong sense of morals and personal responsibilities, and the desire to act upon them. Ironically, as you teach them these things, you're overriding their free will with your own, but you do so in the interests of the "greater good." At the end of the day, when they're no longer in your site, they have to make their own decisions, and you can only hope that the lessons you've instilled in them will be enough to get them through any situation that comes their way. Sometimes you find yourself watching as they self-destruct, but completely unable to do anything to stop it, as you'd be if your child was dealing with addictions to drugs or alcohol. All you could do is offer your unconditional love, and be there in a supporting role, hoping that they'll eventually get a handle on things before it's too late.

In this aspect, God is very similar to you. He's provided His children with a sense of what He expects out of His children in the form of a Bible. In doing so, He's trying to teach us to curb our natural desires in an attempt to do what's right. Like the parent discussed above though, at the end of the day, He has to sit back and allow His children to make their own choices, even when He already knows that the outcome is going to be destructive for all involved. To do anything otherwise, no matter how desperately, would render free will absolutely meaningless.

If you're asking me how to explain the sudden, and miraculous healing of someone who was facing certain death; or the sudden and mysterious swerve of a car at the last moment, causing it to narrowly miss a child in its path; how someone falls out of the sky without a parachute, yet still manages to survive; or how an addict with decades of abuse suddenly manages to kick the habit cold turkey, and to explain it in a way that doesn't involve God imposing His will over that of His children, then I believe that there are a number of answers, all of which are far simpler than we'd think. For starters, in the instance of the drug addict, more often than not, we find that we've always had the power, we were just caught between not remembering where it was, or being ready to actually use it, regardless of what we may have said to the contrary. Of course, it could have been partly due to my second answer, which is that, like God's human children, His angels also have free will. In

act, the Bible seems to support this, as evidenced by Satan making the decision to go against God and being thrown out of heaven for it. If angels didn't have free will, then God could have simply overrode Satan's desires, and that would have been the end of that. However, since He didn't, then perhaps His angels sometimes act in the same way that humans do when they find themselves in a position to help. They intervene, in whatever way that they can. In this way, God hasn't taken away our free will, but someone was nevertheless able to experience a much-needed blessing.

If you're asking yourself why His angels haven't intervened before every tragedy, perhaps what you really need to be asking yourself is why haven't **you** intervened at every opportunity. Don't you see tragedy unfolding before you on a daily basis? The fact that you're reading this alone demonstrates an opportunity for you to intervene. This essay was written by someone struggling to rehabilitate himself, someone with virtually no access to the outside world, someone who desperately wants to avoid repeating the mistakes of his past. Like everyone else in here, I too am human, and as such, I have the same wants, needs and desires as anyone else. I just happen to have made some poor decisions along the way, choices that put me in prison, even if I'm innocent of most of the crimes I found myself charged with. But my problems, while serious to me, are minor compared to things others find themselves struggling with, so take this as an opportunity to find someone in need of assistance and see if you can help them. Today's your chance to be an angel to someone in need.

And while we're on the subject of free will, why is that people always want to say that God will never give us more than we can bear? Do you not realize the complete absurdity of such a statement? Were this in fact true, then you wouldn't have people killing themselves, would you? You also wouldn't have people walking into movie theaters and schools trying to kill anything that moves. Again, this all comes down to free will and how a person chooses to exercise that will. No matter what laws we create or how we choose to enforce them, there will **always** be people out there in the world committing senseless and tragic acts. Unfortunately, when it comes to free will, you have to take the good with the bad. Hopefully, we can figure out a way to achieve more good than bad.

As always, I welcome your comments, both good and bad, and I'm more than willing to respond to any of your posts, or better yet, your letters. I can be reached via the address listed below. Until next time, stay safe and be blessed.

Shawn L. Perrot CDCR# V-42461  
CMC-East Cell# 6326  
P.O. Box 8101  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93409-8101