



## General Topics :: Free will - a question

### Free will - a question - posted by JFW (), on: 2023/9/11 15:37

A while back something occurred to me while studying out a matter in scripture, this led me to question whether we actually have "free will" as it's commonly assumed in various Christian circles and to date I have found absolutely zero affirmative passages in scripture.

Perhaps I'm simply missing it.

Has anyone else here on SI been confronted by this topic or perhaps has some notes or experiences with this topic?

note; I'm not asking whether we are free to choose, that much is clear from scripture- but that is different from "free will" as it's commonly stated as a belief-

### Re: Free will - a question - posted by docs (), on: 2023/9/11 15:45

I think God gives us the ability to choose Him - at the beginning of our salvation and throughout. The new birth makes the difference. Through it, we become free to choose Him as before we were in bondage and unable to choose. The freedom to choose Him is His empowering and gift.

Well. I just reread your thoughts. Maybe I described the type of free will you are making reference to.

Thanks.

### Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/9/11 15:53

Hey Fletcher it may be helpful if you would state what you think the opposite of free will is. I.e. if we don't have free will what does that mean?

I would add that if we do not have free will (as I understand that concept) then we were not created in God's image.

But it may be you are thinking of something different.

### Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2023/9/11 20:50

Well the implication of "free will" is that we are free to will which by definition would be free from consequence- Before anyone offers a knee jerk response, let me explain (per Todds request) what occurred to me-

In the garden, Eve was seduced and beguiled by the serpent into believing that she had the freedom to choose a thing without consequence. The devil did so by suggesting that she was in fact free to choose to disobey God without the said consequences- he did this by very subtly making it about her flesh whereas God was referring to her spirit. So when she partook of the fruit she did not (physically) die and seemed to verify the serpent's claim but she did (die) spiritually in that she now is conscious of her physical person in a way hereto before had not been. Then she gave to her husband to eat, demonstrating that she herself had eaten of the fruit and was in fact very much alive- Adam did the same and experienced the same-

Yet neither seemed to realize their condition until God showed up the next morning at which point they both were overwhelmed by the awareness of their condition.

So, the real issue was spiritual not physical, but neither had this knowledge until they disobeyed and exercised their supposed "free will" which was ultimately a lie, no?

In reality they never had free will, or freedom (from consequence) to will themselves, rather they had freedom to choose either life or death. To put it another way, they were free to choose sin or righteousness-

The conclusion that I've (tentatively) come to is this-

We are slaves and will inevitably serve one of two masters- loving one and hating the other- choose this day whom you

u will serve, etcâ€

Perhaps this is best illustrated by Paul in Romans 6:

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

There seems to be a hyper consistent, from beginning to end, proclamation of this fact in scripture.

note; This weekend, while searching out this matter I looked to see if any of the champions of our faith had found/come to the same conclusion and interestingly (for me) Spurgeon apparently held this particular position, even defending it. Once I discovered this I immediately stopped my inquiry into those whom may have or not and went back to scripture so as not to be influenced by any other persons. Now Iâ€™m hoping someone will give me pushback to see if it is or if I had missed something-

To be clear, I am suggesting that it seems scripture only, exclusively and repeatedly states we only have the freedom to choose between obedience and sin- life or death (spiritually) -

Thank you both for helping me it means more than you might imagine ðŸ™•ðŸ•»

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/9/12 6:12**

Fletcher-

In your tentative view, does everything a person choose fall into either the category of choosing obedience or sin?

In other words, if I choose to eat a turkey sandwich for lunch instead of a salad, does it fall into one of those categories?

I guess I am still not 100% sure what you mean.

**Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2023/9/12 9:08**

"But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin." Romans 14:23

**Re: Todd - posted by JFW (), on: 2023/9/12 9:35**

Ha! Great question-

Yes, ultimately it would tho itâ€™s more about why than what â€

So allow me to parse this out and list a few examples-

Eve had hunger (natural desire) but she fulfilled it in an ungodly way, which is to say outside the will of God-

Jesus had hunger in the wilderness and being likewise tempted to turn the stone into bread, He suffered the hunger rather than succumb to the temptation of the devil-

Paul in Romans 14 states â€nothing is in and of itself unclean, yet of a man thinks of it is, for him it isâ€

So (for me) itâ€™s a matter of conscienceâ€

That brings us to Esau / Jacob where a natural desire to satisfy hunger cost him far more than he could have ever imagi

ned,â€ even to the point of not finding a place of repentance. The scriptures state â€God hated Esauâ€ for giving into that desire (though in an of itself isnâ€™t sinful) yet he allowed that desire to overcome his devotion to be obedient in that he (Esau) didnâ€™t act in faith towards the Lord but rather yielded himself to be a servant (slave) of his flesh.

Even now we have restrictions on our food sources in that we are not to consume things that were strangled to death so if the turkey had been strangled and we knew itâ€ or if we had a personal conviction regarding shellfish or pork then the same would applyâ€.

Hope that helps and thanks for continuing to help me come to a clearer understanding myself ðŸ™•ðŸ•»

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/9/12 12:25**

â€.. For Christâ€™s love compels usâ€..â€ 2 Cor 5:14

**Re: Todd - posted by JFW (), on: 2023/9/13 14:21**

â€™m a bit confused as to how that verse relates to the topic of free willâ€ðŸ™•”  
Would you please elaborate â€

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/9/13 15:27**

Maybe it doesnâ€™t- but the reason I posted it is that Paul seems to be saying that he is compelled to act (perhaps against his fleshly preference) because of the love of Christ, i.e. his natural desire(â€lowâ€ will) is trumped by his desire to please Christ (â€highâ€ will). Christâ€™s love compels taking the high road.

**Re: Todd - posted by JFW (), on: 2023/9/13 20:48**

Ohhh ok,â€

The reason I asked is because my Bible uses the word â€constrainethâ€ and is defined as ;

to hold together

any whole, lest it fall to pieces or something fall away from it

to hold together with constraint, to compress

to press together with the hand

to hold one's ears, to shut the heavens that it may not rain

to press on every side

of a besieged city

of a strait, that forces a ship into a narrow channel

of a cattle squeeze, that pushing in on each side, forcing the beast into a position where it cannot move so the farmer can administer medication

to hold completely

to hold fast

of a prisoner

metaph.

to be held by, closely occupied with any business

in teaching the word

to constrain, oppress, of ills laying hold of one and distressing him

to be held with, afflicted with, suffering from

to urge, impel

of the soul

So it was odd to me that your translation used the word compels as in the above definition(s) would only be applicable metaphorically-

In any case I do appreciate you offering some pushback ðŸ™•ðŸ•»

General Topics :: Free will - a question

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2023/9/13 21:35**

I don't see the difference in context between compels and constrains. Paul is saying the love of Christ forces him ( squeezes him) into a certain direction.

I'm not trying to push back. I am pretty sure I agree with what you are saying.

**Re: Todd - posted by JFW (), on: 2023/9/14 7:27**

Yes it is more clear to me what you were trying to point out and was hoping to clarify my misunderstanding regarding the translations use of the word

(for me) Sometimes the different translations really help to define a thing and other times certain words are injected to promote a particular doctrine- not so much in this case tho in others it is certainly so -

I was simply not picking up what you were putting down and very much benefit from your candor and willingness to help :)

\*perhaps pushback was a poor choice of words on my part

Refine or offer an alkali in hopes of causing a separation of the dross, which is of course a bit uncomfortable-

It is (for me) at times a place of testing, where our understanding can be tested, vetted, refined and polished through the fires of other saints inquiry and as is often the case, one saint may be further along in their development on a particular subject- this is one of the most valuable aspects in practical application of our faith, where it serves as a type of dojo where we can spar and have our equipping tested by a loving brother or sister so that when in the fallen world they we are more prepared to meet the challenges that are inevitable as we seek to reach the lost-

This can't happen if we lack the willingness to spar and see the efficacy or lack thereof regarding our personally held beliefs and positions. Many times I have thought a thing to be a certain way only to read/follow a thread where under intense pressure/scrutiny that thought collapses and is broken down to its base components. In my experience this serves to buttress the faith of the body as a whole, effectively exercising us unto godliness †

We do seem to be, in general, a bit more sensitive these days when compared to times past when former members of this forum got extremely intense in their working out of certain things and it was a huge benefit for me to have witnessed these discussions and took years of study and research off my personal pursuits effectively equipping me with firm understanding †»

My hope, is that though mild, our discussions here might be doing the same for others all over the world -

**Re: - posted by Elibeth, on: 2023/9/14 12:26**

Bro. Fletcher,

I love the discussions.

I love the \*depth, of the discussions you hunger and seek after,... and your wording has such depth!! so knowledgeable!

Thank you dear brothers.

elizabeth

**Re: †f†™•†» - posted by JFW (), on: 2023/9/14 15:45**

Ohhh my sweet sister !!

Your ears must've been burning as just last night even after 10pm i and a friend were talking about you and Ginney Rose (Sandra) and how much we missed your all's contributions and how much we had gained gleaning in the edges of your fields of faith †

It's oh so good to hear from you and to know you are well †»

Thank you for your kind words, though my life of faith changed forever when you shared that first msg from brother Akanni a

few years ago-

In case I never get the opportunity again I want to be completely honest about what happened and share a short testimony of that period

You had mentioned Luka (also from Nigeria) and Gbile and suggested that I might enjoy his ministry, you stated here on SI that if I was interested you would send it and I responded, of course I always appreciate godly sermons. When I received the email containing the msg, I clicked on it and when it opened I saw it was 3 hours and 40 some odd mins and it was the first of three messages totaling 9+hrs

So I sat it aside, that was a Wednesday and after work that Saturday I came home and played basketball with my boys till they were red faced and exhausted. Once we came in from the heat and got a drink of water, they collapsed with me picking at them for being so soft and I retired upstairs to tend to emails, bills and such, that's when I saw your email and remembered how long it was, I thought to myself "how can I get out of this since I publicly said I'd listen". Then it occurred to me that if I listen to a few minutes I could tell you when you asked, "eyes I've started it but haven't finished it yet" and that would help me deflect the responsibility of having to follow through and keep my word. So I opened the email and began to listen after 45 mins or so I was frustrated to have to pause it to come prepare the boys some food as it was like nothing I've ever heard. I went back upstairs and finished that msg and began the next in the series. Each hour passed and by the end I was undone! How can this man from Nigeria, a physics professor, preach 3 days - 9hrs on only 4 words ?!!! yet it never got stale, it never slowed, he kept an accessible pace and held my attention with almost baited breath! This man has it! I thought, this is the most remarkable thing I've ever seen in regards to preaching, he literally extracted the marrow from the bones of the word like I'd never seen nor heard, and I'm maybe a lil "addicted" to good preaching-

After that, you sent me many messages from him and I devoured many but not all as my life became extremely complicated for a season.

Even as recently as last week I quoted Luka to a client as he posted the truest words I've ever read by someone who was alive on planet earth at the same time as me. "Many Christians today, don't know how to trade with heaven and instead they do business with the world" »

So I hope you know that your response to God's divine influence in sending/suggesting this ministry has changed not only my life but my whole family's and many of my clients whom the Lord has prompted me to share with.

I am truly grateful and hope that others also find the treasure in it that I did.

May great grace and peace be unto you dear sister and know that thanks has been heartily given to heaven for your obedience

**Re: - posted by Elibeth, on: 2023/9/14 21:27**

Dear Brother Fletcher,

It is a joy to hear from you,..Thank you for the kind words,

Yes, I also truly appreciate Bro. Gbile Akanni, too.

I have observed him ,and his messages for many years now,.. and came to believe he lives , a life of death to self, and a Life to God, daily.

He does a live Bible Study on Saturday's, has a staff here in the U.S., who has come and ate at my table.

Bless you ,

-  
elizabeth