



Free Will

April 14, 2019

www.kimberlyga.com/blog2019

My job requires a certain degree of mobility, as I must travel between the various schools in our city. Sometimes, I am in the car and I know which school I am expected at next, but I cannot see my way there, and I don't have time to waste! I pull out my phone and type the name of the school into my GPS. Within seconds, it shows me the best route. It even shows me how to exit the parking lot. I know my city's streets, but sometimes there are several ways to reach a particular point, and I only need to glance at the GPS to show me the fastest route. I don't need to leave it running giving me turn-by-turn instructions, but by force of habit, I set my phone in the cupholder and start driving. Often, as I approach the next intersection, this computerized voice tells me which direction to turn - because I forgot to turn it off. Once I have seen the GPS's estimate of the best route, it is my choice which route I actually take. There are a few roads in town that I dislike - too many potholes, too many police, too many stoplights, etc. It is my free will which route I take. If the GPS is running and I choose to take a different route, the computerized voice says, "recalculating," as it reconfigures the directions based on my actual actions. GPS doesn't pass judgement on me - it doesn't care which route I take, it's a computer! Its only tasks are to show me the route, tell me which turns to take and calculate my estimated time of arrival. What I actually do with the directions it provides, is my business.

In 2016, I drove from South Carolina to Missouri. It was 850 miles and it took almost 13 hours. I did not know the route, I was totally unfamiliar with the drive. During this drive, I was totally dependent on GPS for the directions. We made it there and back without incident. I did not use my free will for even one mile of the trip. I think this is what our relationship with God should resemble - total reliance.

Free will was given to man before man had even reproduced. We read in the second chapter (v.16) of Genesis, "And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;'" Right there, in the second chapter of the first book in the Bible, God gave man

options - choice - liberty - autonomy - the ability to make his own decisions - free will. God was not leaving man to his own devices. God was (and is) still there, but man was made in the image of God, and God is free to act as He so desires, so He gave man freedom, too. Genesis 1:29 “Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.” In Genesis 2:15, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” We don’t see specific instructions, but choices in what to eat and in how to work and take care of the garden. In Genesis 2:19 we see more choices. “Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.”

If we look back at Genesis 2:16, we notice that it is an incomplete sentence, hence the semicolon. *And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; The rest of the sentence is verse 17, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”* That’s tricky! Oh, but it’s not! When we pick up a Bible, it’s got a thousand pages, and probably a billion words, and all of them are important. Even if you haven’t read the entire Bible, there are some important, overall truths to know.

- 1) God gives man choice. According to some [sources](#), we make an average of 35,000 decisions each day. We choose to hit the snooze, we choose to make up the bed (or not), we choose to put the coffee on before we take a shower, we choose what to wear, we choose our route to work, etc. Many of the decisions we make are habitual or routine, but each day it is a choice to keep up the habit.
- 2) We don’t know everything. “As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother’s womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things.” (Ecclesiastes 11:5) Since we don’t know everything, we should rely on the One who does.
- 3) We are sinners by nature. “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” (Psalm 51:5) God knows we are sinners. He knew we would become sinners. In Genesis 2:17 “but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” It says when, not *if*, when - God knew man could not resist the temptation to eat the forbidden fruit. He still loves us and wants us to have choices. When faced with life’s options there is always a Godly option (1 Corinthians 10:13). We have to be cognizant and ready. When making 35,000 decisions, in rapid succession, we must be in the Word daily so that we have the strength to choose God time and time again.
- 4) Man was created in God’s image (Genesis 1:27) for God’s glory (Isaiah 43:7). The decisions we make should always be to God’s glory. “In their hearts humans plan their

course, but the Lord establishes their steps.” (Proverbs 16:9) Because He loves us, the Lord gives us choices in the course of our lives. Like GPS, He tells us which steps to take, but it is our choice to take the steps He has established. Sometimes, after a series of steps, we realize that we are off course - our own plan is failing. Whenever we desire to, we can ask Him to intervene. He will lovingly recalculate a new course. We cannot, however, expect our ETA to be the same. And sometimes, depending on just how far off course we went, He recalculates, but we may decide that it is not feasible to try to reach the original destination. In this case, we must pray and ask Him how we can bring Him glory from where we are, and start anew. It is important to check in with the Father sooner than later; we should do so frequently; and we can never stop. My pastor said, recently, “sometimes we are the cause of our own oppression.” Our free will, our choices, can bring God glory or they can bring us oppression. “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:11-13) Exercise free will with discernment. Choose wisely. Chose God’s glory.

AMEN

Have a wonderfully blessed week!

Kim