



## Free Will - Part 3

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Two weeks ago, it was my intention to share some thoughts about free will. This post MAY conclude those thoughts, but I don't know. Let's just see where the Spirit leads. I've used the analogy of God's plan for our lives as being like GPS directions. We have the directions at our fingertips, but it is still our choice whether or not to follow them. Quite often, we decide to make our own course, we use our free will and make our own decisions. I've heard of God being called a gentleman, and in terms of the free will He gives us, He really is! He does not force man to do anything! He is there when we need Him (which is always, whether we realize it or not), but He does not intervene unless He is asked to do so.

Remarkably, we are given free will in both how we choose to live our lives day-to-day on earth, and choice in how we choose to spend our after-life. According to a survey in 2014, the [Pew Research Center](#), found that about 72% of Americans believe in heaven, which they define as, "a place where people who have led good lives are eternally rewarded." 58% of U.S. adults also believe in hell, which they define as a place "where people who have led bad lives and die without being sorry are eternally punished." Also [interesting](#) is that 66% of American Christians believe that multiple different religions can lead to heaven.

If the Bible is our GPS, we must look carefully at it's directions. It says, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:10) Without Jesus, we are lost, and Google Maps will not help. "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Philippians 3:20) If 72% of Americans believe in heaven, then I would think that 72% of Americans desire for heaven to be their final destination. I cannot imagine that someone who believes in heaven would not desire this eternal reward. The thought that those who have led a *good life* are rewarded by heaven, though, is troubling.

I would ask, how good does one's life have to be to be rewarded by heaven? Does God have a clipboard for every person on earth that He keeps tally marks for our good behaviors, good thoughts, and acts of kindness - maybe when we have sinful thoughts, or use a bad word, or drive

above the speed limit, we lose a point. At what age did He begin the tally sheet? How many points equal heaven? What if we unintentionally sin, does that count? This whole system of good life vs. bad life could become very complicated. If this were how the Lord made the decision of heaven or hell, we might not know from one day to the next, if it were our last, what would be our fate. In fact, just thinking of a system like this makes me fearful. I watch the news, people die daily--accidents, in weather situations, shootings--on top of just trying to be safe, we would have to worry about our final destination. Fortunately, we don't have to wonder how many tally marks we have, the Bible makes it very clear how to know our final destination.

The Bible tells us in Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." The Lord knows we are sinners, and there is no exception. "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8) If sin is the dividing line between heaven and hell, then we would all go to hell, because we are all sinners. God created man for His glory. (Isaiah 43:7) He loves man so much that He does not want us to perish in hell, but to one day live in heaven with Him. For that reason, God sent His Son, Jesus to earth, to live in human flesh and blood, to experience human emotions and human pain. At the appointed time, Jesus was crucified on the cross as the penalty for man's past, current, and future sin--not His own sin. Jesus was sinless. 1 Peter 2:22 says, "He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth." Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, so that we no longer must perish for our sinful lives. Three days following His death, Jesus rose from the dead as proof of God's power and authority.

In order for our final destination to be heaven, we don't have to worry about whether we have enough tally marks. Instead, we must believe that 1) Jesus is the Son of God. 2) Jesus was without sin. 3) Jesus died to make atonement for our sins, as our substitute. 4) Jesus was raised from the dead. If we believe those things, we are spared from eternity in hell, but will, instead, spend eternity in heaven, with God the Father. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

Again, it is our free will to believe, or not to believe. God give us infinite choices. This, choice, is one of the big ones. This choice is bigger than what type of car to buy, where to go on vacation, or whether or not to get married. This choice will determine our eternity--our final destination. To believe or not to believe, that is the question! "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)

Surely, you know someone who needs to read this post. Please forward it to them today--their life may depend on it.

Thank you for reading (and for forwarding)!

Have a blessed week!

Kim