

MISUNDERSTANDING OF FREE WILL AND BEING HUMAN

Written by Calvin Fox

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Many hold that freedom of will, also defined as freedom of choice, is what makes us human beings. It is this that makes us "Persons" and the degree to which we are denied free will or choice is the degree to which we are less human or demeaned as persons. Is this true? Is it Biblical?

What makes us Persons and gives us our true value as humans is the fact we image God. We are made in His image and as such represent Him in the world.

1 Cor 11:7 a man ...is the image and glory of God ...cf James 3:9, Psalm 8

“Man” (male & female) is created to be as God is- Rational, Creative, Moral and Communal. These are the standout characteristics of God drawn from the Genesis

A. Rational- God created the heavens and the earth. He created order out of chaos. He formed the unformed and filled the empty.

Doing all this, God demonstrated great mental ability: analyzing, reasoning, problem solving, planning.

B. Creative- God, the Creator, is artistic. He uses imagination, shapes, forms, colors, materials, sound and motion. We are like God when we do likewise. He created us to be

artists, loving and using shapes, materials, lights, colors as well as movement and sound.

We are to value and cultivate the arts and the works of our hands, just as God does.

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C. Moral- God is revealed as righteous with an abhorrence of sin in later chapters of Genesis. This, too, is the original basis for the traditional definition of the Image. God has created all human beings with a sense of moral-oughtness. Morality is part of the human DNA. It is called "Natural Law" and Paul describes it in Rom 1:32 and 2:15. Thus God can hold even non-Christian individuals and nations accountable for their moral decisions and behavior.

D. Communal- The second chapter of Genesis reveals that God is concerned with communicating with human beings, as well as human beings themselves communicating and having companionship with themselves. He does not want Adam to be alone. (The first thing mentioned in the Bible that is "not good".)

A Biblical view of "Man" will keep the balance of all four attributes of the Image, of being a "Person". Freedom of will and choice are not mentioned. However, they are assumed and absolutely essential to who we are.

would be impossible to function as the Image of God apart from such freedom.

(God could have created our first ancestors without any will at all.

Then they would have been automatons and not human beings.)

Therefore, yes, human beings were created with "Free Will".

But it would be serious error to divorce Freedom from the Image or to champion Liberty apart from its purpose to enable us live and represent God as His Image in the world.

Sadly, this "divorce" or seeking autonomy from God is exactly what human beings do.

The Image is fractured. Human beings remain "human" and free will is still essential and possible, but in a seriously limited way.

The Free Will humans retain is no longer truly free because of "The Fall" (Genesis 3).

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Humans have a serious problem with their Creator, a literal "falling out" with Him.

Human beings universally chose not to love, serve and obey God.

They seek the Liberty to do their own thing.

Their ability to chose is in total bondage to this Bent, this Sin.

Before there can be true freedom of will, the will itself must be set free.

At the very least it must be restrained.

The latter is the primary purpose of all Government (Romans 13:4)

The former is the purpose of the Gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Paul writes of this bondage in Romans 7 and 8. The primary definition of "freedom" or Liberty" in the Bible is spiritual, not social, political or economic.

Gal 5:1, 2 Peter 2:16

BUT see Isaiah 61:1 with Luke 4:17,19-21