

Ephesians

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] I would like to just revisit a little bit what we touched on last week because of the importance of it having to deal with the order in which these things occur.

And in verse 13 of Ephesians 1, he talks about in whom you also trusted after that you heard the word of truth. And we made an issue of the fact that the tenses that are involved here are not all that accurate in the King James, but they are somewhat enlightened by the translations that follow.

And the American Standard Version right below that, the ASV, renders it, in whom ye also having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation.

And then in the continuation of the verse, on down a little further, in whom also after that you believed you were sealed. And the ASV renders it, in whom having also believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

And we just belabored the point that this sealing takes place at the point of salvation. It isn't something that is realized at some subsequent point later.

[1 : 16] And we explained the distinction between understanding the text in that manner and the tenses in which it is used, as opposed to some of the teaching today that suggests there is a second blessing.

Salvation is the first blessing. And the second blessing is sanctification or the sealing of the Spirit. And that is achieved by praying, agonizing, promising, whatever is involved.

That isn't the way it works. And the corrected texts here in the alternate readings give the same sense. The sense that is, I believe, theologically and doctrinally correct.

And that is, when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, as an act of faith, an act of your will, you receive Him.

You didn't simply receive something He has to give. You received Him, the person of Christ. And with Him, you get the whole package.

[2 : 24] There is nothing more that God has for you that is not wrapped up in the person of Jesus Christ. That includes the sealing, the position, everything that goes with it.

And this is an amazing concept because it is one that is not all that well understood. And the reason it isn't is because man is just unalterably connected to human works and to deeds done that are required in order to please God.

And the fact is, fellas, when you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you are put into a position in Christ whereby you are made accepted in the Beloved and your standing is one that is equal to that of Jesus Christ Himself.

Now, I know that's a big item to swallow, but it's true. This does not mean that we have arrived at all, but it does mean we have a position with God the Father that is without spot and blemish.

We are perfect. We are complete. We are entire in Him. Nothing lacking. That's your position. That's your standing.

[3 : 51] Your practice is something different, and we're going to be talking about that too. But we've got to get fixed in mind that this standing, this position that you have in Christ is something that cannot even be improved upon.

And the reason it can't be improved upon is because it is Jesus Christ who has done it and has provided it for you. And when you are in Him, there is nothing lacking.

Once that standing is accomplished by faith in Jesus Christ, that then puts us in a position for development, growth, maturity.

And that is a gradual, ongoing thing, two steps forward, one step backward, and so on. Because our standing is one thing, our state is something else.

There is a positional truth, and there is a practical truth. Your position in Christ is one of perfection, cannot be improved upon. God Himself cannot do anything more for you than what He has done in and through Christ, insofar as your acceptability to Him is concerned.

[5 : 08] Once we have that standing, once we are a believer in Christ, then we are in position for growth, development, maturity, and the Bible calls that growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

You do not grow in your standing. You grow in your state. You do not grow in your position. You grow in your practice. And that term sanctification, which means to set apart or set aside, literally means to separate.

When you are sanctified, and we talked a little bit about this before, you are sanctified. Sanctified. You are made a saint in Christ Jesus, and that means you are separated unto Him.

And the picture I tried to create for you, it is just as if you are here in a mass of humanity, as just a member of the human race. And when you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, He reached down and picked you up, out of the mass of humanity, and He brought you over here, and He set you down in a new group.

And that new group is called the spiritual body of Christ. And it is made up of all believers. These are the ones who are set apart from the world as a whole.

[6 : 35] They are sanctified. And that is, again, our position. And yet, we grow in grace, and that means we develop and mature, and the time is coming when we will be complete.

And that has to do with our entire or our complete sanctification. So, theologically, it is very correct to say, we have been sanctified, we are being sanctified, we shall be sanctified.

All of those are involved, and yet each one is a different phase. And it all has to do with being set apart. The time is coming, and we saw that in Romans chapter 8.

Well, let's see here. At the bottom of the text, we believe we were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.

The earnest we talked about meaning the pledge or the down payment. When Jesus Christ saved you, He put within you His Spirit.

[7 : 53] This is Christ in you, the absolute confidence of future glory. Colossians 1 states it that way. The absolute confidence of future glory.

Christ is in you, and that is your position, and that Spirit that Christ put in you, that's the new nature.

That's what has regenerated your human spirit. And that is the part of you, that is the part of you that became a new creation in Christ.

Your body wasn't affected at all. And the distinction I made was, when Jesus Christ died on the cross, He paid the full price for your total redemption.

He left nothing undone. And when He said, it is finished, that's precisely, I think, what He was talking about. Done. The great transaction is done.

[8 : 58] Christ had nothing more to accomplish on our behalf, other than what was accomplished on that cross, where the payment was made in full. And yet, that payment has not been fully applied.

It is only partially applied. The price has been fully paid, but it is only partially applied. And that is because, when He saved you, when you came to faith in Christ, you received that regeneration, that new man inside, whereby you were positionally set apart from the world, unto Christ, Christ, and that is the down payment.

That is, that is God giving you the earnest of the Spirit. And that is His guarantee that what He has begun in you, He will accomplish it until the day of Jesus Christ.

And then, you'll recall, we referenced that. I'm going to open this up for comments and questions in just a moment, but I want to make this one point. In Romans chapter 8, that testifies to this, when Paul says that, we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now, and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first, which have the first fruits of the Spirit.

That's the same thing as a down payment. That is God guaranteeing you that He's going to finish what He began in you. Which has the first fruits of the Spirit. And then he says, and I'm in Romans 8.23 now, he says, even we ourselves, grown within ourselves, waiting for the adoption.

[10 : 53] And we talked a little bit about the Roman definition of adoption that Paul is utilizing here, as opposed to the Western culture of adoption, whereby we always adopt children or underage children.

But this was an official act in the Roman culture, whereby a father would adopt an adult son. And that gave him privilege and status and made him the official heir and so on.

And this is what he's using as an analogy here. Or even we ourselves, grown within ourselves, waiting for the adoption to wit. And that's a legal term.

You usually only find it in legal documents. To wit. Which means, and by that, what I mean is the redemption of our body.

Spiritually speaking, if you are in Christ, you have been redeemed spiritually and regenerated. But you have not been redeemed physically. And that's why we're still going to die.

[11 : 55] Even though you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you have a physical body that still has its limitations. And eventually, it's going to die.

Because, this redemptive act that Christ accomplished has not been fully applied. It is fully guaranteed by the earnest of the Spirit.

But we are not yet a completed transaction. And we will be when this mortal puts on immortality and this corruptible puts on incorruptible, then, we'll be a finished product.

Right now, we're a study in progress. None of us has arrived. None of us is fully redeemed. We have the guarantee that that will be the case.

And when Paul said, writing to the Colossians, about Christ being in you, that is your hope of glory. glory, and we've defined that word hope, which doesn't mean what we take it to mean.

[13 : 05] The biblical word for hope never has a question mark after it. It's an exclamation mark. It is something that is absolutely certain because God is behind it.

So, what Paul is saying when he wrote for the Colossians is, because Christ is in you, that is your absolute guarantee of future glory. What will that future glory be?

Well, it will be a body fashioned like unto Christ's resurrection body. It will be a glorified body. Then we will be a completed person.

But for now, we just have the down payment, the earnest of the Spirit, and we trust God for the rest. Questions or comments about that before we move on?

Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Okay. Roger? In my Bible, I've got the seal in the Spirit as a huge down payment because of what Christ did.

[14 : 06] Right. It's a guarantee. Absolutely. He's not going back out of that view. Absolutely. It's irrevocable. You have to look at it from this standpoint.

When Jesus Christ died on that cross and when God saved you, He made a He made an incalculable investment. investment.

And God will realize the return on His investment. And that's why not one of those who have placed their faith and trust in Christ will be lost because we have been purchased at such a great price.

God has made an investment and you can be sure that He will protect His investment. Other thoughts? Anybody? Marty? Marty? You've talked periodically over the years about some friends and also some acquaintances and some pretty notable people who have lost their faith.

Or have just lost their faith. people who have lost their faith. And that's not something that God has done with His guarantee.

[15 : 19] It's something that through His or her own volition. You know, well, that's the subject that we could spend a little time there and I think it probably deserves it.

I can understand what this party is going through. I know some of you read the devotionals that we distribute and one of them came up just a couple of days ago when Marie and I were reading it in the morning and it was the testimony of this individual who said that they had just walked away from God because they had prayed and prayed and prayed according to the scriptures and what Christ said, anything you ask in my name I will do and so on.

They prayed for people and people died. And there was no answer to the prayer. And they became very discouraged and despondent and just said that they just walked away and chucked the whole thing because it just wasn't working for them.

And some of you have read a couple of the books that we've distributed here on faith and doubt. Tremendous volumes and something that every believer ought to read.

It is entirely possible in our frailty and in our humanness to experience doubt regarding your salvation.

[16 : 48] Am I truly a Christian? Christian? And what would make you think that you're not? Well, sometimes we are guilty of thinking things or doing things that we know no Christian should be thinking or doing.

And yet you did them. What does that mean? Well, maybe it means you're not really a Christian at all because you shouldn't be doing those things.

And if you were any kind of a Christian, you wouldn't be thinking those things. You're doing those things. And fellas, when Jesus Christ saved you, he did not eliminate your flesh.

You still have the capability of doing sinful, stupid things as a believer. Now you have no justification for it because you have resources to combat that.

But we can still fall into error and we can still sin and displease the Lord. And that's part of our humanness. That is proof positive you have not arrived.

[17 : 54] You are not totally mature. And there is room for failure and room for disobedience and everything else in the Christian life.

And we are all capable of that. And sometimes when we do something like that, fall into sin, one of the most automatic things then is to question your salvation. And maybe that's a good thing to do because we do need to make our calling and election sure.

Maybe that is an indication that you aren't truly a believer. So you need to examine yourself, as Paul said, and see whether you'll be in the faith. And then another thing, and probably the most significant thing, that can cause someone who really is a genuine believer to say, you know what, this Christianity thing is not working for me.

I'm just going to forget it. I'm not going to read my Bible anymore. I'm not going to church anymore. I'm not going to do this. I've done, you know, and the thing that can bring us to a position like that is unfulfilled expectations or adversity.

Adversity can be a powerful detriment to our faith and cause us to question because we see things going on.

[19 : 23] Let me give you an example. Years ago, Charles Templeton. Charles Templeton was a colleague and a close friend of Billy Graham.

and it was the considered opinion of most people who knew both Billy Graham and Charles Templeton that Templeton was the better preacher.

And they would take turns holding evangelistic crusades and one would preach one night and one would preach the next night and so on. And this was before Billy Graham hit the really big time with the Los Angeles Crusade in 1948 and everything.

And he was just a young man and his twenties. And one day, while they were having these meetings, preaching to great crowds, numbers of people responding, being saved and so on, Charles Templeton picked up a Life magazine and on the cover of that Life magazine was a picture of a little African boy, about three years old.

Typical picture of starvation with the distended stomach and all. Forlorn look on his face. And the article in Life magazine was like a revelation of what was going on in Africa at the time.

[20 : 54] Now we're talking talking, we're talking the 1950s, early 1950s. And as he looked at that picture, he was gripped by the thought, why does God allow this?

Why does God allow innocent little children like this to suffer from starvation and die? And that was a crisis in his life that caused Charles Templeton to literally walk away from his faith, saying, I don't see how there can be a God who could allow this kind of thing to go on.

God. And even if there is such a God, I don't want anything to do with him. And his reasoning was, I'm not God and not even close to being God.

But if I were, I wouldn't allow that kind of stuff. I would fix that. I would change that. And if there is a God, he's so much more powerful and wiser than I.

And why doesn't he do it? Ergo, there must not be a God. And like I said, if there is, I don't want anything to do with him. And he quit. He stopped.

[22 : 23] He ended up going to Canada, walked away from his faith. Billy Graham went on. And of course, Billy tried to reason with him, tried to talk with him, tried to assure him. And yet, he was so captivated by that.

Now, that's a situation of adversity. And people confront all kinds of things. And by the way, those of you who are familiar with the writings of who am I thinking of?

The former legal editor for the Chicago Times newspaper. Written a number of books. Apologetically.

Pardon? Yeah, thank you. Lee Strobel. Lee Strobel. And we saw a video series here. It's been a couple of years ago that I showed this video series. And Lee Strobel, who had devoted himself to practical atheism.

He's got tremendous testimony. This all began when his wife got saved. And he was really pretty much into atheism. Or at least, at the very least, you would say, agnosticism.

[23 : 40] But after he became a believer, and he did so because he was going to straighten out his wife, who had become a Christian, and he was convinced that she was just caught up in some religiosity, and he was going to examine this thing called Christianity, and then he was going to simply obliterate it before her eyes and get his old wife back after he talked some sense into her.

Well, of course, he got too close to the truth, and got bitten by it himself, and was wonderfully saved, and now he's become an apologist for the faith, and a very effective one. But anyway, Charles Templeton was living in Canada at the time, and because Lee Strobel was writing these books on apologetics, he decided that he would go and locate Charles Templeton and see if he could interview him.

And he made contact with him, living in Canada, he was, of course, an elderly man now, just like Billy Graham was an elderly man. He phoned him and made arrangements to go to Canada and interview him, and he said that Templeton was very gracious and very open to the interview and so on.

he went up and he had learned that Templeton was in the early stages of Alzheimer's and not being sure how that would affect the interview, but at any rate, he went on, conducted the interview, and Templeton told him how he came to his newfound conviction that there was no God and so on.

And then he did make a rather startling statement when Strobel was interviewing him. He said, no, he said, I don't regret having eliminated God from my thinking.

[25 : 36] But I do miss Jesus. Wasn't that an interesting observation? But I do miss Jesus. And you know, people can be brought to faith and people can be brought to doubt on the basis of adversity and experiences.

How many people have come to faith because of the testimony of someone else? Now, this doesn't mean that we ought to believe because someone else believes. That's not an adequate reason for placing your faith in Christ.

You need to believe not because someone else has believed, but you need to believe because you are convinced that it's true. That should be the basis for it. But testimonies can be powerful things.

And adversity and expressions of adversity like Chuck Templeton experienced with that picture of the little African boy on the Life magazine cover. People can have adversity in their life that leads them to believe there can't be a God or he wouldn't allow this kind of thing to go on.

And folks who come to conclusions like that, first of all, are usually very emotionally upset and understandable because nothing hits us like adversity.

[27 : 01] And adversity, guys, adversity almost always involves a loss. A loss of something. A loss of a mate.

A loss of health. Loss of wealth. Loss of a job. Some kind of a loss produces pain and oftentimes along with it a doubt.

Is God really in charge? Does God really know what's happening in my life now? And does he care? And sometimes adversity is piled on top of adversity and we just kind of throw in the towel.

And a number of people have done that. And I don't know about the friend you're talking about, but it's a common thing. And it almost always comes about as a result of God not coming through like we think he should when we think he should.

So, if that's the way you want to be, I'm not going to read your Bible anymore and I'm not going to your old church anymore and I'm not, you know, God will be sorry when I'm not on your side anymore. That's almost the attitude.

[28 : 13] It's kind of like a spiritual temper tantrum, you know, that people can throw. And it's not unusual for people to do that because they're not coping well with, and I counter all of that with this.

The Romans 8:28 principle. Guys, it is not a cliché. It is a truth. That God really does work all things together for our good.

Problem is, he won't do it according to our timetable. We want God to do what we want him to do when we want him to do it.

And I've often told you God has never done anything as quickly as I wanted him to. But fellas, and I hope you get this because this is really important, and I'm talking as one who learned this and is still learning it, there is value, real value, in the process.

In the process of what we would call spiritual downtime, when things don't seem to be going right at all, when there's adversity and maybe one kind of reversal after another, we are going through a time of pain and disappointment and we can't see how there's anything good that can come out of this and it just doesn't seem to let up and it goes on and on and on and on but trust me, God is using downtime, adversity, reversals, heartaches, disappointments, all the rest of it, none of which anybody in their right mind would ever volunteer for.

[30 : 08] But he is committed to taking those things negative as they are, painful as they are, and weave them into something that is meaningful and for your ultimate good.

And when I say your ultimate good, that may be years away. Now who wants to think of that? Ultimate good may not even be realized until you're in eternity.

Who wants to think of that? But what God wants us to do more than anything else in the bad times as well as the good times is just trust him.

Just trust him. It's the Job mentality that says though he slay me, yet will I trust him. That's what he wants more than anything.

One thought of what you're just saying now is that I know what I need. I know what's good for me. And it may be very close to what God thinks is good for me or it could be very, very far away.

[31 : 15] When God doesn't give us what we want, maybe that's a blessing, we just don't recognize it. Absolutely. Another comment, and this is not a comment as a question, but I heard that basically all Christians doubt at some point.

And Mother Teresa doubted her faith. Is that true from what you've heard? Oh yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. Doubt is common to the human animal.

It just is because of these experiences that we have, things that make us question and wonder. I doubt seriously that there is not a believer anywhere who at some time or another in his life hasn't even doubted whether there's a God.

And one of the reasons that makes us think those things or doubt those things, if you looked at the world lately, have you seen what's going on? The violence, the murders, people cutting off people's heads?

And you mean to tell me there's a God in heaven who loves people and cares and he lets this kind of stuff go on? Are you kidding me? And that's exactly the way a lot of people reason. And they don't take into consideration, fellas, that what God has done in this creation is he has injected into it a concept called human volition.

[32 : 39] And that gives human beings the capability of doing some very evil things. things. And yet, if God is going to selectively step in and when somebody is about to cross the line and do something they ought to do, God miraculously prevents it, that makes the volition thing a joke, just a sham.

But it isn't a sham, it's for real. And when God created us with a volition, that gives us a capacity to obey him or to disobey him, you can tell God to go fly a kite, you don't want anything to do with him.

You can do that with your volition if you want to. It's a pretty stupid thing to do, but there are stupid people who do that all the time. And it is human volition that God has granted us because the alternative to not giving us that is to make us automatic puppets, where we just don't have any choice, we just always do the thing that's right.

but that's not this world. And God's alternative is to make man and angels. Angels were given volition also.

They were given a will also. And the only alternative is for God to give his creations no will and no ability to disobey him.

[34 : 04] And that constitutes a worthless kind of obedience. And the same way with love. love is a volition. It is an act of the will. And who wants to be loved because the person who loves you doesn't have a choice.

They have to love you. Who wants that kind of love? We want to be loved by someone who chooses to love us. Who doesn't have to love us but wants to love us.

And that's the way we love. God is no different in that. God wants our obedience and he wants our love. But he doesn't want it because we have to do it. He wants it because we choose to do it.

All this comes into play. Yes, Brian? Let's go back to practical and positional. Okay. For a second. Even with Charles Templeton, he practically walked away, but his position, would you say, did it change or did not change?

In Christ? If he was a true believer, and I don't know, I cannot assign true salvation to Chuck Templeton. And the reason I say that is because of this.

[35 : 16] In the first place, none of us has the ability to look into the heart and mind of another person and see if faith is truly there. God has that ability, but we don't. And I do know this.

I do know that it is capable, that we are capable, apart from Christ, we are capable of being able to preach a really powerful sermon in the flesh, without the spirit of God's involvement at all.

And it is possible to speak very passionately and very eloquently and just be a spellbinder. Being able to have a whole rapt attention of thousands of people.

You know who was a master at that? Now, he wasn't preaching the kind of content that we're talking about, but Adolf Hitler had a compelling ability to hold thousands of people who would stand and listen to him with his tirades and his emotion.

And he was a spellbinder. And not much of what he had to say was true, but he had an ability to say it. And I was reading about the life of Augustine, fourth century church father, probably the most outstanding of the church fathers, particularly among Roman Catholics.

[36 : 55] And Martin Luther, Martin Luther was an Augustinian monk. He was a monk that was named in honor of Augustine, the Augustinian order.

And Augustine told about how when he was a young man in his early twenties, I believe it was, that he made quite a study and enrolled in school and studied and learned rhetoric.

And that simply has to do with the ability to speak well and explain your case and so on. And the reason this was such a subject in demand in his day, we're talking about fourth century, guys, this is fifteen, sixteen hundred years ago.

Because back then, very few people among the common people could read and write. So, just about everything was reduced to the spoken language.

And it was soon learned by these people that if you had the ability to articulate a position, to explain something, and to have a well-rounded vocabulary that could communicate with people, it equaled power and influence.

[38 : 16] And it could get you somewhere. And there were schools of rhetoric that were established simply to teach people to be able to do that. And Augustine became very proficient at it and very powerful.

And it was the ability to move people. And that can be done completely apart from the work of Christ or the work of the Holy Spirit.

Fellas, sometimes it's scary what can be accomplished in the flesh. Sometimes in the name of Christ, that Christ doesn't have anything to do with. And it can hoodwink people because the power of words and of language can be just captivating.

It moves people. This is what information is all about. This is why we listen to speeches. This is why politicians make speeches. This is why pastors deliver sermons.

words is because there is power in words. And they can affect and impact life negatively or positively. It's a powerful thing. So, yes?

[39 : 22] Another thought that kind of goes along with what you're saying here about how we hear something and it may be of God and it may not be. It's not always easy to recognize that.

You're right. But back to the cover of Life magazine, there's things that revolve us as humans for whatever reason because it's not fair or it's not right or whatever.

But yet God has set up a system of nature for lions pick out the weak and the sick out of the herd. And they slaughter them and it's ugly and stuff but yet that's part of God's system.

And I guess what I'm saying is that with other humans we don't always recognize what's good in God's eyes. It's easy to mistake that.

And it may not be what we like. Yeah. Being able to discern the truth and whatnot, that's a really powerful thing. And this, I tell you, our nation right now has probably got a larger percentage of just downright gullible people living in it than it has ever had in the history of this nation.

[40 : 47] And when I say gullible people, all you have to do to gauge the gullibility of the American public is just look at the television commercials and how effective they are.

And they're effective for gullible people for the most part. Someone said all advertising is legal lying. And there's a lot of gullibility out there. And one of the most important things that needs to be instilled into Christians, and this is so critical, is to be able to develop a discerning spirit.

Because there is so much fakery and falsity out there that is just incredible. people. And when Paul went to the church at Berea, these people distinguished themselves by being of a mind that they would hear what Paul said, but they're not going to take it at face value, just because he said it.

And scriptures say that the Bereans heard what Paul said, and then they searched the scriptures daily to see whether those things were so.

And they wouldn't take his word for it, but they went to check it out with the word of God. And that is so important. I don't know how many times I've told people at Grace, listen, last thing in the world I want anybody to go out of here saying, well, if that's what Pastor Marr believes, that's good enough for me.

[42 : 26] Oh! Oh, that's like a knife to the heart. I don't want anybody to think that, because I speak with flaws in my theology and my doctrine.

I don't know where they are, and I'm looking for them. And I trust that if I come upon one, I'll root it out and replace it with the truth. And I had to do that a few times over the last 45 years, because sometimes you can be convinced of something that you're teaching and later find out you were wrong about that.

What are you going to do about it? You need to correct it. And it's not an easy thing to do. In fact, it's a downright humbling thing to do. But truth is our most precious possession.

We need to guard it at all costs. And you've heard me say this before, and I'll say it again. Every preacher should fear two things. One is that people will not believe what he says. And the other is that people will believe what he says.

And that gives us sobriety to the task of preaching the word of God. And I tell you what, I take it very, very seriously.

[43 : 43] The last thing in the world I want to do is communicate something that isn't true. And I've asked the Lord more than once to just remove me from the scene, if that's what I'm doing or going to do, because I don't want to be responsible for that.

My shoulders can't handle that kind of weight. Any other thoughts about this? Roger? I think most of the world's problems are due to the total neutrality of mankind.

We have to build it and better. Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Well, the the wrongs and the evil that goes on in the world is is men men exercising their evolution.

And, you know, and if you keep this in mind, I think it helps to put some of it in perspective, too, that when Adam and Eve disobeyed that initial disobedience and they as much as told God they didn't believe him and they believed instead the lie, the seems to me the initial consequence that came from the fall is that Adam and Eve were instantaneously imbued with that sin with self centeredness that became their immediate focus self centeredness became in my estimation the first consequence of the fall and before before they rebelled and disobeyed God God was their focus he was their center and when they disobeyed him they transferred their center from God to themselves they became self centered and that self centeredness they passed on to their children and Cain got a good dose of it and I'm sure

[45 : 52] Abel did too that caused Cain to rise up and slay Abel and the self centeredness fellas selfishness selfishness is at the heart of every relationship that comes apart it's always used to self centered in a marriage it is self centeredness on the part of the wife or self centeredness on the part of the husband usually it's self centeredness on the part of both of them and they end up in a power struggle you know and that's the first consequence I think of the fall and humanity was off and running and it's been downhill all the way anything else before we dismiss yeah well there is no question there is no question that there are times when God does override human volition and I think the conversion of Saul of Tarsus is a good example of that

Saul was on his way to Damascus to do one thing and God stepped in short circuited that and Paul later gives a testimony and he says hey he said I Paul as much as said when he wrote to the Corinthians he said I didn't volunteer for this job I was drafted and the Lord approached me on the Damascus road and told me what was what and his only act then could be compliance because he realized who this risen Christ really was and he got in line quick with the program but God interrupted his volition in a big time in a big way so yeah but God doesn't intervene for our benefit he intervenes for the benefit of all for his benefits and it's we're not the focus of it we may be the subject of it yeah I think you're right yeah and for his ultimate glory let me just let me just close this out by by making a statement that I think maybe it's kind of comprehensive and that is

I am persuaded for whatever that's worth that God does not do anything and God does not permit anything without taking everything into consideration and he's the only one who's able to do that he is the master orchestrator of everything that is taking place in this world he orders all things after the counsel of his own will and he knows what he's doing he can be trusted he can be relied upon and that's what he wants from us more than anything else is our trust and our reliance upon him hey guys thanks for being here and enjoy your breakfast next week I promise to have some new scripture sheets for you and we'll get further into Ephesians