

understand and easy to follow; a religion with no mystery, no insoluble problems, no snags... a religion in which contact with God spares us all strife, all uncertainty, all suffering and all doubt..." [New York: Harper & Row, 1976], 142) Be Patient, Warren Wiersbe, P. 25 & 26

III. Don't Let the Doctrine of 'Election' Kill Your Burden for Lost People

If you're not a Christian – don't use God's electing love as an EXCUSE to turn away.

2 Pet. 3:9 "God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Matt. 11:28-29 "Come to Me all who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest... and You will find rest for your soul."

Maybe your heart is breaking for a loved one that's not saved... God's sovereign electing love is the rock we stand on *as we* hope... and pray – having every confidence that our God is a merciful... compassionate... saving God who can and does will to save lost sinners.

Rom. 9:1-3 "I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit— I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race"

2 Cor. 5:11, 14-15, 20 "Knowing therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men... For the love of Christ constrains us... Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."

IV. Keep Using Biblical Language Instead of Man-Made Labels

Let's avoid the use of man-made labels like "*Calvinist*" (taken from the reformer John Calvin) or "*Arminian*" (taken from the Dutch theologian, Jacobus Arminius). Instead let's use biblical terms like 'Sovereign Grace' or the 'Doctrines of Grace.'

V. Stay Humble and Esteem Others Better than Yourself!

Philip. 2:3 "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself."

I've Got Questions...

What about Election and Predestination?

Grace Fellowship Church, April 18, 2010, Pastor Brad Bigney

"Shall we never be able to drive into men's minds the truth that predestination and free agency are both facts? Men sin as freely as birds fly in the air, and they are altogether responsible for their sin; and yet everything is ordained and foreseen of God. The fore-ordination of God in no degree interferes with the responsibility of man. I have often been asked by people to reconcile the two truths. My only reply is – They need no reconciliation, for they never fell out. Why should I try to reconcile two friends? Prove to me that the two truths do not agree. In that request I have set you a task as difficult as that which you propose to me. These two facts are parallel lines; I cannot make them unite, but you cannot make them cross each other. Permit me also to add that I have long ago given up the idea of making all my beliefs into a system. I believe, but I cannot explain. I fall before the majesty of revelation and adore the infinite Lord." C.H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. 33, Banner of Truth, 1969 reprint, pp. 198-199

Several WARNINGS from Scripture concerning the glorious and mysterious doctrine of God's electing love

I. You Will Never Escape a Measure of Mystery in the Bible

Deut. 29:29 "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever..."

I Cor. 13:12 "For now we see through a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I am known."

"Remember – the most gifted, best-equipped minds in church history, no matter how far they dive into the theological pool, have failed to plumb the depths of election. Meanwhile, far above them, my skinny legs can only occasionally be glimpsed, just beneath the surface, desperately treading water." C.J. Mahaney, "*Sovereign Grace and the Glorious Mystery of Election*," p. 6

Job 11:7-9 "Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than heaven – what can you do? Deeper than Sheol – what can you know? Their measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea."

New Living "Can you solve the mysteries of God? Can you discover everything there is to know about the Almighty? ... who are you?"

The doctrine of God's electing love is both glorious and mysterious! And God calls us to hold onto this doctrine just as tightly as any other doctrine... even if we don't fully understand it.

A sampling of the verses that proclaim God's electing love:

The Bible says God did the choosing...

I Thes. 1:4 "...knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

2 Thes. 2:13 "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation..."

The Bible says God's choice was made before the world was created...

Eph. 1:4 "...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him."

The Bible says God's choice was not based on anything He saw you were going to do or not do...

2 Tim. 1:9 "who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace."

Rom. 9:11 "...for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls..."

John 1:12-13 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Ultimately God's choice was based on His own sovereign love and mercy...

Titus 3:4-5 "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit..."

God's Word is supposed to INFORM us and TRANSFORM our understanding of all that we experience in this life – not be limited to only what we can experience and verify or be comfortable with. We're not supposed to rule over God's Word. God's Word is supposed to rule over us.

"The relationship of the sovereign will of God to the freedom and moral responsibility of people is one of those mysteries. Basil Manly, one of the founding fathers of the Southern Baptist Convention, while commenting on

this difficult subject in one of his sermons, said, 'The Scriptures do not undertake to explain mysteries. They leave them unexplained. There is a difference between difficulties, and mysteries: - difficulties may be removed; mysteries cannot, without a new revelation, or the bestowment of a higher intellect.'" p.67-68

"...There is no conflict in the Bible between His sovereignty and our responsibility. Both concepts are taught with equal force and with never an attempt to 'reconcile' them." Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God*, p. 115-116

II. Your Human Logic Will Never Be Fully Satisfied

Eccles. 3:11 "He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the works that God does from beginning to end."

New Living "... people cannot see the whole scope of God's work..."

NIV "... they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end."

Eccles. 11:5 "As you do not know what is the way of the wind, or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child, so you do not know the works of God who makes all things."

Salvation is God's work.

Rev. 7:9 "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" It's His and not ours! We're like small children snatching and grabbing and telling Him what to do with what is rightly His.

And we're never going to fully understand all the details of "Why" and "How" and "What" He's done... but He's given us enough truth to call us to respond by faith and trust Him... that He's good and that He's sovereign!

Rom. 11:33-36 "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 'For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid him?' For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

"Whenever you meet a person who feels compelled to explain everything, who has a pat answer for every question and a red formula for solving every problem, you are back at the ash heap with Job's three friends. When that happens, remember the words of the Swiss psychologist, Paul Tournier: We are nearly always longing for an easy religion, easy to