

The Five Points of Calvinism: Irresistible Grace

Also known as: effectual calling, efficacious grace, overcoming grace, intoxicating grace, the magnificent defeat

From the Westminster Catechism:

*"All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, **effectually to call**, by His Word and Spirit, **out of that state of sin and death**, in which they are by nature, **to grace and salvation**, by Jesus Christ; **enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly** to understand the things of God, **taking away their heart of stone**, and **giving them a heart of flesh**; **renewing their wills**, and, by His almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and **effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ**: yet so, as they come most freely, **being made willing by His grace**."*

In simple English: God lovingly overcomes our stubborn, sinful wills with his never-giving-up grace so we will willingly and joyfully turn to him.

Questions: Is God begging and pleading with us to come to him? Will God save us only if we let him? Are dragged into the Kingdom kicking and screaming? Does God want to save you but ultimately leave the choice up to you? Does God violate our wills?

Overcoming grace is necessary because there is nothing in us that wants Christ

*"None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; **no one seeks for God**. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." (Romans 3:10-12)*

*"And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. **For everyone who does wicked things hates the light** and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed." (John 3:19-20)*

Without faith it is impossible to please God...

"And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." (Hebrews 11:6)

Faith and repentance is a gift from God

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; **it is the gift of God**." (Ephesians 2:8)*

*"Then to the Gentiles also **God has granted repentance** that leads to life." (Acts 11:18)*

"A woman named Lydia... was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul." (Acts 16:14)

*"Moreover, **I will give you a new heart** and put a new spirit within you; **and I will remove the heart of stone** from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **I will put My Spirit within you** and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." (Ezekiel 36:26-27)*

*"All that the Father gives me **will** come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out...And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day."* (John 6:37, 39)

A believer can only turn to Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit

"The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14)

*"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe." ...And he said, "This is why I told you that **no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.**" After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:63-69)*

God doesn't force us to repent and believe. He enables us to repent and believe.

"Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power..." (Psalm 110:3)

*"...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, **having the eyes of your hearts enlightened**, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints..."* (Eph 1:17-18)

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12-13)

Implications of Irresistible Grace

- ∴ The success of evangelism is guaranteed*
- ∴ There is no one too far gone that God cannot change his/her heart*
- ∴ The church does not need to resort to cheap tricks to bring people into the Kingdom*

"The doctrine of irresistible grace does not mean that every influence of the Holy Spirit cannot be resisted. It means that the Holy Spirit can overcome all resistance and make his influence irresistible." - John Piper (See Acts 7:51-53, Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, Romans 9:14-20)

"There's no rebellion that grace can't defeat. You can't be so lost that grace can't find you or so blind that grace can't give you sight." - Paul Tripp

"It is that the Holy Spirit implants a principle within me which enables me, for the first time in my life, to discern and to apprehend something of this glorious, wondrous truth. He works upon my will. 'It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do.' He does not strike me; He does not beat me; He does not coerce me. No, thank God, what He does is operate upon my will so that I desire these things and rejoice in them and love them. He leads, He persuades, He acts upon my will in such a way that when He does, the call of the gospel is effectual, and it is certain, and it is sure. God's work never fails, and when God works in a man or woman, the work is effective." - D.M.Lloyd Jones