



chosen &
choosing
How God's life becomes ours

Week 2: *Dead Man Walking*

God chooses us, pursues us, and draws us to himself. But does his choice override our free choice to respond?

With the exception of the later writings of Augustine, virtually all of the great thinkers up to the Reformation affirmed that human beings possess the power of free choice, even in a fallen state.

-- Norman L. Geisler, *Chosen But Free*

God, wishing men and angels to follow His will, resolved to create them free to do righteousness. ...So if they repent, all who wish for it can obtain mercy from God.

-- Justin Martyr (100-165), *Dialogue*

God made man a free agent from the beginning, possessing his own soul to obey the behests of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God. For there is no coercion with God.

-- Irenaeus (130-200), *Against Heresies*

God made man free, and with power over Himself. For as man, disobeying, drew death on Himself; so, obeying the will of God, he who desires is able to procure for Himself life everlasting.

-- Theophilus of Antioch (2nd Century), *To Autolytus*

I find, then, that man was by God constituted free, master of his own will and power; indicating the presence of God's image and likeness in him.

-- Tertullian (155-225), *Against Marcion*

There are, indeed, innumerable passages in the Scriptures which establish with exceeding clearness the existence of freedom of will.

-- Origen (185-254), *De Principiis*

Know also that thou hast a soul self-governed, the noblest work of God, made after the image of its Creator. ...There is not a class of souls sinning by nature and a class of souls practicing righteousness by nature; but both act from choice.

-- Cyril of Jerusalem (312-386), Lecture

Being in the image and the likeness of the Power which rules all things, man kept also in the matter of a free will this likeness to Him whose will is over all.

-- Gregory of Nyssa (335-395), *On Virginity*

Everyone who wills, wills willingly. ... Although Adam and Eve yielded themselves to sin, they could not abolish in themselves their natural freedom of choice.

-- Anselm (1033-1109), *Truth, Freedom, and Evil*

Sin wounded man in his natural powers so far as concerned his capacity for gratuitous goods but not in such a way that it takes away anything of the essence of his nature.

-- Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274), *On Evil*

Choose life!

-- *Deuteronomy 30:19*