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| Foundational Truths of Christianity Part 4 | **March 1 / 2, 2025** |

**God is Sovereign**

**Speaker: Dr. Henry Schorr**

**1.** When we talk about the sovereignty of God, we’re essentially asking, “**Is God in control?**”

 **Answer:** God created everything and everyone, therefore EVERYTHING in heaven and earth is His. Psalm 135:6 says: “The Lord does whatever pleases Him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.” God continuously sustains or holds together that which He created, literally preventing the universe from blowing apart. He is fully aware of all that occurs. Nothing escapes His eye, not even a little sparrow that falls to the ground (Matt 10:29).

**2.** Since God is in control, **do I have any freedom?**

 Being made in the image of God includes (among other things) the ability to create and to make decisions. God in His sovereignty allows people to reject Him even though He desires their ultimate good. In same way that Jesus, though fully God, voluntarily chose to lay aside some of His divine privileges, so God chooses to limit Himself by giving us humans the freedom and ability to make choices.

 Those choices, however, have consequences. If we choose to jump off a high tower, we will be bound to the law of gravity. God warns us that in this life we will reap what we sow. In the next life we will face the judgment. We will have to give an account for the decisions we made in life, especially what we decided about Christ and His offer of salvation through faith in Him.

**3.** **Does my life have purpose?**

 **Yes.** God has chosen to involve us in His kingdom work. Jesus said, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and YOU WILL BE my witnesses” (Acts 1:8). Jesus also said in Matt 28:19: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

 In the same way that a potter makes pottery for a purpose, God gives us different abilities for a purpose. He loves us all the same, but He has given us different abilities and giftings to accomplish the purpose He has called each of each of us to fulfill.

**4.** **Do my prayers matter?**

 **Yes!** In Ezekiel 36 God makes several promises to the nation of Israel and says, “I, the Lord, have spoken and will do it” (v.36, NASB). Clearly, this is God’s will. In the next verse He adds, “This also I will let the house of Israel ASK ME to do for them.”

 God in effect is saying, “My will is to do these things, but NOT until you exercise prayer and ask Me.” The same principle is found in James 4:2, “You do not have (why?) because you do not ask.” God wants to involve you in His Kingdom work through prayer.

 Your prayers (just like your service to God) make a difference even if you see no evidence today. Believe and know that the prayer of a righteous person changes things. If God does not give you what you ask, it may be because you ask amiss. The more you know God and His written Word the more your prayers will be in sync with His will and purposes.

 God is pleased when we humble ourselves, acknowledge our need of Him and come to Him in prayer. If God says ‘no’ or ‘wait’ instead of YES, we can find peace in knowing that God has our best interest at heart and (based on Rom 8:28) is working out all things for our ultimate good and His ultimate glory.

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| IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP1. When playing a game, do you prefer to just play or keep score and reference the rules? Why?
2. How does the statement, “The Lord does whatever He pleases,” make you feel? Explain.

UP – PURSUE GOD1. Read 1 Chron 29:11, Isaiah 46:10, Col 1:17, Acts 17:25, Matt 7:9-11; 10:29 and 23:37. From these verses what can you glean about the character and nature of God? Which of these stands out to you? Why?
2. Read Ezek 36:24, 36-37, James 4:2, Eph 3:20 and Romans 8:28. Discuss the tension between God’s sovereignty and our call to pray. Why do we need to pray if God knows everything ahead of time?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION1. Consider Acts 1:8, Matthew 28:19-20, and 1 Cor 15:58. What is the mission Jesus has called us to?  What is the mission or purpose you are called to?
2. Max Lucado wrote, "In our desire to understand Him, we have sought to contain Him. The God of the Bible cannot be contained." Who solves your problems? In what ways do you ‘contain’ God such that your problems are bigger than He? How can we ‘enlarge’ God?
 | *THE WORD (NIV)*1 Chronicles 29:11 Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the splendor and the majesty, for everything in the heavens and on earth belongs to you. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom, and you are exalted as head over all.Isaiah 46:10 I declare the end from the beginning, and from long ago what is not yet done, saying: my plan will take place, and I will do all my will.Colossians 1:17 He is before all things, and by him all things hold together.Acts 17:25 Neither is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives everyone life and breath and all things.Matthew 7:9–11 9 Who among you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him.Matthew 10:29 Aren’t two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father’s consent.Matthew 23:37 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!Ezekiel 36:24 “‘For I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries, and will bring you into your own land.Ezekiel 36:36–37 36 Then the nations that remain around you will know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt what was demolished and have replanted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken and I will do it. 37 “ ‘This is what the Lord GOD says: I will respond to the house of Israel and do this for them: I will multiply them in number like a flock.James 4:2 You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and wage war. You do not have because you do not ask.Ephesians 3:20 Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us—Romans 8:28 We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. |
| *For Personal Reflection / Prayer:**Take time to assess your prayer life. What is your focus? Think about the who and why behind your prayers, your heart posture before Him, and to whom the glory goes. Take these answers to God. Repent, if necessary, and choose to partner with God going forward to effectively fulfill your purpose.*  |
| This week’s writers:  | Elsa Henderson, David McMillin, Gene & Karen Gibbs, Jorel Quemuel |