

PLUCKING THE T.U.L.I.P. IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

INTRODUCTION

- A.** Calvin completed his Institutes of the Christian Religion in 1559. In 1903, McAfee consolidated that theology under the T.U.L.I.P. acronym.
 - 1.** Total Hereditary Depravity
 - 2.** Unconditional Election
 - 3.** Limited Atonement
 - 4.** Irresistible Grace
 - 5.** Perseverance of the Saints
- B.** The fourth tenet is “Irresistible Grace”.
 - 1.** “This grace is not bestowed on all promiscuously... Men are indeed to be taught that the favor of God is offered, without exception, to all who ask it; but since those only begin to ask whom heaven by grace inspires, even this minute portion of praise must not be withheld from him” (John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book Second, Chapter 3, Paragraph 10).
 - 2.** “God himself is pleased so to work in us as to guide, turn, and govern our heart by his Spirit, and reign in it as his own possession” (John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book Second, Chapter 3, Paragraph 10).

I. GRACE IS AVAILABLE TO ALL

- A.** **Titus 2:11** *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.”*

Since the doctrine of “Irresistible Grace” teaches that a select few, known only to God, will receive grace, we start by reiterating that grace is for everybody.

B. **Hebrews 2:9** “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.”

Jesus experienced death for everyone by God’s grace. That is a grace without limit.

II. ACCESS TO GRACE IS DETERMINED BY PERSONAL WILL

A. **Hebrews 4:16** “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Why does inspiration teach us to **boldly** pursue grace if it is unattainable for most people?

B. **Hebrews 12:14-17** “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully **lest anyone fall short of the grace of God**; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.”

If we must take care to avoid falling short of grace, then doesn’t that necessarily imply we have control over whether or not we are in grace?

C. **Galatians 5:4** “You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.”

Grace can be fallen from.

III. MAN IS CAPABLE OF RESISTANCE

A. **1st Thessalonians 4:8** “He who rejects this does **not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.**”

God can be rejected. He does not make Himself irresistible.

James 4:6 “He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’”

Grace comes from God! If God can be rejected, then so can the grace He gives!

B. **John 12:48** “He who **rejects Me**, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”

Christ can be rejected. He does not make Himself irresistible.

John 1:17 “For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

Grace comes through Jesus Christ. If Christ can be rejected, then so can the grace He provides!

C. **Acts 7:51** “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always **resist the Holy Spirit**; as your fathers did, so do you.”

The Holy Spirit can be resisted. He does not make Himself irresistible.

Hebrews 10:29 “Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?”

Grace comes from the Spirit. If the Holy Spirit can be resisted, then so can the grace He makes available.

D. **2nd Timothy 3:8** “As Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also **resist the truth**: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith.”

Truth can be resisted. It is not irresistible.

Colossians 1:3-6 “We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit,

*as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the **grace of God in truth.**"*

Grace is found inside the truth! If truth can be resisted, then so can the grace it contains.

E. **1st Timothy 1:18-19** *"This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck."*

Faith can be rejected. It is not irresistible.

Ephesians 2:8 *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."*

Grace is reached through faith. If faith can be rejected, then grace can be rejected.

CONCLUSION

A. **Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23** *"Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"*

...Therefore hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the

word, immediately he stumbles. Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

1. Christ taught in the parable of the Sower that there are four kinds of hearts:
 - a. Those who do nothing at all with the word they've heard, at one extreme.
 - b. At the opposite extreme are those who receive, understand, and obey the word in varying degrees of fruitfulness.
 - c. In between are two kinds of hearers who receive the word temporarily, but allow temptations of various kinds to interfere.
2. Calvinism insists there are only two kinds of hearts: those forced to believe and receive grace and those who can do nothing at all to ever be saved.

B. **2nd Samuel 13:1-14** "Absalom the son of David had a lovely sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. Amnon was so distressed over his sister Tamar that he became sick; for she was a virgin. And it was improper for Amnon to do anything to her. But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother. Now Jonadab was a very crafty man. And he said to him, 'Why are you, the king's son, becoming thinner day after day? Will you not tell me?' Amnon said to him, 'I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.' So Jonadab said to him, 'Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, "Please let my sister Tamar come and give me food, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat it from her hand." Then Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill; and when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, 'Please let Tamar my sister come and make a couple of cakes for me in my

sight, that I may eat from her hand.' And David sent home to Tamar, saying, 'Now go to your brother Amnon's house, and prepare food for him.' So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was lying down. Then she took flour and kneaded it, made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. And she took the pan and placed them out before him, but he refused to eat. Then Amnon said, 'Have everyone go out from me.' And they all went out from him. Then Amnon said to Tamar, 'Bring the food into the bedroom, that I may eat from your hand.' And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them to Amnon her brother in the bedroom. Now when she had brought them to him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, 'Come, lie with me, my sister.' But she answered him, 'No, my brother, do not force me, for no such thing should be done in Israel. Do not do this disgraceful thing! And I, where could I take my shame? And as for you, you would be like one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you.' However, he would not heed her voice; and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her."

Unlike Amnon, God is not a rapist. He does not force His love on those unwilling to receive it.

1. **1st John 4:19** "We love Him because He first loved us." God desires reciprocal affection.
2. **Revelation 22:17** "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely." His love is offered, not coerced.
3. **Mark 6:3-6** "They were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.' Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief."

He heeds those who refuse Him.

4. **John 6:67-68** *"Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you also want to go away?' But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.'"*

The Lord affords people the freedom to accept Him or reject Him.