

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. *Hebrews 12:12-13*

WILLING SERVANTS

Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD;----- And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. Exodus 35:5;21

There are many today who have never even questioned whether or not a man has a “free-will”. The prevailing thought among men is that man does indeed possess something which is commonly called “free-will”. After all it is true that men do the things that they do because they choose to do them. They get up in the morning and go to bed at night according to the time which each one selects. They decide what clothes they will wear and what music they will listen to, the food they will eat and how they will spend their free time. It is plain to see that man does possess some sort of ability to make choices. Can't this be called a “free –will”? I would say that in a limited sense that it can be but in the true analysis of mans so called “free-will” we find that he is only free to make the choices which are dictated to him by his own nature which holds the seat of his desires.

It is impossible for a natural man (or woman) to choose anything which they do not desire to choose. A mother who loves her children with the natural love which is given to mothers, cannot in that love choose to destroy them. A man who loves a woman with all his heart cannot in that love choose to neglect her needs. Nor can a man who loves the paths of wickedness choose to walk in obedience to the LORD, because to do so is contrary to the very nature in which he is born and takes delight in. Our nation has incarcerated in its prisons, hundreds of thousands of criminals who would bear testimony to this. In fact they serve as a great illustration of the supposed “free-will” of man. Each of these men makes choices every day but every one of their choices is limited by the restrictions of the place they live. They can choose to do anything they want to do as long as it does not go beyond that limitation. They can't choose to leave nor which cell they will occupy because they are in bondage.

Mans choices in all things are limited by two things: his own corrupt nature and the predestinating purpose of ALMIGHTY GOD. So we say that man has a “free-will” but it is not a self determining free will. Man always chooses what he does but the determination of what he does is dictated by his sinful nature (unless the LORD sees fit to make HIM a new creature) and all of the things that he does ultimately fulfills the foreordained purpose of HIM who knows the end from the beginning: that is HE who dwells in Eternal Glory and rules in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and whose hand cannot be stopped nor HIS motives questioned. (See, Ps.115:3; 135:6; Isa.46:10; Dan.4:35)

The scripture describes the bondage of mans "free will" by saying *"They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."* (Rom 3:12) The LORD JESUS described mans condition when HE said, *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."* (John 6:44) HE illustrates man's natural desire and will when HE speaks of the Pharisees, saying, *"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."* (John 5:40) The apostle Paul declares the impotence and inability of ordinary men to make spiritual choices when he says, *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* (1Cor. 2:14) A man whose will is in bondage to sin, (this condition is described in the scripture as being dead in trespasses and sins, see Eph.2:1) will not "choose" spiritual things because he cannot, and not vice versa. So we must conclude that man is in a ruined state and quite unable to rescue himself or participate in any way in his own deliverance. He is totally at the mercy of HIM who said *"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy."* (Rom.9:15) The amazing thing about all of this is that only those who have been made the recipients of that mercy are able to comprehend the very truth of this matter.

This passage of scripture which we are looking at in Exodus indicates that there were some who "were willing" to worship the LORD with their substance. It says that every one whose heart and spirit stirred them to action were the ones who brought these offerings. This illustrates the fact that unless a person's heart moves them (the seat of their desire) then they will not serve the LORD, they may follow HIM for loaves and fishes but are quite unable to submit themselves to HIS rule. If we know that men by their human nature will not choose to do good then we must conclude that they were made willing by the mercy of GOD, as the Psalmist said, *"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth."* (Psa 110:3) The scripture indicates that:

The LORD is pleased with those who willingly follow HIM. *"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee."* (1Ch 29:14) Just as surely as the multitudes in the book of the Revelation cast their crowns at the feet of the LORD so do all of those who willingly follow HIM attribute their willingness to the work of HIS own power and not their own. The LORD takes delight in those upon whom HE has set HIS love in eternity.

Willing servants do so because of love and not reward. The LORD said *"If ye love me, keep my commandments."* (John 14:15) The motivation of GOD's people is HIS love toward us and not ours towards HIM. *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."* (Phil 2:13) HE *"is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."* (Jude 1:24) We do now rejoice and take delight in HIS ways because we *"are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."* (1Pet 1:5)

Only the willing shall enter the Celestial City. *"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."* (Rev 21:27) *"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."* (Rom 8:30) *"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."* (Heb 13:20-21)

Are you willing? *"And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."* (Rev 22:17)