

LEADERSHIP/MISSIONS STUDY GUIDE

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CALVINISM: (also called the **Reformed tradition**, **Reformed Christianity**, **Reformed Protestantism**, or the **Reformed faith**) is a major branch of Protestantism that follows the theological tradition and forms of Christian practice set down by John Calvin and other Reformation-era theologians; which develops Luther's doctrine of **justification by faith alone** and emphasizes the **grace of God** and the doctrine of **predestination**.

THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM: T.U.L.I.P.

Total Depravity: Sin has affected **all parts** of man. The heart, emotions, will, mind, and body are all affected by sin. We are **completely** sinful. We are not as sinful as we could be, but we are completely affected by sin.

The doctrine of Total Depravity is derived from scriptures that reveal human character:

- Man's heart is evil (**Mark 7:21-23**) and sick (**Jer. 17:9**).
 - Man is a slave of sin (**Rom. 6:20**).
 - He does not seek for God (**Rom. 3:10-12**).
 - He cannot understand spiritual things (**1 Cor. 2:14**).
 - He is at enmity with God (**Eph. 2:15**).
 - He is by nature a child of wrath (**Eph. 2:3**).
- The Calvinist asks the question, "In light of the scriptures that declare man's true nature as being utterly lost and incapable, how is it possible for anyone to choose or desire God?" The answer is, "He cannot. Therefore God must predestine."
 - Calvinism also maintains that because of our fallen nature we are born again not by our own will but God's will (**John 1:12-13**); God grants that we believe (**Phil. 1:29**); faith is the work of God (**John 6:28-29**); God appoints people to believe (**Acts 13:48**); and God predestines (**Eph. 1:1-11; Rom. 8:29; 9:9-23**).

Unconditional Election: God does not base His election on anything He sees in the individual. He chooses the elect according to the kind intention of His will (**Eph. 1:4-8; Rom. 9:11**) without any consideration of merit within the individual. Nor does God look into the future to see who would pick Him. Also, as some are elected into salvation, others are not. (**Rom. 9:15, 21**).

Limited Atonement: Jesus died only for the elect. Though Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient for all, it was not efficacious for all. Jesus only bore the sins of the elect. Support for this position is drawn from such scriptures as **Matt. 26:28** where Jesus died for 'many'; **John 10:11, 15** which says that Jesus died for the sheep (**not the goats, per Matt. 25:32-33**); **John 17:9** where Jesus in prayer interceded for the ones given Him, not those of the entire world; **Acts 20:28** and **Eph.**

5:25-27 which state that the Church was purchased by Christ, not all people; and **Isaiah 53:12** which is a prophecy of Jesus' crucifixion where he would bore the sins of many (not all).

Irresistible Grace: When God calls his elect into salvation, they cannot resist. God offers to all people the gospel message. This is called the external call. But to the elect, God extends an internal call and it cannot be resisted. This call is by the Holy Spirit who works in the hearts and minds of the elect to bring them to repentance and regeneration whereby they willingly and freely come to God. Some of the verses used in support of this teaching are **Romans 9:16** where it says that "it is not of him who wills nor of him who runs, but of God who has mercy"; **Philippians 2:12-13** where God is said to be the one working salvation in the individual; **John 6:28-29** where faith is declared to be the work of God; **Acts 13:48** where God appoints people to believe; and **John 1:12-13** where being born again is not by man's will, but by God's. "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out," (**John 6:37**).

Perseverance of the Saints (also known as Once Saved Always Saved): You cannot lose your salvation. Because the Father has elected, the Son has redeemed, and the Holy Spirit has applied salvation, those thus saved are eternally secure. They are eternally secure in Christ. Some of the verses for this position are **John 10:27-28** where Jesus said His sheep will never perish; **John 6:47** where salvation is described as everlasting life; **Romans 8:1** where it is said we have passed out of judgment; **1 Corinthians 10:13** where God promises to never let us be tempted beyond what we can handle; and **Phil. 1:6** where God is the one being faithful to perfect us until the day of Jesus' return.

ARMINIANISM: A theological movement in Christianity named for Jacobus Arminius, a Dutch Reformed theologian. It is a liberal reaction to the Calvinist interpretation of the divine decrees respecting election and reprobation. The movement began early in the 17th century and asserted that **God's sovereignty** and **man's free will** are **compatible**. For Arminius, God's will as unceasing love was the determinative initiator and arbiter of human destiny.

THE FIVE POINTS OF ARMINIANISM:

- **Human Free Will:** This states that though man is fallen, he is not incapacitated by the sinful nature and can freely choose God. His will is not restricted and enslaved by his sinful nature.
- **Conditional Election:** God chose people for salvation based on His foreknowledge where God looks into the future to see who would respond to the gospel message.
- **Universal Atonement:** The position that Jesus bore the sin of everyone who ever lived.

- **Resistable Grace:** The teaching that the grace of God can be resisted and finally beaten so as to reject salvation in Christ.
- **Fall from Grace:** The Teaching that a person can fall from grace and lose his salvation.