

# The Drawing Power of God

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Most of us are familiar with the basics of Calvin's *TULIP*. In Calvin's theology, man has no free will, and what appears to be choices that man makes are, in actuality, decisions that God made before creation. In the words of Edwin H. Palmer, "Nothing in this world happens by chance. God is in back of everything. He decides and causes all things to happen. He is not sitting on the sidelines wondering or perhaps fearing what is going to happen next. No, He has foreordained everything 'after the counsel of his will' (Eph. 1:11): the moving of a finger, the beating of a heart, the laughter of a girl, the mistake of a typist – even sin." *The Five Point of Calvinism* (Baker, 1972), p. 25.

In this theology, man has no choice in deciding anything toward his salvation. But it also means that man does not sin of his own accord. Instead, it is God making him sin. The god of Calvinism is a hideous monster. He has made men guilty of sin that they have no choice in either 1) committing the sin or 2) receiving forgiveness through Christ. Then, Calvin's god, holds them accountable as though they are responsible for the sin which He forced them to commit. God forces them to sin and God forgives them according to His unconditional selection. Once God chooses the one to be saved, He then miraculously regenerates the man so he can believe and obey. The choice has already been made for him, by God, who made the choice before mankind was ever created. Only those God has chosen can become Christians. In Calvin's theology, man is saved first, then he believes and repents.

There are an over-abundance of problems with this theology. Calvinists often take certain verses and pull them out of context so that they appear to agree with the theology. One verse of Scripture that often is used to try and validate this theology is John 6:44, which says, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day" (NASB). This seems to say that only those God chooses to draw to Him will be saved. Is Calvinism correct?

The Bible is replete with passages demonstrating the free will of man:

Deut. 30:19 "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants."

Josh. 24:15 "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Ps. 25:12 "Who is the man who fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way he should choose."

Prov. 3:31 "Do not envy a man of violence And do not choose any of his ways."

Matt. 13 – The parable of the Sower is based on the choices that that people make, such as, getting caught up in the affairs of the world, etc.

Acts 2:37, 38 – Why would the audience ask Peter what they must do if there is nothing they could do? Why did Peter not tell them that God had already chosen the saved? Instead Peter told them to first repent, which literally means to choose a new mind, or as we might want to say it, a new mindset.

Yet, upon a quick reading, John 6:44 seems to indicate that God must "draw" a person. The word "draw" is the key word. What does it mean? The Greek word is helkuse which means "to bring near." This would seem to fit with the Calvinistic concept of man not being able to respond to God unless God first miraculously

regenerates him. But there is more to that passage of Scripture than the 44<sup>th</sup> verse. Verse 45 reads, “It is written in the prophets, ‘AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.” According to this verse, those who are taught from God, come to Jesus. Notice that “it is written in the prophets.” What is written? That which is to be taught. How do people learn from God? Through His written word. How does God draw a man? By teaching him through the Word.

This fits perfectly with what Paul teaches in Romans 10:17 when he says, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” Faith comes to man as he hears the Word of Christ. The Word of God is the great faith-giver.

As man is taught of God by His Word, he is drawn to Him. To paraphrase verses 44 & 45 with this understanding we might say, “No one can come to me unless he has been drawn to the Father by His Word. If he has come to the Father, I will raise him up on the last day. If men have learned from the Father through the writings of His prophets, they will come to Me.”

If we look at the same word used in a different verse of Scripture, it can be seen to have the same meaning. In John 12:32 Jesus said, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.” The word “draw” is the same word used in John 6:44. If verse 6:44 has God imposing His will upon men so that they have no choice but to come to Christ, then Jesus is teaching universal salvation in 12:32. Jesus says that He would draw ALL men to Himself. Jesus was lifted up. He hung for six hours upon a cross. Has He drawn all men to come to Him? Obviously the answer is no, for there are many that are lost and do not know Jesus. So what does it mean?

If faith comes from hearing the Word of Christ, which the Scriptures say that it does; and if men are drawn to God by being taught from His Word, then men that are taught about Jesus being lifted up, about His Word, God will draw those men to Himself. Not because of God imposing His will upon mankind. But because as men learn of the wonders of God, His love, His forgiveness, His promise of eternal life – they will be drawn to God because they choose to draw near. God has a natural attraction to all men. After all, only man has been created in the image of God. They will be drawn to God if they will simply hear Him and learn of Him.

Is it any wonder that Jesus, as He gave the Great Commission said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” If we will teach men of God and His Word they will be drawn to Him – they will gain eternal life.

Lift up Jesus!