

GOD IS NOT A VENTRILOQUIST

(Compiled by Curtis Lanclos)

Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are from the New King James Version (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

I. Introduction

A. **Romans 8:28**

²⁸And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

1. This verse is known by people that don't know any other verses in the Bible!
2. There are two possible interpretations of this verse:
 - a. God ordains (or "allows") all things (even evil) in accordance with his "sovereign will" for the purpose of bringing good out of those things. In other words, God controls everything that happens in your life.
 - b. God is so secure, He does not have to be "in control" as the world defines it; yet, He is able to bring good out of any circumstance; even those that are against his will (evil).
3. Your relationship with God cannot be helped but be affected by the interpretation of this verse that you embrace. The author advocates the latter interpretation.

B. In this Bible lesson, we are going to endeavor to show that God is good all of the time (in Him is light, and no darkness at all), and that His plan does not impugn His character.

II. Five (5) Foundational Principles

A. *Principle #1 - Jesus Christ is the Express Image of God.*

1. **John 14:8-11**

⁸Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." ⁹Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹"Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

2. **Hebrews 1:1-4**

¹God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ²has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

3. If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus!

B. *Principle #2 - Jesus demonstrated that the sovereignty of God is different from the world's idea of sovereignty (i.e. "unilateral control and micromanagement of everything").*

1. **Rick Warren (Pastor, Saddleback Church; Lake Forest, CA) wrote:**
We serve God by serving others. The world defines greatness in terms of power, possessions, prestige, and position. If you can demand service from others, you've arrived. In our self-serving culture with its me-first mentality, acting like a servant is not a popular concept.¹

2. **Mark 10:42-45**
⁴²But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³"Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. ⁴⁴"And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. ⁴⁵"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."
 - a. Jesus does not "lord over" his disciples as a dictator. He wins them over by serving them. Since Jesus is the express image of the Father, then the Father must be this way as well.

 - b. **John 13:3-5**
³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, ⁴rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. ⁵After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.

3. **Ephesians 5:22-32**
²²Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.* ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. ³⁰For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."³²This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
 - a. Verses 22-24 of this passage have been used by insecure men as a justification for dominating their wives. The only thing worse than a male chauvinist is a Christian male chauvinist!

 - b. The real purpose of this passage is to show husbands that they are NOT to dominate their wives but to lead them God's way... by love and service.

 - c. Again, this demonstrates that God's sovereignty is NOT coercion, but love. Jesus does not manipulate, intimidate, and control the church. He wins over His Bride by His unconditional love. He gives her freedom. That is true strength! He is not so insecure that He has to "control everything."

¹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), page 257. This is what hostage Ashley Smith read to her captor Brian Nichols on March 12, 2005 at her apartment in Duluth, GA! She modeled this, and overcame his coercive nature with servanthood and the love of Christ.

C. *Principle #3 - Evil and suffering are a consequential possibility of the freewill of mankind and angelic beings; not a calculated part of God's will for mankind.*

1. **Luke 13:1-5**

¹There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all *other* Galileans, because they suffered such things? ³"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. ⁴"Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all *other* men who dwelt in Jerusalem? ⁵"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

- a. Jesus NEVER encouraged anyone to look for the "Father's hand" in radical evil/suffering, nor did He imply that all such events somehow fit into a "secret purpose." He did not advocate the silly philosophies, clichés, and oversimplifications that feebly attempt to explain such events. Rather, Jesus encouraged everyone to be concerned about their own relationship with God.
- b. God never has a "secret purpose" for evil. To suggest that rape, murder, child molestation, accidents, sickness, etc. somehow directly or indirectly fit into God's plan is to severely impugn his character. Yet, this is what is suggested when it is implied that God "always gets His way" or "controls everything."
- c. Events such as the Holocaust, the Columbine High School shootings, and the 9/11 attack on America were the result of the freewill of human beings that were motivated by evil (Satan).

2. **1 John 3:8**

⁸He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

- a. Jesus ALWAYS demonstrated God's plan and will by coming against evil and suffering. If the works of the devil somehow fit into God's perfect plan, then Jesus did His Father an injustice by destroying those works!
- b. The devil is against the purposes of God, and vice versa. However, in His infinite wisdom, God can take what Satan does and turn it around for good!

3. C.S. Lewis (Classic Christian Author) wrote:

God created things which had free will. That means creatures that can go either wrong or right. Some people think they can imagine a creature which was free but had no possibility of going wrong; I cannot. If a thing is free to be good, it is also free to be bad. And free will is what has made evil possible. Why then, did God give them free will? Because free will, though it makes evil possible, is also the only thing that makes possible any love or goodness or joy worth having. A world of automata - of creatures that worked like machines - would hardly be worth creating. The happiness which God designs for his higher creatures is the happiness of being freely, voluntarily united to Him and to each other in an ecstasy of love and delight compared with which the most rapturous love between a man and a woman is mere milk and honey. And for that they must be free.²

² Clive Staples Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1952, 2001), pages 47-48 (Underline Mine).

D. *Principle #4 - Although God established boundaries around His creation, He is not responsible for what free moral agents do (nor become) within those boundaries.*

1. **Acts 17:26,27**

²⁶“And He [God] has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, ²⁷“so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

2. **1 Corinthians 10:12,13**

¹²Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.

- a. The purpose of this passage is to suggest that Satan uses the same old tricks over and over again; and that no person can claim that he or she is a “special case” with regard to their situation (and thus without a “way of escape”).
- b. This passage does NOT suggest that God has to place His “seal of approval” on every temptation or trial that the devil brings into your life (in accordance with some supposed “secret purpose”); this would suggest that God and the devil are “in cahoots” with one another. ***Rather, by virtue of the boundaries that God imposed upon His creation from the beginning, no temptation that is uncommon to mankind will be allowed to come your way! He does not micromanage the activities of His creation!***
- c. Verse 13 is often terribly misquoted in the statement: “God never gives us more than we can bear.” Actually, God is NOT the giver of temptation...

James 1:13

¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

E. *Principle #5 – When God prevents evil and suffering, he normally does it through the activity (i.e. prayer) of believers.*

1. **Ephesians 3:20**

²⁰Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us...

- a. This verse is often misquoted, in that the first half is usually quoted by itself.
- b. “According to the power that works in us” implies that God works through His people.

2. Example: Elisha and the Syrian Army

a. **2 Kings 6:8-12**

⁸Now the king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, "My camp will be in such and such a place." ⁹And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there." ¹⁰Then the king of Israel sent someone to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice. ¹¹Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?" ¹²And one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom."

- b. God prevented danger to the armies of Israel by warning the king of Israel of Syria's battle plans. He did not override the freewill of the king of Syria; He simply revealed those freewill plans to Israel through the prophet Elisha.

3. Example: Paul and the Roman Shipwreck

a. **Acts 27:9-11**

⁹Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, ¹⁰saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives." ¹¹Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul.

1. God tried to prevent the shipwreck by warning the apostle Paul.
2. God warns us of impending danger all of the time. However we are like the helmsman many times... we either don't have our "spiritual antenna up" or we ignore the "clear reception" of the counsel of God. To say that God "could have stopped a tragedy but didn't because He had a purpose" after such ignored warnings is asinine!

b. **Acts 27:14,21-26**

¹⁴But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon... ²¹But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. ²²"And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. ²³"For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, ²⁴"saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.' ²⁵"Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. ²⁶"However, we must run aground on a certain island."

1. Paul seemed to take great pleasure in saying "I told you so."
2. However, through Paul's prayer and fasting, God granted Paul the lives of everyone on the ship.

4. Andrew Wommack (Bible Teacher; Colorado Springs, CO) wrote:

There was a man who had been my youth director when I was just a young boy. He left our Baptist church before I was a teenager, and I heard how he had been baptized in the Holy Spirit and was seeing great miracles happen. He had one room in his church that was filled with the wheelchairs, crutches, and braces of people who were healed and didn't need them anymore.

During a three- or four-month period of time, I thought about this man often. It was usually while I was in prayer that he would just come to mind, and I would feel the compassion of God towards him. I would just wonder what was happening with him and then dismiss the thoughts. Later, I found that he had died in a freak accident where a red ant bit him on the thumb.

As soon as I heard of his death, I knew that the reason I had been thinking of him so often was because the Lord was trying to get me to intercede for him. Over a decade later, I met this man's son, and I confessed to him my failure to pray for his dad. He told me that I was at least *the twelfth person* who had told him a similar story. The Lord had impressed many of us to intercede for this man, but none of us recognized it as the Lord.

It is imperative that we learn to recognize and flow in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It's not only a blessing to us, but the lives of other people may depend on it. You are carrying someone's miracle. Don't let it stay inside. You have to learn how to release it.³

5. Dr. Roy Hicks (Former Overseer of the Foursquare Church) wrote:

Margaret, my dear wife, and I have analyzed every accident or near-accident we have ever encountered personally. In every case God has been faithful to give a prior warning. Sometimes we refer to this warning as a premonition. It could come in a dream, or by a heavy feeling, sometimes through a fellow believer. Or the person may be warned in his spirit to change his plans, to stay home, or even to delay a trip.

Someone once said to a young boy, "I'll see you in church on Sunday." The boy answered, "Yes, if you don't see my name in the obituary column first." This statement causes me to believe that he had some portent of impending misfortune. Indeed he was killed in an accident the next day.

In another case, a pastor and his wife were awakened in the night, feeling that one of their church members was in imminent danger. They immediately went to prayer and the man was warned. The next day when he went to work, his foreman told him to climb up and release a cable on an oil derrick.

The man answered and said that he could not, because he had been warned by God that if he did, he would fall and end up at the feet of the foreman, beheaded. Another worker, who laughed and scoffed at his words, climbed up the derrick. He released the cable, it whipped around and severed his head and he fell to the ground.

There are many, many illustrations such as these, but suffice it to say, our people, even in most Pentecostal churches, are not taught what to do when they have premonitions or warnings. One of the reasons is that the Calvinist teaching has so affected our way of thinking that many people seem to have developed a fatalistic attitude of "what is to be, will be."

No, dear saint. Be sensitive. If you receive a warning, use the keys. Put a stop to the accident. If you do, God will stop it in heaven. The help you need is not automatic. You must learn to use the keys at your disposal.⁴

³ Andrew Wommack, How To: Flow In The Gifts Of The Holy Spirit. Online at http://www.awmi.net/uk_products/articles/1031.html.

⁴ Roy Hicks, D.D., *Keys of the Kingdom* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1984), pages 56-57.