**Prayer Makeover -- Class #2**

**Decree Makeover**

**LAST WEEK’S ASSIGNMENT**

How did “listening” more in prayer work for you?

**LESSON OVERVIEW**

1. Is prayer about what we want or about what God has purposed?

2. God’s decrees determine and define his purposes which determine his will.

3. How does prayer to the occurrence of what God has already decreed?

4. Is it possible to pray successfully without taking God’s decrees into consideration?

**DEFINING DECREES**

The Westminster Confession states:

God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: (1) yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

1. Before time, God ordained whatever comes to pass. Why do many people find this doctrine to demotivate them to pray? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Yet the Confession gives three qualifications to the decrees of God:

 a. God is not the ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? Why? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 b. What is “violence offered in the will of the creatures?” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 c. What is the “liberty or contingency of second causes”?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**GOD: AUTHOR OR OBSERVER?**

1. Two Views:

* God knows the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the story (most evangelicals)
* God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the story (reformed Christians)

2. Ephesians 1:11

3. Acts 4:27-28

4. Proverbs 16:33

5. Isaiah 14:24, 27

6. Isaiah 46:9b-11

**POSITIVE & NEGATIVE DECREE**

1. Positive decree – Fulfilled intentions consistent with character of God

 Negative decree – Evil allowed by God to fulfill a greater purpose

Because God is sovereign and His will can never be frustrated, we can be sure that nothing happens over which He is not in control. He at least must “permit” whatever happens to happen. He **chooses** to permit them in that He always has the power and right to intervene and prevent the actions and events of this world. Insofar as He lets things happen, He has “willed” them in this certain sense. -- R. C. Sproul

2. Decrees happen ­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of time? Why? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**WHY PRAY?**

1. If everything is already settled by God’s decrees, why pray? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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2. God decrees both the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:

It is our full belief that God has foreknown and predestinated everything that happeneth in heaven above or in the earth beneath, and that the foreknown station of a reed by the river is as fixed as the station of a king, and ‘the chaff from the hand of the winnower is steered as the stars in their courses.’  Predestination embraceth the great and the little, and reacheth unto all things; the question is, wherefore pray?  Might it not as logically be asked wherefore breathe, eat, move, or do anything?  We have an answer which satisfies us, namely, that***our prayers are in the predestination, and that God has as much ordained His people’s prayers as anything else, and when we pray we are producing links in the chain of ordained facts. Destiny decrees that I should pray—I pray; destiny decrees that I shall be answered, and the answer comes to me.* —Charles Spurgeon**

**APPLICATION**

1. Issue is what God has \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, not what we \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

What we usually pray to God is not that his will be done, but that he approves ours. – Helga Bergold Gross

2. God’s decrees determine and define his will.

3. Successful petitionary prayer is based upon God’s will.

4. Not knowing God’s decreed will when we pray guarantees failure.

**ASSIGNMENT**

1. When you approach God in prayer, consider the impact of his decrees on your life – your coming to faith, your daily sanctification and your ultimate eternal destiny.

2. Meditate on the Scriptures noted in this class which teach God’s decrees. Do you gain any new insights on prayer after pondering these passages?

3. Focus on prayer this week that aligns with God’s known decrees.