

understanding the  
**doctrines of grace**



May 28, 2025

# A kinder, gentler Calvinism

Election is a very difficult teaching for Christians to accept (due to pride/fear/prejudice).

Of course, it is impossible for non-Christians to believe it.

Some people—saved people who love the Lord Jesus and will be with us in heaven—do not like this doctrine. Some hate it and fight it.

# A kinder, gentler Calvinism

Anytime you encounter disagreement regarding issues of theology, intentionally seek to:

1. Understand the specific nature of their disagreement with what you believe. In specific terms, what is it that they believe is wrong with your view?
  - Pray for understanding for both of you. Pray out loud with the person and expose your heart for the truth and for being useful to God as His follower.
  - Understanding comes from listening well and from applying the truth in the gentleness of the wisdom of Christ.
  - *“Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.... But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.” (James 3:13, 17)*

# A kinder, gentler Calvinism

Anytime you encounter disagreement regarding issues of theology, intentionally seek to:

2. If they are able, let them take you to the verse(s) that they use to support their disagreement and explain to you their concerns, etc.

# A kinder, gentler Calvinism

Anytime you encounter disagreement regarding issues of theology, intentionally seek to:

3. Ask them if you could share your views. If they say no, then let it go. If they say yes, then gently and patiently let the Bible speak for itself. Share the truth in love with them about the Bible's teaching concerning their specific disagreement.
  - DO NOT ARGUE WITH THEM! Be sure to use good, solid principles of interpretation which you've learned as you patiently and calmly present the Bible's contextual evidence from within the passage.

# A kinder, gentler Calvinism

Anytime you encounter disagreement regarding issues of theology, intentionally seek to:

4. Trust the Holy Spirit to teach both of you the truth of God's Word over time, and resolve in your heart not to lean on your own understanding. (Prov. 3:5)

# A kinder, gentler Calvinism

Anytime you encounter disagreement regarding issues of theology, intentionally seek to:

5. Repeat these steps as the Holy Spirit gives you direction and opportunity.

# A kinder, gentler Calvinism

Remember, there is a difference between people who ask because they seek understanding and people who ask for self-serving reasons. You must discern. This works both ways.

Be sure that if *you* ask questions, it is to clarify your understanding of their position. If they are open to compare interpretations and seek the true counsel of God, discuss the issue with them with much prayer being shot up to the Father.

In this process... Do not argue! Do not demean! Do not assign motives!

2 Timothy 2:22-26





- T total depravity
- U unconditional election
- L limited atonement
- I irresistible grace
- P perseverance of the saved

# Irresistible Grace

## *Efficacious Grace*

This doctrine stresses God's work to effectively apply His saving grace in the life of a sinner, rather than stressing the response of the person saved.

*Irresistible* = God's power to fulfill His electing will for those marked out for His salvation.

- Job 42:2
- Psalm 115:3

Why is God's saving grace (for His elect) a power of God which cannot be resisted?

# Irresistible Grace

## *Efficacious Grace*

Defining the terms:

- Efficacious = “producing a desired effect”
- *Grace* = God’s underserved, saving favor toward sinners by the merits of Jesus Christ.

Efficacious grace is effectual, effective, successful grace.

It is the Divine work of God accomplishing what He designed and desires His saving favor to bring about in the lives of undeserving, spiritually dead sinners who have been elected by God for His salvation.

# Irresistible Grace

## *Efficacious Grace*

The Bible teaches that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit acted together to safeguard and guarantee that their covenant to save some was effectively carried out.

As part of that holy pact, those marked out for salvation by the kind intention of His will would find this saving grace irresistible at the time of God drawing them to Himself for forgiveness of their sins.

# Irresistible Grace

## *Efficacious Grace*

Four main teachings of Scripture help us structure this doctrine in our minds and hearts:

### 1. The Covenant of the Godhead (Trinity)

The Trinity—God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit took counsel together before they made the world, and they decided to provide salvation for some through Jesus' death on the cross.

- John 6:35-40
- Ephesians 1:3-12

# Irresistible Grace

## *Efficacious Grace*

Four main teachings of Scripture help us structure this doctrine in our minds and hearts:

### 2. The Electing Will of God the Father

God the Father then chose from among all the rebellious sinners of the world those whom He desired to save from their sins. Election didn't save them, but it "marked out" those whom the Father was pleased to draw to Himself to save at a point in time.

- Romans 9:11; 11:5
- Colossians 3:12
- 1 Thessalonians 1:4
- 1 Peter 1:1

# Irresistible Grace

## *Efficacious Grace*

Four main teachings of Scripture help us structure this doctrine in our minds and hearts:

### 3. The Redeeming Work of Jesus Christ

Jesus then came to earth at the appointed time to redeem (free) God's elect sinners from their sins. Redemption means that Jesus Christ delivered us from the pain and punishment of our sins by paying the penalty for our sins for us on the cross.

The cross was the place where Jesus suffered and died on behalf of those whom God chose for salvation. Through His sinless life, His silent humility in suffering, His obedience in death, and His glorious resurrection, Jesus fulfilled His mission to do all that was needed for God's chosen people to receive God's gift of forgiveness from their rebellion against Him.

# Irresistible Grace

## *Efficacious Grace*

Four main teachings of Scripture help us structure this doctrine in our minds and hearts:

### 3. The Redeeming Work of Jesus Christ

Through the offering of His blood, shed for us, Jesus purchased our spiritual freedom to live in a right relationship with God.



# Irresistible Grace

## *Efficacious Grace*

Four main teachings of Scripture help us structure this doctrine in our minds and hearts:

### 3. The Redeeming Work of Jesus Christ

His death was sufficient to save everyone who has lived (or will ever live). But Jesus' death was offered for—and it was aimed specifically at—securing the salvation of those chosen by God.

- Titus 2:14
- Galatians 1:3-4; 3:13
- 1 Peter 2:24
- John 17

# Irresistible Grace

## *Efficacious Grace*

Four main teachings of Scripture help us structure this doctrine in our minds and hearts:

### 4. The Regenerating Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit acts on the counsel of the Godhead by bringing to fulfillment the electing will of God; He applies the perfect work of Jesus Christ on the cross to our lives.

All of this is effectively accomplished by supernaturally giving God's elect new spiritual life.

From spiritual corpse...  
Ephesians 2:1-3



to new spiritual creation  
Ephesians 2:4-5; 1 Peter 3:18

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Four main teachings of Scripture help us structure this doctrine in our minds and hearts:

### 4. The Regenerating Work of the Holy Spirit

Regeneration means to generate again. “To generate means to cause to happen or to begin.”

- For example, Genesis refers to the book of beginnings.
- Regeneration is the beginning of new spiritual life.

# Irresistible Grace

## *Efficacious Grace*

Four main teachings of Scripture help us structure this doctrine in our minds and hearts:

### 4. The Regenerating Work of the Holy Spirit

This renewed, regenerated spiritual life:

- Brings a renewed desire so that one's affections are warm toward God.
- Brings a renewed direction in life so that one's goal in life is to honor the God Who saved him.
- Brings a renewed power that enables one to overcome the temptation of sin and live to please God.

# Irresistible Grace

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Four main teachings of Scripture help us structure this doctrine in our minds and hearts:

### 4. The Regenerating Work of the Holy Spirit

It is from this renewed desire to please the Lord that we obey Him (Col. 1:10). By God's love for us, we can love God. We love because He first loved us.

- 1 John 4:9-10, 19

# Irresistible Grace

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Four main teachings of Scripture help us structure this doctrine in our minds and hearts:

### 4. The Regenerating Work of the Holy Spirit

Irresistible grace does not make us robots or puppets, being forced to believe in God. We believe because, in bringing us from death to spiritual life, God has given us the free gift of faith.

# Irresistible Grace

## *Efficacious Grace*

Four main teachings of Scripture help us structure this doctrine in our minds and hearts:

### 4. The Regenerating Work of the Holy Spirit

When God takes a person who has lived in spiritual blindness and opens their spiritual eyes to the love and splendor of God, that new vision of the love and grace of God in Christ compels the person to embrace the Lord by God's gift of saving grace.

- 1 John 4:15-16; 2 Corinthians 4:4-6
- "God causes the glory—the self-authenticating truth and beauty—of Christ to be seen and savored in our hearts.... God causes the glory of Christ to shine with irresistible beauty. This is irresistible grace." (*John Piper*)

# Irresistible Grace

## *Efficacious Grace*

Four main teachings of Scripture help us structure this doctrine in our minds and hearts:

### 4. The Regenerating Work of the Holy Spirit

The new direction of our will brought on by our new birth causes us to reach out to God.

- Titus 2:11-14 (Verse 11 is wrongly used to teach against election)

Those who hold firmly to the doctrines of grace do not believe that people cannot resist the grace of God. Sinful people do resist God's gracious love.



# Irresistible Grace

## *Efficacious Grace*

Four main teachings of Scripture help us structure this doctrine in our minds and hearts:

### 4. The Regenerating Work of the Holy Spirit

Irresistible grace means that the Holy Spirit will succeed in applying the merits of Christ's life/death/resurrection to each person whom God elected for salvation and for whom Christ died.

By the predetermined will of God, His elect will gain the full effect of God's love applied to them through His saving grace. "Effectual grace is grace that effects what God desires." (*source unknown*)

# Irresistible Grace

*Efficacious Grace*

“Irresistible grace makes the unwilling, willing.”

*(John Piper)*



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