

*The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined,  
Defended, and Documented*

Study Guide

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Italics within Scripture quotations indicate emphasis added.

# Introduction

1. At this stage in your study of the Bible and Christian issues, what is your opinion about Calvinism? Check the item(s) below that best describe your current thinking in regard to Calvinism.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Don't really know very much about it. Am here to learn.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have heard of it, both pro and con, but have formed no opinion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Want to understand it better than I currently do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Think that I disagree with that view.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Think that I generally agree with that view.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Agree strongly with that view.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Am open to the biblical data and resulting view, whatever that is.

2. Glance through pages ix-xii (the Table of Contents) noting the three major parts of the book. Describe the three parts including the three (alliterated) key words plus one or two more details about each of the three sections.

3. The "Appendices" section has eight added articles, which will be helpful as we think through the subjects in our twenty-six-week study. Glance through the titles of the Appendices.

4. Read the Foreword by Dr. Roger Nicole (pages xiii–xv) in which Dr. Nicole mentions the TULIP acrostic, which is often used to list Calvinism’s five main tenets. He expands or clarifies each of the five (in a list near the top of page xv). Write out or memorize both lists side-by-side, so that the acrostic is restated in another phrase. For example:
  1. Total Depravity—Radical and Pervasive Depravity
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
  - 5.
5. Read the two prefaces (one written in 1963 for the original edition and the other written in 2004 for this updated edition). Also read the quotation from Charles Haddon Spurgeon.
6. Which of the three parts (definition, defense, or documentation) will likely be the most useful to you?
7. In what attitudes and spiritual qualities do you hope to grow as you examine the “high thoughts” about God that are the key to Calvinism?
8. Dr. Phillip G. Ryken summarizes the spiritual growth that Calvinism stimulates (and which Calvinists must embody) as:
  - A God-centered mind
  - A penitent spirit

- A grateful heart
- A submissive will
- A holy life
- A glorious purpose<sup>1</sup>

Choose one or more of these areas of your own Christian growth to emphasize in your prayers daily during the study. Perhaps we, too, may someday be described as Dr. Ryken described a man named Henry Martyn, “a true Calvinist, tenderhearted and evangelistically minded, with a holy jealousy for God’s glory.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

This Study Guide mentions “high thoughts” (a high view) about God as the key to Calvinism. How is the God of the Bible similar to / different from our culture’s view of him?

Are there dimensions of God’s personality and character in the Bible that you tend to de-emphasize? Why?

Look over question 8 in which Dr. Ryken lists six areas of Christian growth. How does a “high view” of God relate to each of these six important areas of Christian character and practice?

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<sup>1</sup> Phillip Graham Ryken, *What Is a True Calvinist?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

## Lesson 2

# Origins of the Names and “Five Points” of Both Calvinism and Arminianism

1. Read the first paragraph on page 1.
2. As background to the early seventeenth century, refresh your memory about people and events in the years leading up to 1610 by doing the following exercise. Match these famous names from the sixteenth century with their descriptions. (Correct answers can be found at the end of the study.)

1. Michelangelo, DaVinci, Rafael, and El Greco
2. The Index
3. Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles V and Phillip II
4. John Calvin
5. The Medici family
6. Henry VIII of England
7. Ulrich Zwingli
8. Mary Tudor (Bloody Mary)
9. Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthew’s Great, Geneva, Bishops, Douay, and King James Bibles
10. Martin Luther
11. Inquisition
12. James (Jacobus) Arminius
13. Shakespeare, Machiavelli, and Cervantes
14. Gutenberg Bible
15. Balboa, Magellan, Drake, Hudson, Cartier, and Ponce de Leon
16. Elizabeth I of England
17. John Knox
18. Huguenots

\_\_\_\_\_ a. German (former) monk who ignited Protestant Reformation in 1517 with his Ninety-five Theses; emphasized salvation by grace through faith

\_\_\_\_\_ b. well-known writers in the sixteenth century

- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Dutch seminary professor who taught a theological system emphasizing human abilities and work in man's salvation (1560–1609)
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. well-known painters in the sixteenth century
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. French lawyer turned theologian and leader in Reformation who taught a theological system emphasizing God's work in salvation (1509–64)
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. well-known explorers in the sixteenth century
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. first printed in 1455, was impetus in the sixteenth century to presses turning out much cheaper books and pamphlets that spread ideas throughout Europe quickly
- \_\_\_\_\_ h. an early Reformation leader in Switzerland; founded the Reformed church; worked in Zurich (1484–1531)
- \_\_\_\_\_ i. Roman Catholic Church Court revived in the sixteenth century to root out and punish "heresies"
- \_\_\_\_\_ j. French Calvinists; estimated thirty thousand killed in Paris on August 24, 1572, in St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (perhaps total of 100,000 throughout France); many fled to Holland, Germany, England, and America
- \_\_\_\_\_ k. best known of Spain's rulers in the sixteenth century; fierce opponents of Protestant Reformation
- \_\_\_\_\_ l. reigned in England 1558–1603; led Church of England into middle-ground position between Catholics and Puritans
- \_\_\_\_\_ m. reigned in England 1509–47; led English breakaway from Roman Catholic Church over personal and political issues and disagreements with the papacy; had six wives
- \_\_\_\_\_ n. English translations of the Bible that were published in the years 1525–1611

- \_\_\_\_\_ o. Catholic queen of England; reigned 1553–58; opposed Reformation; burned three hundred Puritans at the stake in her short reign
- \_\_\_\_\_ p. famous Catholic Italian dynasty of financiers, politicians, popes, rulers, and arts patrons; strongly opposed Reformation
- \_\_\_\_\_ q. took Calvinism to Scotland in 1550s; established Presbyterian Church; followers established churches in England where they were called Puritans
- \_\_\_\_\_ r. list of forbidden books published by Roman Catholic Church during the sixteenth century (and other eras)

3. Read the remainder of the “Points of Contention” section in the text (pp. 1–5).
4. Did James Arminius draw up the list of five tenets or points presented to the Synod of Dort? Explain:
5. Did John Calvin draw up the list of the five tenets or points that is commonly used to summarize his views? Explain:
6. Name one (or more) of the major differences in their two views.



7. Which view was affirmed by the official synod that considered the matter?

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

Describe the changing culture in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. (Hint: The matching exercise in question 2 has examples.)

What advances in science and technology took place in Europe in the sixteenth century that enabled the Reformation of the early seventeenth century to spread across Europe?

Summarize and discuss Arminius's views in the five areas below that his followers presented in their protest or "Remonstrance":

- The sinfulness of mankind
- The freedom of man's will
- The basis of God's election
- What Jesus' death accomplished
- Believers remaining saved or falling from grace

## Lesson 3

# Calvinism and Arminianism Compared; Historical Roots

1. Read through the side-by-side sections from pages 5–8, looking at *both* views on each of the points before moving on to the next pair.
2. As you read through the side-by-side sections, circle lightly in pencil the *titles* of each of the sections with which you think you generally or mostly agree.
3. Go back through the chart again, underlining specific sentences (in a color other than black) with which you know or think that the Scriptures agree. If you are unsure, leave that sentence as it is. Jot down Scripture references, phrases, or notes in the margins as you think of Scriptures that agree with various sentences.
4. Read the two summaries on page 8 titled “According to Arminianism” and “According to Calvinism.”

**Bonus Activity:** Can you think of hymns or choruses that are based on each of these views? List several titles in two columns below. Look through a hymnbook if you need to jog your memory. Write out lines or phrases that are especially clear in stating an idea that is part of either Calvinism or Arminianism. Example:

Calvinism

Arminianism

*Man of Sorrows*

“guilty, vile, and helpless we”

5. Read pages 13–15 for additional comparisons of the two views we are studying. Summarize two or three of the differences in the two systems, as they are discussed in Dr. J. I. Packer’s paragraph, which begins on page 13.

6. Read “The One Point of Calvinism” (pp. 14–15). What does Dr. Packer say is “the one point”?

7. Read pages 8–13 regarding some of the historical roots of Calvinism and Arminianism. Both systems are actually much older than the Reformation era (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries). In what century did Augustine and Pelagius live?

**Extra Bonus Reading:** Additional interesting details and discussion of the history of both views (through the Reformation period) are presented on pages 207–18 as part of an appendix titled “Calvinism and Arminianism Before and After.”

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

Choose a partner or two from your group (unrelated to you). Work together to write out short but accurate definitions of both Arminianism and Calvinism. Check yourselves, using pages 5–8 in the text. If needed, add any significant ideas that you missed in either definition.

Share from hymn and chorus titles and/or segments that express ideas from each view.

## Lesson 4

# The Five Points Defended: Total Depravity or Total Inability

1. Read the three paragraphs of general introduction to this new section on pages 17–18. The authors have called the second of their book’s three major divisions “The Five Points Defended: Their Biblical Support.”
2. Do you agree with the authors’ contention, “The final court of appeal for determining the validity of any theological system is the inspired, authoritative Word of God” (p. 17)?
3. What problems do you foresee that could or would occur if the above contention were *not* true?
4. The third paragraph of the introduction discusses the interdependence of the five points and uses Rembrandt’s paintings as an illustration. Explain how these paintings are examples of the need to examine both the parts and the whole of Calvinism as a system.

5. Read the four introduction paragraphs about “Total Depravity or Total Inability” (pp. 18-20).
6. Define “total” depravity or inability as the word “total” is used here (i.e., what this does and does not mean). Summarize the discussion of this from pages 18-19 (the paragraph that begins “When Calvinists speak . . .”).
7. Give some synonyms for the word “depravity.”
8. How did this condition (total depravity) come to be?
9. Glance through pages 20-26, where you will notice sections of biblical passages quoted under several different headings. What are the five categories or headings?

10. Read the quoted passages in the first of these categories titled “Spiritual Deadness” (pp. 20–21). Which passage(s) do you think is (are) especially strong?

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

Discuss the meaning of the word “depravity.”

When Calvinists say that man’s depravity is “total,” do they mean that a human can never do any righteous deed? If not, in what sense do Calvinists regard depravity as being “total”?

Does our culture generally agree with Calvin or Arminius about man’s innate goodness/sinfulness? Name some authors, media personalities, or popular philosophies whose basic assumptions agree with one or the other.

The authors quoted seven passages from the Bible about “spiritual deadness” and its implications. What frightening phrases do you see as you glance back over those seven passages on pages 20–21? What phrases in these passages contain good news?

## Lesson 5

### Total Depravity or Total Inability (continued)

1. Reread the introduction to the “Total Depravity” section (pp. 18–20).
2. In this lesson we will look at additional passages about total depravity on pages 20–27. Glance through these pages, first noting from which parts of the Bible these passages are drawn. Put a check mark below beside the biblical sections that include discussions about depravity.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The Pentateuch
- \_\_\_\_\_ Old Testament History
- \_\_\_\_\_ Old Testament Poetry and Wisdom Literature
- \_\_\_\_\_ Old Testament Prophecy
- \_\_\_\_\_ New Testament Gospels
- \_\_\_\_\_ New Testament Letters

3. As you read the quoted verses in the section “Darkened Minds and Corrupt Hearts” (pp. 21–23), notice other words or phrases used to refer to the inner person (in addition to hearts and minds), such as intentions, thoughts, and consciences. What distressing descriptions of the inner person are used in these passages? Name several.

4. What do you conclude about the state of mankind’s hearts? minds? consciences? intentions?



5. Read the section titled “Bondage to Sin and Satan” (pp. 23–24) for more grim news about mankind. Notice that two of the quoted passages are the words of Jesus. Look back over the two previous sections of verses. Were any of those passages also quotations from the Lord? What did the Lord say about the sinfulness of our human race?
  
6. Both the apostles John and Paul also connected mankind’s sin to Satan and to the idea of spiritual slavery. Which of the quoted segments impressed you with the most intensity regarding all humans’ spiritual state?
  
7. Read “A Universal Bondage” (pp. 24–25). Who is left among mankind who is *not* sinful?
  
8. Read the “Inability to Change” section (pp. 25–27). Do these Scriptures give any hope that a human can, of his own ability . . .
  - change his nature?
  - accept the things of God?
  - understand the things of God?
  - come to God?
  
9. Go back to lesson 3, where on the chart on Calvinism and Arminianism you were to underline the statements from

Arminianism and Calvinism with which the Scriptures agree. If you can underline any additional sentences with which the Scriptures agree, in the “Free Will or Human Ability” description or in the “Total Inability or Total Depravity” description of the contrasted views, do so with a colored pen or pencil.

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

In the last question above, class members were asked to indicate sentences or ideas in the side-by-side chart (pages 5–8) with which the Scriptures agree. Discuss *specific* pairs of ideas and corresponding Scripture passages (related to both Arminianism’s and Calvinism’s views) about human ability or inability in spiritual matters.

Since the news about man’s spiritual condition is extremely serious, the “good news” about salvation is good indeed. In groups of two or three, read aloud of events recorded by Luke, in chapters 1–2, concerning the announcement and the coming of the Savior. Discuss the joyful gratitude, praises, and amazement that you see in the reactions of Mary (Luke 1:26–38, 46–55), Zechariah (Luke 1:67–69), and the shepherds (Luke 2:8–20).

## Lesson 6

# The Five Points Defended: Unconditional Election

1. Read the introductory material to the section on “Unconditional Election” (pp. 27–28).
2. In defining election (p. 27), the authors say, “The doctrine of election declares . . .”
3. What is the context of the biblical material about election? (See the first paragraph in this section.)
4. Calvinism’s second tenet says that God’s choosing of particular individuals for salvation was unconditional. According to this view, on what was election *not* based?

5. On what *was* God's choosing or election based?

**Vocabulary Alert:** In both the authors' explanations and the biblical quotations, a word occurs which is easily confused with another very similar English word. "Purposed" is not the same in meaning or spelling as the word "proposed." "Purposed" means that someone determined or planned. "Proposed," of course, means that someone suggested something for consideration or approval.

6. Describe below the actions of each member of the Trinity in the process of salvation:

God, the Father:

God, the Son:

God, the Holy Spirit:

**Bonus Activity:** Read through the hymn printed below, which describes the glorious salvation with which the triune God has blessed his people. Notice the emphasis in verse one on the Father's work; in verse two, on the Son's work; in verse three, on the Holy

Spirit's work. The final verse is a summary of praise. Sing this hymn by Margaret Clarkson to the tune of "To God Be the Glory" and begin to memorize it as a hymn or as a poem.

### **Praise, Praise the Father, God of Our Salvation**

*Sing praise to the Father, Creator and King,  
Whose mercy has taught us a new song to sing;  
Who made us, and loved us though rebels and lost,  
And planned our redemption at infinite cost.*

Chorus:

*Bless the Lord, bless the Lord, bless the Lord, O my soul,  
For the grace that redeems, for the love that makes whole;  
O come and adore Him, His glories proclaim,  
And worship before Him, the Lord is His name!*

*Sing praise to the Savior, Redeemer and Friend,  
For grace past all telling, for love without end;  
Who stripped off His glory, put on mortal sin,  
And died in our stead, full atonement to win.*

*Sing praise to the Spirit, the gift of God's love,  
Who quickens our hearts with new life from above,  
Who woos us, subdues us and seals us His own,  
And faultless presents us before the White Throne.*

*Sing praise to the Father, sing praise to the Son,  
Sing praise to the Spirit, great God Three in One;  
The God of salvation, of glory, of grace,  
Who wrought our redemption; my soul, sing His praise.<sup>3</sup>*

7. As we examine biblical passages about unconditional election, we will examine the work of God \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ primarily.

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8. Read the biblical quotations in the section titled “A Chosen People” (pp. 29–31). What two key word groups do you see that the biblical writers used often (eight to ten times each) in those passages? Write them below.
  
9. Do you spot some synonyms for the words above that also occur in these verses? If so, list them also.

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

Discuss the idea stated by the authors that “if God had not graciously chosen a people for Himself and sovereignly determined to provide salvation and apply it to them, none would be saved” (p. 28). If they are right, why would this be the case?

How should we respond to the realization of the unworthiness of sinners, combined with the graciousness of God in choosing some of the sinners for salvation?

How have some people responded who are offended by these thoughts?

Dr. Curtis Vaughn, commenting on Ephesians 1:3–14, a doxology in which God’s election is discussed, writes:

The teaching [of election] is often brought in (as it is in the present passage) in contexts of praise and devotion and is intended to elicit the adoring gratitude of redeemed people.

The doctrine of election is often vigorously opposed. Sometimes this opposition arises from a misunderstanding of the doctrine. Sometimes it represents a reaction to those who have made the teaching harsh and forbidding. Often, however, the prejudice against election is an expression of imbedded conceit, for this teaching deals a crushing blow to human pride. It is indeed a leveling doctrine, stripping away all trust in flesh and bringing men to see that their only hope is the grace of God in Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Evaluate Dr. Vaughn's statement after reading Ephesians 1:3-14 aloud.

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<sup>4</sup> Curtis Vaughn, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1977), 21.

Lesson 7  
The Five Points Defended: Unconditional  
Election (continued)

1. Read the section titled “Election Not Based on Foreseen Responses” (pp. 31–35).
2. Which one of the biblical passages quoted in this section makes the strongest statement (in your opinion) about each of the following elements involved in election? Write out the relevant biblical phrases or sentences and the book, chapter, and verse.

*Who* did the choosing . . .

*When* the choosing occurred . . .

On *what basis* the choices were made . . .

The *results* of the choosing of individuals . . .



3. Analyze the quoted verses in parts 4, 5, and 6 (pp. 32–34) to determine if you agree or disagree with the authors' statements introducing those lists. They state in item 4, "God's choice was not based upon any foreseen merit residing in those whom He chose, nor was it based on any foreseen good works performed by them." After analysis of the passages that follow that statement, do you think that they are right or wrong in that view?
  
4. The introduction statement to item 6 says, "God's choice was not based upon foreseen faith. Faith is the result and therefore the evidence of God's election, not the cause or ground of His choice" (pp. 33–34). Analyze those seven passages, too. What is your opinion about the assertion quoted above?
  
5. A common view about election is that God chose (elected) individuals because he looked down through time and saw who would believe in Christ, then chose those individuals to be saved. List the passages you have been studying that suggest that explanation.

## Ideas for Group Discussion

There are two options concerning the basis of God's election of sinners to salvation. What are they? What are the implications of each option? Discuss these using biblical evidences for each view.

Dr. Wayne Grudem has written in his *Systematic Theology* that "it is important to view this doctrine [election] in the way the New Testament views it."<sup>5</sup> He cites three of the contexts or purposes for New Testament writers discussing or mentioning election.

The first purpose he cites is as a *comfort for believers*. Read Romans 8:28–39. The material in 8:18–27 has dealt with the Christian's suffering and weaknesses. Paul bases comfort and encouragement for the present and the future on God's record of past actions (note v. 32). Discuss past actions that Paul recalls to his readers in Rome in this section of his letter.

What phrases in this passage are about God's present or future blessing of his people?

Dr. Grudem says that a second purpose or context in which New Testament writers mention election is as a *reason to praise God*. Read Ephesians 1:3–23. Record on a chalkboard or other device the four examples from these verses that express the idea of praise or glory to God for his actions; for example:

(v. 3) "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ."

(v. 6) "to the praise of his glorious grace . . ."

Discuss God's actions that stimulate such praise for God in each of the above examples from this chapter.

(We will look at a third New Testament context in which election appears in the following study.)

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<sup>5</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 673.

## Lesson 8

# The Five Points Defended: Unconditional Election (continued)

1. Read through the three remaining sections in the discussion of “Unconditional Election” (pp. 35–39).
2. Notice in the section titled “Election Precedes Salvation” (page 35) that two passages are quoted and others mentioned for further investigation. Check out the verses that are “quoted above” (i.e., quoted earlier in this chapter). What is the consistent pattern as to the chronological order in time of (1) salvation and (2) election?
3. In the “Sovereign Mercy” section (pp. 35–37), some powerful biblical material is quoted. Look back through those seven quoted passages and choose (elect), from among all the sentences, one sentence that best summarizes the concept of sovereign mercy. Write that sentence below.

4. The final installment in the defense of “Unconditional Election” is a study of some descriptions and praises of God’s sovereignty over everything. In these profound words we see God who rules supremely over heaven and earth; over the past, present, and future; over every creature and all events. Read all these passages of exaltation.
5. Reread King David’s description in 1 Chronicles 29:10–12 of a greater and absolutely sovereign king. How does David describe the extent of God’s rule?
6. What words does David use in listing attributes or qualities that God possesses?
7. Does the idea of God as the supreme ruler (as he is described in the passages quoted on pages 37–39) disturb you? comfort you? perplex you?

## Ideas for Group Discussion

Earlier we looked at two contexts for New Testament discussions of election: as a *comfort for believers* and as a basis *for praise to God*. Dr. Grudem also explores a third context or purpose: *an encouragement to evangelism*. Does this surprise you?

Dr. Grudem writes:

Paul says, “I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with its eternal glory” (2 Tim. 2:10). He knows that God has chosen some people to be saved, and He sees this as an encouragement to preach the gospel, even if it means enduring great suffering. Election is Paul’s guarantee that there will be some success for his evangelism, for he knows that some of the people he speaks to will be the elect, and they will believe the gospel and be saved. It is as if someone invited us to come fishing and said, “I guarantee that you will catch some fish—they are hungry and waiting.”<sup>6</sup>

In groups of three or four, look at these verses in 2 Timothy (the context from which Dr. Grudem quoted):

2 Timothy 1:2, 8–14  
2 Timothy 2:8–10  
2 Timothy 4:1–2, 5–8

Discuss Paul’s situation when writing this letter.

Talk about his instructions to Timothy.

Reread aloud 2:8–10, where Paul states his motivation.

Dr. Loraine Boettner has written about the effects on daily living that an understanding of predestination and God’s sovereignty often produces in the lives of believers. (This material is reproduced in Appendix F in the textbook on pages 199–204.) In your larger group take turns reading the succeeding paragraphs aloud,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 674.

beginning on page 200 where Dr. Boettner says, “The Christian who has this doctrine . . .” and continuing to the end of the appendix on page 204, if time allows.

Pause occasionally, perhaps at the end of each paragraph, to allow for any response from members of the class.

Reread the first two sentences of this appendix (pp. 199–200) to summarize Dr. Boettner’s explanation.

## Lesson 9

# The Five Points Defended: Particular Redemption or Limited Atonement

1. Atonement is “making at one”—the bringing together of those who are estranged into unity.

Dr. Leon Morris tells us that atonement denotes

the work of Christ in dealing with the problem posed by the sin of man, and in bringing sinners into right relation with God. . . . The need for atonement is brought about by three things, the universality of sin, the seriousness of sin, and man’s inability to deal with sin. . . . No deeds of law will ever enable man to stand before God justified (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16). If he must depend on himself, then man will never be saved. . . . God and man, then, are hopelessly estranged by man’s sin, and there is no way back from man’s side. But God provides the way.<sup>7</sup>

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). Christ’s sacrificial death as “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29) meant the shedding of his blood, “which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt. 26:28).

This sacrifice of himself is described as “a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45) and as a substitute. Paul said, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13). He implored those in Corinth, “Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:20b–21).

The atonement of Christ involves redemption, reconciliation, justification, adoption, propitiation, intercession, and other

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<sup>7</sup> Leon Morris, “Atonement,” *The New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962), 107–8.

glorious benefits—all part of the “satisfaction for sin by which forgiveness is had.”<sup>8</sup>

2. Read the introduction on pages 39–41 to this new section. How does Dr. Boettner (quoted near the top of page 41) illustrate the Calvinistic and Arminian views of Christ’s atonement?

3. Is the idea of particular redemption or limited atonement a new idea to you?

Reread the material included in the chart on pages 6–7 of the textbook, which contrasts the two views of the atonement provided by the death of Jesus Christ. Write a brief summary of the two views of the atonement in the space below.

Universal Redemption or General Atonement	Particular Redemption or Limited Atonement

4. Read the biblical passages quoted in the section titled “Jesus Actually Saves” (pp. 41–45).

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<sup>8</sup> William Smith, *Smith’s Bible Dictionary* (Philadelphia: Holman, n.d.), 28.



5. List below different actions done by Christ in the biblical passages on pages 41–45 (in a word or very short phrase).

6. Read back through your list from the question above, meditating and thanking the Lord for these specific spiritual blessings that you, as a believer, have received.

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

In groups of two or three, look back through this week's biblical passages, taking turns to analyze each one, looking for the person who is performing the saving action that is mentioned. If a pronoun occurs, determine the person to whom the pronoun refers.

Discuss the impact on your thinking as you meditated this week on the glorious work of Jesus Christ on your behalf. Did you (like Mary, Zechariah, and the shepherds in Luke 1–2) experience joyful gratitude, praise, or amazement?

Have hymn writers and chorus composers expressed their own joyful gratitude, praise, or amazement in their musical lyrics? If so, name an example of each of the three responses.

Lesson 10  
The Five Points Defended: Particular  
Redemption or Limited Atonement  
(continued)

1. Reread the introduction to this section (pp. 39–41). Two sentences in the first paragraph of this material summarize what Jesus Christ came to earth to accomplish. Complete the two sentences below.

“Christ, acting on behalf of His people, kept God’s law perfectly and thereby worked out a \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ which is imputed or  
\_\_\_\_\_ to them the moment they are brought to faith in Him.”

“Through His substitutionary sacrifice, He endured the \_\_\_\_\_ of their \_\_\_\_\_ and thus removed their guilt forever.”

2. What are some of the Old Testament symbols that pictured the atonement which Christ provides? How do those symbols portray both of the aspects discussed above?

3. Read the hymn below which was written by Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf in German in 1739, and translated into English in 1740 by John Wesley. It is based on the phrase from

Galatians 3:26–27 describing believers as “clothed . . . with Christ.” Underline the references in the hymn to both aspects of the atonement by Christ. (If this hymn is unfamiliar to you, you can hear the tune at [www.cyberhymnal.org](http://www.cyberhymnal.org).)

### **Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness**

*Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness my beauty are, my  
glorious dress;  
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed, with joy shall I lift up  
my head.*

*Bold shall I stand in Thy great day; for who aught to my  
charge shall lay?  
Fully absolved through these I am from sin and fear, from  
guilt and shame.*

*When from the dust of death I rise to claim my mansion in the  
skies,  
Ev'n then this shall be all my plea, Jesus hath lived, hath died,  
for me.*

*Jesus, the endless praise to Thee, whose boundless mercy hath  
for me—  
For me a full atonement made, an everlasting ransom paid.*

*O let the dead now hear Thy voice; now bid Thy banished ones  
rejoice;  
Their beauty this, their glorious dress, Jesus, Thy blood and  
righteousness.*

4. Read the section titled “Jesus Fulfills the Eternal Covenant” (pp. 45–49). Notice that the speaker quoted in the first four biblical passages is Jesus. These passages give us glimpses of the covenant between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which results in the saving of sinners. Do the descriptions of “the saved” in these verses seem to you to indicate a definite group or an indefinite potential group?

Do the descriptions of Christ's actions indicate that he is tentative and indefinite or that he is definite about his work? Does he seem definite about the response by those who are his?

5. Read the section titled "How Jesus Died for 'All' and Yet for a Particular People" (pp. 49-52). The authors acknowledge that some biblical passages do speak of Christ's saving work using terms such as "the world," "every creature," and "all." Write out one such verse below.

Such phrasing, they believe, was used to correct the false but common idea that salvation was only for Jews. The biblical writers thus were showing that Christ died for all men without \_\_\_\_\_ (Gentiles as well as Jews). They were not saying that Christ died for all men without \_\_\_\_\_ (every man, woman, and child who ever lived).

If the textbook authors' view is correct, how is the verse quoted above to be understood?



## Ideas for Group Discussion

Discuss how various New Testament writers use the pictures and symbols from the Old Testament to describe Christ's work on behalf of believers.

Read Luke 22:7-20, then discuss the Lord's Supper as a symbolic way to help us to remember and to meditate on the atonement. Comment also on the fact that Jesus did not emphasize his miracles, his parables, or his other teaching in the command to "do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). What part of his work on earth *did* he emphasize?

## Lesson 11

# The Five Points Defended: The Efficacious Call of the Spirit or Irresistible Grace

1. Read the introduction to this new section (pp. 52–54). In this fourth of the five points of Calvinism, we will be primarily examining the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation. What does each person of the Trinity do in this process?

God, the Father:

God, the Son:

God, the Holy Spirit:

2. Describe below the outward call of the gospel.

Who issues it?

What requirements does it state?

What promises does it make?

To whom is it issued?

What results does it create?

3. Accompanying the gospel presentation is another type of call to some of the listeners—a special inward call. Describe it below.

Who issues this inward call?

To whom is it issued?

How is it different from the outward gospel call?

What results does it create?

4. In the paragraph that begins near the bottom of page 53, the authors contend that the inward call of the Holy Spirit “never fails to result in the conversion of those to whom it is made.” If they are correct, who would then receive all the credit and glory for the salvation of any true believer?
5. Read the Bible passages quoted in the section titled “The Spirit Saves” (pp. 54–55). Write out below several of the dozen or so actions done by the Spirit in these quoted verses (e.g., led, searches, comprehends God’s thoughts, taught, washed).
6. Summarize some of the blessings or benefits of the Spirit’s work that these verses discuss.



7. Read the section titled “The Spirit Gives New Birth” (pp. 55–58). Write out below your favorite among the passages quoted in this section. Memorize the passage this week.

8. If you are a Christian (i.e., if you have been given a new birth), what changes in you have occurred as a result of your being a “new creation”?

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

Discuss the metaphor for the Spirit’s working that the Lord used in his conversation with Nicodemus in John 3. Besides describing the necessity that Nicodemus be born again in order to enter God’s kingdom, Jesus also alluded to some facts about the Holy Spirit. How do these facts relate to the “new birth”?

We cannot observe the new birth by God’s Spirit occurring, but we can observe that he has been at work by the effects. In groups of two or three, examine 1 Thessalonians 1:2–10 and compile a list of some effects or evidences that you see there of the Holy Spirit having worked in peoples’ lives.

Commit to your small group to reread 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 and pray next week for your own church or study group, thanking God, as Paul did, for the spiritually good things you see. And pray for the growth of these good things in both individuals and the group.

Lesson 12  
The Five Points Defended: The Efficacious  
Call of the Spirit or Irresistible Grace  
(continued)

1. Before reading the new biblical material for this study, reread the summary of both of the Arminian and Calvinistic views about the Holy Spirit's work in salvation (both items 4, on page 7).
2. Read the two sections titled "The Spirit Reveals the Secrets of God" and "The Spirit Gives Faith and Repentance" (pp. 58-60).

The first of the sections which you have just read seems to be summed up by the John 6:37, 44-45 quotations. Write those verses below (from page 59 or your preferred translation).

3. The second of the sections you have just read (p. 60) quotes several short passages from the Scriptures to support the view that both faith and repentance are God's gifts to the sinner, not the sinner's gifts to God. Do you find that these passages substantiate that contention? If so, copy down the one or two Scriptures which say it best.

4. Reread J. I. Packer's paragraph on page 12 regarding faith as a gracious gift from God. How does he describe the importance of this in determining a person or group's view of the gospel?
  
5. Read the remaining two sections of biblical quotations on this subject titled "The Spirit Effectually Calls," and "Salvation, Given by a Sovereign God" (pp. 61-64). The fourteen Bible quotations about the Spirit effectually calling sinners seem to expand the ideas in Jesus' statements in John 6: "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. . . . No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:37, 44 ESV).

In the verses quoted above, circle the word that is synonymous with the inward call of the Spirit. Does this quotation from the Lord's teaching contain any ambiguity about the effectiveness or efficacy of God's drawing or calling of sinners to himself?

Underline words and phrases that convey certainty if you see some in this quotation. Put asterisks beside any words or phrases referring to how many people are being discussed.

6. Review John 10:1–30 for more of Jesus’ teaching that touches on these issues. List phrases which the Lord uses which speak of God’s effectual call to salvation using both the sheep/shepherd metaphor and direct teaching.

7. Reread again the chart contrasting the view of Arminianism and Calvinism on the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation (both items 4, page 7). Underline in color those sentences in each view that you believe to be taught in the Word of God.

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

Read aloud each of the five stanzas from the hymn “I Know Whom I Have Believed” as poetry. The hymn writer, Daniel Whittle, based his hymn lyrics on 2 Timothy 1:12, which is part of Paul’s farewell letter to Timothy, written from prison. Read verses 8–12 of 2 Timothy 1 to see the context of Paul’s thoughts as he meditates on his own salvation and on his expected execution. Then reread the hymn stanzas aloud slowly and thoughtfully, remembering what you have studied in recent weeks about aspects of the grace of our glorious God.

Working with a partner, match up the following “biblical addresses” with various ways in which the inward change brought about by the Holy Spirit is described using other phrases instead of “efficacious calling” or “irresistible grace.”

1. Ezekiel 11:19
2. John 3:3
3. John 5:24

4. Galatians 6:15
5. Ephesians 2:5
6. Titus 3:5
7. 1 Peter 1:3
8. 1 Peter 2:9
9. 1 John 2:29
10. 1 John 5:1 or 4 or 18

- \_\_\_\_\_ regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit
- \_\_\_\_\_ being born again, born from above
- \_\_\_\_\_ being called out of darkness into God's marvelous light
- \_\_\_\_\_ made alive together with Christ
- \_\_\_\_\_ made a new creation
- \_\_\_\_\_ passing from death to life
- \_\_\_\_\_ God having removed the heart of stone and given a heart of flesh
- \_\_\_\_\_ born again to a living hope
- \_\_\_\_\_ born of Jesus Christ
- \_\_\_\_\_ born of God

## Lesson 13

# The Five Points Defended: The Perseverance of the Saints or the Security of Believers

1. Read the introduction to the new section (pp. 64–65). Choose one sentence from this introduction that defines or summarizes the “security of believers” and write it below. (P.S. There are several—choose one.)
  
2. Read the Old Testament quotations (pp. 65–66), as well as those from the gospels of Matthew and John (pp. 66–67). The Old Testament sections are the words of \_\_\_\_\_. The New Testament passages are all the words of \_\_\_\_\_. As you read through these verses, jot down below the bad, injurious, or detrimental things that are described. (Some of them are graphic metaphors.) For example, the Old Testament passages contain words such as “overwhelm,” “burned,” “consumed,” “depart,” and “removed.” What others do you see in the sections from Matthew and John?
  
3. In almost every New Testament quotation given, the bad, injurious, or detrimental circumstance described is accompanied by the discussion of good, restorative, saving actions by God himself. Obviously these New Testament verses are not just about lost sheep and bread but about eternal things. The one word that seems to occur most frequently to describe the future *without* God’s intervention is





7. How does the Arminian view about man's significant part in cooperating with God in salvation affect the Arminian view of the believer's security?

8. How does the Calvinistic view that God alone saves sinners affect the Calvinistic view of the believer's security?

9. Analyze the Romans 8:29–30 quotation, which many commentators call a “golden chain.” If hypothetically there are five billion people whom God foreknew, how many did he predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son?

If he predestined five billion, how many did he also call?

If he called five billion, how many did he also justify?

If he justified five billion, how many did he also glorify?

How many were lost in the process?

## Ideas for Group Discussion

Discuss Dr. Boettner's words below:

A consistent Arminian, with his doctrines of free will and of falling from grace, can never in this life be certain of his eternal salvation. He may, indeed, have the assurance of his *present* salvation, but he can have only a *hope* of his final salvation.<sup>9</sup>

It is not until we duly appreciate this wonderful truth, that our salvation is not suspended on our weak and wavering love to God, but rather upon His eternal and unchangeable love to us, that we can have peace and certainty in the Christian life.<sup>10</sup>

Some evangelical churches and individuals believe strongly in “once saved, always saved,” but do not believe in the other Calvinistic tenets. Do you see any problems with this view?

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<sup>9</sup> Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1963), 193.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

## Lesson 14

# Appendix B: Perseverance and Preservation

**Note:** Our study will continue in *The Five Points of Calvinism Defended* but not in chronological fashion.

1. Read the introduction to Appendix B (pp. 147–49).
2. Define the terms below which are used frequently in discussions of the believer's security:

preservation

perseverance

3. What means does the author list that God uses in the process of keeping his true children spiritually safe *after* their new birth? (See the discussion that begins near the bottom of page 147 and continues on page 148.)
4. Has God used any of these means in your life? Explain.

5. Perseverance and preservation are both biblical and both true, the author says. Write below the explanation from page 149 that begins, “God preserves us, beyond any doubt, yet . . .”
  
6. Examine the biblical quotations about perseverance on pages 150–53. List below synonymous words or phrases used in these passages that are describing the same idea (i.e., “continuing unswervingly”).
  
7. Look back through these same verses (pp. 150–53). A few of the passages describe persevering in dangerous or stressful times. Give examples of those times below.

8. But many of the circumstances in which the biblical writers urge us to persevere are the less dramatic but trying periods of our lives, including temptation times, spiritually “dry” periods, or when facing false teaching. List some of those that are in the quoted material, too. (Hint: Don’t miss Galatians 6:9 or Hebrews 12:1–3, especially, though there are others, as well.)
9. Read the summaries of some longer biblical passages about perseverance (listed on pages 153–55). Check out several of them, reading them in their entirety.

### Ideas for Group Discussion

Discuss A. N. Martin’s statements on page 149. They follow the sentence that says, “Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is never alone.”

Discuss the fact that all mankind is totally depraved (radically and pervasively depraved) *but* believers must and can persevere in the faith. What changes in them have made this even possible? Are they now working for their salvation?

Read aloud and discuss the following quotation by Dr. Loraine Boettner:

It seems that man, poor, wretched and impotent as he is, would welcome a doctrine which secures for him the possessions of eternal happiness despite all attacks from without and all evil tendencies from within. But it is not so. He refuses it, and argues against it. And the causes are not far to seek. In the first place he has more confidence in himself than he has any right to have. Secondly, the scheme is so contrary

to what he is used to in the natural world that he persuades himself that it cannot be true. Thirdly, he perceives that if this doctrine be admitted, the other doctrines of free grace will logically follow. Hence he twists and explains away the Scripture passages which teach it, and clings to some which appear on the surface to favor his preconceived views. In fact, a system of salvation by *grace* is so utterly at variance with his every-day experience, in which he sees every thing and person treated according to *works* and *merits*, that he has great difficulty in bringing himself to believe that it can be true. He wishes to earn his own salvation, though certainly he expects very high wages for very sorry work.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 201.

## Lesson 15

# The Five Points Defended: Summary and Assessment

1. You have just completed the material in this book in which some of the biblical evidence is presented in defense of the Calvinists' understanding of salvation. How would you summarize that view?
2. Reread the writers' summary of both the Arminian and Calvinistic positions on page 8.
3. Review Dr. Packer's analysis of "The One Point of Calvinism" (pp. 14–15).
4. Read John MacArthur's "Afterword" (pp. 139–40).
5. At this stage in your study of the Bible and Christian issues, what is your opinion about whether the Bible teaches Calvinism? Using the numbers 1–4 as defined below, assess your current thinking on the topics that will follow.
  1. Am still trying to decide.
  2. Think that I disagree.
  3. Think that I generally agree.
  4. Agree strongly.

Write the numbers which best correlate with your current thinking in the space beside each of the statements below.

\_\_\_\_\_ That mankind is pervasively and radically depraved in the totality of his parts—his mind, heart, will, soul, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ That God the Father, before the world was made, sovereignly and unconditionally chose certain individuals

from among the fallen race of mankind to be the objects of his undeserved favor.

- \_\_\_\_\_ That Jesus Christ lived a perfect life and died a substitutionary death as the actual (not potential) atonement for the sinners whom his Father had graciously chosen to redeem.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ That the Holy Spirit graciously and effectually calls the elect by both the gospel and an inner spiritual call which together bring him to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. The elect becomes a new creature, now able to see, hear, understand, and desire the things of God.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ That God secures and preserves his saved ones in their faith (which is his gift) so that they can never be lost, using whatever means are necessary and prudent. The saved sinners persevere in faith and holiness, which is the evidence that they really are new creatures.

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

Discuss how a believer's understanding that his salvation is the work of God alone affects his loving God with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his mind.

Discuss how a believer's understanding that his salvation is the work of God alone affects his love of others.

Using the material above, discuss the class members' assessments regarding whether such a view of salvation is supported biblically.



## Lesson 16

### Part Three: The Five Points Documented

1. Read the introduction to this new part of the book (pp. 73–78). This part contains a bibliography of books and other works on the topics of Calvinism and God’s sovereignty. In most cases, the books listed are also described and often evaluated as to the audience for which they would be most helpful.
2. Glance through pages 78–138 to get a general idea of the material included.
3. Read the listings and descriptions of the following entries, which are especially helpful and readable. Page numbers are from the bibliography.
  - (79–80) Boettner, Loraine. *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*.
  - (82) Boice, James Montgomery, and Phillip Graham Ryken. *The Doctrines of Grace*.
  - (83) Bridges, Jerry. *Trusting God*.
  - (85) Daniel, Curt. *The History and Theology of Calvinism*.
  - (87) Gill, John. *The Cause of God and Truth*.
  - (90–91) Hunt, Dave, and James White. *Debating Calvinism: Five Points, Two Views*.
  - (93) Meeter, H. Henry. *The Basic Ideas of Calvinism*.
  - (94) Packer, J. I. *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*.
  - (Page 98) Schreiner, Thomas, and Bruce Ware, eds. *The Grace of God, the Bondage of the Will*.
  - (112) Reymond, Robert L. *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*.
  - (114–15) White, James R. *The Potter’s Freedom*.
  - (120) The Second London Confession, A.D. 1689.
  - (123–24) Luther, Martin. *The Bondage of the Will*.
  - (127) Sproul, R.C. *Chosen by God*.
  - (132) Smeaton, George. *The Apostles’ Doctrine of the Atonement*.
  - (135) Owen, John. *The Holy Spirit, His Gifts and Power*.
  - (137) Berkouwer, G. C. *Faith and Perseverance*.

Check into the availability of these books in your church library, local bookstores, and online sources. Consider buying or borrowing one of the books listed.

4. As was mentioned in the introduction to this bibliography (pp. 75–76), the Internet has made other materials and helps readily available to interested users. If you have this help available, look for information on one or more of these topics:

- the personal histories, families, education, writings, and influences today of these Reformation leaders: Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and Knox
- the part which Calvinism plays in your denomination's historical creeds or confessions of faith
- songs, hymns, or choruses which are about one of Calvinism's five points or about God's sovereignty
- the Calvinistic beginnings of several Ivy-league colleges in the U.S. and other major education institutions in Europe and worldwide
- any U.S. presidents and the prime ministers, kings, or leaders of other nations who were Calvinists
- data on the Puritans in American history or on the Huguenots' influence in France
- sermons available from authors whose names appear in the bibliography section of this book

If you do not use a computer, look up one or more of these topics in traditional sources. (Several good sources are listed on page 106 in the *New Bible Dictionary* entry and on page 108 in the *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* entry.)

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

Discuss and evaluate any of the books that were mentioned in item 3, above, that class members have consulted or read. Discuss also any other sources listed in the bibliography that class members have found helpful.

Share information class members learned as they used the Internet or other sources to investigate the topics listed in item 4 above.

## Lesson 17

### Appendix A: A Kinder, Gentler Calvinism

1. Read the article by James N. McGuire, which appeared in the quarterly magazine of Reformed Theological Seminary several years ago and is reprinted on pages 141–46.
2. Notice, in the first paragraph, the description of the “mudslide of lukewarm evangelicalism.” Jot down below the specifics named by the author which trouble many people in the Reformed (Calvinistic) camp.
3. Reread the second and third paragraphs, which describe the spirit and reaction that some Reformed pastors and church members have displayed in opposing error. Summarize this reaction and spirit.

Review the quotation from Dr. Curtis Vaughn in lesson 6 of this study guide. How did he assess this same sort of reaction and spirit?

Have you ever experienced what these men have described?

4. Dr. McGuire tells of his own youthful errors of attitude and emphasis, describing himself as “dispensing total depravity without much amazing grace.” After wise counsel, he sought and found new models, he says, who were “theologically correct, unyielding of the truth, yet full of Good News.” Who were his new models?

Summarize the gospel presentation of the new models that Dr. McGuire studied.

5. Analyze Jesus’ presentation of the gospel to Nicodemus (in John 3) and to the Samaritan woman at the well (in John 4). What evidences do you see in each case of clarity regarding truth, and what evidences of a kind and gentle style of interaction?

Do you detect greater expectations and directness in Jesus' dealing with the religious leader Nicodemus? Is this true of his dealings with other religious leaders?

6. Dr. McGuire emphasizes the love of sinners that must accompany the telling of gospel truth. Write below his comment (p. 145) that "Calvinism, above other understandings of the Bible, rests . . ."

And, also on page 145, his statement, "Correct theology . . ."

7. Do you agree that it is important to have the "kinder, gentler" spirit Dr. McGuire describes? Why?

Do you need to repent of any such harshness in your own life?

To which extreme are you more inclined—inclined to "tell it like it is" with little thought of gentleness—or inclined to avoid serious discussions out of discomfort at any confrontation?

## Ideas for Group Discussion

Discuss some attitudes named in the “fruit of the Spirit” list from Galatians 5 as to (1) which of the qualities are part of communicating gospel truth clearly, and (2) which are part of the kinder, gentler method described in the article which we have just read.

Share your own conversion story with the group, if it involved great patience from a believer as that person dealt with you regarding the gospel.

In Jesus’ earthly years, what situations required patience, love, and gentleness from him? List some of these on the board.

One joking description of Calvinists is “the frozen chosen.” Given what you have studied about Calvinism’s view of God, man, and salvation, discuss which of its elements should cause these believers to be joyful, thankful, and amazed instead.

Lesson 18  
Appendix C: The Meaning of “Foreknew” in  
Romans 8:29

1. Read Appendix C (pp. 157–68).
2. Reread the introduction (pp. 157–58) and summarize the two views about the meaning of the word “foreknew” in Romans 8:29.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Copy the sentence below from page 158, which begins, “Notice that . . .” This sentence contains an important idea in understanding the meaning of “foreknew.”
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Reread the material in the first two paragraphs of the “Know and Foreknow” section (pp. 158–60). The authors state clearly that God knows everything—past, present, and future, including what people would do. The authors contend, however, that in Romans 8, Paul is discussing those *whom* God foreknew (not what facts he knew *about* them). In the second paragraph they explain, “When the Bible speaks of God knowing particular individuals, it often means that he

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\_\_\_\_\_.”

5. Several biblical examples follow in which God’s “knowing” an individual or group of people must mean more than knowledge of their future actions. In these passages, God’s knowing these people (or not knowing them) involves relationship, not just information. Choose one of the three examples given (Israel or Jeremiah or the workers of lawlessness from Matthew 7), and explain how it illustrates those uses of “know” which mean that God “has special regard for . . . affection and concern.”

6. On page 162, an excellent summary states, “Although God knew *about* all men before the world began, He did not ‘*know*’ all men in the sense that the Bible sometimes uses the word ‘know,’ i.e., \_\_\_\_\_.

It is in this latter sense that God *foreknew* those whom He predestined, called, and justified, as outlined in Romans 8:29–30!”

7. The section titled “Not Foresight of Faith or Good Works” (pp. 162–64) explains that faith is God’s gift to man, not man’s gift to God. And as Dr. John Murray writes:

Even if it were granted that “foreknew” means the foresight of faith, the biblical doctrine of sovereign election is not thereby eliminated or disproven. For it is certainly true that God foresees faith; he foresees all that comes to pass. The question would then simply be: (from whom does it come), this faith which God foresees? And



the only biblical answer is that the faith which God foresees is the faith he himself creates.<sup>12</sup>

8. Reread the introduction to “Foreknow in Several Translations” (pp. 164–65). This section quotes from seven modern English translations that were available in 1963, when this appendix was originally written. Since then other modern English translations have been published. After reading the biblical material quoted on pages 165–68, check out the same passages in one of the following: the NIV, the NASB, the NKJV, or the ESV. Write out that translation’s version of the five passages in which God’s foreknowledge is discussed.

### Ideas for Group Discussion

Discuss your answers to question 2 above in which you summarized the two views about “foreknew” in Romans 8:29.

With a partner or two, look at the following passages and determine if each is describing God’s omniscience (his perfect knowledge about everything) or God’s knowledge in a relational sense (his concern and affection).

Psalm 139

Matthew 11:27

John 10:14–15 (and on a separate occasion, 10:27–28)

Romans 11:33–36

As Jesus spoke in the Gospels, on the occasions listed below, in which passages was he using the word “know” to mean a relational knowledge, and in which passages was he speaking of an informational “knowing”?

Matthew 6:3

Mark 12:24

Luke 21:31

Luke 23:33–34

John 8:19, 54–55

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<sup>12</sup> John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959), 316.

John 14:7, 15-17

John 15:21

John 17:3

Perhaps you have noticed that frequently in the English text the phrase recounts someone “knowing *that*” a fact or information is true. In the relational use of “know,” the phrase recounts a person’s name, a personal pronoun (him, her, etc.), or the word “whom,” which refers to a person. Discuss this with your small group in connection with the quotations listed above.

## Lesson 19

### Appendix D: A Defense of Calvinism

The author Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–92) was the most famous preacher of the Victorian era. He was pastor of a very large Baptist church in London attended often by the prime minister (W. E. Gladstone), the royal family, members of Parliament, future U.S. President Garfield, Florence Nightingale, David Livingstone, Hudson Taylor, George Müller, and thousands of others. He frequently spoke ten times during the week in various places and to ten thousand of his own congregants on Sundays, without the help of a microphone. His writings were voluminous, too.

The Victorian era had also produced men like Dickens, Marx, and Darwin. In Spurgeon's lifetime, Bell invented the telephone; Morse, the telegraph; and Daimler, the internal combustion engine. As you will notice, the English language of the nineteenth century was also somewhat different from that of the twenty-first century, but not so different that we cannot benefit from Spurgeon's thoughts.

1. Read the first half of Spurgeon's "Defense of Calvinism" (pp. 169–75). As the footnote indicates, this material comes from Spurgeon's autobiography. He recounts his early spiritual journey in these pages.
2. In the opening (*italicized*) statements on page 169, Spurgeon aligns himself with several historical Christian leaders. Who are his "heroes"?

3. In the first paragraph (pp. 169–70) Spurgeon describes his gratitude for the true gospel, which he was blessed to learn early in his life. He is astonished, he says, “that . . .”
  
4. He writes at some length in the second paragraph about his own sinfulness and need of salvation from God (pp. 170–71). List below a few of Spurgeon’s vivid expressions about his own natural depravity.
  
5. The recognition of his own sinfulness and his utter dependence upon God’s grace caused Spurgeon to be more naturally inclined, he says, to the doctrine of \_\_\_\_\_ than to the doctrine of \_\_\_\_\_ (p. 170).
  
6. In the next several paragraphs he explores and discusses the doctrines of grace, both in his own experience and as glorious concepts clearly taught in Scripture. What does he say is his constant confession (p. 172)?

7. As Spurgeon continues (pp. 172–73), he tells of an Arminian pastor whose text for a sermon was, “He shall choose our inheritance for us.” Analyze the quoted parts of the sermon in light of what you have learned about Arminian ideas.
  
8. After establishing the fact that God, in his providence, chooses and directs the place, time, and circumstances of our physical birth (p. 173), Spurgeon then establishes that the same is true of our election and spiritual birth. Summarize below his reaction to a whimsical story in which a woman declares, “The Lord must have loved me before I was born, or else He would not have seen anything in me to love afterwards.”
  
9. The writer eloquently and effusively tells of God’s grace and love for his people (pp. 174–75). One of his sentences, however, has a perplexing description to twenty-first century readers. Substitute “affections” or “compassions” for the word “bowels” (p. 175) as you are reading of God’s great love for his chosen ones before the foundation of the world.

Spurgeon was given great language skills. Copy below just one of his exuberant sentences of praise from pages 174–75. Perhaps you will choose the sentence in which the above-mentioned word substitution was needed.

### Ideas for Group Discussion

Spurgeon has woven together autobiographical material with ideas that are part of Calvinism. Get with a partner or two to look back over pages 169–75. Which Calvinistic tenets do you see there? Which other related things do you see that we have encountered in our weeks of study?

On page 171, Spurgeon quotes fragments from the hymns of Phillip Doddridge and Augustus Toplady. What other hymn is Toplady's most famous one? Some of the verses say,

*Not the labors of my hands  
Can fulfill Thy Law's demands;  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone,  
Thou must save and Thou alone.*

*Nothing in my hand I bring.  
Simply to Thy cross I cling;  
Naked, come to Thee for dress,  
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly,  
Wash me, Savior, or I die.*

In your small group, look back through Spurgeon's writings on pages 169–75 to locate his expressions of the same ideas that

Toplady communicated in his hymn. (Toplady wrote lots of other hymns, too.)

Spurgeon says, “I have met with a great many believers, and talked with them about [whether faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit]; but I never knew one who could put his hand on his heart and say, ‘I believed in Jesus without the assistance of the Holy Spirit.’” What do the Scriptures say on that issue? Use your Bible to support your conclusion about the origin of the faith through which believers are graciously saved.

Lesson 20  
Appendix D: A Defense of Calvinism  
(continued)

1. Read the second half of “A Defense of Calvinism” by Charles Spurgeon (pp. 176–85). In this material the author is again autobiographical (as in the first half) but more often theological; that is, developing biblical ideas and teachings.
2. Notice that the first paragraph on page 176 is about depravity, especially the writer’s own. He is amazed at God’s grace. What statement does he then say, in the second paragraph, is the epitome, sum, and substance of Calvinism?

It, in his own words, is the essence of

\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Spurgeon segues into a very strong defense of God’s sovereignty in all aspects of salvation (p. 177). Follow his thoughts about the security of believers to the last few lines on page 177 and on to 178, where he writes, “God altereth not His plans. . . .” Spurgeon then cites some of God’s attributes in developing that idea.

“Because God is \_\_\_\_\_, He can perform His pleasure. Because God is \_\_\_\_\_, He cannot have planned wrongly. Because God is \_\_\_\_\_, He cannot die before His plan is accomplished.”

In his typically florid style, Spurgeon continues, “Ye worthless atoms of earth, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, ye may change *your* plans, but He shall \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.”



4. Spurgeon then quotes part of a stanza written by Augustus Toplady (p. 178). Look at other lines from that same song:

*The work which [God's] goodness began,  
The arm of his strength will complete,  
His promise is Yes and Amen,  
And never was forfeited yet.  
Things future, nor things that are now,  
Nor all things below or above,  
Can make him his purpose forgo,  
Or sever my soul from his love.*

On what biblical passage does Toplady base his thoughts in these stanzas (one quoted on page 178 and the other quoted in this question)?

5. Reviewing the next lengthy paragraph (pp. 178–79), observe how Spurgeon writes about God’s preservation of believers and his great promises in that regard. He then begins extended discussions about Christ’s atonement (pp. 179–82). How many people does Spurgeon believe are recipients of Christ’s glorious acts on their behalf? Check the correct answer below.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a few  
\_\_\_\_\_ many  
\_\_\_\_\_ vast multitudes  
\_\_\_\_\_ everybody

6. Starting in the middle of pages 182–84, Spurgeon discusses Calvinism generally. Interestingly, he says that he wishes to be called nothing but a Christian, but that he holds the doctrinal views that were held by John Calvin, in the main, and rejoices to avow it. He is clear, however, that he has high regard for Christians who, like \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, are men “of whom the world was not worthy.” He continues (on page 183) to include others, as well,

in his affirmation, saying, “I believe there are multitudes of men who \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.”

7. He analyzes some of the pairs of biblical truths that we find difficult for our limited minds to fully comprehend (p. 183). List below, in a few brief phrases, some of the examples he mentions.

Circle one of the pairs of biblical truths listed above that you find the most difficult to comprehend.

8. Spurgeon ends his defense of the perseverance of believers in living holy, reverent, and devoted lives out of gratitude to God for his immeasurable gifts (pp. 184–85). He could have again quoted from Augustus Toplady. This poem (or hymn) can be sung using the tune of “There Is a Fountain” or the tune of “I Sing the Mighty Power of God.”

*How vast the benefits divine  
Which we in Christ possess!  
We are redeemed from guilt and shame  
And called to holiness.  
But not for works which we have done,  
Or shall hereafter do,  
Hath God decreed on sinful men  
Salvation to bestow.*

*The glory, Lord, from first to last,  
Is due to thee alone,  
Ought to ourselves we dare not take,  
Or rob thee of thy crown.  
Our glorious Surety undertook  
To satisfy for man,  
And grace was given us in him  
Before the world began.*

Write an original poem or memorize this hymn as a poem to express your own gratitude to the Lord. He is worthy!

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

As a group, analyze Spurgeon's "Defense of Calvinism" as to whether his essay included the TULIP's major points and related ideas. Be specific, using quotations from the whole essay as various ideas are discussed.

Recite the final Toplady poem as a group (or read it, if you must). Listen to the original poems written by your friends, expressing their gratitude to the Lord, if any class members wrote down their thoughts.

In "popcorn" fashion, recite single stanzas from hymns that you already know "by heart" which express gratitude and praise for God's astonishing grace.

## Lesson 21

# Appendix E: The Practical Application of Calvinism

1. Read “The Practical Application of Calvinism” by Curt Daniel (pp. 187–98).
  
2. Curt Daniel reminds his readers that “doctrine comes first, then practice” (p. 187). He continues, “Now we must look at how to live what we have learned.” His biblical basis for both the faith and the practice lies in 1 Timothy 3:16–17. Write out those verses below, putting asterisks beside the “living out” parts and underlining the “learning” parts.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Christians (of all persuasions) must have a \_\_\_\_\_, he says, but this is especially true of \_\_\_\_\_. What synonym phrases for “worldview” does he use?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Reread the three paragraphs on page 189 in which a Calvinist worldview is defined, beginning, “Basically, . . .” Later on page 189, the author summarizes “the one controlling principle in this worldview is that everything in life is to be done with \_\_\_\_\_.”

5. A few of the cultural areas and everyday-life areas in which God's glory should be primary have already been mentioned (pp. 188–90). As you glance back over these pages, jot down some of them.
  
6. The topic of a work ethic is discussed as an example of Calvinistic Christianity applied to daily living (pp. 190–91). Name a group that practiced this God-centered work ethic notably well: \_\_\_\_\_. In this area of their lives they were living in the world by the principles of the sovereign God whose world it is.
  
7. On pages 192–95, the author discusses “Pitfalls Peculiar to Calvinists,” which prevent us, if we fall into them, from glorifying God in the world. Pride in being a Calvinist is one such sinful pitfall. The author has written several devastatingly accurate sentences about this pride, and he quotes several clear passages that apply. Write below an example or two of his helpful analyses and what the Scriptures say on that topic.
  
8. Curt Daniel describes several other possible pitfalls (pp. 193–95). He decries, for example, the “Calvinist second blessing,” Calvinist intellectualism, apathy, lethargy, passive resignation, obsessive antiemotionalism, chronic introspection, and hyper-Calvinism. Take a few minutes to ask the Lord to protect you from falling into these sinful attitudes and outlooks, or to rescue and forgive you if you have displayed these mindsets.

9. In contrast, the author describes “The Truly Reformed Attitudes” (pp. 195–98). List the desirable attitudes and the benefits that are discussed. Can you list ten? A dozen?

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

A wise person has said, “A proud Calvinist is a contradiction in terms.” Discuss how this is true, citing elements from your understanding of Calvinism that would make such pride absurd, baseless, and an offense to God.

Discuss with a partner or two the Scriptures listed below, noticing what they say about work principles and one’s job, whether working for pay or not. Compile a list of these principles in your small group.

Proverbs 6:6–11

Proverbs 31:10–31

Ephesians 6:5–9 (These instructions to slaves and masters in that culture can apply to employees and employers in our culture.)

Colossians 3:22–25

2 Thessalonians 3:6–15

Discuss the biblical principles that should be applied in politics, so that God would be most glorified. If time allows, do the same about medicine and about education.

## Lesson 22

### Appendix F: The Practical Importance of the Doctrine [of Predestination]

1. Read the short segment from Dr. Loraine Boettner's book *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (pp. 199–204).
2. In his first sentence, Dr. Boettner says that predestination is not \_\_\_\_\_ but is \_\_\_\_\_ account of God's relations with men. He then quotes John Calvin on the same subject (p. 200). Do take the time to read that quotation, which is the first quotation in this volume from the French Reformer's writings. Though the sixteenth century style is different from the writing style in this century, you may be pleasantly surprised at the tone in which it is written.
3. One of the practical effects of understanding that God predestines all events appears in the last sentence in the quotation by John Calvin. Copy it below.
4. Another great practical effect is discussed in the paragraph that begins, "The Christian . . ." Summarize this beneficial effect on a believer who sees God as sovereign in all things.

Does this mean that he understands everything that happens to himself and to others?

5. The section on pages 201–4 develops the thought that the doctrine of predestination is a source of both security and courage. Notice Dr. Boettner’s beautiful words on page 201. “The sense of security which this doctrine gives to the struggling saint results from \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ that over him is the banner of love and underneath are the everlasting arms.”
6. Dr. Clarence Macartney (p. 202) says much the same in discussing “misfortunes and adversities,” which “assume a different color when we look at them through this glass. . . . It is \_\_\_\_\_,  
 and not our part, that gives us \_\_\_\_\_.”
7. Reread the paragraph on page 203, in which eight biblical passages are quoted, about how we should think and react in times of difficulty. What is the common thread or thought that runs through these passages?

(The Romans 8:28 quotation is from the *American Standard Version* [1901], as are all the biblical quotations in Dr. Boettner’s book. Subsequent editions of the *New American Standard Bible* have translated Romans 8:28 to read, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God . . .” with a footnote that gives the earlier ASV rendering.)

8. Courage is a natural result, the author says on page 204, of knowing \_\_\_\_\_.



9. But humility and gratitude along with perseverance and patience are also the result as seen in the last paragraph. Dr. Boettner attributes these to a person realizing that he is a “brand plucked from the burning.” Such a person, knowing that salvation was “not by any merit or wisdom of his own, but only by God’s grace and mercy,” has two reactions. What are they?

### Ideas for Group Discussion

Joni Eareckson Tada says, “Next to the doctrine of salvation, the sovereignty of God has, to me, been the most powerfully comforting truth from the Word of God. To understand God’s hand in my hardship as a quadriplegic has dissipated the darkness of despair and hopelessness.”<sup>13</sup> Perhaps some of those in your group have read books by this courageous woman and can share more about her with the class. Discuss how her attitude is an example of ideas in the paragraph (pp. 200–201) that begins, “The Christian . . .”

With a partner or two, analyze Blaise Pascal’s words to a bereaved friend (p. 202). How do they connect to the worldview we discussed recently?

Paul, the apostle, wrote a letter to Roman Christians in which his theme was expressed in Romans 1:16–17. He said,

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<sup>13</sup> Joni Eareckson Tada, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004), flyleaf.

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will *live* by faith.”

Discuss how trusting God throughout one’s Christian life (from first to last) is what Paul described, what Dr. Boettner and Blaise Pascal wrote about, and what Joni Eareckson Tada does every day.

## Lesson 23

# Appendix G: Calvinism and Arminianism Before and After: A Brief Historical Sketch

1. Read the first half of this appendix by S. Lance Quinn (pp. 205–18). In the introduction (pp. 205–7), theology is defined and its importance discussed. Just how important do the author and R.C. Sproul believe theology to be?

How important that it be true and right?

2. In the section titled “The Theology of God and Man through the Lens of History,” the author says that two areas are the most critical parts of theology (p. 207). Write them below.

Also write your own paraphrase of the quotation from Earle Cairns on page 207.

3. Concerning the doctrine of salvation (called soteriology), two basic views continue to recycle throughout Christian history, author Quinn says. Although some of the details vary from age to age, these two basic understandings about salvation remain in every age: the theocentric (or God-centered) view and the anthropocentric (or man-centered) view of how anyone is saved. Describe further each of the two views below.

**Note:** Now is a good time to memorize the meanings (if these are new words to you) of “soteriology,” “theocentric,” and “anthropocentric,” which will be used again as this article continues.

4. In the section titled “Augustine and Pelagius” (pp. 208–13), the period of history discussed is approximately \_\_\_\_\_ years after Jesus came into this world as a man. After the era of the apostles, most of the church’s doctrinal disagreements during the third and fourth centuries A.D. were about the nature and person of Jesus Christ. But in Augustine and Pelagius’s era, a hot debate arose about justification—how a sinful man becomes right with God, who is perfect in holiness.
5. Pelagius’s views about salvation are spelled out in some detail on pages 210–12. (Augustine’s views about salvation have occupied many of the earlier pages of this volume.) Write a one- or two-sentence summary of Pelagius’s views on each of the following subjects. Pelagius’s view on

the freedom of the will:

the nature of sin:

grace:

the ground of justification:

6. As the author says on page 212, “The debate between Augustine and Pelagius set the stage for further debate down through history: Does the sinner get right with God because of his own effort or because of God’s effort?” If you had been living in the fifth century A.D., would your view of salvation have agreed more with Augustine or with Pelagius?
  
7. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the doctrine of salvation was again the topic of serious disagreement. Martin Luther and Desiderius Erasmus (as described on pages 213–14) were the most prominent voices for each view. Copy (or paraphrase) the last sentence on page 213, which continues on page 214. This statement identifies the issue that is again being strongly debated in this era by the two Roman Catholic and Protestant Reformation leaders.
  
8. On pages 214–18, John Calvin’s defense of the view of salvation, which had been held by Augustine and Luther

(among others), was disputed by two well-known Roman Catholic theologians, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. But almost half a century after Calvin's death, the *most* famous adversary of his theological position came from the Protestant Reformation camp, a man named \_\_\_\_\_. Because Arminius adopted some, but not all, of Pelagius's views, he was correctly called a \_\_\_\_\_.

9. On pages 216–18 the historical data of this debate is reviewed, and on pages 217–18 the two views are summarized. “The issues of God’s \_\_\_\_\_ and man’s \_\_\_\_\_ were being vigorously pursued because both sides believed that the gospel was being polluted and that lives were being plunged into perdition.” One important fact was different, though the issues were much the same as before. As Calvinists and Arminians in the seventeenth century defended their ideas, all the theologians on both sides were Protestants.

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

Discuss what denominations and Christian groups came out of the Protestant Reformation or hold similar beliefs.

Discuss the generally held modern concepts about the importance and relevance of theology. Why is this so?

Discuss what class members would consider crucial if they had recently moved to a new city and were looking for a new church home. More important than programs and style of ministry issues, what theological views would they consider that the church *must* have if they were to join that body?

## Lesson 24

### Appendix G: Calvinism and Arminianism Before and After (continued)

1. Read pages 218–29, which contain the second half of Lance Quinn’s historical analysis of the major debates and personalities surrounding the two primary views of salvation.
2. In the nineteenth century Asahel Nettleton and Charles Finney, who were both leading evangelists, embodied the two divergent views about salvation. The God-centered view was held by \_\_\_\_\_ and the man-centered view by \_\_\_\_\_.
3. In his comments on page 218–19, John Thornbury says that Charles Finney found the Calvinistic view unacceptable and functionally intolerable in the practice of evangelism. Write Thornbury’s last sentence below.
4. Rick Nelson says that Charles Finney is widely regarded as the father of \_\_\_\_\_ and shaped the theology and methodology of \_\_\_\_\_ generally (p. 219). Several emphases in modern evangelism, such as the public invitation system and other practices, were begun in Finney’s crusades and have influenced modern evangelism.
5. The basis for Finney’s methods was his theology. Reread the material on pages 219–22 in which his beliefs are discussed. If you disagree with any of his views, write them below in his own words, using his clearest and strongest statements on that subject.

I disagree with Charles Finney when he says:

6. Asahel Nettleton, also a leading evangelist, did his work based on a God-centered theology. His theology is described on page 222. What label would you give it? \_\_\_\_\_.  
Describe Nettleton's methodology in evangelism briefly below.
  
7. "The Contemporary Debate over Sovereignty and Free Will" (pp. 223–29) indicates that both views about salvation continue in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Read the section on pages 224–25 about the issuance in 1994 and 1996 of the two documents entitled "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" and "The Gift of Salvation." The author of this appendix expresses his concern: "These two volumes seem to blur the line of demarcation between evangelicals and Catholics—and thus the demarcation between theocentrists and anthropocentrists." Opposition to the ideas in these two documents, and concern about an alarming doctrinal drift generally, resulted in issuance of the \_\_\_\_\_ in 1996 by R.C. Sproul and other evangelicals who decry the man-centered mind-set of modern Christendom and its divergence from the biblical path.
  
8. Clark Pinnock is a contemporary spokesman for the man-centered view of salvation in his many writings. On pages 225–29, Dr. Pinnock's neo-Arminian ideas are discussed, including several quotations of his positions. The author of this article



summarizes (p. 229) Dr. Pinnock's positions on the five major components of this debate, concluding that Pinnock's view is the man-centered understanding of salvation . . . "at its clearest!"

9. Have you an opinion of what the *Scriptures* teach in regard to the man-centered and God-centered views of salvation? (Reread John MacArthur's "Afterword" on pages 139–40 as part of your thinking process. MacArthur is clear and correct in his remarks to us all that the Bible is our only source and standard for any theological system.) Explain your view below, if you have reached any conclusions.

### Ideas for Group Discussion

An ecumenical movement has been gaining adherents among many individuals and groups since the 1950s. Discuss instances of the uniting of various denominations, for example. On which issues would members of your group require agreement before considering such (hypothetical) unification?

Discuss your group members' reaction to occasional joint services, conferences, or events with other Christian bodies. What about occasional speakers from other traditions? On which doctrines would agreement be essential to allow for your group members to participate in good conscience?

Discuss the very current issue of tolerance for religions that worship other gods.



- the erosion of *the chief article*, (or main theme of the Reformation: justification by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone) as seen in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - the erosion of \_\_\_\_\_ as seen in \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The Cambridge Declaration’s signers call themselves and other evangelicals to repentance and reformation in these matters. Look back through the summaries on pages 231–37 at the statements that are reaffirmed as correct and essential, and at those that are denied. Meditate on these important issues for evangelicals who prize biblical fidelity. Pray for God’s truth to prevail in our faith and practice.

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

Some recent events and trends have so disturbed the Cambridge Declaration’s signers that they, like Luther with his Ninety-five Theses, have published their concerns. In groups of three or four, consider and discuss the alarming erosion in key doctrinal beliefs that the Declaration writers believe is occurring in evangelical circles.

Evaluate, in your small group, each of the five theses or statements that are reaffirmed and those denied (at the end of each segment of the Declaration). Do you agree or disagree with each of the assertions?

## Lesson 26

# Summary and Application

1. As we wrap up our study of the five points of Calvinism, reread the summary chart on pages 5–8 as a condensed review. Again, as before, read both the Arminian and the Calvinistic positions on one topic before moving on to the next topic.
2. On earlier occasions in which we used that chart, you were asked to circle lightly in pencil the titles of sections with which you generally agreed. Complete that process now, adding to or erasing as necessary.
3. You were also asked earlier in this study to underline in color those specific sentences with which you knew or thought that the Scriptures agreed. Complete that process, too, if any other sentences can be underlined.
4. Using the number designations below, comment again on each of the five points usually associated with Calvinism, expressing your *current* opinion. After several weeks of study, what are your thoughts and opinions about Calvinism?
  1. Am still trying to decide.
  2. Think that I disagree.
  3. Think that I generally agree.
  4. Agree strongly.

Write the number which best correlates with your current thinking in the space beside each of the statements below.

- \_\_\_\_\_ That mankind is pervasively and radically depraved in the totality of his parts—his mind, heart, will, soul, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ That God the Father, before the world was made, sovereignly and unconditionally chose certain individuals from among the fallen race of mankind to be the objects of his undeserved favor.

- \_\_\_\_\_ That Jesus Christ lived a perfect life and died a substitutionary death as the actual (not potential) atonement for the sinners whom his Father had graciously chosen to redeem.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ That the Holy Spirit graciously and effectually calls the elect by both the gospel and an inner spiritual call which together brings him to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. He becomes a new creature, now able to see, hear, understand, and desire the things of God.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ That God secures and preserves his saved ones in their faith (which is his gift) so that they can never be lost, using whatever means are necessary and prudent. The saved sinners persevere in faith and holiness, which is the evidence that they really are new creatures.

5. Have any of the readings, assignments, or class discussions caused you to have a higher view of God and his grace? Explain, if so.

Have any of the readings, assignments, or class discussions produced joy, gratitude, or amazement about your own salvation? Explain, if so.



10. Memorize one of the hymns/“poems” in this study guide, or write a prayer, poem, or song to express your own reactions to the fact that “salvation, first and last, whole and entire, past, present, and future, is of the Lord, to whom be glory for ever; amen” (p. 15). Or, as Paul wrote, “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen” (Rom. 11:35–36).

### **Ideas for Group Discussion**

In your group, ask those who have memorized a hymn/“poem” to recite it in unison. Also ask some class members to share their original prayers, poems, or songs that praise God for his wondrous gift of salvation.

Discuss the biblical passages that have most impacted or impressed class members during this study.

Discuss the biblical passages that have changed or clarified anyone’s thinking on a previously held idea.

Discuss the biblical passages that have reinforced the gravity and value of previously understood truths.

## Answers for Lesson 2

- 10 a.
- 13 b.
- 12 c.
- 1 d.
- 4 e.
- 15 f.
- 14 g.
- 7 h.
- 11 i.
- 18 j.
- 3 k.
- 16 l.
- 6 m.
- 9 n.
- 8 o.
- 5 p.
- 17 q.
- 2 r.