Christianity 101:
20 Basic Christian Beliefs—Chapter 12
What Is Election?

I. Introduction:
   a. Food for Thought:
      i. “I believe in the doctrine of election, because I am quite certain that if God had not
         chosen me I should never have chosen Him; and I am sure He chose me before I was
         born, or else He never would have chosen me afterwards; and He must have elected me
         for reasons unknown to me, for I never could find any reason in myself why He should
         have looked upon me with special love.” (Charles Spurgeon)
      ii. “The high mystery of predestination needs to be handled with special prudence and
         caution, so that men, being directed to the will of God revealed in His Word and obeying
         the same, may become assured of their eternal election through the certainty of their
         effectual calling. By this means predestination will promote the praise of God, and
         reverential awe and wonder. It will encourage humility and diligence, and bring much
         comfort to all who sincerely obey the gospel” (“Second London Baptist Confession,”
         modern English).

   b. How would you define Election?
      i. Election is an act of God before creation in which he chooses some people to be saved,
         not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of his sovereign good
         pleasure.¹

II. New Testament Teachings on Election
   a. Did God ordain beforehand those who would be saved? If so give examples.
      i. Several passages in the New Testament seem to affirm quite clearly that God ordained
         beforehand those who would be saved. For example, when Paul and Barnabas began to
         preach to the Gentiles in Antioch in Pisidia, Luke writes, “And when the Gentiles heard
         this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of God; and as many as were appointed
         to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).
      ii. One of the reasons Luke says, almost in passing, that many were “appointed to eternal
         life” is that he understood the truth Paul would later express in Ephesians 1:4–6: God
         “chose us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and
         blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ,
         according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace.” Paul later adds
         that “we who were the first to hope in Christ” are to live for “the praise of his glory”
         (Eph. 1:12).²

¹ Wayne A. Grudem, Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know (ed. Elliot Grudem;Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 79.
² Wayne A. Grudem, Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know (ed. Elliot Grudem;Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 79.
b. Why did God save and call us to Himself?
   i. God saved us and called us to himself, not because of our goodness, but because of his own purpose and his unmerited grace in eternity past. Paul says that God is the one “who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began” (2 Tim. 1:9).  

III. What This Means
   a. Why is God’s Sovereign Election a comfort?
      i. It is important to note that these New Testament authors often present the doctrine of election as a comfort to all who believe in Jesus. For example, Paul says that God has acted and always will act for the good of those whom he called to himself: “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28).
      ii. But how could Paul know this? He gives the reason in the next two verses. He can say this because when he looks into the distant past, before the creation of the world, he sees that God “foreknew” and “predestined” his people “to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:29). Then, when Paul looks at the recent past, he finds that “those whom he [God] predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified” (Rom. 8:30). And when Paul looks toward the future, he sees that “those whom he justified” he also “glorified” (Rom. 8:30), in the sense that God has already determined he will someday give perfect, glorified bodies to those who believe in Christ. From eternity to eternity God has acted and will act with the good of his people in mind. Election is thus a cause for comfort and for assurance that God will work for our good today. And this will all happen, “not because of our works,” but because of his “own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began” (2 Tim. 1:9).

b. What is a natural response to God’s work on our behalf?
   i. A natural response to God’s work on our behalf is that we would live “to the praise of his glory” (Eph. 1:12). We can, as Paul did, give thanks to God for those he has chosen (1 Thess. 1:2–4), knowing that God is the one ultimately responsible for their salvation and all the good things that accompany it. In fact, Paul says we are obligated to give thanks to

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God for such a great salvation (1 Thess. 2:13). Singing praises to God for salvation does not leave any room for singing our own praises, because our salvation is not our own work but is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8–9).  

**c. Since God has already chosen His Elect, does that mean that we do not and should not do the joyful service of worship, evangelism?**

i. There is no biblical basis for not worshiping God through sharing His Gospel. We have no way of knowing who the Elect are and we are called to share the good news with EVERYONE. I always like to think of the Parable of the Sower, because he cast the seed of God’s Word on every kind of soil, just as we should sow the Gospel everywhere!

ii. Yet this truth should not lead us to think that our work of evangelism is unimportant! When God chooses people to be saved, he carries this out through human means. That is why Paul worked so hard at preaching the gospel. He said, “I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim. 2:10). Paul knew that God has chosen some people to be saved, and he saw this as an encouragement—not discouragement—to preach the gospel, even if it meant enduring great suffering. Election was Paul’s guarantee that there would be some success for his evangelism, for he knew that some of the people he spoke to would be the elect and that they would believe the gospel and be saved. It is as if someone invited Paul to come fishing and said, “I guarantee that you will catch some fish—they are hungry and waiting.”

**IV. What This Doesn’t Mean**

**a. Does God’s Election mean that our choices don’t matter?**

i. Not at all, for we are completely responsible for our decisions. If we weren’t, how could we be held responsible for our sins?

ii. Affirming the doctrine of election does not mean that our choices don’t matter and our actions don’t have any consequences. Nor does the doctrine of election require us to affirm an impersonal, inflexible universe that is controlled by an impersonal, inflexible force.

**b. Is man still responsible for making a decision of the will?**

i. Yes, without a doubt, for he is both a creature, that is totally reliant on God, and a person, responsible for his own decisions!

ii. Moreover, Scripture continually views us as personal creatures who make willing choices to accept or reject the gospel. For example, this is seen clearly in the invitation at the end

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of Revelation: “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price” (Rev. 22:17). This invitation and many others like it (for example, Matt. 11:28) are addressed to genuine persons who are capable of hearing the invitation and responding to it by a decision of their wills. These real decisions have eternal consequences, as is shown in John 3:18: “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”

c. Was God’s decision to save us, based on our choices or decisions?
   i. Not at all, we do nothing to earn our salvation, it is God’s sovereign choice and our responsibility to respond in repentance and faith.
   ii. While a proper understanding of election does give real value to our decisions and choices, it does not mean that God’s decision was based upon our choices. When God chose individuals “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4), he did not do so because he foresaw their faith or some decision they would make. Paul affirms this in Romans 8:29 when he writes, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined.” When Paul speaks about God’s foreknowledge, he is thinking of God as knowing persons (“those whom”). God “foreknew” these individuals in the context of a saving relationship with them. This is different from speaking about foreknowledge of an individual’s actions or decisions such as a decision to believe.
   iii. In fact, Scripture never speaks of faith (present or future) as the reason God chose someone. In Ephesians 1:4–6, Paul says, “In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace.” If election were ultimately based on our decision, it would seem to diminish God’s love, cheapen his grace (for there would be some merit on our part), and diminish the glory that is due him for our salvation.

V. Are We Really Free?
   a. Does God have anything to do with our choices?
      i. But does that mean that God had nothing to do with our choices? Do we want to insist that God, our infinitely powerful and wise Creator, cannot influence and mold and shape our hearts and our desires according to his plan? In fact, if God works through our choices and desires to bring about his plan, this preserves our ability to choose willingly while at the same time assuring that our choices will be in accord with what God decided and ordained would happen.

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Furthermore, God also created us so that our choices would be *real choices*. However, our choices do not need to be absolutely free of any involvement by God in order to be real, voluntary, willing choices. To take another example, while we make the choice to breathe many times every day, God, as our Creator and Sustainer, is intricately involved with us in that decision, for God “works all things according to the counsel of his will” (Eph. 1:11), and Christ continually “upholds the universe by the word of his power” (Heb. 1:3).\(^{12}\)

**b. If, God does work with, in, and through our choices, how can we say that we responded to Christ’s invitation while also saying that it was ordained by God?**

i. Therefore, if we respond to Christ’s invitation in a positive way, we can honestly say that we *chose* to respond to Christ while also saying that it was (in ways we cannot fully understand) ordained by God. If we can’t fully understand how these two things can be true at the same time, then we must acknowledge that there is mystery here. At least in this age, we cannot completely grasp this mystery. And although we do not understand it, we should at least be sure that we speak the way the Bible speaks about this in all aspects of its teaching.\(^{13}\)

**c. What about those whom never believe (in other words those whom God has not elected or chosen)?**

i. The Bible never puts any blame on God for anyone’s rejection of Christ’s claims. The emphasis is always on the willing choices of those who refuse to believe, and the blame for their unbelief rests with them. As Jesus said in John 8:43–44, “Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires.” To some who rejected him earlier, Jesus said, “You refuse to come to me that you may have life” (John 5:40). And Paul in Romans 1:20 says that all who reject the clear revelation of God given to all mankind are “without excuse.” This is the consistent pattern in Scripture: People who remain in unbelief do so because they are unwilling to come to God, and the blame for such unbelief always lies with the unbelievers themselves, never with God. Once again, we probably will not be able to fully understand in this age just how this can be so.\(^{14}\)

ii. Augustus Strong: “Election and sovereignty are only sources of good. Election is not a decree to destroy—it is a decree only to save. When we elect a President, we do not need to hold a second election to determine that the remaining millions shall be non-Presidents...Sinners, like water, if simply let alone, will run down hill to ruin. The decree of reprobation is simply a decree to do nothing—a decree to leave the sinner to

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himself. The natural result of this judicial forsaking, on the part of God, is the hardening and destruction of the sinner. But it must not be forgotten that this hardening and destruction are not due to any positive efficiency of God—they are a self-hardening and destruction and are not due to any positive efficiency of God. . .” (790).

VI. Is God Really Fair?

a. Is God fair to only chose some and pass others? Why or Why Not?
   i. Yes!
   ii. It is important to understand what “fair” really is with respect to salvation. Indeed, it would be perfectly fair for God not to save any human beings who sinned and rebelled against him, just as he did with the angels: “God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment” (2 Pet. 2:4). But if he does save any human beings, then this is a demonstration of grace, which goes far beyond the requirements of fairness and justice. If God saved only five people out of the whole human race, this would be mercy and grace. If he saved one hundred, this would be amazing mercy and grace. But in fact he has decided to save “a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” (Rev. 7:9). This is mercy beyond our comprehension.15

b. Read Romans 9:18-24 and summarize Paul’s answer to this difficult question in your own words.
   i. Paul is essentially saying that there is a point beyond which we cannot answer back to God or question his justice. God has done what he has done according to his sovereign will. He is the Creator; we are the creatures, and we ultimately have no basis from which to accuse him of unfairness or injustice. Our response to these words in Romans reveals a lot about our hearts and our willingness to submit to our sovereign Creator.16

VII. Does God Want Everyone to Be Saved?

a. If election is true and God choses some and passes over others, does God still want everyone to be saved?
   i. Yes, according to some Scripture passages. In 1 Timothy 2:4, Paul writes of our God and Savior “who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Peter says the same thing in 2 Peter 3:9 when he writes that the Lord “is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”17


b. How then can both sides say that God desires everyone to be saved, in accordance with verses like 1 Timothy 2:4 and 2 Peter 3:9?
   i. These verses tell us what God commands people to do and what actions please him (namely, repenting and believing in Christ). In this sense he truly “desires” and “wishes” that every person be saved. This is what is sometimes called his “revealed” will, what he tells everybody on earth they should do. But such verses are not talking about God’s secret, hidden plans from all eternity to choose some people to be saved.18

c. If election is true, does it still pain God that not everyone is saved?
   i. The fact that not everyone will be saved is one of the most difficult doctrines in Scripture to consider. The Bible indicates that even God has great sorrow when he thinks about those who will not be saved. “As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?” (Ezek. 33:11). When Jesus thought of the people who rejected him in Jerusalem, “he wept over it” (Luke 19:41), and he said, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!” (Matt. 23:37).19

VIII. Common Grace
a. What is Common Grace?
   i. As Romans 6:23 says, “The wages of sin is death.” But the punishment for sin is not immediately felt. Instead, all mankind—regardless of whether they will ultimately receive God’s grace or God’s judgment—will continue to receive many blessings while on earth.20

b. Can you give some examples of Common Grace?
   i. Sometimes those blessings will be physical. Jesus says, in Matthew 5:45, that God “makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” The Creator of the universe sees to it that all people—those who believe in Jesus and those who have rejected his claims—receive from the abundance of his earth.
   ii. God’s grace is also seen in the intellectual realm. Although Satan is “a liar and the father of lies” and “there is no truth in him” (John 8:44), even those who reject the claims of Jesus are not fully given over to falsehood and irrationality. Instead, many who clearly rejected God have made incredible discoveries and inventions. They did so not knowing that they were enlightened by Jesus, “the true light which enlightens everyone” (John

18 Wayne A. Grudem, Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know (ed. Elliot Grudem;Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 86.


1:9). When we benefit from these advancements, we are benefiting, ultimately, from God’s common grace.

iii. This common grace is seen in many other areas of life: the moral realm (people are not as evil as they could be), the creative realm (we can both produce and appreciate many different kinds of good and beautiful things), the societal realm (many communities, institutions, and governments protect and provide for their members and constituents), and even the religious realm (Jesus tells his followers in Matthew 5:44 to pray for their persecutors, showing that God answers many prayers that are prayed for the benefit of unbelievers).  

**c. What is the proposed doctrine of Prevenient Grace?**

i. “Simply put, prevenient grace is the grace of God given to individuals that releases them from their bondage to sin and enables them to come to Christ in faith but does not guarantee that the sinner will actually do so. Thus, the efficacy of the enabling grace of God is determined not by God but by man.” (Read more: http://www.gotquestions.org/prevenient-grace.html#ixzz3UBnWSsc4)

ii. “The Arminian doctrine of prevenient grace should be rejected on biblical grounds. First and foremost, it turns Paul’s words “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ” (Philippians 1:6) on their head. The Greek term used here means to “accomplish” or “perfect,” similar to how the writer of Hebrews says Jesus is the “author and perfecter of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2). The doctrine of prevenient grace affirms that a work is done in the sinner but it denies that the efficacy of the grace is guaranteed. This makes no sense if we are assured that God will perfect what He starts in a person. Second, there is no reason to believe that the two “him’s” in John 6:44 are different groups of people. Two Greek words separate the first “him” who is drawn by the Father from the second “him” who is raised up on the last day. Grammatically and contextually, there is nothing that would begin to support the idea that the verse means not all who are drawn will be raised up on the last day. We find a similar idea in Romans 8:30, where we read that all whom God calls, referring to the inward calling, will be justified and later glorified. Lastly, 1 John 5:1 states clearly that the cause of a person’s believing in Jesus Christ is that he was born again (i.e., regenerated), which John had already told us is “not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13) and is something necessary in order to even perceive the kingdom of God (John 3:3), let alone enter into it. As long as we recognize the biblical truth of the natural man’s deadness in sin (Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13), his need of a new heart (Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26), and that man is a pile of bones needing to be breathed on by God to be brought to life (Ezekiel 37:3-7), we can see that man does not need to be made “better” or “partially alive” but that man needs to be resurrected! Therefore, the doctrine of prevenient grace is without biblical support.” (Read more: http://www.gotquestions.org/prevenient-grace.html#ixzz3UBo80XmH)

**IX. It’s All Grace**

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a. What is our appropriate response to God’s love?
   i. The doctrine of election demonstrates to us that God loved us, not for who we are or what we have done or will do, but simply because he decided to love us. Therefore, our appropriate response to God is to give him praise for all eternity. Our appropriate response to others is humility since individually we have no claim on any portion of God’s grace—it’s all a gift from him. 

b. “That God predestines, and that man is responsible, are two things that few can see. They are believed to be inconsistent and contradictory; but they are not. It is just the fault of our weak judgment. Two truths cannot be contradictory to each other. If, then, I find taught in one place that everything is fore-ordained, that is true; and if I find in another place that man is responsible for all his actions, that is true; and it is my folly that leads me to imagine that two truths can ever contradict each other. These two truths, I do not believe, can ever be welded into one upon any human anvil, but one they shall be in eternity: they are two lines that are so nearly parallel, that the mind that shall pursue them farthest, will never discover that they converge; but they do converge, and they will meet somewhere in eternity, close to the throne of God, whence all truth doth spring.” (Charles Spurgeon)

X. Questions for Review and Application
   a. How does your understanding of the doctrine of election cause you to rejoice? What troubles you about it?

b. In light of the doctrine of election, in what ways do our choices have meaning?

c. Can you name some specific ways in which you have recently seen God bless his creation through common grace? Take a moment to pray, thanking God for specific examples of the grace he has given to all people.

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Appendix: ELECTION

(Dr. LARRY PETTEGREW, TH.D.)

A. Biblical Doctrine of Election

   a. Biblical Terminology

      i. Predestination: This term means “to determine beforehand,” and may carry with it God’s resolve to effectively accomplish that purpose (Acts 4:27-28; Eph. 1:5,11; Romans 8:29)

      ii. Election:

         1. Old Testament:

            a. The Hebrew term bahar (“elect” or “choose”) and its derivatives occur 98 times in the Old Testament.

            b. God chooses a people (Psalm 135:4); certain tribes (Psalm 78:68); specific individuals (1 Kings 8:16; 1 Chron. 28:5).

            c. “Everywhere that bhr occurs in relationship to persons, it denotes choice out of a group (generally out of the totality of the people)” (TDOT, 2:82).

               i. Abraham: God chose Abraham to be the father of Israel and to bring blessings to all the nations of the earth (Gen. 12:1-3; 18:19).

               ii. Jacob: God chose Jacob over Esau (Rom. 9:10-13)

               iii. Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5)

               iv. Israel / the nation (Deut. 7:6-8; Exod. 32:9; Deut. 4:37; 9:6; 10:15; Psalm 47:4).

            2. New Testament:

               a. The verb eklegomai and the noun eklektos are each found 22 times, often dealing with an election to salvation. (John 13:18; 15:16a; Acts 13:48; Romans 8:28-30; 11:7; Eph. 1:4-6: 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2a; cf., “elect” Matt. 24:22; Mark 13:22; Luke 18:7; Rom. 8:33).

               b. Conclusion: “Election is an act of God before creation in which he chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of his sovereign good pleasure” (Grudem, 670).

      iii. Foreknowledge: “If two Christian brothers disagree on the doctrine of election, it is likely that the root of their disagreement is in their respective beliefs and understanding of the doctrine of God’s foreknowledge” (Christian Layman blog).

         1. Arminian View: foreknowledge means “foresight”

            a. “By election we mean that sovereign act of God in grace whereby He chose in Christ Jesus for salvation all those whom he foreknew would accept him” (H. C. Thiessen, Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology).

            b. God looks down the tunnel of time and sees who will believe

            c. God elects those who will believe

            d. Thus, God’s election is conditioned on seeing that the person will believe

               i. Reactions:

                  1. Depends on man

                  2. Total inability

                  3. Makes election unnecessary

                  4. “Foreknowledge” isn’t used in Scripture in connection with what people do:

                     a. “Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23)
b. Not God’s foreknowledge of the act of the crucifixion, but of the Person crucified: “Him (Christ) being delivered by,” etc.

5. “The usage of the term ‘to know’ someone also implies knowing much or all about him or her, not necessarily intimate acquaintance.” (J.C. Thibodaux)
   a. “God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew” (Romans 11:2)
   b. To foreknow with only an intellectual awareness of would mean nothing because God “knows” everyone beforehand, and all are not saved

2. Calvinist View: Foreknowledge is the intellectual energizing of God’s foreordination.
   a. Foreknowledge implies foreordination and predetermination.
   b. But they are not exactly the same because foreknowledge focuses on the intellectual/emotional part of foreordination.
   c. God thinks about His decision and determines to bring it to pass.
   d. Of course, all of God’s forethought/foreordination took place in eternity past as a part of His omniscience.
   e. Thus, “foreknowing” in Scriptural context means thinking in love about a chosen person (or people) ahead of time, “setting one’s attention on someone ahead of time”; often, “foreloving,” or “forethinking about.”
   f. Foreknowledge takes place in the mind of God according to His omniscience and wisdom and is not based on the actions of human beings

Augustus Strong: “Election and sovereignty are only sources of good. Election is not a decree to destroy—it is a decree only to save. When we elect a President, we do not need to hold a second election to determine that the remaining millions shall be non-Presidents...Sinners, like water, if simply let alone, will run down hill to ruin. The decree of reprobation is simply a decree to do nothing—a decree to leave the sinner to himself. The natural result of this judicial forsaking, on the part of God, is the hardening and destruction of the sinner. But it must not be forgotten that this hardening and destruction are not due to any positive efficiency of God—they are a self-hardening and destruction and are not due to any positive efficiency of God...” (790).

b. Objections to the doctrine of election with some responses:
   i. It is unjust to those who are not included in this purpose of salvation
      1. Election does not deal simply with people, but with guilty, sinful and condemned people.
      2. That any should be saved is pure grace.
      3. It is more honoring to God to be surprised that He saves any rather than to charge Him with injustice.
   ii. It represents God as partial in His dealings and a respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11)
      1. In context, Paul is teaching that you will be judged regardless of whether you are a Jew or a Gentile. (It is really a judgment passage!)
      2. Biblically, God has been a respecter of persons in the sense of giving to some what He has not given to others (Ezek. 16:3-6; Luke 4:25-27; 1 Cor. 4:7)
   iii. It represents God as arbitrary
      1. It is not arbitrary on God’s part because His decisions are based on His perfect Knowledge, wisdom, love holiness, and total character
   iv. It tends to immorality by representing people’s salvation as independent of their own obedience.
1. No, God has ordained the means as well as the end (Rom. 10:13-15)

v. It inspires pride in those who think themselves elect.

1. Pride is possible only in those who pervert the doctrine. It actually should humble us, since we have no reason to believe that we in any way led to our own salvation.

vi. It discourages effort for the sinner’s salvation, either on his own part or on the part of others.

1. Love and gratitude to God for His grace are the greatest motives to service.
2. Moreover, the means to the end, as well as the end, have been ordained by God.
3. Moreover, those who believe in election (except for the hyper form) have historically been evangelistic and missionary minded.
4. Election is a secret decree (we just don’t know who is elect, so we must be evangelistic to everyone!)

vii. The decree of election implies a decree of reprobation

1. Election in Scripture is always presented as a source of good


c. Perspectives on the doctrine of election (Summary)’

i. God has a sovereign right to bestow more grace upon one subject than upon another b/c grace is unmerited favor (Mat. 20:12-15; Rom. 9:15, 16, 20-23).

ii. God exercised this right in the choice of Israel (Ezek. 16; Psalm 147:19-20; Rom. 3:1ff).

iii. God must have some other reason than that of saving as many as possible (Mt. 11:21; Mark 4:12).

iv. The word, “elect,” means “choosing,” “selection,” “appointment.” (Rm. 8:33)

v. The Bible teaches that it is God’s purpose to save certain individuals (Mark 13:27; Acts 13:48; 2 Thess. 2:13; Cf. Eph. 1).

vi. The Bible teaches that God’s choice is a matter of unmerited favor, bestowed in eternity past (2 Tim. 1:9).

vii. The Bible teaches that the Father has given certain persons to the Son to be His possession (John 6:37).

viii. The Bible teaches that the uniting of believers to Christ is due wholly to God (John 6:44).

ix. The Bible teaches that God’s foreknowledge of a person is God’s setting His special attention/love on him (Gen. 4:1; Amos 3:2; Rom. 11:2; 8:29).

x. The Bible teaches that regeneration is effected not by means of man’s will, but of God’s will (John 1:13; James 1:18).

xi. The Bible teaches that repentance comes from the grace of God (2 Tim. 2:25).

xii. The Bible teaches that belief and faith come from the grace of God (John 6:65).

xiii. The Bible teaches that salvation in its entirety comes from the grace of God (Eph. 2:8-9).

d. Balancing the Truths about Election (W. Hansen)

i. Every person is totally dead in trespasses and sins—Rom. 3

ii. No one deserves salvation; everyone is saved by grace—Rom. 3:20

iii. No one seeks true salvation; God does the seeking—Rom. 3:11

iv. If God did not seek after sinners, no one would be saved.

v. Everyone could be saved; God prohibits no one—Rom. 3:17, 18; 2 Thess. 2:12

vi. Hell is a place of punishment for wicked people; no innocent person goes to hell.

vii. God is just. He never acts unjustly; it is impossible for Him to send an innocent person to hell.

viii. People go to hell because they’re wicked sinners and have not believed on Christ; they could have believed.

ix. Election is not to keep people out of Heaven, but to get them into it—Rom. 9

x. Though man’s will is depraved, it is not inoperative. It is in fact absolutely warped against God. When a person is saved, he responds to God’s working in his life, and he
intellectually believes. This is an act which all unsaved could do, and are responsible to do.

xi. God truly wants everyone to be saved, but has not decreed they must.

xii. Regarding God’s elective grace, there’s a difference between certainty and necessity. His election assures that some will be saved…This is better than saying that His election demands some will be saved.

xiii. God’s plan of salvation includes Christians witnessing and leading sinners to Christ—Rom. 10:14-15.

xiv. These words will never be spoken at the Great White Throne Judgment:

1. “I would have been saved, but I couldn’t.”
2. “I tried to be saved, but God wouldn’t let me.”

Charles Spurgeon on 1 Timothy 2:3-4: “It is quite certain that when we read that God will have all men to be saved it does not mean that he wills it with the force of a decree or a divine purpose, for, if he did, then all men would be saved. He willed to make the world, and the world was made; he does not so will the salvation of all men, for we know that all men will not be saved. Terrible as the truth is, yet it is certain from holy writ that there are men who, in consequence of their sin and their rejection of the Savior, will go away into everlasting punishment where shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. . . . . There will be a dreadful hell as well as a glorious heaven, and there is no decree to the contrary.

“What then? Shall we try to put another meaning into the text than that which it fairly bears. I trow [think] not. You must, most of you, be acquainted with the general method in which our older Calvinistic friends (John Gil types) deal with this text. ‘All men,’ say they, ‘that is some men’: as if the Holy Ghost could not have said ‘some men’ if he had meant some men. ‘All men,’ say they; ‘that is, some of all sorts of men’: as if the Lord could not have said ‘all sorts of men’ if he had meant that. The Holy Ghost by the apostle has written ‘all men,’ and unquestionably he means all men. I know how to get rid of the force of the ‘alls’ according to that critical method which some time ago was very current, but I do not see how it can be applied here with due regard to truth.

“I was reading just now the exposition of a very able doctor [probably John Gill] who explains the text so as to explain it away; he applies grammatical gunpowder to it, and explodes it by way of expounding it. I thought when I read his exposition that it would have been a very capital comment upon the text if it had read, ‘Who will not have all men to be saved, nor come to a knowledge of the truth.’ Had such been the inspired language every remark of the learned doctor would have been exactly in keeping, but as it happens to say, ‘Who will have all men to be saved,’ his observations are more than a little out of place.

“My love of consistency with my own doctrinal views is not great enough to allow me knowingly to alter a single text of Scripture. I have great respect for orthodoxy, but my reverence for inspiration is far greater. I would sooner a hundred times over appear to be inconsistent with myself than be inconsistent with the word of God. I never thought it to be any very great crime to seem to be inconsistent with myself; for who am I that I should everlastingly be consistent? But I do think it a great crime to be so inconsistent with the word of God that I should want to lop away a bough or even a twig from so much as a single tree of the forest of Scripture. God forbid that I should cut or shape even in the least degree, any divine expression. So runs the text, and so we must read it, ‘God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.’

“Does not the text mean that it is the wish of God that men should be saved? The word ‘wish’ gives as much force to the original as it really requires, and the passage should run thus—‘whose wish it is that all men should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.’ As it is my wish that it should be so, as it is your wish that it might be so, so it is God’s wish that all men should be saved; for, assuredly, he is not less benevolent than we are.” (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, vol. 26, 1880, pp. 49-50.)