

LESSONS ON PREDESTINATION #2
"Predestination - Its Definition"
(Scriptures from NKJV)

NOTE: much of the text is quoted directly or paraphrased from the book, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* by Lorraine Boettner).

Today's lesson will be the second in a series of lessons on the topic of Predestination. The title of today's lesson is "Predestination - Its Definition." It is our goal in this study to achieve two things. First, to make the doctrine clear so that it is understood, which is for the benefit of those who have never been exposed to this doctrine in a Biblical and logical manner. Secondly, it is to present to the opponents of Predestination what it really states, because there are so many unjustifiable remarks that are made against the doctrine. That is, the advocates that hold to the doctrine of Predestination do not believe certain things that are ascribed to them.

Before we get into the lesson today, I wish to make a qualification for those who are listening to the message, in the presentation of the first lesson, which was an Introduction and Brief History, I made the comment that God had given me an inquiring mind, which caused me to examine all of the details before I was satisfied on a matter. Then off the top of my head, I used the crude illustration that "I read the *Inquirer*." After the lesson closed and before the class was dismissed, my wife made the statement that she wanted to make it very clear that in our 51 years of marriage, we had never purchased a copy of the *Inquirer*. So I want those who listen on the internet to know that I am not a reader of the *Inquirer*. Whatever you see on the front page of the *Inquirer*, the exact opposite is true.

In the last setting, we looked at the broad scope of the churches that have believed and taught this through the centuries. They consisted of the Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, the Calvinistic Methodists, the Church of England, the churches in Europe, France, and on and on. This is not some doctrine that just a handful of people who belonged to a cult held to, but it has been widely held throughout the mainstream churches, even going back into the Roman Catholic Church with the writings and teachings of Saint Augustine in the Fourth Century.

Now, today in dealing with the definition, we will begin first with the Confessions of Faith as how they are stated. Listen very carefully and see if you do not discern some of the careful descriptions of the doctrine. First from the *Westminster Confession* which is used by the Presbyterian and Reformed churches, therein we read:

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

I will define what is meant by "secondary causes." You have a secondary cause when God may create natural laws like the wind and the rain, and we say that the rain washed away someone's house, or the rain caused it. That is a secondary cause. But before that rain could ever do that, the primary cause was that God had to have ordained it. So God works through secondary causes. He works through animals; He works through plants; He works through human instruments; and He works through angelic instruments. All of these are secondary causes, so that the doctrine of Predestination does not deny secondary causes, and it certainly does not ascribe to God that He is a sinner or is the author of sin. Nor in any way does Predestination infringe upon the moral agency of creatures, be they men or angels. Picking up again the quote from the *Westminster Confession*:

Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath He not decreed any thing because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

Again we state that God has ordained whatsoever comes to pass. He is the originator of those conditions - it was not that He merely looked out and foresaw certain conditions taking place, and took that into accountability.

The Confession of the Baptists in England known as the *Baptist Confession of 1689* is almost identical to the *Westminster Confession*. I will read it for confirmation purposes.

God hath decreed in Himself from all eternity by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably all things whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin, nor have fellowship with any therein, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established. In which appears His wisdom in disposing all things and power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree. Although God knows whatever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet He hath not decreed anything because He foresaw what is future, or as that which would come to pass upon conditions.

There are other statements in that Confession. When the settlers came over from Europe, it was decided that rather than having a European 1689 confession, a large number of Baptists adopted what is known as the *Philadelphia Confession of Faith*. I don't feel it is necessary to read this confession because it is virtually identical to the *Westminster* and the *London Confessions*. It was this *Philadelphia Confession* which was so influential among the Baptists in the South, and was used for many years, particularly in the Charleston Association. It was modified later by the *New Hampshire Confession of Faith*, which is a good confession that maintains the essential ingredients, but is more simplified than the *Philadelphia Confession*. In contrast to this, there was a denomination that was founded in response and objection to this doctrine of Predestination, and that group calls themselves the "Freewill Baptists." It is not that it is a group of individual persons who believe in free

will, but it is an actual denomination that did not want any identification with the doctrine of Predestination in the causing of salvation and of the cause of a person to persevere in salvation. So those in the Freewill Baptists deny Predestination unto salvation, and they also deny that a person who is once truly regenerated and saved, will persevere. They emphasize that it is possible for a person to fall away, so that belief became a division among the Baptists.

Now listen as we present several statements here together, some that I have reworded, some that we have taken directly from Dr. Boettner's work on *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, and several quotes that we have selected to go along with this.

The doctrine of Predestination represents the purpose of God as absolute and unconditional, independent of the whole finite creation, and as originating solely in the eternal counsel of His will. God is seen as the great and mighty King who has appointed the course of nature and who directs the course of history even down to its minutest details. Remember our Lord made reference to even the hairs on our head are numbered. You don't get much more minute than that. His decree is eternal, unchangeable, holy, wise, and sovereign. It extends not merely to the course of the physical world, but to every event in human history from the creation of the world, to the final judgment, and includes all the activities of saints and angels in heaven and of reprobates and demons in hell. It embraces the whole scope of creaturely existence, through time and eternity, comprehending at once all things that ever were or will be in their causes, conditions, successions, and relations. Everything outside of God Himself is included in this all-embracing decree, and that very naturally since all other beings owe their existence and continuance in existence to His creative and sustaining power. It provides a providential control under which all things are hastening to the end of God's determining; and the goal is, "One far-off divine event, Toward which the whole creation moves."

This is a lot to reflect about - that from the first of God's speaking the created order into being, until the final judgment and throughout all eternity, every minute detail has been pre-ordained by God, so that nothing comes into effect that will cancel out or cause any of His purposes to be thwarted or prevented to be brought to pass.

Since the finite creation through its whole range exists as a medium through which God manifests His glory, and since it is absolutely dependent on Him, it of itself could originate no conditions which would limit or defeat the manifestation of that glory.

Do you see that? If there was one condition that God left out, you could see how that condition could begin to offset and cancel out things which God has ordained. Here is a statement, "From all eternity God has purposed to do just exactly what He is doing." If you asked me today, what in the world is God doing? I would reply, "Just what He wants to do." He determined what He was going to do this day before there was ever a single act of

creation. That includes what is going on in your life and my life this day. That does not mean that He endorses the moral activities of all of our thoughts and deeds which are contrary to His revealed will, but they are still all included in that. Joseph said, **"You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good."** (Genesis 50:20). Joseph's brothers were accountable and responsible for what they did, but they only did what God had ordained before the foundation of the world. Now if something negative or sorrowful takes place this day, then it is a great consolation to the child of God to lay hold of this doctrine. For **"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."** (Romans 8:28). Calvinism believes that things do not happen at random, but they happen according to purpose. Even though this negative or sorrowful happening may bring great sadness to our hearts, yet we can believe that one day we will be enabled to see that God's purpose was for our good and for His glory. God is the sovereign ruler of the universe and does, **"According to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth."** (Daniel 9:45). God is not just sovereign in heaven, He is also doing His will among the inhabitants here on earth, and **"No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"** In other words, "God, what are you doing?" We can't question Him. Since the universe had its origin in God and depends upon Him for its continued existence, it must be in all its parts and in all times, subject to His control so that nothing can come to pass contrary to what He expressively decrees or permits. Everything must be under His control in order for His purposes to work out. Thus the eternal purpose is represented as an act of sovereign predestination or foreordination, and those words will be used interchangeably throughout our study, and unconditioned by any subsequent fact or change in time. Hence, it is represented as being the basis of the divine foreknowledge of all future events and not conditioned by foresight of those events. I am going to repeat that again. Predestination, foreordination is represented as being the basis for divine foreknowledge. **"Known to God from eternity are all His works."** (Acts 15:18). In other words, God knows what He is going to do. His foreknowledge is aware of His purposes, and it is not, as our opponents try to flip it around and say, that God merely foresees and then He says, "I think I will include this in my purpose." Do you see the difference? The Calvinistic theologians of the various denominations logically and consistently applied to the spheres of creation and providence those great principles which were later set forth in their major confessions of faith. They saw the hand of God in every event in all of history and in all the workings of the physical nature so that the world was the complete realization in time of the eternal ideal. There were many contingencies in which God could have done this or that, but He did not. But in His infinite wisdom, He ordained that which was best. So the ideal is what God has coming forth to pass in the world as we see it. Now we may think that if we had the ability to design these things, we would never have designed it like it is working out, but neither do we have all the attributes of God. If God wants to make a display of all

of His attributes, and of those attributes, there is wrath and justice and judgment, those would never have been known had not sin entered into the world. Grace would never have been known. We would have known of His goodness, but we would never have known of His grace. We could see His power as the **"Heavens declare the glory of God"** (Psalm 19:1), but we would never have known the rest of the attributes of God. So God included in His ideal to reveal the perfections of His glory all things that are now working together that are under that scope. That is an amazing thing to try to comprehend. The world as a whole and all of its parts and movements and changes was brought into a unity by the governing, all pervading, all harmonizing activity of the divine will. And its purpose was to manifest the divine glory. While their conception of that was that of a divine ordering of the whole course of history even down to the smallest detail, they were especially concerned with its relation to man's salvation. Calvin, the brilliant systematic theologian of the Reformation, put the matter thus:

Predestination we call the eternal decree of God, by which He has determined in Himself, what He would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with a similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some and eternal death for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say he is predestinated either to life or to death.

We will see how that harmonizes out as the study unfolds. We will see how the different means that are brought to achieve the end of eternal life and eternal torment, and what takes place in that. Martin Luther was just as zealous for absolute Predestination as was Calvin. It is shown in his Commentary on Romans where he states:

All things whatever arise from, and depend on, the divine appointment; whereby it was foreordained who should receive the word of life, and who should disbelieve it; who should be delivered from their sins, and who should be hardened in them; and who should be justified and who should be condemned.

Phillip Melanchthon, which was Martin Luther's co-worker and close friend, makes this statement:

All things turn out according to divine predestination; not only the works we do outwardly, but even the thoughts we think inwardly.

He goes on to say:

There is no such thing as chance, or fortune; nor is there a readier way to gain the fear of God, and to put our whole trust in Him, than to be thoroughly versed in the doctrine of Predestination.

Are we beginning to get a little grasp how the leaders of these churches that came from them, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and the Baptists, were influenced by this? This teaching and belief was not something that was just held by a few. You will notice that they are not

ashamed to confess it, down to the details of it. Order is heaven's first law. The Apostle Paul stated, "**Let all things be done decently and in order.**" (I Corinthians 14:40). Then could we expect any less from our perfect Creator? Take for example that if you did not hold to Predestination, but yet you held to the creation by God, would you not have to reach some type of conclusion that God must have gotten things out of order. Look how messed up things are. The order is the first of heaven's laws. From the divine viewpoint there is unbroken order and progress from the first beginnings of the creation to the end of the world and the ushering in of the kingdom of heaven in all its glory. The divine purpose and plan is nowhere defeated nor interrupted; that which in many cases appears to us to be defeat is not really such, but only appears to be, because our finite and imperfect nature does not permit us to see all the parts in the whole nor the whole in all its parts.

A young lady looked up at me at the funeral of her firstborn child that was stillborn. It was a cold winter day when I made a few remarks inside the tent at the cemetery. We were getting ready to leave when she looked up at me and said, "Pastor, where was God at when my son died?" I said this often, if you had assigned me that question, it would have taken me a great deal of time to try to come up with some type of an answer, but I just blurted out, "He was at the same place He was at when His own son died." She said, "It is alright, Pastor." Then that little casket was placed out there beneath the soil awaiting the resurrection. Where is God at? He is everywhere and in everything, working all things together for our good and His glory. If at one glance we could take in the mighty spectacle of the natural world and the complex drama of human history, we should see the world as one harmonious unit manifesting the glorious perfections (or attributes) of God.

I get a little glimpse of this when I see scenes from outer space looking back down upon this one little planet. In seeing all the weather systems going, and then at night, all of these lights throughout the various parts of the earth as it is turning, it gives you a whole lot bigger perspective of God's creation than where I am standing here in this one spot. Try to expand that into the mind of God as He sees things the end from the beginning in one, and you see then that what appears to be out of place and in disharmony, it is not that at all. One day we will be able to be brought in on that in a much greater light when we stand before Him in the eternal state and understand Him better.

Though the world seems to run at random, and affairs to be huddled together in blind confusion and rude disorder, yet, God sees and knows how all the causes and effects are so linked together that He can so govern them to produce a perfect harmony out of all the seemingly discords and conflicts. When our lives get knocked upside down in this way and that, and we don't know where to turn, it is consoling to know that God is still working and has not lost His control or His ability. This understanding would correct the error that

somehow God has, what is called in this teaching, a perfect will for all of our lives, and that it is up to us to find that perfect will. Have you ever been exposed to that teaching? That if you will just pray and dedicate and re-dedicate and deny yourself, you will then be able to be brought into this perfect will of God. That is a miserable way to have to live, when after all the praying and self-denial, it is very disheartening to a Christian when things are still not changing. However, we can see that God does have a perfect will, does He not? It is called His plan, and His plan is not that God loves me and has a wonderful plan for my life, and I just have to discover it, but it is God has a plan for my life, and He has ordained all the details in that plan from the moment that I was conceived until I end up in glory. Take heart in that understanding.

The writer of Ecclesiastes makes this statement. **"He hath made everything beautiful in its time."** (Ecclesiastes 3:11). In the vision which the prophet Isaiah saw in Isaiah chapter 6, the seraphim sang, **"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: The whole earth is full of His glory."** Now if we have the idea that the negative things, the pain, suffering, death, and wars, are all of the devil, and God has absolutely nothing to do with these things, how could Isaiah be told, the whole earth is full of His glory? When seen from this divine viewpoint, every event in the course of human affairs in all ages and in all nations, no matter how insignificant it may appear to us, has its exact place in the development of the eternal plan. The mosquito bite, the bee sting, a little insect stings at the right place and a healthy person dies. Surely you don't mean that these things like an ant bite are under the control of God and that He had something to do with these things. If He didn't, how would He work out His plan and purpose for that person that died? Everything has got to be included in this, if the end result is going to be such as God has ordained. Many instances might be given to show that events of the greatest importance have often depended upon what at the time appeared to be the most fortuitous and trivial events. The inter-relation and connection of events is such that if one of these were to be omitted or modified, all that follows soon would be modified or prevented. Hence the certainty of the divine administration rests on the foreordination of God extending to all events both great and small. Take for example, the little worm that ate Jonah's gourd. The text said that God prepared a worm. What if that worm had somehow avoided the control of God and said, "Now wait a minute, I'm not going to go over there and eat that gourd. I'm going to go over here and eat this one." Do you see how Jonah would never have learned the full character of God? God prepared a big fish, a great storm, and all through the book of Jonah, it was God preparing, God preparing, etc. If any of those things, even the smallest of these things, could take place apart from the preparation of God, the end result would not occur. The course of history, then, is infinitely complex, yet a unit in the sight of God. This truth, together with the reason for it, is very beautifully summed up in the *Shorter Catechism* which states:

The decrees of God are, His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

A great theologian and politician, Abraham Kuyper, who is now deceased, was recognized as one of the outstanding Calvinistic theologians in his age. He gives his observation on Predestination.

The determination of the existence of all things to be created, or what is to be camellia or buttercup, nightingale or crow, hart or swine, and equally among men, the determination of our own persons, whether one is to be born as boy or girl, rich or poor, dull or clever, white or colored, or even as Abel and Cain, is the most tremendous predestination conceivable in heaven or on earth; and still we see it taking place before our eyes every day, and we ourselves are subject to it in our entire personality; our entire existence, our very nature, our position in life being entirely dependent on it. This all-embracing predestination, the Calvinist places, not in the hands of man, and still less in the hand of blind natural force, but in the hand of Almighty God, sovereign Creator and Possessor of heaven and earth; and it is in the figure of the potter and the clay that Scripture has from the time of the prophets expounded to us this all-dominating election. Election in creation, election in providence, and so election also to eternal life; election in the realm of grace as well as in the realm of nature.

Why do you have the color of skin that you do? Was it because you stayed on or out of the sun? Why were you born in the United States of America? Why are you rich or poor? Why are you intelligent or not so intelligent? Why do you have chronic health problems and others do not? Somebody answer that question for me. Nearly every Christian quotes the statement, "I am what I am by the grace of God." However, the vast majority of current Christians don't believe that even though they may say it. If you are what you are by the grace of God, then you must believe in Predestination. There were two preachers walking down the street one day and there was a drunk in the gutter with all of his vomit and everything. One of the preachers turned to the other one and said, "There I am but for the grace of God." The drunk looked up at the two preachers and said, "Here I am but for the grace of God." That is, the preacher didn't want to be a drunk, and the drunk didn't want to be a preacher. The people that perish are left to get what they want, and those who are destined for eternal life are given a will that is changed to desire what God wants. We have no adequate appreciation of this world order until we see it as one mighty system through which God is working out all of His plans. Calvin's clear and consistent theism gave him a keen sense of the infinite majesty of the Almighty Person in whose hands all things lay, and made him a very pronounced predestinarian. In this doctrine of the unconditional and eternal purpose of the omniscient and omnipotent God, he found the program of the history of the fall and redemption of the human race. He ventured boldly but reverently upon the brink of that abyss of speculation where all human knowledge is lost in mystery and

adoration.

Do you believe that God has chosen you unto salvation? Why? Do you believe some are not? Now why did God choose the one and not the other? Give me the reason. We say He did so, but why? We do not know the why. That is how you answer someone who asks you to explain why God chose this one and He didn't choose this one; why He chose Peter and didn't choose Judas. I can't explain that, but why can't I do that? I'm not God, and don't know everything God knows. How then do I know what I know about God? It is in His revelation, and His revelation does not explain to us why some are chosen and some are left. Therefore, we must stop where the book stops and not try to speculate and go further to explain these things. We do know that He did not look out through history and foresee us doing something that another person didn't do, and on that basis He chose us. That makes the cause to be in us. The Scriptures make it clear that the cause is not in us, but in Him. I repeat again, as to why He chose one person and not another, that is the mystery that must be left in the infinite majesty of God Himself. We must learn contentment with that. We don't have to try to apologize to our opponents and try to explain all of these things, because we must stop where the Scriptures stop.

The Reformed, or the Calvinistic faith, offers to us a great God who is really the sovereign Ruler of the Universe. Its grand principle is the contemplation of the universe of God revealed in Christ. The Calvinistic system focuses on Christ as the center of God's purposes. In all places, in all times, from eternity to eternity, Calvinism sees God, and when you see God, you see Predestination, you see foreordination.

Now our age in the United States in which we live in right now emphasizes a certain kind of a government which is called a democracy. What is the emphasis on democracy? What makes it distinct? It is that everyone has a vote. Therefore, it is the people who determine who the next leader is going to be. Democracy does not like Calvinism because it is believed that Calvinism infringes upon the "freedom of the choice." What has burst forth in the last 50 to 60 years regarding human rights is that all individuals are expressing their freedom from God rather than being content with where God has placed them. They feel that they have been wronged as such, so democracy opposes Predestination. Do you then see why those like myself, who hold to Predestination, do not make up the majority of Christian leaders today. When this truth was so held vividly almost to a person in Europe and in England, what kind of a government did they recognize? It was a monarchy or ruled by a king who governed according to his good pleasure. So as time goes on and as the country drifts more and more into the idea of personal human freedom, independent of God, that we don't need God, then you will see the belief in this doctrine becoming less and less popular until it will be viewed as a hindrance to the progress of the United States of

America, and wherever it is found, the laws will need to be made to eradicate it. That is what is happening in human history. The tendency is to exalt man and to give God only a very limited part in the affairs of the world. At the present time we still have a prayer breakfast in Washington D.C., but what God is prayed to in that prayer breakfast? It is a generic God, where everybody can pray, "Oh God, bless us today." Whatever your particular view of God is, has to be allowing everybody to be in unity, and open to pluralism. He must be a generic God, not the God of heaven and earth who has created all things and is ordaining all things, who raises up kings, and pulls down kings, who raises up nations and pulls down nations. We would still have the idea of a God who raised up the United States of America in His providence, but we don't like to hear prophets or teachers like myself remind us that God can pull down this nation, and He appears to be in the process of doing so.

We have given a definition of the confessions and have looked at several of the leaders and theologians of the different denominations that have held to this doctrine. Now let us see what the Scriptures say regarding this doctrine. We have chosen a few Scriptures (NKJV) at random that set forth the concept of Predestination or foreordination as being explicitly stated in Scripture.

Acts 4:27-28 - *"For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done."*

Do you see in this text the secondary causes that were there? All these leaders from different political entities who hated one another, all got together to do something about this Man, Jesus. But unknown to themselves, they were doing what God had foreordained for them to do. What they did, they did freely, because they hated Him, but it was under the control and ordination of God.

Ephesians 1:5 - *"having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will"*

Ephesians 1:11 - *"In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will"*

Romans 8:29 - *"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."*

I Corinthians 2:7 - *"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory"*

Remember, these individuals like Paul, the Apostles and early Christians were not looked up to on the ladder of popularity. They were looked down upon by the culture as the scum of the earth.

Acts 2:23 - *"Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death"*

You see, whose hands put Jesus on the cross? Were they not secondary causes? These individuals who have been mentioned in Acts chapter 4, were merely gathered together ***"to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done."*** The Roman soldiers grabbed Jesus, beat Him, and nailed Him to a cross with their hands, but their hands could not move without the hand of God controlling that circumstance. That particular circumstance was working out according to the pre-ordained purpose of God.

Acts 13:48 - *"Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed."*

There are actually some versions of the Bible out there that change this around to say, "As many as wanted eternal life, were ordained." You see, that is somebody who sees what this text is saying and is wanting to control what it means. What is the text saying? Which comes first, the appointment or the believing? It says that those who were appointed believed. It is not those who God saw would believe that He appointed. Do we grasp that? That is just in one text. Wouldn't you think that would be enough to settle the issue of whether or not that the Holy Spirit's work in regeneration must precede and cause our faith rather than holding that it is our faith which brings about our regeneration?

Ephesians 2:10 - *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."*

Romans 9:23 - *"and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory"*

What is the significance of that word, "beforehand?" Why is that word put in there? It is to set out Predestination. God, before the world in His eternal decree, ordained us to display the riches of His glory.

Psalms 139:16 - *"Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written. The days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them."*

I will ask you this question. Pretend with me that you have never heard of the Bible, and try to wipe out all of your thoughts about being a Christian. You have never read the Bible, and you read a number of these verses that we have alluded to this morning. What would your thoughts be?

Wade: That the Scriptures proclaim that there is a God who is in control of everything. He is in control of everything.

Frankie: What if what I am reading is actually true - that there is a God who I have no knowledge of? What if this is absolutely true? Wow, this is a slap in the face. Then I am accountable for my actions, when I really didn't think I would be accountable at all. Have I ever been wrong in my life? What if I've been wrong and there is a God?

Jim: One response is that God is all in control. Another one, if this is true, there have got to be some changes made.

Pam: I was going to say as a non-Christian, I think I would be so overwhelmed with the information. It would take a lot of processing. I don't think I would even have any kind of thing to say.

Rhonda: My thoughts as a non-Christian would be "fear."

Cindy: I think I would probably be like Pam, a lot to process, until I could do more research.

Jim Gunn: I would say this was part of my testimony, that when the Lord began to deal with me, I began to read the Bible, and I began to see that it was the truth and I didn't want it to be true. Because if it was true, it condemned me. I fought it and fought it, and the Lord won.

When I taught this lesson in another setting, I will never forget what one fellow said. This fellow is a believer, but I asked him this question as an unbeliever and he said, "I would hate a God like that." Is not that the natural man's instinct - he does not want a God who will affect our conduct and the way we make decisions. That fellow said, "I am going to play the devil's advocate - I would hate a God like that." The old Indian chief replied to the question of an early missionary as to why he had never become a Christian. He said, "I don't like your God." The missionary said, "Why?" "Because He is always watching me." Let's conclude right there.