

Freedom is the capacity to exercise _____²; free _____³: "The only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good, in our own way. (John Stuart Mill)

Note the last six lines of p. 247 in *IF GOD IS GOOD*⁴: R. Alcorn

Consider the practical illustrations of versions of freedom and their consequences or outcome: "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven:...**a time to plant...**" (Ecclesiastes 3:2).

Failure to discern the time to plant in Solomon's day brought considerable distress--*not freedom*. **There is such a thing as planting time in a human life that is very advantageous--very often those favorable planting times are in younger years. But we need not limit planting to agricultural planting. Planting skills, planting character, planting responsibility:** For instance:

1. Proverbs 19:18 What do you think he means by "while there is hope"? Isn't one time as good as the next?

2. Proverbs 24:30-33, 21:25 How did Solomon know it was a slothful man that owned the vineyard and field?

What, if anything, is the slothful man free to harvest from his property in its present state?

Laziness was the downfall of the slothful man: what is the root of laziness? Is it not a lazy man's *version of freedom and choice*

2 choice

3 will

4 We may freely follow our desires, but this is not entirely good news. Why not? Because *we lack freedom to dictate our desires*. We are not innocent beings inclined to choose whatever is best. We are not even morally neutral beings, objectively weighing and measuring our options. **We are congenitally selfish.** Jesus said of the human heart, "From within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean'" (Mark 7:21-23).

making? "...a little slumber, a little sleep, a little folding of the hands..." one little choice after another?

3. "Moses said...Shall your brethren go to war, and shall you sit here? ...behold, you have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:6,23).

Moses warned the children of Gad, the children of Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh that if they chose to sin (by not going to battle--a sin of omission, a sin of passive neglect), that their sin would surely "find them out."

How do such sins find us out? _____

p. 238: *IF GOD IS GOOD: "Free Will" and Meaningful Choice*
Note the paragraph headings: glance over to p. 242 "reasonable self-determination" or "meaningful choice" better describe the true state of things than the common term "free will."

Jonathan Edwards defined free will as "the ability to choose as one pleases." In that sense, a sinner has free will, but given his sinful nature (which "minds the flesh") he is not free to ... live righteously without God's empowerment [p. 243 top].

p. 245 God gives us choices to test us *and to grow us*.

p. 246 If there is no human freedom of choice, but instead, everything is precisely unalterably preordained, then my sinful choices are really God's sinful choices since He precisely and unalterably preordained it.

p. 247 last three excellently worded paragraphs are important.

