

Westminster Confession of Faith: Session Ten  
WCF 9 – *Of Free Will*

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13 NKJV).

- I. Introduction  
Battleground: God’s Sovereignty and Man’s Responsibility/Freedom

It is Reformed theology that successfully (and biblically) holds fully both to God’s sovereignty *and* to man’s responsibility.

- II. WCF Chapter IX
  - a. *Free Will of Man (9.1)*  
Definition of Will

Will vs. Choice

Second Helvetic Confession 9.3: “In regard to evil or sin, man is not forced by God or by the devil but does evil by his own free will, and in this respect he has a most free will.”

- b. *Unfallen Will (9.2)*  
Man in His Fourfold State  
Pre-fall—Able to sin (*posse peccare*)

Post-fall—Unable not to sin (*non posse non peccare*)

Regenerate—Able not to sin (*posse non peccare*)

Glorified—Unable to sin (*non posse peccare*)

- c. *Unregenerate Will (9.3)*  
Unable not to sin (*non posse non peccare*)

Augustine: “To will is of nature; to will *aright* is of grace.”

The Will and the Affections

Ezekiel 36:24-27

- d. *Regenerate Will (9.4)*  
Able not to sin (*posse non peccare*)

Not New Will, but New Desires/Affections

1 John 1:8

Romans 7:14-25

- e. *Glorified Will (9.5)*  
Unable to sin (*non posse peccare*)

Worthy of Meditation!

#### Helpful Resources

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), II.ii-iii; pp. 255-309.

Hodge, Archibald Alexander. *A Commentary on the Confession of Faith*. Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1869; pp. 219-230.

———. *Outlines of Theology*. Rewritten and Enlarged. New York, NY: Hodder & Stoughton, 1878; pp. 338-347.

R. C. Sproul, *Truths We Confess: A Systematic Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith*, Revised Edition. (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2019), pp. 231-238.

Van Dixhoorn, Chad. *Confessing the Faith: A Reader's Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith*. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2014; pp. 135-144.