

T-U-L-I-P

NICE FLOWER

BAD DOCTRINE

T-U-L-I-P is the acrostic representing an erroneous interpretation of God's grace in the Biblical plan of salvation. It was formulated by Augustine (AD 354-430), and it was made popular by John Calvin (AD 1509-64). Augustine was one of the founding fathers of the Roman Catholic Church, believing in baptismal regeneration and the saving ability of the Lord's Supper. John Calvin, like Martin Luther, was steeped in these Catholic views of sacramental salvation and, being a prolific writer, perfected them along with the grace/TULIP doctrines in his volumes referred to as *Calvin's Institutes*. The Bible teaches that we are not saved by good works, or righteous deeds (sacraments) which we have done (Titus 3:5), therefore, these were unregenerate men with no Holy Spirit to guide them--religious, but not saved. They were "*false brethren*" (Gal. 2:4).

Although much has been written on this subject, the purpose of this booklet is to give a succinct overview of the TULIP teachings. These teachings are not only contrary to Scripture, but, as we will see, are actually demeaning God and His loving plan for mankind. The meaning of the TULIP acrostic, according to John Calvin, is basically as follows:

T – Total Depravity: Every human being is totally depraved because of the fall and totally unable to do anything spiritually good, i.e., man cannot “believe” the gospel or, of his free will, exercise saving “faith.” Mankind has only free will to sin.

U – Unconditional Election: God’s decision to “elect” the few that He would save from eternal torment was not determined by, or conditioned upon, anything that man would do. The rest of mankind, including babies, God does not want saved (see “T” above).

L – Limited Atonement: Jesus’ atoning death and suffering in Hades is not offered to the world, but is limited to those few whom God decided He would elect to be saved.

I – Irresistible Grace: The Holy Spirit “irresistibly” creates within those few whom God the Father has “elected,” a new heart or a new nature. He “regenerates” them before they are able to believe the gospel, irresistibly, whether they want it or not, even if they have no Bible knowledge.

P – Perseverance of the Saints: Those who are truly saved can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere (bear fruit--good works) therein to the end. If they don’t persevere--have no “good works,” they weren’t saved to begin with—they just thought they were.

We are going to look into the Bible in the following pages to see if this TULIP view of the Bible actually makes any sense at all. We will use an adjusted form of the acrostic TULIP to help you remember the points.

T – Total Disparity

As one studies the Bible, it doesn't take long to find example after example of the disparity or contradiction between "total depravity" and what the Bible actually teaches. In Genesis 4:6-7, Cain is asked, "*Why are you angry?*" and encouraged to "*do well.*" God also tells Cain that "*sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.*" If Cain is "totally depraved," why does God tell him to do things he can't do, i.e. "do well" and "master sin?" If Cain is one of the "elect," he certainly doesn't "persevere" to the end.

God declares in Ezekiel 18:23, "*Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked,*" declares the Lord, "*rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?*" Why would God tell the wicked man to "*turn from his wicked ways*" if he is "totally depraved" and cannot do anything spiritually good?

Why would Jesus and John the Baptist tell people to "repent" if they couldn't change their minds? In Matthew 23:37 Jesus says (referring to Jerusalem), "*I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.*" Notice Jesus' sovereign will does not override the will of the Jews—they could have chosen Him. They were not unable, but "unwilling."

Why would Paul, in Acts 17:27, publicly preach to the Greeks in Athens concerning every man in every nation "*that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;*"?

Then Paul says clearly in verse 30, "*Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent*" ALL! EVERYWHERE!

Jesus, in Revelation 22:17, says, "*. . . let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.*" This is a salvation call for people to exercise their free will and choose salvation, if they *wish*.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden they received "the knowledge of good and evil." Nowhere does the Bible say that they became totally depraved. In fact, in Romans 1:28, we see "depravity"

happening to people as the fourth and final step of their rejecting the knowledge of God, which, according to Romans 1:19-20, 2:14-15, has been placed within the hearts of all human beings.

However, Calvin's god has "according to his good pleasure" created billions of people who cannot believe (totally depraved) and then judges and condemns them to an eternity of torment in the lake of fire because they did not believe. John 3:18

U - Unconditional Corruption

The riches of God's love are totally corrupted by the idea that God only loves a few—the chosen or the elect—and has no desire at all to see everyone saved. Even those limited in their Bible knowledge are usually familiar with John 3:16, which states, "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.*" Verse 17 goes on to say, "*For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him.*" These verses make it obvious that God wants the world saved, yet Calvinists insist they are only referring to the "world" of the elect. That is absolute nonsense.

In Mark 16:15-16 Jesus says to His disciples, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been (Holy Spirit) baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.*" Notice the "alls" and notice what saves—faith—to believe or not to believe. The choice is man's.

In II Peter 3:9, God's patience is pointed out and Peter states that God is ". . . *not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.*" Notice the words *any* and *all*. God wants *all* to believe. *All* can believe. *All* who choose to believe the gospel will be saved.

L - Limited Mercy

Calvinists like to use these verses referring to Pharaoh to prove that God is not willing to extend His mercy to everyone.

Romans 9:17-18 the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND

THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH.” So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

Why wouldn't Calvinists use Romans 11:31-32 (referring to the whole world)? It states: “. . . *so these [Jews] also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you [Gentiles] they also may now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.*”

Again, God says in verse 32, “*For God has shut up all in disobedience so **that He may show mercy to all.**” If we could get every Calvinist to memorize Romans 11:32, we'd be well on our way to eradicating this false theology of TULIP.*

I – Irresistible Sorrow

It is sorrowful that Calvinists continue to reject the clear teaching of the Holy Spirit as presented in the Bible. From Genesis 6:3, where the Holy Spirit is striving with mankind before the flood, to Acts 7:51, where Stephen accuses the Jews of resisting the Holy Spirit, we see clearly that the loving God who wants all to be saved does not impose His will on those who reject, by their free will, His grace and mercy.

The following verse is many times singled-out by Calvinists to prove “irresistible grace,” showing that the Father draws or drags people irresistibly to the Son:

John 6:44 *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.*

Notice, however, when verse 45 is added, that the Bible teaches us how God draws people to Jesus Christ:

John 6:44 *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.*

45 *It is written in the prophets, ‘AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. (God “draws” through the gospel. Jesus said, “If I be lifted up, will draw all men. . . Jn 12:34)*

They are all “taught;” the one who “hears and learns comes” to Jesus.

In Romans 9:2 Paul says, “*I have a great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart . . .*” for the Jewish people. His concern is reiterated in chapter 10, verse 2, where he states, “*I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.*” Most Calvinists have a zeal for God, but have been led astray by this false approach to the Bible, an approach that finds its roots in Augustine and the Catholic Church.

A good example of Calvinist irrational thinking in this area comes from Tom Ross in his book *Abandoned Truth: the Doctrines of Grace* where he states, “If every man possesses a free will that is powerful enough to resist the will of God in salvation, what would prevent that same man from choosing to resist the will of God in damnation at the Great White Throne of Judgment?”

P – Perseverance of the ‘Aints

No, there isn’t a typographical error in the heading above. Anyone who believes he must persevere (work) to the end to be saved from the flames of hell is not saved. The verses which Calvinists go to in order to prove that they must have works if they have genuine faith (the same verses that Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, and every other false “Christian” religion uses to try to prove their works gospel), are found in James 2, specifically verse 14, which says, “What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?”

The answer to the question, “Can that faith save him?” is, obviously “no.” But the real question is, “Save him from what?” The Calvinist would say, “Hell, of course!” He would be wrong. The verse is talking about being saved from what could be a “merciless” judgment that is coming for the born-again believer.

Let us read verse 14 in its context, “*So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment. What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?*” James 2:12-14

Do we need to be saved from the Judgment Seat of Christ? We see above that it could be “merciless.” Hebrews 10:30-31 states: “For we know Him who said, ‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.’ And again, ‘THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE.’ It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” In 2 Corinthians 5:10 God says that we will be “recompensed” for the “bad,” or evil that we have done. In 1 Corinthians 3:15 we see that some Christians will have all their works burned up and will “suffer loss,” and yet they are saved!

Christians should have good works, but how many do you have to have to make sure you are one of the “elect” and “chosen?” No real Calvinist knows how many, therefore he can’t know for sure that he is saved. He has to wait until the end to see. Calvinists R. C. Sproul and John Piper are clear in their writings that even they are not sure they are “elect.”

If we look to performance to determine salvation, we run into some real serious problems. For example, were Aaron and Miriam saved? They died in the wilderness. How about Moses? He couldn’t go into the Promised Land either and God even took his life (as with Aaron) as discipline for his sin. Deuteronomy 32:48-52

In I Samuel 11:24 we see that King Saul was the “chosen” of the Lord, yet he continually disobeyed the Lord’s precepts and angered Him to the point that He would choose another king, David, to replace Saul. Saul ends his life seeking wisdom from a witch and finally committing suicide. Samuel said Saul would be with him.

In I Kings 11:1-14 we read of King Solomon having 700 wives and 300 concubines, in violation of Deut. 17:17. He also practices idolatry and builds “high places” for his idolatrous wives. God becomes angry with Solomon and takes 10 tribes away from him and leaves 2 for his son, Rehoboam, only because of David, his father.

What about Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5; the “brother” in I Cor. 5; Hymenaeus and Alexander, I Tim. 1:20; the Sardis and Laodicean saints in Rev. 3? If the perseverance of the saints is true, then none of these people were saved. It should be obvious that this last point of TULIP is as much nonsense as all the rest, and totally unbiblical. It makes performance (works), along with faith, the criterion for saving faith--not faith alone. Works do not get us saved, keep us saved, or

prove that we're saved. We are saved by what we believe; **our** faith! "Faith comes by hearing" the word of GOD; **then** we are regenerated. Romans 10:14, 17

Romans 4:5 *But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,*

Conclusion

It should be obvious by now that what Paul declared about false Christians in 2 Corinthians 11:4 is true about Calvinists. Their sadistic god is not the God of the Bible. They have "another Jesus," a "different spirit," and a "different gospel." The God of the Bible loves the whole world--Augustine's and Calvin's god does not.

When Calvinists are confronted by the unbiblical contradictions of their position and the fact that their TULIP doctrines are actually distortions of Scripture, they often, as a last resort, turn to the "mysterious." That is, they will imply that because God's mind is higher than our mind, and His thoughts higher than our thoughts, therefore their unbiblical, illogical and the irrational doctrines should be accepted as if from God. However, 1 Corinthians 2:12 states "... we may **know** the things freely given to us by God," and 14:33 says that God is not a God of confusion. The gospel is simple enough for a child to understand. Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:15, "... *that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*"

At the end of his chapter on **John Calvin**, page 490, *The Reformation*, historian Will Durant makes this final and very insightful statement, "... *we will agree that even error lives because it serves some vital need. But we shall always find it hard to love the man [John Calvin] who darkened the human soul with the most absurd and blasphemous conception of God in all the long and honored history of nonsense.*"

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