

Lesson 1:

"The Significance of God's Sovereignty"

- I. Introduction
 - a. Definitions of the sovereignty of God:
 - i. Nelson's Bible Dictionary: "a theological term which refers to the unlimited power of God, who has sovereign control over the affairs of nature and history"
 - ii. New Unger's Bible Dictionary: "the term by which is expressed the supreme rulership of God"
 - iii. Jerry Bridges: " His constant care for and His absolute rule over creation for His own glory and the good of His people"
 - b. Some verses that reveal God's sovereignty:
 - i. Psalm 103:19
 - ii. Isaiah 14:27
 - iii. Isaiah 46:9, 10
 - iv. Dan 4:34-35
 - v. Ephesians 1:11

- II. **The sovereignty of God means that no _____, sickness, failure, or _____ can thwart His plans for you.**
 - a. Examples from Joseph's life (various passages, Gen. 45:5-9)
 - i. God did not work his plan *in spite of* these things – He worked His plan _____ these things.

 - ii. God is never the author of sin. He is never responsible for evil. But here's the great and mysterious truth about His providential work in our lives:

God often uses what He _____ to accomplish what He _____.

- b. God is sovereign over both good and bad . . .
 - i. Ecclesiastes 7:14
 - ii. Isaiah 45:7
 - iii. Lamentations 3:38

- c. God NEVER allows people to make decisions about us that undermine His plan for us. Ever!
 - i. Proverbs 19:21
 - ii. Proverbs 21:30
 - iii. Job 42:2
 - iv. Psalm 33:10, 11

III. The sovereignty of God means He can use the _____ events of your life to bring about His extraordinary purposes.

- a. One thing you won't find in Joseph's story: _____

- b. Here's what this teaches us: God is so sovereign, so in control of all things, so full of wisdom and power that if He so chooses He can carry out His will without any _____.

- c. Here's the principle for us: Faith is not expecting a miracle, faith is _____ to use whatever means He chooses to accomplish His good, pleasing, and perfect will for your life whether you can _____ it or not.

- d. Never underestimate what God can do with your _____!

IV. The sovereignty of God means that though you often can't _____ or understand what God is doing, you can always trust that it is for your _____ and His _____.

- a. The problem with God's sovereign reign: it's an _____ reign – we trust our whole lives and futures to a God we cannot _____.
- b. Jacob's example: Genesis 42:36-38
- c. The theme of Joseph's story: Genesis 50:20
- d. From what I understand of God's sovereignty, His love and His wisdom, if you are His child there is *nothing* in your life about which you can't say in *full confidence*, "_____." (The "good" being your conformity to the character of Christ and the advancement of His kingdom.)

The purpose of this study: To instill in us an unshakeable awareness of the sovereignty of God so that when we cannot understand what He _____, we can wholeheartedly trust and rest in the strong shelter of _____.

Wayne Grudem on how we should handle the tension between the sovereignty of God and the free will of man: "The number of passages that affirm the providential control of God is so considerable, and the difficulties involved in giving them some other interpretation are so formidable, that it does not seem to me that this can be the right approach to them. It seems better to affirm that God causes all things that happen, but that he does so in such a way that he somehow upholds our ability to make willing, responsible choices, choices that have real and eternal results, and for which we are held accountable. Exactly how God combines his providential control with our willing and significant choices, Scripture does not explain to us. But rather than deny one aspect or the other (simply because we cannot explain how both can be true), we should accept both in attempt to be faithful to the teaching of all of Scripture." (Systematic Theology, 321)