

S T U D Y G U I D E

C H O S E N

B Y

GOD

R.C. SPROUL

S T U D Y G U I D E

Chosen by God

R.C. Sproul



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

Renew your Mind.

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Introduction

There has been no shortage of debate over the doctrine of predestination throughout the history of the Christian church. That is because predestination is a biblical doctrine that can't be avoided. A careful study of the doctrine of predestination will necessarily include a consideration of such subjects as God's sovereignty, the will of man, human depravity, God's eternal purpose, the doctrine of regeneration, and evangelism. In this study, Dr. Sproul will walk us through a biblical, historical, theological, and philosophical treatment of these and other related issues.

This study guide is a companion to the video teaching series. Whether you are using the DVDs, streaming the videos on Ligonier.org, or going through the course in Ligonier Connect, this resource is designed to help you make the most of the learning experience. For each message in the series, there is a corresponding lesson in this guide. Here is what you will find in each lesson:

INTRODUCTION	<p>The introduction is a brief paragraph that summarizes the content covered in the lecture and considered in the study guide lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use the introduction to each lesson to get a sense of the big picture before watching the video. Refer to these statements as you work through the study guide to remind you of what you have already covered and where you are headed.</p>
LEARNING GOALS	<p>The learning goals are the knowledge and skills the study guide lesson will endeavor to equip you with as you work through the lecture content.</p> <p>How to use: Familiarize yourself with the goals of each lesson before engaging with its contents. Keeping the overall purpose in mind as you watch each video and reflect on or discuss the questions will help you get the most out of each lesson.</p>
KEY IDEAS	<p>The key ideas are the major points or takeaways from the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Use these ideas to prepare yourself for each lesson and to review previous lessons. They describe specifically the knowledge each lecture is communicating.</p>

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	<p>The questions are the guided reflection and/or discussion component of the lesson that are intended to help you prepare for, process, and organize what you are learning.</p> <p>How to use: Reflect on individually or discuss in a group the questions in the order in which they appear in the lesson. The timestamps in the right margin indicate where the answers to questions during the video can be found.</p>
PRAYER	<p>The prayer section offers suggestions for how to close the lesson in prayer with respect to what was taught in the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Consider using each lesson's prayer section as a guide to personal or group prayer. These sections follow the ACTS prayer model, which you can learn more about in R.C. Sproul's Crucial Questions booklet <i>Does Prayer Change Things?</i> This helpful guide is available as a free e-book at Ligonier.org.</p>
REVIEW QUIZ	<p>The review quiz is a set of six multiple-choice questions that appears at the end of each lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use each quiz to check your comprehension and memory of the major points covered in each lecture. It will be most beneficial to your learning if you take a lesson's quiz either sometime between lessons or just before you begin the next lesson in the study guide.</p>
ANSWER KEY	<p>The answer key provides explanations for the reflection and discussion questions and answers to the multiple-choice questions in the review quiz.</p> <p>How to use: Use the answer key to check your own answers or when you do not know the answer. Note: Do not give in too quickly; struggling for a few moments to recall an answer reinforces it in your mind.</p>

Study Schedules

The following table suggests four plans for working through the *Chosen by God* video teaching series and this companion study guide. Whether you are going through this series on your own or with a group, these schedules should help you plan your study path.

	Extended 8-Week Plan	Standard 6-Week Plan	Abbreviated 4-Week Plan	Intensive 3-Week Plan
Week	Lesson			
1	*	1	1	1 & 2
2	1	2	2 & 3	3 & 4
3	2	3	4 & 5	5 & 6
4	3	4	6	
5	4	5		
6	5	6		
7	6			
8	*			

* For these weeks, rather than completing lessons, spend your time discussing and praying about your learning goals for the study (the first week) and the most valuable takeaways from the study (the last week).

Everyone Believes This Doctrine

INTRODUCTION

We sometimes mistakenly believe that there are two types of Christians—those who believe that predestination is a biblical doctrine and those who do not believe predestination is a biblical doctrine. In this introductory lesson, Dr. Sproul explains that the doctrine of predestination is in fact a doctrine that every Christian believes. The difference of opinion has to do with how we understand and explain predestination. Surveying the history of the Christian church, Dr. Sproul will introduce us to key figures and schools of thought in the debate regarding the biblical doctrine of predestination.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Understand the importance of studying the doctrine of predestination
- Identify the doctrine of predestination in Scripture
- Distinguish between differing explanations of the doctrine in church history
- List key figures who held to the Reformed doctrine of predestination
- List key figures who rejected the Reformed doctrine of predestination
- Define the word *predestination*

KEY IDEAS

- Predestination is a biblical doctrine and has been a mainstream teaching of the church throughout history.
- There are three basic theological schools of thought about God's grace in salvation—Pelagianism, semi-Pelagianism, and Augustinianism.
- Predestination is God's choice in salvation, made before the foundation of the world.

- The issue is not *whether* God predestinates people unto salvation but *how* (on what basis) He predestinates.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- Why are you undertaking this study of the doctrine of predestination?
- How familiar are you with the doctrine of predestination? Can you define it? Have you ever struggled with believing it?

Scripture Reading

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will . . . In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.

—Ephesians 1:3–4, 11

- What does Ephesians 1:3–11 teach us about the doctrine of predestination?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

Approaching the Doctrine

0:00–8:25

- Why is it important for us to approach a study on predestination with caution and charity?
- Where do we find the origin of the word *predestination*?

Understanding the History of the Doctrine

8:25–30:46

- What are the three basic types of theology in church history?
- Which two important historical figures debated the role of grace in the work of salvation?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- Why does the doctrine of predestination engender so much debate and controversy in the church?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss why it is important for us not to shy away from this doctrine because of its difficulty or because of the divergence of views held by theologians or denominations.

- How does our understanding of the sinfulness of man factor into our understanding of the doctrine of predestination?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss the idea of depravity. How does the Augustinian understanding of depravity affect our understanding of grace? Consider questions such as this: If someone denied the Augustinian view of depravity, how would that affect our understanding of cooperating with God in the work of salvation?

- On what basis did God choose to save you before the foundation of the world? Does He look down the corridors of time and see something that you do, resulting in His choosing you? Or, does He choose you without any view of anything you may or may not have done?

If you are in a group, have each member discuss Dr. Sproul's distinction between God's sovereignty in salvation and the semi-Pelagian view of predestination.

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for carrying out His eternal purposes by choosing to save a people for Himself before the foundation of the world.

- Confess your own sinfulness and your inability to be saved apart from the grace of God.
- Thank God for saving you apart from anything that you have done or will do.
- Ask God to enable you to better understand His predestinating grace.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. What is confusing about the question, “Do you believe in the doctrine of predestination?”
 - a. The Bible does not teach predestination.
 - b. No one believes in predestination anymore.
 - c. Predestination is a private matter and should not be made a topic for conversation.
 - d. There are many views of the doctrine of predestination, and most people would affirm at least one variety.
2. What church or churches have formulated a doctrine of predestination?
 - a. Presbyterian
 - b. Methodist
 - c. Roman Catholic
 - d. All of the above
3. Which are the three historic views of the activity of the grace of God in salvation?
 - a. Calvinism, Arminianism, and dispensationalism
 - b. Calvinism, Arminianism, and Amyraldianism
 - c. Pelagianism, semi-Pelagianism, and Augustinianism
 - d. Pelagianism, Arminianism, and semi-Pelagianism
4. What does Pelagianism teach regarding grace and man’s salvation?
 - a. Grace is not *sufficient* for man to attain salvation.
 - b. Grace is not *necessary* for man to attain salvation.
 - c. Grace is not *meant* for man to attain salvation.
 - d. None of the above.
5. Which of the following leaders from church history were against Augustinianism?
 - a. Charles Finney
 - b. John Wesley
 - c. Arminius
 - d. All of the above
6. What was at the heart of the disagreement on predestination?
 - a. A dispute over the *role* of man
 - b. A dispute over the *sinfulness* of man
 - c. A dispute over the *nature* of man
 - d. None of the above

Answer Key—

Everyone Believes This Doctrine

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- What does Ephesians 1:3–11 teach us about the doctrine of predestination?
Fundamentally, this passage teaches us that predestination is a biblical doctrine, and that it is a divine act of God.

During the Video

Approaching the Doctrine

- Why is it important for us to approach a study on predestination with caution and charity?
When we study this doctrine, it tends to raise more questions than it answers because it is shrouded in mystery. This doctrine requires patience and charity on account of the fact that emotions tend to run high whenever people study it together.
- Where do we find the origin of the word *predestination*?
The word predestination is first and foremost a biblical word. It is explicitly taught in the pages of Scripture. This is evident from the recurring use of the word in Ephesians 1:3–11.

Understanding the History of the Doctrine

- What are the three basic types of theology in church history?
The three basic types of theology in the history of the church are Pelagianism, semi-Pelagianism, and Augustinianism.
- Which two important historical figures debated the role of grace in the work of salvation?
Augustine and Pelagius were the two individuals who debated the importance and necessity of the grace of God for our salvation.

After the Video

- Why does the doctrine of predestination engender so much debate and controversy in the church?

There is a wide divergence of attempts to interpret the meaning of the doctrine among the great theologians throughout the history of the church. In addition to these differences, people can have emotional reactions to the doctrine itself.

- How does our understanding of the sinfulness of man factor into our understanding of the doctrine of predestination?

Augustine defended the biblical teaching that man is absolutely dependent on the grace of God for salvation, whereas Pelagius taught the humanistic view that man has in himself the capacity to keep the commandments of God apart from the grace of God. Both of these views are fundamentally rooted in their understanding of the nature of man's sin.

- On what basis did God choose to save you before the foundation of the world? Does He look down the corridors of time and see something that you do, resulting in His choosing you? Or, does He choose you without any view of anything you may or may not have done?

God does not choose to save individuals based on anything that He sees in them. Rather, He chooses merely by the good pleasure of His will.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 1

1. **D.**

Throughout the history of the church, there have been many views of the doctrine of predestination. The debate is not whether such a doctrine exists but about what the doctrine means.

2. **D.**

Just about every denomination has formulated a doctrinal explanation of the biblical teaching about predestination. Although there are numerous doctrines of predestination in the history of the church, people usually have the Reformed view in mind when they speak about it on a popular level.

3. **C.**

The three historic views of the doctrine of salvation are Pelagianism, semi-Pelagianism, and Augustinianism. Pelagianism teaches that man can be saved apart from the grace of God. Semi-Pelagianism teaches that while man cannot be saved apart from the grace of God, he must cooperate with God in his initial response to the gospel in order to be saved. Augustinianism teaches that man is so sinful that he needs the grace of God even to respond to the gospel.

4. **B.**

In this lesson, Dr. Sproul explained that Pelagius believed that God's grace may assist an individual to be saved but that people have in themselves the ability to keep the commandments of God to such an extent that they can be saved apart from the grace of God. This is why Augustine deemed Pelagius' view humanistic and unbiblical.

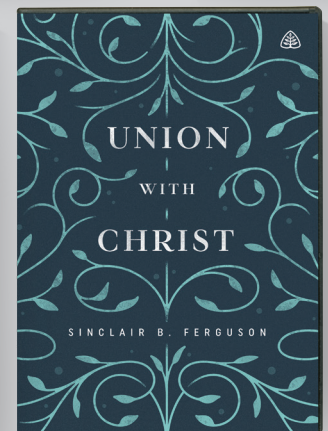
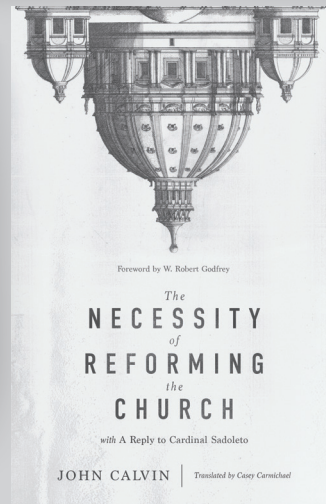
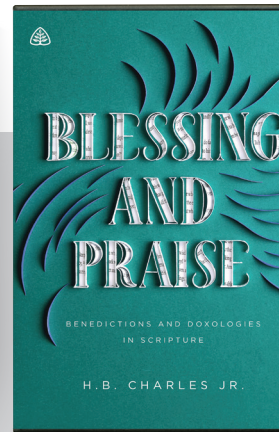
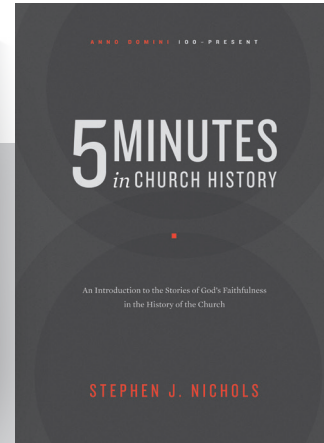
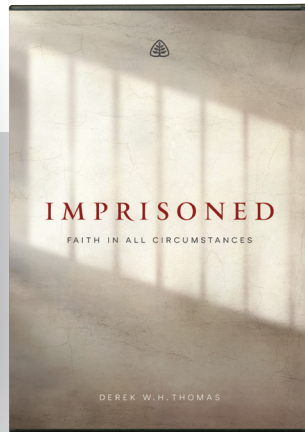
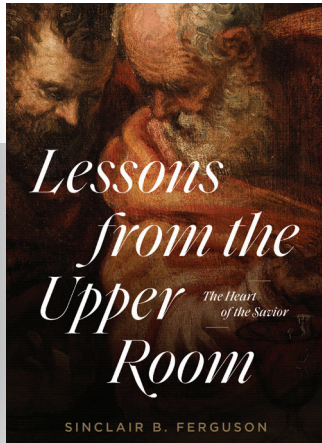
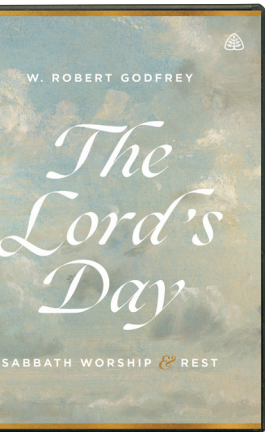
5. **D.**

Three of the leading Protestant teachers of the semi-Pelagian doctrine of salvation were Jacob Arminius, John Wesley, and Charles Finney. Additionally, Erasmus represents Roman Catholic theologians who have propagated this teaching.

6. **B.**

At the heart of the disagreement on the doctrine of predestination was a debate over how much sin affected man's ability to receive the grace of God. The Augustinian view teaches that people are so depraved that they are unable to be saved apart from the grace of God.

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