

From the website: <http://heavenlyheartburn.wordpress.com/>

I have been involved in a couple of good discussions with my friends at [World From Our Window](#) recently concerning the way that God sovereignly interacts with the free will of man. (Let me state up front for those new to this blog that I am a non-Calvinist/non-Arminian.)

As I consider the interaction of God's sovereignty and man's free will, I see three possible positions.

1. God sovereignly dictates every nuance of every thought, word or action of every man, rendering man as nothing more than a dangling marionette in the hands of a divine puppetmaster.
2. Man is a completely autonomous being who is free to do as he chooses without divine influence or consequence.

Most of us would agree that these are two extreme positions that have no basis in scripture. The first is so fatalistic as to remove any semblance of hope or worship. The second is little more than atheism. We must use care so as not to allow our aversion to one of the extremes drive us too close to the other.

Surely the truth must lie in a balance between the two. There is never a moment, circumstance or action in the course of man's history in which God has not, is not or will not be sovereignly involved. The question is, **“What degree of control does God exercise?”**

I believe that God and God alone can answer that question.

Some have suggested that the idea of man having a free will is somehow a denial of the sovereignty of God. If it is God who created man with a free will, omnisciently knowing how man will exercise it, omnipotently influencing man to use it for God's glory and omnipotently holding man responsible for how he exercises the free will, how is His sovereignty denied?

Some have stated that because God is sovereign, He must be in absolute control of every circumstance. To think otherwise, some say, is to leave the door open for open theism. As long as we don't forget the omniscience and foreknowledge of God, we will never be in danger of straying into that pit of heresy.

Let us consider the weather. Some would look at storms and say that God controls the direction of every hurricane, tornado and dust devil that comes across our planet. The Bible teaches us that “God has his way in the whirlwind.” I have heard some describe a tornado as “the finger of God.” Truly there are times when you look at the path of such storms and it seems that perhaps God is personally directing the path of the twister. At other times, these storms move in a seemingly indiscriminate manner. Has God left that storm to its own devices? I think not. Such storms seem to be directed by the normal ebb and flow of atmospheric conditions. These conditions are created and sustained by God. Therefore, we can say that God is in control whether or not He chooses to directly alter the path of the storm.

My point is this. It is neither denying the sovereignty of God nor open theism to say that He creates a being or a system designed to function in a certain way and then allows that being or system to function in the way in which He designed it. If it is God who has given man the free will, then it is not usurping the sovereignty of God when man exercises it. If it is God who sovereignly holds man accountable for the use of his will, then God's sovereignty is not eroded. In fact, I would go so far as to say, if God's sovereignty can be usurped or eroded then He is not sovereign. If He is not sovereign, He is not God.

I am thankful that God has created man with the capacity for free will. I am also thankful that there is not one moment, circumstance or aspect of my life in which He is not sovereignly involved.