

**Bible Study on Hermeneutics – Handout Session 17**  
 Controversial Doctrines, Practices, and Passages – Irresistible Grace  
 Grace Bible Chapel  
 July 25th, 2010  
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Understanding Calvinism – continued from previous lessons -

Five doctrinal positions were determined by the Synod of Dort (1618/1619) to counter the five statements of the Remonstrants. These became known as the Five Points of Calvinism. The points are all interconnected – but, each can easily be supported individually from Scripture.

**A Comparison of Arminianism with Calvinism – Point Four**

<b>Arminianism</b>	<b>Calvinism</b>
<p><b>The Holy Spirit Can Be Effectually Resisted</b>                      The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the gospel invitation; He does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation. But inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit's call. The Spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes; faith (which is man's contribution) proceeds and makes possible the new birth. Thus, man's free will limits the Spirit in the application of Christ's saving work. The Holy Spirit can only draw to Christ those who allow Him to have His way with them. Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life. God's grace, therefore, is not invincible; it can be, and often is, resisted and thwarted by man.</p>	<p><b>The Efficacious Call of the Spirit or Irresistible Grace</b>                      In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.</p>

\*Source “The Five Points of Calvinism, Steele & Thomas, Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 1963

**The Call to become a Christian – the Calvinist view concerning the call as irresistible or effectual:**

By definition: “According to Calvinism, those who obtain salvation do so, not by their own "free" will, but because of the sovereign grace of God. That is, men yield to grace, not finally because their consciences were more tender or their faith more tenacious than that of other men. Rather, the willingness and ability to do God's will, are evidence of God's own faithfulness to save men from the power and the penalty of sin, and since man is so corrupt that he will not decide and cannot be wooed to follow after God, God must powerfully intervene. In short, Calvinism argues that regeneration must precede faith” (from Wikipedia).

**A summary of the “effectual calling” doctrine:**

In **John 10:26-27** we have the very words of Jesus to provide the platform for considering this important doctrine. In **verse 26** Christ is providing the explanation as to why the religious Jewish leaders do not believe Him. It was not lack of evidence, or because it was illogical, or Jesus had not told them or shown them in countless ways. It is because they are not of God's chosen, and do not therefore have the special calling of God necessary.

By contrast, Jesus sheep (His chosen given to Him by the Father - **John 6:37**), act altogether differently toward Christ. The hearing of Jesus voice is the special effectual call required. In **Romans 8:29-30** we see a disclosure of the special chain of events God works in salvation beginning with His unconditional election, and ending with glorification. The effectual call is a necessary component of this chain of

absolute and unbroken events. This is the same consistent chain of events we see in other passages (**Eph 1:3-14; Eph 2:1-10; Col 1:13-23; 1 Pet 1:1-5; 2 Tim 1:8-14**).

As the sheep (His elect) “hear My voice” (**John 10:27** words of Christ) it is the idea of a special hearing with reception that produces action. The action is “they follow Me” (follow Christ) with the idea they trust Him, and have a life changing relationship with Him as their true Shepherd. This voice of Christ carries life and power (**Hebrews 4:12**), and Christ’s voice is equal to His Word – as He is the Word of God (**John 1:1**). The power of Christ’s Word called creation into existence, and the same power is effectual in calling His sheep. That is why such passages as **Isaiah 55:8-11** show the effectual reality, or irresistible reality of the power of His Word. When Jesus cried “Lazarus come forth” (**John 11:43**) he came out of the physical dead into resurrected life. Lazarus experienced the irresistible call of Christ.

This same power is used of God to call dead sinners (**Ephesians 2:1**) out of “darkness into marvelous light” (**1 Peter 2:9**). God uses His Word to call sinners to Himself, and it is always an effectual call (**1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18; Romans 10:17**). By contrast, just like the Pharisees in the John 10 passage did not believe in Jesus, the natural man (those unsaved) “cannot understand” the Words of Christ (**1 Corinthians 2:12-14**). This is true of all unsaved men (Romans 3:11), and therefore God must act to powerfully overcome the condition of man in his spiritual deadness so that he will understand and believe (**1 John 2:21**).

**General thoughts on studying this subject:**