

Invited to Partnership

Psalm 139:13-17

Dr. Michael Elliott

Throughout history, there has been an ongoing debate as to what degree things are “predestined” and therefore, they just automatically happen. This debate in both society, and in the church, has tended to place the emphasis on fatalism, or on the negative. Perhaps you have heard the old joke about the theology professor who believed that every single detail of life was predestined by God. One day, the professor fell down a flight of stairs. Picking himself up, he was heard to say, “Well, I’m glad that’s over with.” Truthfully, there is no such concept revealed in the Scriptures.

On the other hand, neither is there any teaching within the whole of Scripture that indicates that man has the capacity to effectively control his own destiny. While it is true that we do have the freedom of “choice,” our freedom to choose still does not bring the wisdom we need to make our lives work. The vanity of our flesh causes us to suppose that we do not need God’s wisdom. Our vanity will also lead us to wonder if we need God for anything at all. We assume that in our own strength, we can achieve the best purposes for our lives.

It will only be through a partnership with the Lord that we will truly succeed in life. Living life in partnership with the Lord allows us to draw on His wisdom in order to make wise choices. God’s wisdom, coupled with our choices, will ultimately bring us into the fullness of all that God has purposed for us. We are all on a journey of faith with the Lord. We must learn to trust Him to take us to the place that we need to be. Ultimately, that place can only be attained if we choose to allow Him to lead us there. It is at this point in our journey we realize that we need to accept the Lord’s offer for partnership in order to arrive at our God-appointed destiny.

Preordained Destiny

The Psalmist gives us insight to God’s amazing foreknowledge in Psalm 139:16, *Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.* When considering the concept of “preordained destiny,” the Bible reveals that we were in the mind of God before the creation of all things. Be careful though; this does not mean, as some religions teach, that we existed before conception. However, this does mean that we were a part of His divine plan and purpose.

The day will come when we will stand in the courts of Heaven and discover that the Lord thought of us before the creation of all things. We will also discover that He pre-planned and provided for our salvation from the damning plague of sin. The record of Scripture states that Jesus was the “*Lamb slain before the foundations of the world.*” It is through the blood of Jesus that we are redeemed from sin. According to the Word, our redemption was purposed before creation. This is one of the great mysteries of God! We can relax in knowing that we will never be able to figure this out by our limited human logic and understanding. We can, however, accept this as a fact by placing our faith in God and in His Word.

Choosing a Partner in Life

We need to realize that this is the only life that you and I will ever have this side of Heaven ... each of us only has one life to live. This is contrary to what some religions teach and what some Hollywood celebrities espouse. No matter what you have done in the past, when this life is over, you can rest assured you will not come back to earth as a spider or a monkey. Who you choose as your partner in this life, will determine what happens to you when this life is over. When it comes to partners, there are only two choices: God or Satan.

If you should choose to make Satan your partner in life, you will discover that his agenda towards you is not a favorable one. Jesus said in John 10:10, *“The thief comes to steal, kill and destroy.”* The ultimate loss is the loss of your eternal soul. This horror will encompass being forever separated from God. God’s plans for us never included being separated from Him. The horror of hell is unimaginable and impossible to adequately describe. In hell, you will live a life without any hope; without any purpose; or without any direction. Your future will be an endless existence as you suffer insignificance. Your sorrow and suffering will be compounded because you will be aware of your hopeless condition at all times.

If you should make the wise choice and make God your partner in life, you will discover that His agenda towards you is filled with intended blessings. Jesus said in John 10:10, *“I have come that you might have life and have it abundantly.”* Jeremiah 29:11 tells us; *“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”* The blessings of God usually do not come without trials. However, God uses these trials to exercise and strengthen our faith and to build our confidence in Him. These trials will result in our spiritual growth. When we face these things, we discover the strength and resources that God has to bring us through in victory. When we choose to make the Lord our partner in life, there comes an increasing sense of security that assures us of His sustaining grace.

Ask God

We need to begin to honor our partnership with the Lord by asking Him to lead us through every moment of our lives. The Psalmist prayed in Psalm 5:8, *“Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; make Your way straight before me.”* We need to ask Him to make us sensitive to His leadings throughout our day. I’m not talking about such foolishness as one saying, “Lord, should I turn at the next corner? Give me a sign if You want me to turn.”

We need to be careful not to miss the significance of simply asking God about the things that are transpiring in our lives. When we ask God about everything, we are acknowledging our partnership with Him in all matters of life. We recognize that the Lord has an opinion about all of our decisions; all of our activities; and all of our relationships.

Another reason we need to ask God about everything in our lives is *“because of our enemies,”* as stated in Psalm 5:8. We need to be aware that we have an enemy of our souls. That enemy seeks to intrude into our lives in order to spoil what God has purposed for us. We need the Lord’s resources to successfully steer our lives around the intrusion of the enemy. Again, our asking the Lord about everything declares our dependence on Him to deliver us from our enemy’s snares.

Consider the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 91:1-3, *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.” Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence.*

Trust God

As we walk in partnership with the Lord, we see constant evidence of His care, provision, protection and deliverance. As we consider this overwhelming evidence of God's faithfulness to us, it increasingly deepens our trust in the Lord. The Psalmist prayed in Psalm 16:1, "*Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.*"

Many of us have prayed, at one time or another, "Lord, I don't understand why this is happening to me, but, I put my trust in You to bring me through this in victory. I am asking You to advance Your kingdom through me and that Your purposes for my life will be accomplished."

Love God

When we make our commitment to walk in partnership with the Lord, our habit will be to ask the Lord about everything. "Lord, what do You think about this?" We will learn to listen for His answer and then place our trust in His judgment. The Psalmist stated a wonderful promise from the Lord for those who love Him in Psalm 91:14-16, "*Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation.*"

Loving God is something that we *choose* to do. It is not an automatic reality ... it is a choice! As we grow in our faith, we discover the amazing dimensions of His faithfulness. It is then that we begin to realize just how rich and rewarding our relationship and partnership with the Lord really is. Our religiosity will drop off with every passing day of living in partnership with the Lord. And, with each passing day, we tap into more and more of His nature. Once we have accepted the invitation to partner with the Lord, we must fulfill our end of the partnership by walking the pathway of commitment. Our commitment to partnership with the Lord will look like the following:

We live by *asking* God about everything in our lives!

Our *asking* the Lord gives evidence to our having learned to *trust* the Lord!

Our *trust* in the Lord will give way to our developing a deep *love* for Him!

Our *love* for the Lord will birth our conviction to live according to the *patterns* of His Word!

Let me get personal for just a moment: Honestly, who have you chosen to be your partner in life? Are you keeping your end of the partnership, or is your claim of partnership merely lip-service? Imagine the difference a partnership with the Lord would make on your family; on your finances; on your career; and in all of your relationships.

Make the Lord your Partner in Life!

Ask the Lord about Everything!

Trust the Lord in All Things!

Love Him with All Your Heart and Understanding!

