

Chosen to Serve
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When I was growing up, America was immersed in the war in Viet Nam, and we had a military draft. When you finished high school, you were enlisted in the armed forces and served for two years. (While conscription ended after the war, 18 year-old men must still register with Selective Service.) Some countries still require service – notably Israel, where all 18-25 year-olds serve for at least two years. The privilege of enjoying the benefits of the country comes with a responsibility to serve. In a similar way, all who enjoy the blessings of eternal life in the family of God have been *chosen to serve*.

I need to start off with a few words about the doctrine of election, which has been a source of bitterness and division among Christians for centuries. Some theologians teach that election – God ‘choosing’ – is all about going to heaven or hell; in other words, before any of us existed, God chose some He would save and who would live in heaven forever, and others He would condemn and send to eternal hell. This doctrine is not based in Scripture; rather, it is rooted in paganism.¹ In the Bible, God’s ‘election’ or ‘choosing’ is *always* for service.²

A few quick examples. God chose Noah to build an ark to preserve the human race. God chose Abram to father the nation of Israel, through which the Messiah would come, and bless all the nations of the earth. God chose Moses to lead the Jewish people out of slavery in Egypt and into their Promised Land. God chose the Apostle Paul to preach the gospel to Gentiles as well as Jews. Jesus Christ was God’s greatest ‘Chosen One’ (Isa. 42.1-4; Luke 9.35), not chosen to gain eternal life, but to give His life on the cross to redeem a condemned humanity, and ultimately to reign in God’s kingdom.

If you are a believer in Jesus as your Savior, your eternal destiny is sure; you have a home in heaven. By faith, you have been ‘declared righteous’ (justified), and you are a child of God. *By grace you have been saved through faith* (Eph. 2.8-9)! But that is not the end of the story. You have been saved *for a purpose*. As Eph. 2.10 continues:

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.



Notice that for each of us who has believe, God has *prepared beforehand* the *good works* for us to do. Our loving Father in heaven knows us better than anyone – He made us! – and He has ‘set in place’ good works for us to perform in this life. We are *chosen to serve*! God has something for *you* to do!

This month at NBBC (on Sunday, September 9th), we’ll have our annual Ministry Fair. A variety of ministries will be on display, open invitations for you to serve the Lord. What form of service for God will you choose to join? A few options: Nursery, early childhood, Sunday School, GrowKids, Youth, Greeting, Ushering, prayer, meals, maintenance, music/worship, Women’s Ministry, Men’s Ministry, Awana...and I could go on!

It may sound trite, but *GOD WANTS YOU!* How will you serve Him at NBBC?

¹ Augustine, the ‘father’ of this five-point Calvinistic teaching, arrived at it by combining pagan ideas with Christian theology, thus creating an entirely new doctrinal system which was unknown in the early church. Ken Wilson, “A Theological and Historical Investigation,” in *A Defense of Free Grace Theology: With Respect to Saving Faith, Perseverance, and Assurance*, ed. Fred Chay (The Woodlands, TX: Grace Theology Press, 2017), 33-65.

² For a comprehensive discussion of the biblical evidence, see Shawn Lazar, *Chosen to Serve: Why Divine Election is to Service, Not to Eternal Life* (Denton, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 2017). Also Leighton Flowers, *The Potter’s Promise: A Biblical Defense of Traditional Soteriology* (Trinity Academic Press, 2017).