

Limiting God

INTRODUCTION :

A. From creation, man has always been a free moral agent.

1. **Gen. 3** ... The first choice man is known to have made was a bad one.
2. Often quoted passage from the Old Testament.

Joshua 24:15- “If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

B. God is also a free moral agent.

1. He has the ability to implement every decision He makes, but does not do so.
2. God wants to save ever person on the planet.
 - a. **I Tim. 2: 3-4** This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
 - b. **Ezek. 18: 23-** Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked,” declares the Lord GOD, “rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?

C. God does not let His free moral agency eliminate mans.

1. God wants to save all men, but will not save any against their will.
2. Observe God’s frustration :

Luke 13: 34- O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it!*
3. The Calvinist’s theory of God saving those HE chooses is wrong.

No one is ever saved against his will.

D. Many want God to help them, but then want to limit His influence in their life.

1. Israel was an example of this attitude.
 - a. **Read ... Psa. 78: 40-42**
 - b. He would have made them the greatest nation in history.
 - c. When they followed God He prospered them.
2. Their lack of submission to Him caused them to be repeatedly brought to ruin.
3. Israel was a type of man’s relationship with God. ...

Man limits God’s ability to bless him.

TRANSITION :

Let's notice some ways people limit God today.

I. Can we limit God today ? (Yes)**A. Individuals can limit God.**

1. We've already observed that God wants to save people, but many refuse.
2. God wants to bless people, but the blessings are in Christ Jesus. **Eph. 1: 3**
3. God wants to give people peace, but it is only found in Christ Jesus. **Phil. 4:7**
4. God wants to answer prayers, but even Christians doubt. **James 1: 6-8**

B. The church can limit God.

1. Congregations fail to carry out the great commission. **Mark 16: 15-16**
2. They fail in their stewardship so they cannot afford to do many things for God.
 - a. Missionaries frequently hear, *"We'd love to be a part of that work, but ..."*
 - b. Congregations stagnate because of lack of activity.
 - c. Loose young people because they are unwilling to spend for youth activities.
3. Limit God by allowing sin to remain in the camp.
 - a. Harsh and unloving people come to dominate a church.
 - b. "Political Correctness" is brought into the church. (won't speak out against evil)
 - c. NO influence ... There light does not glorify God.
4. Congregations limit God by failing to prepare for good works.
 - a. They don't study, learn and train.
 - b. They do not plan, schedule or prepare for good works. (**Just talk about it.**)
 - c. They don't set goals to accomplish anything for God.
5. Congregations limit God by not being united.
 - a. Division kills a congregation.
 - b. When divisive people are left in the congregations, people do nothing for fear of offense
 - c. Divisive people cause those who want to serve God to leave.
(**Leaves congregation stuck with the non-productive members.**)

6. **We limit God when we do not plan for the future. (companies have 10 yr plan)**
 - a. Ready or not, the future happens.
 - b. The church is a stewardship which must be maintained over the generations.
 - c. **II Tim. 2: 2**
 - d. The congregation must be pro-active, NOT reactive. **Always preparing for ...**
- * **We must be on the move. Even God cannot direct a stationary object.**

II. Why Do We Limit God ?

A. Some limit God out of ignorance.

1. They just march along following in the footsteps of their predecessors.
2. **Mark 7: 7-9** But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.⁸ “Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.”⁹ He was also saying to them, “You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.

B. Some are just rebellious; they will not submit to God.

1. **Jer. 6: 16-** Thus says the Lord, “Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’
2. Those who insist on doing it their own way, limit God. (**Love surrenders.**)

C. Some limit God because of fear. (**Lack of faith.**)

1. **Num. 13** ... Israel was afraid to take the promise land. (**Grasshopper complex**)
2. Fear comes from the devil. (**II Tim. 1:7 - cf- Rev. 21:8**)
3. Fear destroys success everywhere. ... **home, job, church**

D. One who is lacking in love limits God.

1. **John 14: 15-** If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.
2. **I John 3: 18-** Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

E. Many limit God because they refuse to accept that God exists.

1. **Psa. 14: 1-** The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”
2. **I Cor. 1: 18-21** ... Some think the gospel is foolishness. (**educated fools**)

III. What Are The Results Of Limiting God ?

A. It provokes God to wrath.

1. **Psa. 78: 58**
2. God is always displeased with disobedience. ... **Lev. 10: 1-3**

B. It causes God to bring negative consequences upon those who don't work with Him.

1. **Psa. 78: 62**
2. God wants to bless, but will punish.

C. Limiting God cause one to loose out on the blessings God wants to give. .. **Eph. 1:3**

D. It causes the loss of souls.

CONCLUSION :

A. Are we guilty of limiting God ?

1. We must surrender before he can save us.
2. We must commit ourselves before He can use us.
3. We must be moving before He can guide us.

B. Let us all develop the attitude of Isaiah the prophet.

1. **Isa. 6: 8-** Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying,
"Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?"
Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!"
2. Let us develop faith, even if only so small as a mustard seed. **Luke 17: 6**

C. With God's help, this congregation can become greater than we can imagine.

1. **Eph. 3: 20**
2. Our faith is the only limiting factor.

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