

Understanding Free Will: Choice, Truth, and the Origin of Evil

1. The Nature of Good and Evil: Absence vs. Creation

1.1 The Source of Goodness and Light

A foundational question in theological pedagogy and biblical analysis is understanding the true origin of evil. Scripture reveals that God created the heavens, the earth, and all living creatures, yet nowhere in the biblical canon does it state that God created evil. Because God is perfect goodness personified, evil cannot originate as a created substance from His divine hand.

- **God is Pure Goodness:** As Jesus explicitly declares in Mark 10:18, "Only God is truly good." Because His nature is intrinsically and perfectly good, He cannot do evil, nor can He create evil as an ontological entity.
- **God is Essential Light:** According to 1 John 1:5, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Light is not merely something God possesses; it is an intrinsic attribute of His eternal nature.
- **The Pre-Existence of Darkness:** Genesis 1:2–4 records that before natural light was spoken into existence on the first day of creation, "darkness was over the surface of the deep." God created physical light and declared it good, but scripture never records God creating darkness.
- **Darkness as a Conditional Void:** Darkness is not a material substance that can be actively manufactured or transported into a space. A photographer constructs a darkroom not by creating "darkness," but by shutting out every light source and sealing all cracks. Darkness is simply the natural condition that exists whenever light is removed.
- **The Central Theological Thesis: Evil is not a created substance, but the void left when God is rejected.** Just as physical darkness exists only in the absence of light, moral and spiritual evil exists only in the absence of God's presence and truth.

1.2 The Spectrum Analogy (Light and Color)

To make this abstract theological concept accessible, curriculum designers can utilize the physical analogy of the visible light spectrum. In physics, pure white light is not an absence of color; rather, white light is produced when all colors of the visible spectrum are blended together in perfect proportion. When white light

passes through a prism—or refracts across rain droplets—it separates into its component colors, producing a rainbow. Scripture reveals that a heavenly rainbow encircles the very throne of God (Revelation 4:3; Ezekiel 1:28), visually representing the full, unbroken glory of His character.

In the prophetic text of Isaiah 11:1–2, God reveals the seven Spirits that rest upon the Messiah. Each divine attribute directly maps to one of the seven primary colors that together form the pure white light of God's full manifestation:

Divine Attribute / Spirit (Isaiah 11:1–2)	Color Spectrum Mapping
Spirit of Wisdom	Red
Spirit of Counsel	Orange
Spirit of Knowledge	Yellow
Spirit of the Lord	Green
Spirit of the Fear of the Lord	Blue
Spirit of Might	Indigo
Spirit of Understanding	Violet

In optical physics, black is not a distinct color within the light spectrum; black exists exclusively when every color of light is completely removed or absorbed. Similarly, Messiah embodies the complete, unrefracted "white light" of God's Spirit. Withdrawing or rejecting any aspect of God's divine character distorts spiritual vision, and rejecting His presence entirely results in total spiritual blackness. Darkness and evil are not positive creations, but the inevitable void that remains when divine light is withdrawn.

1.3 The Spiritual Equivalent

This physical property of light and darkness directly parallels spiritual reality. When Jesus entered human history, He brought divine illumination to a world suffering under a spiritual void: *"The people living in darkness have seen a great light, and for those living in the land and shadow of death, a light has risen"* (Matthew 4:16). Jesus brought perfect Truth, Life, and Light to humanity.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus linked spiritual perception directly to the presence or absence of light within the human heart:

"The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. Therefore, if the light within you has turned into darkness, how great is that darkness!" — Matthew 6:22–23

✦ **Takeaway for the Learner** Just as physical darkness automatically occurs the moment light is removed from a room, spiritual evil automatically fills any space where God and His Truth are rejected. Evil is not an independent creation of God, but the inevitable void left in His absence.

Reflective Application Prompt: *In what areas of your daily routine or decision-making might you be inadvertently pushing out God's light, thereby allowing spiritual darkness or anxiety to fill the vacuum?*

While evil exists passively as an absence of light, it requires a catalyst to manifest in human history—a mechanism driven by human decision-making and free will.

2. The Core Mechanism of Sin: Believing a Lie

2.1 The Root of Willful Sin

Every deliberate act of human sin follows a predictable psychological and spiritual progression. Sin never occurs in an intellectual or emotional vacuum; it is always anchored in deception. As minister Jamie Lash noted, every willful sin is the direct result of convincing ourselves that a legitimate good or benefit exists for us apart from God.

The progression of willful sin operates through four distinct, sequential steps:

1. **God's Truth is Presented:** Divine light, commandment, and instruction are clearly communicated to the individual.
2. **A Lie is Entertained:** The human heart entertains the deceptive proposition—first introduced in Eden—that a genuine good, pleasure, or advantage can be attained outside of God's revealed will.
3. **God's Truth is Rejected:** The individual actively casts aside divine instruction in order to pursue the false promise of the lie.
4. **Evil Fills the Void:** The removal of God's truth creates an immediate spiritual vacuum, which evil automatically rushes in to fill, resulting in destructive action.

2.2 The Eden Precedent

This tragic sequence began at the dawn of human history with Eve in the Garden of Eden. Satan did not offer an alternative creator; he offered a lie that God was withholding something good. Every subsequent act of deliberate disobedience requires an individual to first abandon divine reality in favor of a spiritual falsehood.

Core Insight: It is impossible to sin willfully while fully accepting, believing, and abiding in the Truth of God. In order to commit deliberate evil, one must first actively reject God's Truth.

To observe how this internal progression translates into devastating historical reality, we must examine the first recorded murder in human history.

3. Biblical Case Study: Cain and the Critical Moment of Decision

3.1 The Turning Point at the Door

In Genesis 4, Cain experienced intense anger and resentment when his offering was rejected while Abel's was accepted. At this precise moment of emotional turmoil, God directly confronted Cain, offering him clear instructions and laying out the exact mechanics of free will and responsibility.

"So Cain became extremely angry (indignant), and he looked annoyed and hostile. And the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you so angry? And why do you look annoyed? If you do well [believing Me and doing what is acceptable and pleasing to Me], will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well [but ignore My instruction], sin crouches at your door; its desire is for you [to overpower you], but you must master it.'" — Genesis 4:5–7 (AMP)

God presented Cain with two distinct pathways:

- **Path A (Accepting Instruction):** Trust God, obey His counsel, and align with divine truth, resulting in acceptance, emotional wholeness, and divine favor.
- **Path B (Rejecting Instruction):** Ignore God's word, thereby creating a spiritual void at the door of the heart where sin crouches like a predatory beast, waiting to overpower the mind through dark thoughts and uncontrolled emotional hostility.

3.2 The Choice and its Unprecedented Outcome

Cain chose Path B. He rejected God's personal warning and turned his back on divine light. Once God's truth was cast aside, evil thoughts rushed into the resulting void, feeding Cain's hostility until he brutally murdered his brother Abel.

Cain's action was not merely a personal moral failure; it introduced an unprecedented dimension of darkness into the world. Prior to this event, human murder had never occurred in history. Cain did not merely break a rule—by rejecting truth, he opened the door for a brand-new dark reality (*murder*) to rush into human experience.

 **Insight for the Learner: The Anatomy of Cain's Fall** Cain's fall demonstrates that evil is a consequential void. Cain did not possess a pre-existing "murder gene"; rather, his deliberate rejection of God's protective instruction created an unprecedented moral vacuum. The moment truth was abandoned, the dark concept of murder entered human history for the very first time.

Reflective Application Prompt: *When you face intense emotions like anger or jealousy, what divine truths or instructions must you hold onto to prevent sin from "crouching at your door"?*

The principle demonstrated in Cain's individual life operates with equal force on a corporate level, generating national and societal spiritual voids throughout human history and biblical prophecy.

4. The Broader Pattern: Historical and Prophetic Realities

4.1 Historical Case Study: The Berlin Declaration of 1909

A dramatic historical illustration of corporate truth rejection occurred in early 20th-century Germany. Following the powerful revivals in Wales and Azusa Street, a fresh movement of the Holy Spirit spread to the German city of Kassel. In response, a major body of established German religious leaders gathered and issued a formal document in 1909 known as the *Berlin Declaration*, officially proclaiming that this Pentecostal revival was "not from above, but from below."

In making this formal decree, the German church leaders committed the exact theological error of the ancient scribes in Mark 3:28–30. When scribes attributed Jesus' Spirit-led miracles to Beelzebul ("*He has an unclean spirit*"), Jesus warned that attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan constituted blasphemy against the Holy Spirit—an "everlasting sin" that seals a spiritual door shut. By declaring

the work of the Holy Spirit to be demonic, the German church leaders formally rejected divine light and pushed the Holy Spirit out of their national religious institutions.

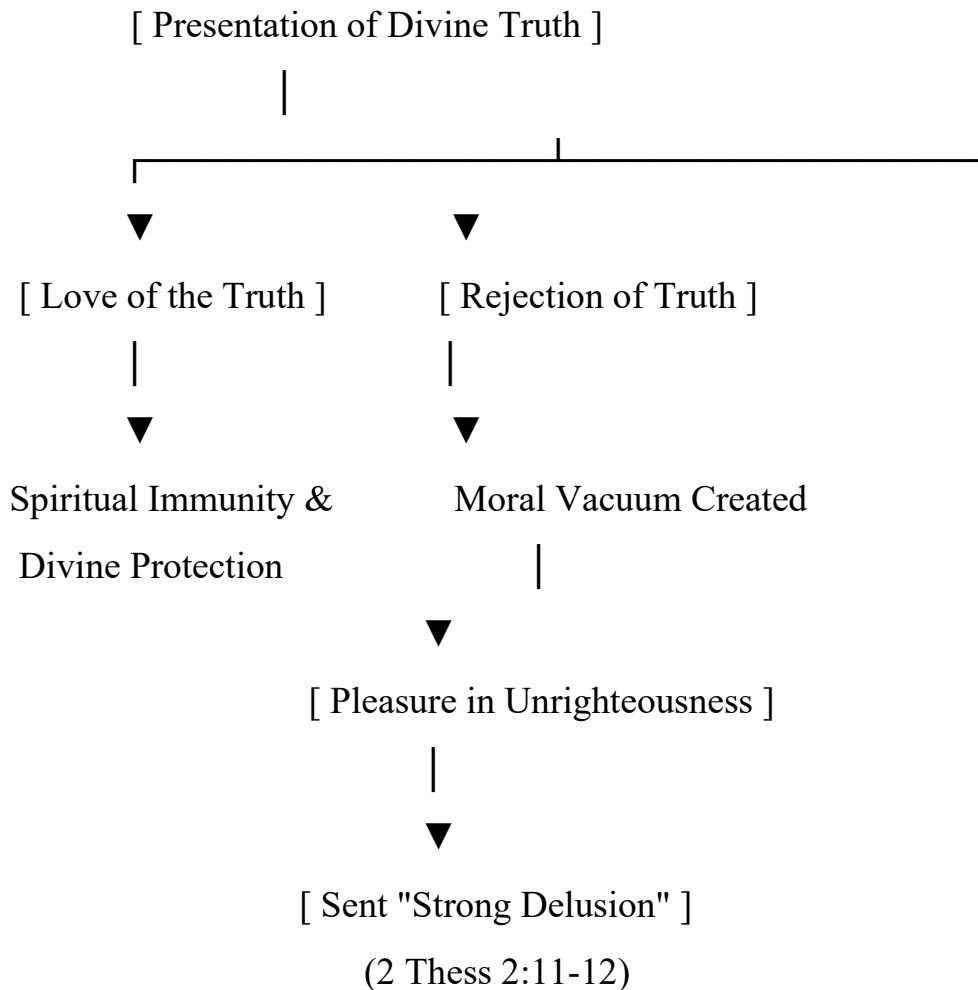
Event Dimension	Analysis of the Historical Mechanism
The Rejection	In the 1909 <i>Berlin Declaration</i> , religious leaders officially rejected the movement of the Holy Spirit, declaring it to be "from below" (demonic). This directly mirrored the blasphemy of the scribes in Mark 3:28–30 who attributed divine miracles to Satan.
The Void Created	By formally denouncing and expelling the Spirit of Truth, the ecclesiastical leadership removed divine restraint and spiritual light from the nation's spiritual atmosphere.
The Resulting Evil	A few decades after this spiritual void was opened, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party rose to power unchecked, resulting in World War II, catastrophic devastation, and the systematic murder of six million Jews in the Holocaust.

4.2 Prophetic Warning: The Unrestrained Lawless One

This same mechanics of rejection and consequence governs the end-time prophetic events detailed in 2 Thessalonians 2:6–12. Scripture reveals that a divine restraining force currently limits the full manifestation of evil on earth. When this restraining influence is "taken out of the way," the global flood of lawlessness under the Antichrist will be unleashed.

The Mechanics of Deception and the "Love of the Truth"

In 2 Thessalonians 2:9–10, the apostle Paul explains that the Antichrist's reign will operate through counterfeit miracles, signs, false wonders, and deceptive unrighteousness targeting those who are perishing. Paul then identifies the exact root cause of their destruction: **"because they did not welcome the love of the truth so as to be saved."**



A detailed pedagogical analysis of this crucial passage reveals three vital principles:

- **Spiritual Immunity Through the Love of Truth:** A genuine **love of the truth** acts as a divine shield. Deception cannot force its way into a heart that actively loves, embraces, and abides in God's revealed reality.
- **Deception as a Secondary Vulnerability:** Satanic delusion never succeeds in a vacuum. Deception can only take root *after* an individual or society has actively rejected truth. The refusal to love the truth creates the spiritual vulnerability that makes lies attractive.
- **The Theological Paradox of "Strong Delusion":** 2 Thessalonians 2:11–12 introduces a profound judicial principle: *"For this reason God will send them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie..."* Delusion is not merely a trick of Satan; it is a divine judicial consequence permitted and sent by God. When human beings intentionally reject divine truth because they

take "pleasure in unrighteousness," God honors their free choice by handing them over to the full, blinding reality of the lies they preferred.

Understanding that evil is a void created by human choice shifts our primary focus to the responsibility and privilege of personal alignment with God.

5. Application: Exercising Free Will to Choose Life and Truth

5.1 The Divine Choice

God created humanity with genuine, uncoerced free will. He does not force human beings to commit evil, nor does He force them to walk in righteousness against their will. Instead, He presents the ultimate choice clearly, details the precise consequences of each path, and lovingly urges humanity to choose alignment with Him.

"I call heaven and earth to witness this day against you that I have set before you life and death, the blessings and the curses; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live." — Deuteronomy 30:19 (AMPC)

5.2 Practical Alignment with Truth

Choosing truth requires more than passive intellectual assent; it demands active alignment with God's commandments. By aligning our choices with His word, we place ourselves in harmony with the unalterable spiritual laws of the universe. Aligning with God guarantees spiritual light, protection, and stability, whereas rejecting His guidance inevitably exposes us to the vacuum of evil.

To cultivate a lifestyle that actively chooses light and dispels spiritual darkness, curriculum learners should integrate these five foundational biblical habits:

- [] **Draw Near to God as Your Sovereign Refuge:** Actively seek God's presence daily, grounding your mind in the reality that true goodness is found only in proximity to Him.
 - *Scripture Alignment: Psalm 73:28 (AMP) — "But as for me, it is good for me to draw near to God; I have made the Lord God my refuge..."*
- [] **Refuse to Imitate Worldly Patterns of Evil:** Model your daily decisions after divine goodness rather than prevailing cultural decay.

- *Scripture Alignment: 3 John 11 (NIRV) — "Dear friend, don't be like those who do evil. Be like those who do good. Anyone who does what is good belongs to God."*
- [] **Guard Your Thoughts Against Practical Atheism:** Resist the temptation to make plans or decisions as if God does not exist or speak.
 - *Scripture Alignment: Psalm 14:1 (NLT) — "Only fools say in their hearts, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, and their actions are evil..."*
- [] **Obey Divine Instructions for Enduring Well-Being:** Follow God's precepts meticulously, trusting that His commands establish long-term protection for your life and legacy.
 - *Scripture Alignment: Deuteronomy 12:28 (ERV) — "Carefully obey all the commands that I give you... then everything will go well for you and for your descendants forever."*
- [] **Seek Daily Holy Spirit Guidance for Firm Footing:** Pray continually for God's Spirit to illuminate your path, direct your choices, and keep your life anchored on solid truth.
 - *Scripture Alignment: Psalm 143:10 (NLT) — "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. May your gracious Spirit lead me forward on a firm footing."*

Final Thought for the Learner: Free will is humanity's highest privilege and heaviest responsibility. Evil is not a substance created by God, but the void that naturally forms whenever His truth is rejected and His presence is pushed away. By exercising your free will to embrace God's Truth, love His Word, and walk in His Spirit, you fill your life with His uncreated light—a light that no darkness can ever overpower.