

## Responsibility and Freedom

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The special position of human beings in the creation carries with it special blessings and special responsibilities. Free will is the highest gift that humankind has received from God. This gift makes man superior to all other creatures and makes him supreme in heaven and on earth, for he represents God, the Creator.

"Ye are created in the image of God"

"What you bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven"

"You shall judge the angels, but for a little while you shall be below the angels"



## Co-Creativity

In particular, as co-creators with God, humans have their own portion of responsibility in seeing that God's original plan for the creation is carried out. Men and women exercise their co-creatorship by contributing their efforts to their own perfection and the fulfillment of the three blessings. Therefore, it is the responsibility of human beings to obey the word of God out of their own volition. If they do not obey God, they will be unable to grow to maturity and God's ideal will not be realized.

Once humans have fulfilled their responsibility, they are completely free. This means that all the options they might consider would be within the province of God's will and, therefore, result in goodness. Conversely, there is no true freedom without responsibility. Anyone who makes choices contrary to divine law will bring about his own destruction, the corruption of his own personality. Hence evil in the world is caused by an abuse of free choice: men and women exercising their God-given freedom in disobedience to God's will and specifically humanity are the creators of evil not God.

Thus although God provides the natural environment for human physical growth, as well as the love and laws needed for spiritual growth, and it is the free choices of individuals that determine their destiny. What a person contributes to his own completion is just a small part of what is needed for human development (God gives the rest), but it is the key to fulfillment of God's purpose for human beings. Therefore, the primary concern of human life is the fulfillment of human responsibility.

## The Direct Dominion of Love

God's law is a guide for giving and receiving love. When humans obey divine law they mature in their love to the point where it fully resembles God's true love and they can enter into the direct dominion of God's love, in which the bond of love between God and humankind precludes any disobedient desire in men and women. God's will and human will become one, such that human desire is only to please God. Thus the goal of human life and the object of growth is to exist in perfect union with God and be obedient to Him out of mature love. (People bring fear of retribution and punishment on themselves when they make choices outside of the Principles of Creation.) This is the ideal of a parent-child relationship, in which the child obeys its parent out of love and affection and not fear. Such a child can become a friend or partner to its parents, or even surpass them on occasion. This mature relationship enhances the parent-child love and thrills the parents with joy.

## Conclusion

As with all created beings, humans grow through three stages to reach maturity. Human growth differs from that of minerals, plants and animals in that it contains a spiritual element that transcends and gives purpose to the physical. The object of human life is the perfection of love for the completion of the three blessings. Once an individual has reached full physical and spiritual maturity, completing the first blessing, he or she is qualified to create a true love family and take dominion over the things of creation, fulfilling the second and third blessings. The three blessings can be completely realized only when individuals enter the direct dominion of God, creating families and nations maintained in perfect harmony with His will and secured by unbreakable bonds of true love.

Human growth to maturity on earth is preparation for an eternal existence in the spirit world. The nature of this invisible world and its relationship to the physical world known to our five physical senses is the topic of the next chapter.