

100 Things

PURPOSE

Every Catholic
Teen Should Know

FREE WILL

When God created us, He gave us free will. This freedom is the ability to act or not to act — to do something or to not do something. Since God is the perfect good, free will reveals its true goal and purpose when we choose the good in a given situation.

God will never prevent someone from using his or her free will and, in the end, it is through choosing good that we are able to realize there is an even greater freedom. As if we are discovering new rooms in a house as we choose the right doors to open.

The opposite of freedom is slavery and the opposite of good is evil, so if we choose evil, we will find that we are falling into a slavery — possibly a slavery to addiction, cycles of hatred and abuse, and other sins.

Now, some have wondered, “Since God already knows what I am going to do, is it really free will?” Think of it this way, perhaps: you walk into your kitchen and open the refrigerator. Inside the refrigerator is cake and leftover, three-day old vegetable stew. You have the freedom to choose either to eat. Your dad walks in and sees you staring into the fridge. Even though *he knows* what you are going to pick, it does not impinge upon your freedom to choose either one. It is an imperfect analogy but you most likely get the point.

God will always honor our free will; if we want to be with God, desire God, and be chosen for God, then God will honor that decision. We will be sanctified and glorified. If we do not desire God and have chosen against God, then God will also honor that choice and allow us to move out of His presence.

Saint John Paul II put it this way: “Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought.” Since everyone has free will, we are responsible for our actions. There may be some situations where a person’s responsibility can be diminished

or cancelled, but everyone has a right to free will and is responsible for his or her own decisions.

REFERENCES

Sirach 15:14, 23:10; Jeremiah 21:8; Exodus 6:6; Leviticus 15:13; Ezra 1:4,6

CCC 1734, 1767-1768, 1809, 1834, 1853