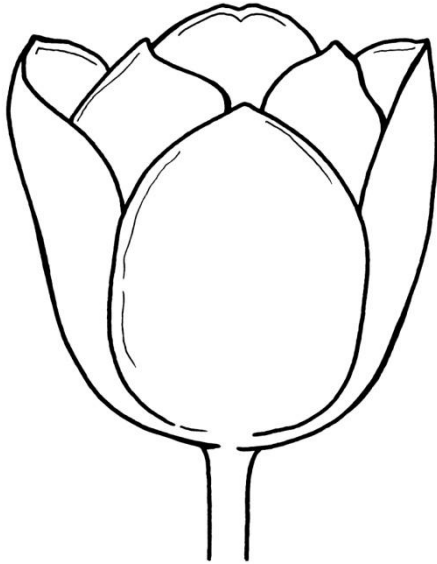


# TULIP

## God's Sovereignty in Salvation



**the Bible talks**

where the Bible does the talking...

Booklet includes a TULIP seminar DVD by John Piper



# How to use this booklet

1. **Review:** from study 2 there's a review of the previous studies. Do the reviews to help you summarize the previous studies as all the TULIP points are intertwined and the summaries are designed to help you see the links. *Try to summarize the meaning of each point from memory and in your own words.*
2. **Position statements:** the statements are either Calvinist or Arminian position on each TULIP point. Honestly chose the one that resonates with the most according what the Bible says this will help you see the position you take before the study and if your position changes after the study.
3. **Definitions:** these are taken from Bob Hayton's "My Explanation of the Five Points of Calvinism" in his *Fundamentally Reformed* website. The reference to each definition is in the end notes. His definitions are the simplest I've found and the verses that support them ground them in Scripture so it will be helpful to look at them as well as some are different from the ones in the questions and points I make.

4. **Study questions or points:** these are designed help understand the TULIP points from the biblical perspective. It will be important to go through all the Scripture references whether they're point or questions to give you a comprehensive understanding. Just note that not all the verses that support the point are quoted but only the key ones.
5. **Footnotes:** don't skip over these, they will fill in some important information to help you understand some statements made and some will have definitions of words you may not know or understand.
6. **Memory verses:** these are found at the end of each study at the bottom of the page. They're key verses for each point. Try memorize these for future reference when in doubt or when speaking to someone about these points of Calvinism
7. **Resources:** this booklet comes with a TULIP seminar DVD and a comprehensive study guide by John Piper from *Desiring God*. *Desiring God's* policy is that you can distribute their material freely but don't sell it. Use the DVD and study guide for further study on the subject preferably having gone through the booklet. More resources from *Desiring God* are listed at the end of the booklet.

*Soli Deo Gloria* (Glory to God alone)

# TULIP - God's Sovereignty in Salvation

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## Introduction to TULIP

Many of us know a tulip as a pretty flower like the one on the front cover of this booklet but for many Christians TULIP has taken on a much deeper significance.

**TULIP** stands for:

**T** – Total Depravity

**U** – Unconditional Election

**L** – Limited Atonement

**I** – Irresistible Grace

**P** – Perseverance of the Saints<sup>i</sup>

These five points of Calvinism were nailed down by the followers of John Calvin<sup>1</sup> in the early 1600's (1618-1619)<sup>ii</sup>. Their purpose was to present what they believed about God's role in salvation over and against what another group known as the Arminians believed.

The Arminians were followers of Jacobus Arminius, hence the name Arminians. Jacobus Arminius disagreed with Calvin on God's role in salvation and taught that individuals have a *determining role in their own salvation*. That means you have the final say on whether you're saved or not.

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<sup>1</sup> John Calvin is one of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Reformers of the church. He's famous for systematically penning his magnum opus, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the body of teachings that Protestant Christians believe from Scripture. Most of what Calvin wrote in the *Institutes* was over against the official teaching of the church (Roman Catholic Church) about God, Jesus and his work on the cross, humanity, salvation and the church.

The Calvinists who were followers of Calvin taught that *God is sovereign in anyone's salvation*. That means God has the final say on who is saved and who is not.

The five points of Calvinism, sometimes termed the doctrines of grace, which you are about to study are not easy truths to swallow. A lot of people struggle to accept them because truth be told we are all born Arminian in our thinking. So don't be surprised if you find some of these turning your world upside down, you're in the right place. I also didn't get it until the Lord by his grace helped me to understand and accept his word.

As you will soon discover these truths are biblical and therefore honouring to God. They're very freeing and assuring when it comes to salvation.

Arminianism on the other hand makes God very tiny and leaves you unsure whether you'll be saved or not. If my salvation ultimately depends on me what will stop me from deserting the faith when the going gets tough? And the answer is nothing for an Arminian, for Calvinists the answer is God.

**Which one of the two statement below resonates the most with what you believe about the condition of human beings before God and why?**

- A. People are depraved and corrupt, but are able to provide the *decisive impulse* to trust God with the general *divine assistance* (grace) that He gives to all people.
  
- B. People are so depraved and rebellious that they are unable to trust God without His special work of grace to change their hearts so that they *necessarily* and *willingly* believe

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✚ The **T** in **TULIP** stands for **Total<sup>2</sup> Depravity**. This means that every aspect of man is tainted by sin. No one is as evil as they can be, but evil affects every part of our being – mind, will, heart, etc. We do not seek after God, naturally. And apart from God’s initiative, we cannot please God. In fact, we are enslaved by the devil and are lost, blinded to the truth of the gospel and in need of God to mercifully reach down and intervene. (See Rom. 3:10-18, 8:7-8; 1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; 2 Tim. 2:24-26)<sup>iii</sup>

**Answer the questions below by reading the verses related to each question:**

1. Who does sin affect?

- **1 Kings 8:46**
- **Psalms 143:2**
- **Rom. 3:23**
- **1 John 1:8**

2. Can we have a right relationship with God by our own ability?

- **John 3:19-21**
- **Rom. 3:9-18**

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<sup>2</sup> The ‘Total’ in Total Depravity does not mean we are bad as we can be as human being but it does mean we’re unable to come to God on our own ability.

3. How much of what we do is good and how much isn't?

- **Rom. 3:23**
- **Rom. 14:23**
- **1 Cor. 10:31**
- **Jam. 2:10-11**

4. Is man's inability to submit to God partial or total?

- **John 3:5-7**
- **Rom. 8:5-9**
- **Rom. 6:17-18**
- **Eph. 2:1-5**

5. Is our rebellion totally deserving of eternal punishment?

- **Matt. 25:46**
- **Eph. 2:3**
- **2 Th. 1:8-9**

Having studied these verses which statement A (Arminianism) or B (Calvinism) is in line with what the Bible says.

**Memory Verse: Romans 3:10** <sup>10</sup> As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

Review:

The T in TULIP stands for.....  
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And this means.....  
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**Circle the statement below that best explains what you believe about election.**

- A. God has chosen *unconditionally* whom he will bring to faith and salvation.
- B. God has chosen to bring to salvation all whose faith he foresaw but did not *decisively* bring about.

**Which one sounds like Calvinism? Which one sounds like Arminianism? Can you think of any scriptures to support your answer?.....  
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✚ The **U** in **TULIP** stands for **Unconditional Election**. Since we are helpless and totally depraved, we need God to intervene. God doesn't sit on the sidelines waiting to see who is worthy of being chosen, God chooses. And because of His choice, the "elect" live lives worthy of their calling. Scripture is quite emphatic that neither our belief nor our works fit us for being elected but rather, flow from our election. (See Acts 13:48; John 6:44, 6:64-65; 10:26; Eph. 1:3-6; 1 Thess. 1:4-5; 2 Thess. 2:13)<sup>iv</sup>

**What election doesn't mean:** *(NB: read the verses for each point)*

- God *foreknew* who would believe and then chose them.

**(Rom. 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:1-2)<sup>3</sup>**

**What election does mean:**

1. God's choice of whom he would save and whom he would condemn is not based on our deeds.

**(John 10:25-28; Acts 13:47-49; Rom. 9:6-18)**

2. We can be sure and confident of our salvation because if you're a Christian you've been chosen and there's nothing you have done or you can do to change God's choice.

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<sup>3</sup> These verses are used to prove that election means God knew who would come to faith and chose them but foreknew here means God had a relationship with or set his heart on the people he wanted to save before the foundation of the world (see Rom 11:2 where foreknew is clearly used to mean relationship)

**(Matt. 24:24; John 6:37-39, 10:27-30; Rom. 8:28-30; 1 Pet. 1:1-2)**

3. There're people whom God has chosen to be saved so be bold and go tell the gospel to everyone because we don't who they are.

**(Acts 13:48, 18:9-10)**

4. Don't be surprised when people reject the gospel.

**(John 10:25-26; 1 Thess. 1 Pet. 2:6-8; Jude 1:4)**

**Memory Verse: Acts 13:48** <sup>48</sup> When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed."

**Review:**

The **T** in TULIP stands for.....  
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And this means.....  
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The **U** in TULIP stands for.....  
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And this means.....  
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**Circle the statement below that best describes what you believe about the atonement<sup>4</sup>.**

A. In the death of Christ God provided sufficient atonement for all, but designed it be effective by virtue of faith, meaning that faith itself *is not a gift purchased* by the cross but the human means of obtaining the gift of purchased forgiveness.

B. In the death of Christ God provided sufficient atonement for all, but designed it be effective for the elect, meaning that it *purchased for them the new covenant promise* that God would work in his people the grace of faith and perseverance.

**What Bible verses can you think of to support your answer?**

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<sup>4</sup> Atonement is what the reality of what Christ was doing on the cross which is satisfying God's wrath against humanity because of our sins through his sacrificial death of Christ on the cross for our sins.

✚ The **L** in **TULIP** stands for **Limited Atonement**. The choice of “limited atonement” to fit with the TULIP acronym is unfortunate. Actually TULIP doesn’t date back before 1900, and “limited atonement” wasn’t widely used much before then. “Particular redemption” or “definite atonement” give the sense better. Jesus’ death is of infinite value and is sufficient for all but efficient for the elect only. Jesus didn’t just make salvation possible (if “activated” by one’s own contribution of faith). He actually redeemed and saved a people through His death. These are the sheep for whom He died and the church whom He purchased with His blood and the bride whom He died for. He died in some different sense for these than He did for those He knew would reject His atoning sacrifice. He actually bore their real punishment and substituted on their behalf in a real way — He made true propitiation (*satisfied God’s anger*) for these.<sup>5</sup> (See John 10:11 compared to 10:26; Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25-27; Titus 2:14; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Jn. 4:9-11)<sup>v</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Historically there’ve been varying positions regarding this point among Calvinists. All Calvinists hold that Christ died for everyone in a general sense and for the elect in a specific sense (1 Tim. 4:10). Some take this to mean the typical understanding of “Limited” must be flawed and so they call themselves 4 point Calvinists. Others take this to mean there were “multiple intentions” in the atonement, that is, God had more than one purpose in the death of Christ. The majority today hold that God’s purpose in the atonement was the saving of the elect, other benefits such as common grace was extended to all in what Jesus did on the cross, but the cross-work was not performed on the behalf of all, but only for the elect. (Hayton, 2010)



**What limited atonement doesn't mean:** *(NB: read the verses for each point)*

1. Christ's death is not sufficient to cover the sins of the whole world.

**(John 3:16; 1 John 2:2; Heb. 7:27, 9:25-26; )**

**What limited atonement does mean:**

1. Salvation is available to everyone if they believe.

**(John 3:16; 1 Tim 4:10)**

2. The death of Christ purchased and secured the faith and therefore salvation of the elect.

**(Rom. 8:29-33; 1 Pet. 2:24-25; Rev. 5:9-10)**

**Memory Verse: Revelation 5:9-10** “<sup>9</sup> And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, <sup>10</sup> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth’

**Review:**

The **T** in TULIP stands for.....  
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And this means.....  
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The **U** in TULIP stands for.....  
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And this means.....  
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The **L** in TULIP stands for.....  
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And this means.....  
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**What do you believe about saving grace (new birth)? Circle the statement on the next page that best fits what you believe.**

A. New birth is God’s work of renewal in our hearts which necessarily brings about the act of faith [we believed because we’re born again].

B. New birth is God’s work of renewal in our hearts in response to our acts of saving faith [we’re born again because we believed].

**Which one sounds like Arminianism? Which one sounds like Calvinism? Which one can you support with scripture?**

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✚ The **I** in **TULIP**– stands for **Irresistible Grace**. This point does not mean no one can resist God’s grace. People do resist. But for all who have been elected, God will overcome their resistance and graciously save them. This captures the idea of regeneration *preceding* faith. Calvinists believe faith flows from a heart that has been regenerated. A dead heart can’t believe. Faith is the sign of what happened behind the scenes in the internal workings of the heart. So while it may look like faith causes the new birth from our perspective, it actually is the new birth which evidences itself in faith. (See John 1:13, 3:3-8; 1 Cor. 2:14; 1 John 4:7, 5:1 [note Greek tense on both of these = "has been born of God"]; Deut. 30:6; Ez. 36:25-27; Heb. 10:15-16; James 1:18; Phil. 2:13)<sup>vi</sup>

**Answer the questions below by reading the verses related to each question:**

1. Do the verses below imply that no one can resist the grace of God?

**(Acts 7:51; Eph. 4:13; 1 Thess. 5:19; Rom. 10:21)**

2. How does God deal with our resistance of his grace?

**(Ezekiel 11:19-20)**

3. What do these verses call the Spirit’s work of overcoming our resistance?

**(John 3:3-8; 1 John 4:7, 5:1)**

4. Do you think God pursued you and will continue to pursue you at all cost?

**(Hos. 3:1-5<sup>6</sup>; Rom. 11:1-36)**

**Memory Verse: Ezekiel 11:19-20** “<sup>19</sup> And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, <sup>20</sup> that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.”

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<sup>6</sup> In fact the whole book of Hosea is about how a faithful God pursues his unfaithful people, it's worth reading through it.

**Review:**

The **T** in TULIP stands for.....  
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And this means.....  
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**Circle the sentence that best describes what you believe about perseverance.**

A. God works to preserve his people but *does not* always prevent some who were born again from falling away to destruction.

B. God works infallibly *to preserve* in faith all who are truly born again so that no one is ever lost.

**What verses can you think of to support your answer?**

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✚ The **P** in **TULIP** stands for **Perseverance of the Saints**. This means more than the common understanding of the eternal security of the believer. God preserves all the elect so that not one of them is finally lost, but He also so works in them that they persevere in their faith. When they fall, they aren't utterly destroyed, they get back up. They bear fruit and have good works which testify to the genuineness of their professed faith. For those who fail to persevere, we are not the ultimate judge God is. But we should exhort one another daily to "fight the good fight of faith". When understood properly, this point allows believers to take seriously the many warning passages and "if" statements in Scripture. It also gives us confidence to trust that "He who began a good work in [us], will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ". (See Phil. 1:6; 1 Cor. 15:1-2; John 10:28; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; Heb. 3:12-14, 6:11-12, 10:23-25, 12 [1-3])<sup>vii</sup>

**What perseverance of the saints does not mean:** *(NB: read the verses for each point)*

1. Mechanical security, the idea that you're secure no matter what you do.

**(Rom. 11:19-23; 1 Cor. 15:1-2; Col. 1:21-23; Heb. 3:12-14)**



2. You can never live in sin, doubt or backslide, there may be seasons of that but if you're truly born again will repent and come back.

**(Rom. 11:11-36; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 1 Tim. 1:18-20)**

**Answer the questions below by reading the verses related to each question:**

1. According to these verses can you lose your salvation if you truly believe? Why?

**(John 10:27-30; Rom. 28-39)**

2. What will happen if you stop believing?

**(Rom. 11:19-23; 1 Cor. 15:1-2; Col. 1:21-23; Heb. 3:12-14)**

3. What is the role of obedience and holiness for final salvation? And who are some of these warnings directed to?

**(Rom. 8:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:1-6; Heb. 12:14,)**

4. What does falling away prove?

**(1 John 2:19; Heb. 3:13-14)**

5. How can you be confident that you'll wake believing tomorrow?

**(Matt. 24:21-24; 1 Cor. 1:7-9; Phil. 1:6; Jude v24-25)**

**Memory Verse: Jude 1:24-25** “<sup>24</sup> Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, <sup>25</sup> to the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

# TULIP

# Review

From memory write what each letter in TULIP stands for.

T .....

U.....

L.....

I.....

P.....

Explain each of the following terms and reference a verse that supports the doctrine:

1. Total depravity.....  
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2. Unconditional Election.....  
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3. Limited Atonement.....  
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4. Irresistible Grace .....  
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**5. Perseverance of the Saints.....**

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**Application Questions:**

**6. How do these doctrines encourage you?.....**

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**7. How do these doctrines challenge your view of God and Christ?.....**

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**8. How do these doctrines change the way you pray?**

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## Resources

For free resources of TULIP go to [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org) and search for TULIP. John Piper has a range of free resources: books, articles, study guides, sermons and seminars (in audio&video). Some of the are included in the booklet.

## Reference

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<sup>i</sup> HAYTON, B. (2010). *Fundamentally Reformed: my explanation of the five point of Calvinism*.

<http://www.fundamentallyreformed.com/2010/03/12/my-explanation-of-the-five-points-of-calvinism/> Date of access: 16 Jun. 2015.

<sup>ii</sup> GONZALEZ, J.L. (1985). *The story of Christianity: the Reformation to present day*. 2 vols. Peabody, Mass: HarperCollins.

<sup>iii</sup> HAYTON, B. (2010). *Fundamentally Reformed: my explanation of the five point of Calvinism*.

<http://www.fundamentallyreformed.com/2010/03/12/my-explanation-of-the-five-points-of-calvinism/> Date of access: 16 Jun. 2015.

<sup>iv</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>v</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>vi</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>vii</sup> *Ibid*