

DO YOU BELIEVE GOD IS SOVERIGN AND IN CONTROL

Do you believe God is sovereign? Is God really in control of everything? And what about some of the issues and questions you have if that's true? I am so glad you come and watch this each time. People have called me that a young men and women, old men and women, people of all ages and given me their input on this show and how it's helping them. And I pray so much for you. I pray for God to bless your life and inspire you and teach you. And that you take the things from this and really apply them to your life and grow in Christ because of it. A lady told me recently, I watched your show two days in a row, and it was the lesson of defensiveness, and I'm so glad I watched it because a situation came up in my life right after that and I could have gotten defensive, and I didn't. It probably saved my job. So, God is speaking to you through these lessons.

I would like to tell you how it is for me doing these shows. I am a very organized person. I like order and I feel comfortable with order, even though I can be a little scatter-brained at times. I am kind of like a split personality. The Holy Spirit has been talking to me for about two years saying that I do not need to be as organized as I am. That I need to leave room for the Holy Spirit to do anything He wants to do through me. Leave room for the Holy Spirit to speak in ways that you have not even expected for me to speak through you. You need to be prepared for me to stop when I want to give a prophetic word through you for somebody who is watching this show. I will give you one right now that I hear the Holy Spirit saying. There is somebody here that when you were real little you were put in a box or something that confined you so much that it gave you a fear of being caught and not being able to get away. It has been a source of torment for you all of these years. It has held you back. The Lord says today because you decided to tune in to this show, and there was a chance you would not. So you will know who you are by this description. The Holy Spirit says because you were faithful, because you are hungry for me, today I say be free of the fear of the torment of that experience. It is over. You do not have to be tripped up by it anymore.

What is the sovereignty of God? Basically you know what sovereignty is. If you say Queen Elizabeth is the sovereign of England, what does that mean? She is the head of England. She is over it all. Everything points toward her. She is seen as the person over it all. She has a prime minister who runs the everyday part of the government. The Lord has the Holy Spirit who is out doing his job every day; teaching, correcting, encouraging, comforting, empowering. God is sovereign. He is over it all. That means there is nothing made that was not made by Him. Have you ever read that in the Bible in Colossians 1? Nothing was made that was not made by Him. You look around at the trees and the mountains. I look around and think how amazing God is. I look at bugs. Have you ever looked at a bug really close? Who in the world would create something that tiny? He so carefully put different colors mixed together in such an interesting arrangement. I also notice fish. Have you ever looked at how the light shimmers on their scales and the vivid array of color? Our God is a genius. And the Bible says that He made every single thing. Every little bug, every little insignificant flower was made by God. If God cares that much about a flower or a bug, what in the world do you think He cares about you? He cares about everything concerning you.

Many people say, "I don't know how to talk to God. I mean, He's over everything. He's the creator of the universe. Why would he care about anything I care about?" A guideline about prayer is that if it is important to you, it is important to God. It is like having a parent who thinks you are the cutest thing that ever walked the earth, and there is nobody like you. When you talk, He wants to listen. When you pray, He wants to hear. He is listening because you are so special to Him. I heard a man say one time in a church service you know what; God loves me the best of anybody in this room. And then he looked at a person sitting in the audience, but then of course, God loves you like you are the only person. Oh, and God loves you like you are the only person. God is sovereign and over everything, He has a capacity to love each one of us as if we were the only person on earth, His only child. He is so careful to watch over our life and bring good things into our life and to teach us.

What can we learn about this sovereign God? How many of you know the president really well? There may be some of you watching that say, "You'd be real surprised how well I know him." I know him on a first name basis. I know things about him that you probably would enjoy knowing about. But I keep confidence and I do not tell. How would it be if you could meet God? What would it be like? Well, you would say, I'm walking into heaven. Oh my goodness, it is bigger than I thought it was. Oh my

goodness, I can feel the presence of God. Wonder where he is. Wonder how you see him. Wonder what it's going to be like. I've heard all of this stuff about him and you never could see him face to face and live. What did that mean? Why couldn't people? And then you get closer and closer and you start going into the throne room. There's a rainbow all the way around that throne. There's elders bowing and worshipping. There is angels, thousands, millions of angels singing to him, glory to God, glory to God, holy, holy, holy. You know it's such a holy place because it's filled with God and he's so holy. Never forget the Holy Spirit's name, his first name is Holy. He's holy. He's good. God is good. And, he is the highest of the high, the chief of the chiefs.

All around the world, there are people who worship other gods and they think this is the God I worship. In the Hindu faith, there are many gods. And yet in all of time, when people worshipped the sun god, moon god, fertility god or whatever, none of it was a real thing. People are made to worship this sovereign God. This God who is in control and they need someone to tell them, "Let me tell you what he's really like, I know him. Let me tell you".

When the world seems to be going crazy, and right now it feels kind of like it is, doesn't it? It's like, what's going to happen next; earthquakes, tsunamis, war. There is war everywhere, new war. Now South America is revving up. What's going to be going on? Is God really in control? Does God know that person is a bad leader? Does God know that person is a dictator? Does God know he's murdering people? Why does God let that happen in Africa? Why is all of that going on? Is God really in control? Yes he is. The Bible tells us in Genesis 14:19 that God is the possessor of earth and heaven and everything is His. Everything that is made is God's. So, why do we see all this bad stuff then? Have you ever asked yourself that? If God is God, He is sovereign and in control, look at all this bad stuff. There is no way God would want that to happen. And that is true. What you have to understand about the Lord is that He is big, but he does not want puppets. He does not want a bunch of robots that look human, going around saying, "Praise God, praise God. Everything he says, everything I do. Praise God, praise God." He doesn't want people like that and so in this earth we have decisions to make. People over us have to make decisions and they do not make right decisions. They have free will and they make horrible decisions. Or they get put in power and they make decisions that affect huge numbers of people in a bad way.

The thing about the Lord is you have to realize is that He will not allow evil to continue forever. No matter how much that person thinks I am in control and nobody can stop me. God will not allow evil to continue forever even in the process of allowing people to have free will and free choice. Do you remember Idi Amin when he was a dictator in Africa? I pray for people like that. I pray for famous people, because I figure they need to get prayed for. And I remember reading about all the people he murdered. All of the terrible things he did. And he thought he was sovereign. He probably thought, "Ha, I'm equal to God. I run this country." And yet, I watched what God did with him. Sometimes when we see somebody evil in control and we think they need to get out of there. We think that God will do some big, bam, blow-up thing and the person will be gone. I remember looking up one day and thinking whatever happened to Idi Amin? I don't even know where he is. You do not hear about him in the paper anymore or anything on the news. God had seen to it that he was taken out of authority, out of position. The Bible says that no one is in the position of ruling anywhere in the earth that God did not allow it. God even used evil people for his own purposes. He used Nebuchadnezzar, King Darius and King Cyrus. They were people who had no use for God. They did not know there was even a God that they should be serving. They would have said, "Well, that Israel's God. We're not Israel, so we don't serve that God. We serve this god." And yet, God was able to speak to ungodly people.

When you are questioning if God is really in control and sovereign, think about Proverbs 21:1. I was working on a Billy Graham crusade in the Dallas area and Billy Graham would come on the radio and tell all the workers each week this is what we need you to be doing this week. One day he came on and he said, "I want to tell you about Proverbs 21:1. If things need to change and the person over you who is in control, running everything needs to change and nothing you say or do causes it to happen," he said, "then you need to claim Proverbs 21:1." And if you need a verse about the sovereignty of God, that is a real good one because it says, "Just as water is turned out into the irrigation ditch, so the Lord controls the King's mind. He turns it whichever way he wants it to go." Think about what it says. I want you to think about a king. I want you to think about that he's running a country. Everybody has to do what he says. He's the sovereign of that country. He can raise you up or put you down. He can cause you to live. He can cause you to die. He can cause your fortunes to be good. He can cause your fortunes to be bad. He is sovereign in his country. Now, I am going to say the verse again, and listen to what I'm saying. "Just as water is turned out into the irrigation ditch, so the Lord controls the king's mind. He turns it

whichever way he wants it to go.” I live in the part of Texas where there is irrigated land. You may not even know what that is. If you live in Israel, you sure know what it is. There are big pipes with valves for the water to flow through. In order to water certain areas of your crops, you can turn them and adjust them. They turn on when they need to and they turn off. They just go back and forth until everything gets watered. And that is an irrigation system. Just think what God said. Just as water is turned out into the irrigation ditch, so that means on off, on off, wait, slow, on, fast. Just as water is doing that, that is how God controls people in authority over you or over a country. That is how God controls their minds. They do not even know it is happening. He directs them whichever way he wants to go.

I will give you an example of how it happens to you. Have you ever just said something to someone, and you do not even think anything about it. They come back later and say, “You know, when you said that I thought about that for a week. That was a powerful thing you said. That was God speaking through you.” And you think, I do not even remember saying it. I certainly did not feel like it was God or really feel anything. I was just saying something. Oh no, that was God. Well, that is an example of God controlling the irrigation ditch of your mind. Turning it whichever way he wants it to go.

What is the whole point of saying that God rules over wind and rain and storms and all of that? Yes, he does. And I know that it is possible to even speak to a storm and it will stop. How do I know that? Well, Jesus did it. Do you not think that was pretty amazing to just stand up in a boat in a lake and say to be still, and they were. I can tell you another one, Jonah. Have you read the book of Jonah lately? I did that in one of my quiet times this week. Jonah was disobeying God. God said, “I need you to go to Nineveh and tell them in 40 days God is going to destroy the city if you don’t repent.” Now, do not forget, Nineveh is still a city today. It’s in Bagdad. It’s up at the top of Bagdad. But it is still there, the same city. And Jonah knew how cruel they were. He did not want anything to do with them. He did not want to go tell them anything. They were his enemy. They were the enemy of Israel. The Babylonians were constantly causing problems for Israel. He did not want to go and tell them anything. He probably thought, “I hope you do it God, I’m tired of having them always coming against us. If I run in the opposite direction, I can get away from God. Because God wants me over there, but I’ll go to Tarsus.” So he got on a boat and took off. A great storm came up, so much that these ungodly people were praying on the boat. The people working on the boat, were praying to their idols and nothing was happening. It was getting worse and worse and worse. And they were throwing things overboard. And Jonah said, they said, let’s cast lots, let’s figure out who this was and it came up that it was Jonah. And they said, “Who are you? Who are you? What are you doing and what is this all about?” “Well, I’m an Israeli who fears the God of the universe, but I’m running away from him.” You think you can get away from God and you can’t. He’s in control so much more than you think, even of the elements. And Jonah said, “throw me overboard and the storm will stop.” Now these people, you don’t have to know God to be a nice person or have good thoughts or good actions. These people didn’t know God and they still didn’t want to do that to Jonah. They kept trying and trying. Nothing worked. The storm would not stop. And finally, they knew they were going to die if they didn’t do what he said, so they threw him overboard and the storm stopped immediately. It’s amazing. Now, you may think this is funny but I will tell you something I do in my backyard. When I hear it is going to hail, I get out there in my backyard and say, “In the name of Jesus Christ you are not going to hit my yard. I bind you; I tell you you’re not hurting my yard. You’re not hurting my flowers in the name of Jesus. I love these flowers. I’ve worked hard to get this thing looking good. Go away.” It works.

God will rule forever. There is a sign in a cave in Israel that somebody unearthed. They could tell from the writing that the cave had not been opened in a long, long time. From the writing they could tell it was a very ancient form of writing. Do you know what it said? Our God is forever. That was written thousands of years ago. You may have had some experiences happen to you and you thought, “God cannot be in control. He would not have let this happen to me. I do not even know why I think I am following him. I’m tired of it, it’s not working, I want to quit, I want to give up. It is over.” I want to remind you that was written in a cave thousands of years ago. And since that time there have been millions of people following God.

If you decide that you are not going to follow God anymore, it is sad news for you. It is bad news for you. But many people will continue to follow God. Millions of people will anyway. Even if you do not believe, God believes and many other people believe. They believe God. They believe his Word. They believe He is in control. What do you do when things happen and it seems like they are out of control?

I have two children and I have had four miscarriages. When I get to heaven I will have six children. I cannot wait to see what those four look like. God is raising them for me. I had my first child and then had

to wait. Then finally, okay, we can start trying to get pregnant again. I just knew that baby was from the Lord, and I lost it. I could not believe it. How did that happen? It broke my heart. But out of that I got a very tender heart towards the Lord. It just kind of broke something in me, and I became very tender. I tried to have another baby and it fell through. Then I had a baby that was fine. The next pregnancy really felt like the Lord said, "You are going to have a baby and this is what his name is going to be." I was so sure, so sure I had heard the Lord. I had another miscarriage. I was lying in the hospital in a bed. I had my Bible. I take my Bible with me everywhere I go. I was lonesome, lonely and sad in the middle of the night. I said, "Lord I don't understand. I thought you told me I was going to have a baby, and now I'm not pregnant anymore. I've had the miscarriage. I don't understand." I opened up my Bible and it opened up to Nahum. Now, that is not a book I read. Maybe you have read it. I never read it that much. It opened up and I looked down, and it was Nahum 1:7. It said, "The Lord is good, and He is a stronghold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust him." I had just told the Lord I do not understand or know why it is happening, but I trust you Lord. I trust you. And here was God. Sovereign God that wrote this Word thousands of years ago. The very day that I need that word I open my Bible, look down, and there is the word saying I am in control. I know what I am doing, I am a stronghold in this day of trouble for you Betty, and I know you trust me. It brought comfort to my soul, just such comfort. A growing awareness of the sovereignty of God in your life will lead you to a deeper stability in your life.

Does your life feel like it does not have a lot of stability right now because of things you are going through? You may be dealing with sickness, a difficult job situation, living in a country where there is a great deal of turmoil and you do not know what is going to happen next. If you can begin to get a growing knowledge of the sovereignty of God, then you will begin to have peace in the middle of a storm. There are two paintings that are called peace. One of them is a painting of a river and it is peaceful. It is just meandering through a forest and the light is filtering down through the trees. It is peaceful and calm. The title of that painting is peace. There is another painting where there is a storm. The waves are high and they are hitting the rocks as hard as they can. In the middle of one of those rocks is a little indentation where a little bird is resting. He has his wing up and his head tucked under his wing. He is peaceful because he knows that everything is okay. Are you like that? When the biggest storms hit your life, have you developed a growing awareness that God is in control of your life and you can trust him? If you have not, ask God to reveal that to you. It will change your life if you do it.

Quiet Time Questions

Do You Believe God is Sovereign and in Control (5IG_ 53)

1. What does sovereign mean?
2. Who does God care about? (See Matthew 6:25-34 and Luke 12:7).
3. What do we know about God and His sovereignty? Use scripture references if possible.
4. How does the story of Jonah teach us about God's sovereignty and our willingness to be obedient to Him?
5. What should you do when things seem out of control? Reflect on the two pictures of peace described in this lesson.

To watch the video on DO YOU BELIVE GOD IS SOVEREIGN AND IN CONTROL, Pillar Two, Intimacy with God, go to www.bettyswann.com

Permissions: Feel free to reproduce and distribute any articles written by Betty Swann, in part or in whole, in any format, provided that you do not alter the wording in any way or charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. It is our desire to spread this information, not protect or restrict it. Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: by Betty Swann, Betty Swann

Ministries, P.O. Box 8882, Amarillo, TX 79114-8882, Amarillo, TX 79109, phone 806-433-4649, www.bettyswann.com,
betty@bettyswann.com