

Comparing Libertarian and Compatibilistic Beliefs on the Human Will

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Libertarian Beliefs

Compatibilistic Beliefs

1) Choices are self-determined by the human will and nothing else.	1) Choices are determined by God as well as by human nature, desires, motives, etc. which can be affected by external circumstances and influences.
2) God can influence choices that are made but He cannot determine choices without violating one's free will. If God determines choices then people would be coerced to act in a way in which they have no other choice.	2) God ultimately determines choices that are made, but He uses secondary means, including human nature, desires and motives. Secondary means can include coercive influences, but God Himself never directly coerces a person to act against their will thus violating their will.
3) Choices are meaningless if they are necessarily determined by prior factors. The hallmark of choosing is being free of all possible constraints preventing the will from choosing what it chooses.	3) Choices are meaningful when they are made voluntarily even though they are necessarily determined by prior factors. The voluntary nature of choosing is not at odds with prior determining factors.
4) The will is separate and distinct from the mind. One's desires and motives can influence choices that are made, but they cannot determine the choices made, only the will can.	4) The will is simply an instrument of the mind where desires and motives are conceived. One's desires and motives are the immediate cause of the will making choices.
5) Being free from all influences that might direct the will toward a particular choice is freedom from coercion. If influences are allowed to determine one's choices then those influences are coercive hindrances to free will.	5) Choices are more voluntary if they are free from coercive causes that determine choices. But not all prior causes are coercive. Coercive factors are things that keep one from choosing what they most want to otherwise choose. The coercive influence provides a more compelling motive causing one to willingly make another choice instead.
6) Conflicting or competing motives are deliberated over, but they have no necessary bearing on what the will finally decides to choose.	6) Conflicting or competing motives are deliberated over until the most compelling motives determines the choice made.
7) Choices are contingent. No alternative is more compelling than another. Thus, any choice can be made regardless of prior factors.	7) Choices are certain. Given all the prior factors that determine choices, only one choice can be made.
8) Choices can be contrary to what might be expected in a given situation. One can act against all influences that might incline one to a particular choice. Thus, one can act against his desires, motives and nature. But one cannot act against his will which finally determines the choices made.	8) Choices are never made contrary to the prior factors that determine choices. One never acts against his most compelling motives, his nature and thus his will. The choice that is made is always the choice one is most compelled to make even if it is not the most appealing choice otherwise.
9) People are free when they rise above their desires, motives and nature and choose with indifference toward alternative possibilities.	9) People are only able to act according to their desires, motives and nature. They are never indifferent to alternative possibilities.
10) Choices can be unpredictable since no reasons are necessary for choices made.	10) Choices are predictable only to the degree that all the reasons that determine choices are understood which is not always possible.
11) Choices can be arbitrary since no reasons are necessary for choices that are made.	11) Choices are never arbitrary because reasons are always necessary for choices that are made.
12) Choices do not necessarily correspond to typical patterns of behavior because choices can be made that are contrary to all influences.	12) Choices correspond to typical patterns of behavior except where certain prior determining factors intervene and alter typical patterns.

Libertarian beliefs

Compatibilistic Beliefs

13) A wider multitude of possibilities for alternative choices exist than in Compatibilism because choices are not dependent on prior causes. If one wants to choose differently than he does he can because no prior causes prevent him from doing so.	13) Possibilities for alternative choices exist, but they are fewer than in Libertarianism because they are limited by prior causes. If one wants to choose differently than he does he can if a different set of prior causes precede the choice that is made. Every possible choice has its own set of reasons.
15) Human responsibility for choices is maintained only when a person has the ability to act contrary in any given situation (i.e. allowed to act equally in any direction in any given set of circumstances).	15) Human responsibility for choices is maintained the more willingly (i.e. voluntarily) a person makes a particular choice.
16) If choices are determined by anything other than the will then they are coerced and coercion nullifies human responsibility.	16) To the degree that choices are determined by coercive factors then human responsibility is correspondingly reduced because the voluntary nature of such choices is reduced. However, most prior determining factors are not coercive.
17) If all choices are ultimately determined by God then that must include evil choices. Therefore God is culpable for evil.	17) All choices are ultimately determined by God including evil choices. However, culpability for evil lies in one's intentions. Since God always has good intentions for the evil He determines, then He is never culpable for evil. Likewise, men are culpable for their evil choices because their intentions (desires and motives) for such choices are evil.
14) There is freedom in Libertarianism for unbelievers with regard to making moral and spiritual choices which are not necessarily constrained by one's sinful nature.	14) There is no freedom in Compatibilism for unbelievers with regard to making God pleasing moral and spiritual choices because they are constrained by their sinful nature.
18) God's grace is necessary in order to choose (believe) Christ for salvation. Divine grace (called Prevenient Grace by Arminians) is supplied to sinful men so that they might choose Christ. However, this grace can be resisted.	18) God's grace is necessary in order to choose (believe) Christ for salvation. Divine saving grace is only supplied to the elect so that they might choose Christ. This grace is irresistible so that the elect will certainly choose Christ.
19) God's prevenient grace helps sinners exercise saving faith (if they so choose to) in order that their natures might be regenerated.	19) God's saving grace regenerates a sinner's nature in order that he might exercise saving faith.
20) If a person is not given the ability to resist God's grace then any choice that is exercised to believe Christ is not free. In other words, if God's grace is irresistible then it is of a coercive nature by definition and a coerced choice is not a free choice.	20) A person who receives God's irresistible grace exercises faith in Christ voluntarily because saving grace is not coercive in nature. God does not force people to believe Christ against their will, left to themselves they willingly reject Him.
21) If God's prevenient grace is not extended to sinners such that they are given the opportunity to believe, then God would be unfair since people deserve equal opportunity in choosing to believe or reject Christ for salvation.	21) By definition God's saving grace is that which is undeserved. He is under no obligation to extend His grace to anyone because all have sinned and have already chosen to reject God willingly. Thus, God is not unfair in not supplying what men already do not want. God does not force people to reject Him against their will, they do so willingly.
22) True freedom is achieved when one is completely free of all influences altogether that might interfere with the will making unhindered choices in any direction it decides. However, this sort of freedom will not exist in heaven because believers will have no choice to sin in heaven.	22) True freedom is achieved only when the sinful nature and its attending desires and motives have been fully eradicated. Only believers in heaven will have this freedom which means acting joyfully in accordance with God's moral commands and precepts of truth unhindered by any sin.