

How To Give Away Your Faith

HANDOUT #4

D. We need to be expectant to see the Spirit's conviction.

1. John 16 reminds us that no sinner has ever been convicted of his need to come to Christ, apart from the revealing ministry of the Spirit.

8 “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; 11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

2. John 16:8 teaches that the Spirit was sent to *convict the world*, that is to bring conviction to each & every one of us before we come to salvation.
3. In light of our previous discussion of those who identify as Calvinists and others — who consider themselves non-Calvinists — John 16:8 has been a subject of much debate and differing interpretation.
4. This verse stands at the crossroads of how these two groups understand the Holy Spirit's work in bringing “*the world*” of people to faith.
5. The Calvinist typically interprets the word “*world*” to refer to all kinds or categories of people—but not every single human being universally.
6. The Calvinistic emphasis on the word “*world*” concerns the scope of the gospel, but not a reference to every single person without exception.
7. John Calvin taught that “*the world*” referred to Jews & Gentiles alike, but that it did not refer to every human being without exception (see Calvin's Commentaries, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2).
8. In other words—Calvin and those who ascribe to his teaching see the “*world*” here as referring to “*the elect*” within “*the world*” who are brought to repentance and faith by the Spirit's convicting work.
9. Most Calvinists distinguish general conviction as a universal awareness of guilt and sin, which arises through conscience, creation, and a moral understanding that sin warrants judgment (Rom. 1:18-20; 2:14-15).
10. They maintain that, although this conviction may stir feelings of guilt or fear, it is not sufficient in itself to lead to salvation in the non-elect.
11. Still other Calvinists broaden this conviction to include the Holy Spirit, literally convicting every individual in “*the world*” — yet to no effect, unless that person—has first been chosen—and elected by God.

12. By contrast, the non-Calvinist understands the word “**world**” to mean that every person—without exception—can experience the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit and not to different types of individuals.
13. This definition of the word “**world**” fits the plain and simple reading of Scripture—as found such verses like John 3:16 and John 12:32.
14. In the realm of theology, the Spirit’s universal work of convicting all people—where He awakens a sense of guilt and the recognition of the need for grace—is commonly referred to as “**prevenient grace**.”
15. This term is used to describe how God initiates salvation by enabling sinners—who are spiritually dead—to respond freely to His call.
16. In simple speech, **prevenient grace** is God’s first move toward a sinner, as God awakens or **draws** a person, softening his hard heart, so as to give the person enough moral capability to respond to the gospel.
17. Of course—while He convicts the entire “**world**” — His conviction does not guarantee that any given individual will be saved, since each must freely choose—to accept or to reject—the grace of Christ in salvation.
18. Yet, the Holy Spirit gives people enough light to respond to the gospel, without squishing their will to receive or to reject Jesus (Acts 7:51).
19. On the one hand, understanding this, we go in dependence on the Spirit to work through us—with a sense of expectation— toward those with whom we share, knowing that they can potentially believe be saved.
20. In addition, when we understand this, our passion increases because we realize the gospel call is sincere and universal and is available to anyone who responds in faith (John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).
21. On the other hand—those who reject this universal conviction believe that the opportunity is not equal but is only granted to the elect whom they say the Father uniquely “**draws**” to Himself (John 6:44 cf. 12:32).
- 44 “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day (John 6:44).

32 “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth,
will draw all men to Myself” (John 12:32).

22. Calvinists see both these passages—as describing God’s sovereign act of regeneration that brings only those who are elected to faith.

23. Calvinists teach that the word “**draws**” (helkō) — found in John 6:44, means — “**to compel or to draw irresistibly**” — such that those whom God elects — cannot possibly resist — God’s sovereign grace.

24. Reformed theologian John Piper writes in What We Believe (p. 76):

“If our doctrine of total depravity is true, there can be no salvation without the reality of irresistible grace. If we are dead in our sins, totally unable to submit to God, then we will never believe in Christ, unless God overcomes our rebellion.”

25. In other words, he and other Calvinistic thinkers argue that the Father only “**draws**” the elect and when He does, His work is irresistible, such that for any to deny this is to make God less than sovereign over man.

26. Non-Calvinists say that this understanding of the word ‘**draws**’ (helkō), certainly gives God the credit for taking the initiative with us while also maintaining His absolute sovereignty in giving man freedom of choice.

27. Since the power of choice is an aspect of God’s person, God in His sovereignty who created man in His own image, has made us with the capacity to choose and not as some pre-programmed robot.

28. This understanding of John 6:44—is clear from its immediate context where the Jesus just stated, “**All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out**” (6:37).

29. Most of us—who are committed to a grammatical and contextual interpretation of Scripture recognize that the words, “**all that the Father gives Me**” refers to the Bride that God promised His Son.

30. Each and every one who responds to the drawing ministry of God, are promised never to be “**cast out**” such that Jesus can promise “**I will raise him up on the last day**” underscoring our security.

31. Clearly from this context, the drawing ministry of the Father is not limited only to certain chosen ones but to “**all men**” for Jesus said:

32 “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself” (John 12:32).

32. God is able to “**draw all men**” through the Holy Spirit who convicts “**the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment**” (16:8).

33. This does not mean that “**all men**” will turn to Jesus, but that “**all men**” have *sufficient opportunity* to do so *if they choose to* (Jn. 1:9; Rm. 1:19).

34. It is important to note that the context of John 6:44 does not imply an irresistible aspect to salvation, but instead emphasizes an _____ invitation, granting all who are willing the opportunity to believe:

“For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day” (Jn. 6:40).

35. John Piper _____ the “**everyone**” of John 6:40 to refer only to the elect:

“Since men are blinded to the worth of Christ, a miracle is needed in order for them to come to see and believe. Those who are called, have their eyes opened by the sovereign creative power of God so that they no longer see the cross as foolishness, but as the power and the wisdom of God. The effectual call is the miracle of having our blindness removed, this is irresistible grace” (What We Believe, pp. 12-13).

36. The Calvinist teaches that it is only “**irresistible grace**” that can _____ those chosen to ‘see’ & so they are unable to resist coming to faith.
37. Non-Calvinists teach—that God’s grace makes it possible for anyone to perceive spiritual truth by removing their blindness & that this grace is not **irresistible** for one may resist it in unbelief __ respond to it in faith.
38. We could argue that some modern-day Calvinist interpretations come dangerously close to undermining the integrity of Jesus’ rebukes _____ scolding people over something they cannot possibly do (Jn. 12:35-40).
39. To chastise His own people for their persistent spiritual blindness makes little sense if some people are entirely incapable of _____ (John 5:39-40; 8:24; 10:24-26; 12:37-40; Matthew 11:20-24).
40. If total depravity renders individuals entirely incapable of responding, then Christ’s rebukes would be akin to scolding a deaf man for not hearing or reproaching a man without _____ for not walking.
41. The Calvinist rejects that the Father universally ‘**draws**’ all to Himself, and that verses like John 6:44 & John 12:32 refer _____ to the chosen.
- 44 **“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day (John 6:44).**

32 “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself” (John 12:32).

42. They say both passages speak of sovereign grace limited to the _____.

43. By contrast, non-Calvinists hold that these two passages describe different aspects of divine drawing with John 6:44 teaching that no one can _____ to Christ apart from the Spirit's initiative.
44. The Bible teaches that the Father "draws" by convicting or convincing "**the world**" of the need to turn to Jesus Christ, while at the same _____ allowing people to resist the Holy Spirit's stirring (cf. Acts 7:51-58).
45. So when Jesus speaks of the Father who will "**draw all men to Myself**," the non-Calvinist believes that—"all" means "**all**"—such that we _____ understand this to mean "**all**" people & not just "**all**" types of people.
46. Likewise, in John 12:32 the "**lifting up**" refers to the cross—by which He provides an atonement sufficient for "**all**" & so accompanied by a universal call to "**all**" for salvation and not just Jews _____ Gentiles.
47. Because Jesus died for all, He now sends the Spirit to convict _____ person, so that each one receives some measure of divine drawing.
48. Though this drawing — does not ensure salvation — since it may be resisted—it remains genuinely available, enabling _____ to respond.
49. The widespread conviction and the ability & need for each person to respond in _____ are clearly shown in a passage like Titus 2.

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age (Titus 2:11–12).

50. What I do not want us to miss is that some bring an entire system of thought by which they interpret passages _____ John 16:8-11.

8 "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;

51. Jesus promised that the Spirit's coming would bring deeper conviction to those who are _____ about "**sin and righteousness and judgment**."
52. Though verse 8 records three nouns, the tenses implied in these nouns refer to _____ **sin**, present **righteousness**, and future **judgment**.
53. *Before Pentecost* conviction had come mainly from the _____, John the Baptist, Jesus, and the disciples' personal influences.

54. The word “**convict**” or in some translations “**convince**” or “**reprove**,” is a Greek verb that means, “**to bring a guilty verdict**” occurring some ____ times in the New Testament with a view to bring about repentance.
55. The trembling and urgent plea of the Philippian jailor for salvation, show conviction of his sin & need for Jesus, brought by the _____ conviction, through Paul’s testimony & the earthquake (Acts 16:29).

29 And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 and after he brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

56. Jude uses this word “**convict**” for when Jesus returns bringing the same kind of sentence about sin, but at that time it will be too ____.

14 It was also about these people that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord has come with many thousands of His holy ones, 15 to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (Jude 14–15).

57. When Jude writes, “**the Lord has come**” he uses a prophetic past tense describing a future _____ to emphasize the certainty of it happening.
58. “**Many thousands of His holy ones**” refers not simply to his angels, but redeemed believers who will accompany Christ at His _____ (cf. Revelation 19:14, Matthew 25:31, 2 Thessalonians 1:7–10).
59. What I do not want us to miss is that when Jude says the Lord will “**convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds**” he is referring to the just and _____ judgment of unbelievers at His coming.
60. The _____ will be removed at Christ’s Second Coming when He judges the living nations on earth (Matt. 24:38–41; Matt. 25:31–46) & finally after the Millennium at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11–15).
61. My point is that when the Spirit brings conviction _____, He produces a deep sense of guilt and urgency—an essential prerequisite for salvation.
62. There can be no conversion without conviction and there can be _____ conviction—apart from the **Spirit of God**—which is why Jesus just previously said, “**if I go, I will send Him to you**” (John 16:7).
63. The **Holy Spirit** comes to indwell the **Church** and not to the world, and that is important to understand because He does not minister in a vacuum but He ministers in _____ through the Body of Christ.

64. Just as the **Son of God** had to have a body in order to do His _____ on **Earth** — even so the **Spirit of God** needs a body to accomplish His ministries — and that **Body** — is the born-again believer.
65. The Body of Christ also called the Church becomes a “**temple of the Holy Spirit**” — that He uses to witness to a _____ world.
66. When the **Holy Spirit** came at **Pentecost** as recorded in Acts 2, He empowered the **Apostle Peter** to preach the Word of God, which in turn brought deep conviction to those who _____.

37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what are we to do?” (Acts 2:37)

67. We have emphasized in this lesson our need to be filled with the _____ when we evangelize because there is no conversion without conviction.
68. And there can be no conviction apart from the **Spirit of God** (Jn. 16:8), using the **Word of God** (1 Pet. 1:23) & the witness of the _____ of **God**.
69. Witnessing is a great privilege — but it is _____ a serious responsibility.

8 “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;

70. We must be filled with the Holy Spirit, depending on Him to lead us to the right people — and to give us — the right _____.
71. For this reason the Apostle Paul asked the Colossians to _____ that “**God will open up for us a door for the word**” and then when the door opened that he “**may make it clear**” (Colossians 4:3-4).
72. Since He does not work in a vacuum but has chosen to work through us, He will bring conviction to the _____ as we faithfully share the gospel.
73. We should note that the **Lord Jesus** mentions not “**sins**” but “**sin**” in its singular form because unbelief is the mother of all sins condemning ____.
74. People do not get sent into hell because they were not moral or were drunkards or murderers but because they were _____ of unbelief.
75. The Spirit alone can teach someone that that the worst ____ in this world is “**not believing in**” **Jesus** because the greatest sin, the ultimate sin and the damning sin it not to believe in **God’s Son** the provision (1 Jn. 5:10):

10 The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. 11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. 13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

76. The person choosing not to believe is like a man who has a deadly but curable disease — he refuses to take his medicine, and so he dies, not just because of the disease, but because he rejected the _____.
77. All those who go to an eternity in Hell will do so not simply because they are sinners but because they have refused God's remedy which is why the Holy Spirit comes to _____ us of our unbelief.

9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;

78. The 1st step on the road to salvation is to understand what the greatest sin is—so to foolishly neglect or to reject Jesus is an insult that _____ cannot forgive which is why Jesus defines “sin” as “not” believing.
79. A courtroom may convict me of crimes, and my conscience may convict me of my wrongdoing, but only the Spirit can convict me of _____.
80. Only He can show me that I cannot save myself & that I need not to believe in myself but in the One who died & gave Himself for ____.
81. And so, we should ____ be surprised when Jesus said in Mark 16:16, “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned” (cf. 1 Cor. 1:17; 15:1-4).
82. Speaking of unbelief Jesus said, “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has _____ believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18).
83. In the same chapter the Apostle John concluded that great discourse on salvation and the necessity of the second _____ by writing:

“The one who believes in the Son has eternal life; but the one who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him” (John 3:36).

84. The words “the one who does not obey the Son” are equally translated as noted in the margin in some Bibles as “the one who does not believe” equating “the one who disbelieves” _____ “the one who does not obey.”