

*A monthly publication of Christian Church of Mountain Home in the interest of promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ and goodwill among His people, our friends.*

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# Questioning GOD

by Gene McCoy



From the earliest record of his relationship with God, man has been asking God questions. Job questioned God throughout the period of his great suffering. Habakkuk began his writing with questions. "How long will I call for help and You will not hear me?" Then he asked the age-old question, "Why?"

Who better to question than the all-knowing God! Asking God the probing questions about things that perplex us is appropriate when it is an expression of faith.

Faith is expressed when our questions are founded upon facts regarding God's faithfulness.

- ◆ He is sovereign.
- ◆ He is active in His creation (providence).
- ◆ He knows and understands.
- ◆ He has all power to accomplish His will.

Faith is also expressed when our questions are founded upon our resignation to facts concerning man.

- ◆ Our thoughts and ways are inferior to God's (Is. 55:8,9).
- ◆ Man is dependent upon God's power.
- ◆ Man is not the center of the universe.
- ◆ Accomplishing His will may involve our inconvenience; even pain and sorrow.

Based upon these facts, which merely outline the complete foundation, consider other questions we should be asking God.

At the top of the list must be the question posed by the Psalmist (8:4), "What is man that You take thought of him?" That biblical perspective prompts other good questions. For example, why does God allow good things to happen to sinners like me?

Why, God, do You continue to bless me, when I have neglected to thank You for the many trials and troubles from which You have sheltered and spared me? Or to

acknowledge that I don't even know the many troubles I deserved that were averted by Your mercy and grace? Why, God, should You cause Your sun to shine on me and allow Your showers of blessing to fall on me (Matt. 5:45) after I spurned Your offer of salvation?

Chris Tomlin's lyric poses another good question. "How can I keep from singing Your praise?" Job's question strikes at the heart of our selfishness and greed. He said, "Shall we accept good from God and not accept adversity?"

Our questions, like those of Habakkuk, can be answered only by God. It really isn't necessary for us to know "how long" and "why" we must endure hardship and struggle. Our energies must be spent and eyes focused on one thing—faithfulness. How long? Until the end of time, when the Lord returns. Why? Because the just shall live by faith / faithfulness (Hab. 2:4).

In that context we question God in a completely different attitude or frame of mind. For example, the person of faith will ask

- How may I be more surrendered to Your sovereign rule, not only in the world, but in my own life?
- What comfort or convenience may I sacrifice to not only remind myself that You are the center of the universe, but to grant others the opportunity to know Your great salvation?
- How may I demonstrate greater commitment to Your will so that my life's testimony will be the same as Job and Habakkuk?

Job. 13:15 "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him."

Habakkuk 3:17-19 Regardless the circumstances I will remain faithful to God. For "the righteous will live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4).

Read Revelation 2:10c.



## Preacher's Pen by Gene McCoy

For other articles and information about our congregation, go online [www.ccmhar.com](http://www.ccmhar.com)

*The Preacher's Pen article is condensed from a recent sermon.*

### Additions

#### Jessie & Kathy Alger

are immersed believers in Jesus who recently expressed their desire to be identified with the work and worship of our congregation. We welcome their fellowship and partnership in ministry.

### Congratulations!

#### Tyler Callender

took first place in the high hurdles in a recent High School track and field competition.



#### Ruby Hinds

won first place in her school and in Howell County, MO to advance to the regional spelling competition, where she took third place. She was eliminated only because she spelled "saint" with a capital "S."

When Jesus told His disciples that He was going to leave them and return to the Father in heaven, He assured them that He would send the Other Comforter, the Holy Spirit, Who would convict [persuade, convince] the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:5-11). The Spirit's testimony is delivered by preachers, like Paul, whose presentation of God's Word was with full conviction (1 Thess. 1:5). It wasn't just so much talk, but it was accompanied in power and the Holy Spirit and delivered in bold confidence, assurance or conviction. There was no doubting these preachers believed the message with their whole heart (Acts 8:37). The result was converts whose reputation of strong faith and faithfulness was known throughout the world.

In these passages we see the progression of conviction, resulting in salvation.

Conviction is the act or process of convincing or the state of being convinced. A conviction is a strong, fixed belief formed by applying sound principles in arranging biblical truth to ascertain God's will concerning matters not specifically addressed in Scripture. There is room for liberty, therefore, in matters of conviction, for our convictions will vary within a range marked out by what God does say in the Bible.

Conviction determines our direction and our conduct. A person of conviction is a person of action and determination. Conviction produces courage to do what we have determined in all good conscience to be God's will. The late David Reagan, leader of the Antioch Independent Baptist Church in Knoxville, TN, says "a conviction is a convinced conscience." He also said a conscience that is "fed a steady diet of the word and submitted to God in a pure heart can help to guide us in many circumstances. . . . It can act as an early warning system against sin."

Our task is to bring people and God's Word together to effect conviction. Consider the process by which that is done.

#### CONVENE

Conviction begins the moment we meet the Holy Spirit, Whose testimony of Jesus Christ exposes our sinfulness and deep need

#### Progression of CONVICTION

CONvene  
CONverse  
CONvinced  
CONvicted  
CONvert  
CONviction

of His cleansing blood.

#### CONVERSE

The presence of the Holy Spirit is necessarily accompanied by His message. When we interact with Him through His spoken and written testimony, it evokes expression of conviction. The

thousands who heard Peter's sermon on Pentecost cried out of their conviction, "What must we do?" Directed by the Holy Spirit, Peter told them they must repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin. With many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation" (Acts 2:37, 38, 40). The writer of Hebrews affirms that "the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (4:12).

#### CONVINCED

The progress toward conviction next requires concession and confession. Convinced of the truthfulness of the Holy Spirit's testimony, we pull down our defenses and resistance, genuinely conceding our failure and confessing our need.

#### CONVICTED

Conviction separates the righteous from the religious. The accusers of the adulteress were convicted by Jesus' words and writing on the ground, prompting them to retreat (Jn. 8:7-9). Conviction is not intended to cause retreat, but to effect godly sorrow resulting in repentance leading to salvation.

The conviction leading to conversion is that which puts at the forefront the reality that our sin has inflicted sorrow upon God. Those whose focus is upon the trouble their sin has caused them cannot be convicted or converted. Neither will they become people of conviction, because their motivation is self-centered rather than God-centered. Judas was convicted, but he committed suicide. Peter was convicted and responded with bitter tears. See Matt. 26:74-75; 27:3-5.

Preaching with conviction is to incite conviction of sin so as to produce conviction against sin; of unrighteousness to produce righteousness.

#### CONVERT

Some people, when confronted with

convicting truth, will recoil and resist. Some will neglect the response conviction of sin should make. Felix is the classic example of conviction without a response (Acts 24:24-27).

Conversion involves real repentance, a change in the way we think and behave, in our attitude and action. Conviction and conversion is not merely feeling regret and guilt, but actually changing the course of life.

### CONVICTION

He who has humbled himself in the presence of the Holy Spirit and been convinced that His testimony concerning his sin is true will respond to that conviction by being converted by the Holy Spirit's power. His life will then be committed to ordering his life according to biblical precepts and principles. His life is one of deep conviction that is not characterized by carelessness or susceptible to compromise. He is willing to sacrifice social standing and even profit when protecting either would be at the expense of biblical conviction. He dares to be like Daniel and his three friends, willing to be thrown to the lions or into a fiery furnace if such is required to honor biblical conviction.

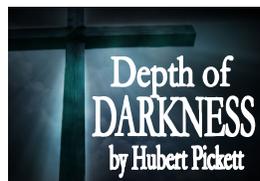
Noted apologist, author and speaker on the college circuit for decades, Josh McDowell, wrote, "Having convictions can be defined as being so thoroughly convinced that Christ and His Word are both objectively true and relationally meaningful that you act on your beliefs regardless of the consequences." (Beyond Belief to Convictions, p 22)

Our primary purpose in life is to impact the world for Christ. This we will do only

when the convicted become people of conviction. Convicted because we have convened and conversed with the Holy Spirit, Whose influence convinced us that people are lost without Jesus. Thus convinced, we are converted from the very core of our being, the result of which is that we become people of strong and unwavering conviction.

David Hume, an 18th century British philosopher who rejected Christianity (and also is to blame for my near-failing grade in college Philosophy), met a friend who was on his way to listen to George Whitfield preach. Hume asked his friend, "Surely you don't believe what Whitfield preaches. Do you?" The friend replied, "No, I don't. But he does." The point is clear that we cannot expect the world to be convinced of something about which we are not ourselves convinced. When you speak about Jesus and present the Holy Spirit's testimony, which we know as the Bible, do it with conviction. Make it obvious that you are strongly convinced of its truthfulness and committed to its propagation.

Effectiveness in helping others progress toward conviction is increased when we are so well informed and educated in the Bible that we are unaffected by the changing winds of doctrine. Our convictions will prevent us from being influenced by the attitudes and actions of those around us, but will rather shape and impact them. Our testimony in the name of Jesus will convict sinners as they see our lives of conviction that avoid even the hint or appearance of sin but are uncompromising in righteousness. 🌐



Five miraculous events occurred at the crucifixion of God's Son, any one of which would have been astounding by itself. In the Gospel of Mark, the miraculous darkness which occurred is recorded in chapter 15:25, 33. "It was the third hour when they crucified Him." "When the sixth hour came, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour."

Producers of such movies as "The Passion of the Christ" and "Son of God" depict the darkness as a storm moving in with dark clouds, then

darkness. I think it was not a gradual but sudden darkness, as if someone flipped the light switch off.

Three hours of light---- three hours of darkness. The first three hours was the suffering of Christ at the hands of men. The second three hours at the hands of a righteous and Holy God.

From 9 till noon man was pouring out his worst—mocking, reviling, deriding—while God was offering up for man His Very Best.

From noon till 3 man was offering up His **Cont. on p. 4**

### MAY MEETINGS

- 5 *Wiling Workers*
- 6 *Benevolence Ministry Team*
- 12 *Elders*
- 14 *Finance Ministry Team*
- 15 *Property Ministry Team*

## NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

first Thursday of May



### One Perfect Rose for MOMS

Our Family Life Ministry Team is again sponsoring a

### Mother's Day Luncheon

Sunday, May 11  
Noon

The men will be serving the ladies. **All** ladies are invited and urged to participate.

## 24-Hour Prayer Event Preview

### OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS



#### PRAYER By Louise Addington

Just as God was concerned about the city of Nineveh and sent Jonah to them, He is also concerned about our community. Jesus wept over Jerusalem and He tried to reach out to His home town of Nazareth. Shouldn't we imitate His compassion and show concern for those around us?

In September let us come together for the united purpose of covering every one of our neighbors in this area with prayer. There are probably thousands who live here who have **never had anyone pray for them specifically**. We will announce this time of concentrated prayer in the newspaper so people will be aware that we are doing this for them.

Our Community Room will be where **24 hours of continuous prayer will take place on September 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>**. Simultaneous to this whole procedure, other prayer centered activities will be taking place. Next month's **CONTACT** will describe how family prayers will be conducted.

Details of the procedures and plans are posted in the Info Center on the church website. 

## Depth of DARKNESS *Cont. from p. 3*

Best, the only sinless One who had ever lived, while God was pouring out the worst.

First three hours our Lord was the "sinless Son of God." The last three He was "made sin."

During the light Christ bore the weight of His own body. During the last three hours He bore the sins of the whole world.

Because God cannot look on sin, neither did He allow man to look on His suffering during this time. During this period of darkness I believe all the mocking ceased. God hung a veil over the light of the sun in order that man (you and I) might realize the gravity of the moment.

Prior to our participation in the Lord's Supper we would do well to contemplate the gravity of what occurred during the miraculous darkness. 

**Ed.:** My title is meant to suggest that the darkness of Calvary was deeper than many have considered or that any may know. Paul says we were rescued from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col. 1:13). Furthermore, He said we were darkness (Eph. 5:8). When we partake of the Lord's Supper we should renew our commitment to live as children of Light (Eph. 5:6-21; 1 Thess. 5:2-11).

The LORD'S COMMISSION is OUR MISSION  
Matthew 28:19-20

### Meeting Schedule

Wednesday Evening Sunday Morning  
5:30 Supper 9:30 Worship  
6:30 Bible Classes 11:00 Bible Classes

### RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

1365 Eastside Centre Court  
Mtn. Home, AR 72653 870-425-8323

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