

The Power of Conviction

If you heed conviction, it lifts you out of sin and leads you back to the heart of God.

I often wonder how any human being can get through a single day without God. If I feel that I am missing God's intimate presence, I can hardly stand it. I'm like a little kid who has lost his mother in a store. I'm frantic! All I can think about is trying to find my parent.

I never want to be out of fellowship with the Lord. I must have Him to get through every single day of my life.

That's why I'm so grateful for the conviction of the Holy Spirit. He lets me know if I'm doing something that grieves God or interferes with our fellowship. He is faithful to show me if I've done something wrong and helps me get back to the place I need to be. He convicts and convinces me, but He never, ever condemns me.

The Bible says: "For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten (unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life. For God did not send the Son into the world in order to judge (to reject, to condemn, to pass sentence on) the world, but that the world might find salvation and be made safe and sound through Him" (John 3:16-17, The Amplified Bible).

God loves us even more than we love our own children, and in His love He disciplines us. I remember how I hated to take privileges away from my children. But I knew they were bound

for trouble if they didn't learn to listen to me.

God has the same concern for us, but He is patient. He tells us again and again what we ought to do. He may tell us 15 different ways, trying to get our attention.

His message of convicting love is everywhere. He wants us to listen to Him because He loves us. If we persist in our ways, He withholds privileges and blessings from us. But He does so only because He wants us to mature.

If God freely gave us His Son, Jesus, surely He won't hold back anything else we need. He wants to bless us radically and outrageously.

Every single day of our lives we need forgiveness. The Holy Spirit sets off the alarm in our spirits to recognize sin, and He gives us the power of the blood of Jesus to continuously cleanse us from sin and keep us in right standing with Him.

But if we are overcome with condemnation, we can be certain it is not from God. He sent Jesus to die for us—to pay the price for our sins. Jesus bore our sin and condemnation on the cross (see Is. 53). When God breaks the yoke of sin from us, He removes the guilt too. He is faithful and just to forgive all our sins and to continually cleanse us from all unrighteousness (see 1 John 1:9).

The devil knows that condemnation and shame keep us from approaching God in prayer so our needs can be met and we can enjoy intimate fellowship with Him. Feeling bad about ourselves or believing that God is angry with us only separates us from His presence. He doesn't leave us, but often

in fear and shame we withdraw from Him.

That's why it is so important to know the difference between conviction and condemnation. Remember, if you heed conviction, it lifts you up and out of sin and leads you back to the heart of God. Condemnation only makes you feel bad about yourself.

Ask God to convict you of your sin, realizing that conviction is a special blessing, not a problem. If only perfect people could pray and receive answers, nobody would be praying. We don't need to be perfect, but we do need to be cleansed of sin.

Conviction is vitally necessary if we are to walk with God properly. This precious gift is one of the important ways we hear from God. Don't make the mistake of allowing condemnation to take hold of your life. Instead, let conviction lift you to a new level in God. Don't resist it; receive it!