

# 2

## Does It Bring Conviction?



### QUESTION 1:

*When has it been difficult for you to admit you've made a mistake?*

## THE POINT

The voice of God seeks to convict us of the truth.



## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

I once spent four hours with a man urging him not to commit adultery with a married woman. He tried to assure me that he and the other woman had prayed about their relationship. They believed God had granted them a love for one another and was releasing them from their marriage vows. He reasoned that God would not give them this love unless He intended for them to be together.

The Holy Spirit assured me this was false and that they were in clear violation of God's commands in Scripture. The Holy Spirit was obviously

convicting the man, because he went to great lengths to justify his sinful behavior. Only later, after the two families and their church had suffered much carnage, did this man acknowledge God's conviction. God had warned him of what he was doing, but he had refused to listen.

A primary way God speaks is by convicting us of our sin. He loves us too much to allow us to rush headlong into sin without calling us to repent and return to Him.

# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

## ACTS 2:32-36

<sup>32</sup> “God has raised this Jesus; we are all witnesses of this. <sup>33</sup> Therefore, since he has been exalted to the right hand of God and has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, he has poured out what you both see and hear. <sup>34</sup> For it was not David who ascended into the heavens, but he himself says: The Lord declared to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand <sup>35</sup> until I make your enemies your footstool.’ <sup>36</sup> “Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

Some people get needlessly bogged down with seeking to hear God’s voice and discovering His will for every little mundane decision. God generally speaks to us about His concerns and priorities. He speaks so that we will know what is on His heart, inviting us to join Him in His work. God’s primary concern for people is that they be in a right relationship with Him. If you are not yet a follower of Jesus, then God’s primary focus is not on what company you work for or what neighborhood you live in; His focus is on seeing you acknowledge that you are a sinner, turn from your sin, and place your faith in Christ. (If you have not yet made this most important decision, turn to the inside front cover of this book and you will find help.)

Acts 2 begins with the Holy Spirit coming upon the 120 followers of Jesus in the upper room. This led to Peter’s sermon, one he preached to the multitude of Jewish people who filled the streets of Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. God often speaks through the preaching of His Word. In this case, Peter preached about the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus.

### QUESTION 2:

***What amazes you the most about Jesus’s death and resurrection?***

The gospel hinges on Jesus being raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:17). Peter proclaimed that he and his fellow disciples were witnesses to the resurrection. This authenticated Peter's message, because he didn't speak of what he didn't know, but rather he preached out of his personal experience. Peter declared that after Jesus's resurrection, God sent the Holy Spirit.

Peter cited Psalm 110:1 in which David prophesied of the Messiah. It indicated that Jesus is the Messiah, the Lord and Savior of all who place their trust in Him. Peter reached the climax of his sermon in verse 36. Peter spoke these words with certainty. He emphasized that it was they who had crucified

Jesus. The people were complicit by their sin and rebellion against God and their rejection of the Messiah.

A telling sign that a word comes from God is the centrality of Jesus, especially His death and resurrection. When God speaks, He uplifts Christ and His work. The Spirit also brings conviction of sin. Peter declared it was his listeners who were enemies of God. When God speaks to you, He will draw attention to the sin in your life and your disobedience to His Word. God will point out anything in your life that is disrupting your fellowship with Him. God knows what matters most in your life and He will speak to those issues.

## ACTS 2:37-38

**<sup>37</sup> When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"**

**<sup>38</sup> Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."**

A distinguishing characteristic of God's voice is that His words always call for a response. You can't remain indifferent to it. When Peter preached to the crowd, the Holy Spirit affirmed his words to those who were listening. As a result, they were "pierced to the heart" (v. 37). This indicates a deep emotional pain as the Jewish people realized, to their horror, that after waiting for centuries for their Messiah, they had crucified Him.



Jesus promised that when the Spirit came, He would convict the world of “sin, righteousness, and judgment” (John 16:8). We each have a sinful nature and are inherently rebellious against God. We don’t naturally do what’s right or good. Our consciences are so seared by sin, we would be without hope if it were not for God’s gracious work to convict us of our sin. In this passage in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit took Peter’s words and applied it compellingly to the people’s hearts. When God speaks, the Spirit will affirm the words to your spirit; you will know the message is from Him.

The people understood they must act immediately based on God’s words to them. This is often a major difference between Satan’s words and God’s words. Satan will try to make you feel guilty, yet offer no solutions for you to find freedom. God, on the other hand, will convict you of sin, but will then offer a remedy. Words from Satan lead to guilt and shame; words from God lead to repentance and life.

Peter told the crowd to do two things. First, he instructed them to repent. Second, Peter told them to be baptized. Baptism is an outward sign of an inner transformation. The New Testament assumed that all who were born again would be baptized. Baptism symbolically identifies a person with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It symbolizes death to sin and being raised to a new life in Christ.

Those who repented received two things. First, they received forgiveness for their sin.<sup>1</sup> This would have been wonderful news for those who listened to Peter. To their relief, Peter assured them that forgiveness was possible through Christ. Second, those who repented of their sin received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Christians often talk about the gifts of the Spirit but neglect the fact that the Holy Spirit Himself is the ultimate gift. When the Spirit enters your life, you have every resource of God to enable you to do His will.

**QUESTION 3:**

***When has the conviction of the Holy Spirit pierced you to the heart?***



## ACTS 2:39-41

<sup>39</sup> **“For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”** <sup>40</sup> **With many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, “Be saved from this corrupt generation!”** <sup>41</sup> **So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.**

As Peter concluded his sermon, he offered hope and encouragement to his listeners. This is a distinguishing mark of a word from God. Satan will seek to discourage you and lead you to a place of hopelessness. God’s word brings hope for better days ahead!

Peter referred to God’s promise. Later in his ministry, Peter again spoke encouraging words about God’s promises (2 Pet. 1:4). He knew that whatever God promised, He would most certainly fulfill. Peter emphasized the scope of God’s promise of salvation: It is for all who believe and trust when God calls. God promised that it would be available to all peoples, even those who were far from God.

Peter offered hope that the people could repent of their sin; they and their children could experience salvation. This was good news indeed! We must always be aware that the decisions we make with God have profound consequences upon our children and grandchildren.

### QUESTION 4:

***Who are some people God has used in your life to bring conviction?***

Peter urged the people to “be saved from this corrupt generation” (v. 40). “Being saved” is the fundamental need of every person. Peter understood the eternal peril that each of his listeners faced, so he preached with urgency.

The result of Peter’s sermon was that three thousand people accepted the message and were baptized. Jesus had foretold that His disciples would do greater things than He had done. In one sermon Peter saw more people find salvation and enter the kingdom of God than occurred during Jesus’s earthly ministry. This reflects the power in a word from God delivered in the power of the Spirit.

Our focus in this study is to discern the voice of God. When God speaks, He always speaks words of truth and grace, desiring to bring us ever closer to Him.

### QUESTION 5:

***What role do we play in the Holy Spirit bringing conviction to people?***

## CONVICTED

*It's the job of the Holy Spirit to convict us of our sins, but also to convict us of how we are doing spiritually. Use the space below to grade yourself from A (best) to F (worst) in each of these categories. If needed, what is something you could do to improve your grade?*

**Hearing God's voice:**

**Acting on God's voice:**

**Submitting to God's will:**

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*“When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment.”*

JOHN 16:8

