

UNDERSTANDING CONVICTION

How God Changes Us



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not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world
worketh death."*

2 Corinthians 7:10 (KJV)



**THE NORTH JERSEY
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Introduction

Every Christian desires to grow spiritually, but growth never happens by accident. God changes us through His Word and by the work of the Holy Ghost in our lives. One of the primary ways He accomplishes this is through conviction.

Unfortunately, many people misunderstand conviction. Some mistake it for condemnation. Others ignore it altogether. Still others become discouraged whenever they feel convicted.

The truth is that conviction is one of God's greatest gifts. It is evidence that He loves us, is working in us, and desires to bring us closer to Himself. Conviction is not meant to drive us away from God—it is God's loving invitation to repentance, obedience, and spiritual growth.

1. What Is Conviction?

Biblical definition

Conviction is the work of God by which He lovingly reveals sin, error, or spiritual need in our lives and calls us to repentance and obedience. It is God's way of drawing us closer to Himself, not pushing us away.

The Holy Ghost reveals what needs to change.

The Holy Ghost speaks to our hearts, showing us attitudes, actions, and habits that do not please God. His purpose is not to shame us, but to transform us into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

John 16:8

Jesus said, *"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."* The Holy Ghost convicts us of sin, points us toward righteousness, and reminds us that every person is accountable to God.

Conviction is an act of God's grace.

Every time God convicts us, He is giving us another opportunity to repent, grow, and strengthen our relationship with Him. Conviction is evidence that God loves us and is continuing His work in our lives.

I would also make one small theological adjustment from a classical Oneness Pentecostal perspective. Rather than saying, "**The Holy Ghost reveals what needs to change,**" I would consistently use the phrase:

"The Holy Ghost lovingly reveals what needs to change in our lives so that we may become more like Christ."

2. Why Does God Convict Us?

Because He loves us.

God does not convict us because He wants to condemn us. He convicts us because He loves us too much to leave us where we are.

Hebrews 12:6

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth..." God's correction is evidence that we belong to Him and that He is actively working in our lives.

God's goal is restoration, not punishment.

God's desire is always to restore fellowship, strengthen our faith, and help us become more like Christ. His correction is motivated by mercy, not revenge.

Conviction keeps us from spiritual decline.

The Holy Ghost often deals with us about small things before they become large problems. Responding early helps protect us from greater sin and spiritual failure.

3. Conviction Is Different From Condemnation

Satan accuses.

The devil seeks to fill us with guilt, hopelessness, and despair. His accusations are meant to drive us away from God.

God restores.

God's conviction always points us toward repentance, forgiveness, and renewed fellowship with Him. He calls us back instead of pushing us away.

Romans 8:1

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus..." Those who walk with Christ can find forgiveness instead of hopelessness.

2 Corinthians 7:10

Godly sorrow leads to repentance and salvation, while worldly sorrow produces despair and spiritual death. True conviction always leads toward life.

Condemnation says, "There is no hope, you might as well give up."

Condemnation focuses on failure without offering a solution. It leaves people discouraged and trapped in guilt. It is not of God, it is the enemy trying to discourage you.

Conviction says, "There IS hope for you!"

Conviction reminds us that God's mercy is available. It invites us to repent, receive forgiveness, and begin again. The Holy Spirit is also an encourager, letting you feel like you can be what God wants you to be through his help.

Satan wants you to run from God because of your failure; the Holy Ghost draws you to God so your failure can be forgiven and your life transformed.

4. How Does God Convict Us?

Through Scripture.

As we read God's Word, He reveals areas of our lives that need to change. The Bible becomes a mirror that honestly reflects our spiritual condition.

Through preaching.

God often uses anointed preaching to speak directly to our hearts. A sermon may answer questions, expose hidden sin, or encourage needed change.

Through prayer.

As we spend time in God's presence, He gently reveals attitudes and actions that need to be surrendered to Him. Prayer opens our hearts to His voice.

Through the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost brings specific conviction throughout our daily lives. He warns, guides, and directs us even when no one else knows what is happening.

Through godly counsel.

God may use pastors, teachers, parents, or mature believers to lovingly help us see what we have overlooked. Wise counsel should always agree with Scripture.

Sometimes through circumstances that reveal our hearts.

God may allow situations that expose pride, impatience, fear, or unbelief. These moments reveal what is truly in our hearts so He can change us.

5. The Holy Ghost and the Word Always Agree

The Spirit never contradicts Scripture.

The Holy Ghost inspired the Bible and will never lead anyone contrary to its teachings. God's Spirit and God's Word always work together.

John 14:26

Jesus promised that the Holy Ghost would teach His disciples and remind them of His words. The Spirit always points us back to the truth of Christ.

2 Timothy 3:16–17

All Scripture is inspired by God and equips believers for every good work. God's Word remains our final authority for faith and conduct.

Every impression should be tested by God's Word.

Feelings and impressions can be mistaken, but Scripture is always true. If an experience contradicts the Bible, it should be rejected.

6. Respond Quickly

Immediate obedience.

When God speaks, our safest response is immediate obedience.
Delaying only makes obedience more difficult.

Hebrews 3:15

"Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." God calls us to respond while His voice is fresh in our hearts.

Delayed obedience often becomes disobedience.

The longer we resist conviction, the easier it becomes to ignore God's voice. What begins as hesitation can become rebellion.

Keep a tender heart.

A tender heart welcomes God's correction and is quick to repent.
Humility keeps us sensitive to the leading of the Holy Ghost.

7. Don't Harden Your Heart

Repeatedly resisting conviction dulls our spiritual sensitivity.

Ignoring God's voice makes it more difficult to recognize His leading the next time He speaks. A hardened heart develops gradually, one act of resistance at a time.

Ephesians 4:30

"Grieve not the holy Spirit of God..." We grieve the Holy Ghost when we knowingly resist His conviction and refuse His guidance.

Hebrews 3:13

Sin is deceitful and can slowly harden the heart. Daily obedience helps protect us from spiritual deception.

Small compromises become great failures.

Most spiritual falls begin with little acts of disobedience that are left uncorrected. Faithfulness in small things protects us from greater failures.

8. Conviction Produces Growth

Repentance.

Conviction leads us to confess our sins and turn away from them.
Genuine repentance is the first step toward spiritual growth.

Greater holiness.

As we obey God's conviction, our lives become more separated from sin and more dedicated to His purposes. Holiness is the natural result of walking with God.

Stronger prayer life.

Obedience removes barriers between us and God, making our fellowship with Him deeper and more meaningful. A clean heart produces greater confidence in prayer.

Better discernment.

As we mature spiritually, we become better able to recognize truth, avoid deception, and make wise decisions according to God's Word.

A closer walk with God.

Every act of obedience strengthens our relationship with the Lord. The more we follow His voice, the more clearly we recognize it.

Transformation into Christ's image.

God's ultimate purpose is not simply to change our behavior but to change our character. The Holy Ghost continually shapes us to reflect the life of Jesus Christ.

9. How Can I Stay Sensitive to God's Voice?

Daily prayer.

Regular prayer keeps our hearts open to God's leading. It helps us recognize His voice throughout each day.

Daily Bible reading.

The more we know God's Word, the easier it is to recognize His direction. Scripture trains us to think according to God's truth.

Quick repentance.

Confess sins as soon as the Holy Ghost brings conviction. Prompt repentance keeps our fellowship with God strong.

Regular church attendance.

God speaks through worship, preaching, and the fellowship of believers. Faithful attendance helps keep us spiritually encouraged and accountable.

Listening to godly preaching.

God has given pastors and teachers to instruct His people in righteousness. A teachable spirit allows God to speak through faithful preaching.

Maintaining humility.

Pride resists correction, but humility welcomes it. A humble believer is always willing to learn, grow, and obey.

10. Rejoice When God Deals With You

Conviction is evidence God has not given up on you.

As long as the Holy Ghost is speaking to your heart, God is still working in your life. Conviction is one of the greatest demonstrations of His love and mercy.

Psalm 139:23–24

David prayed, *"Search me, O God, and know my heart."* He welcomed God's examination because he desired to walk in righteousness.

David welcomed God's searching.

Rather than hiding from God, David invited Him to reveal anything that displeased Him. A growing Christian desires God's correction.

Thank God when He speaks.

Although conviction may be uncomfortable, it is always for our good. Every conviction is another opportunity to become more like Christ.

A tender heart is one of the greatest treasures a Christian can possess.

Never lose your sensitivity to the voice of the Holy Ghost. A heart that remains tender before God will continue to grow in faith, holiness, and spiritual maturity.

In Closing

Every believer faces moments when God lovingly points out attitudes, actions, or habits that need to change. Those moments are not meant to discourage us—they are opportunities to become more like Jesus Christ.

The safest Christian is not the one who never needs correction, but the one who responds quickly whenever God speaks. A heart that

welcomes conviction will continue to grow in faith, holiness, and spiritual maturity.

Never resist God's conviction. Welcome it, respond to it, and thank Him for loving you enough to continue His work in your life.

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

— Philippians 1:6 (KJV)

A Prayer for a Heart Willing to Change

Lord Jesus,

Thank You for loving me enough to show me the things in my life that need to change. Help me understand that Your conviction is not intended to destroy me, but to lead me toward repentance, forgiveness, and a closer relationship with You.

There are times when I recognize that my thoughts, attitudes, decisions, and actions have not been pleasing to You. Give me the humility to acknowledge these things honestly rather than making excuses or blaming others.

Lord, help me recognize the difference between godly sorrow that leads to repentance and worldly sorrow that leaves me trapped in guilt, shame, and hopelessness.

When Your Word reveals something in my life that needs correction, give me a willing heart to receive it.

When I have sinned, help me repent sincerely.

When I need to make things right with others, give me the courage to do so.

When I struggle to change, remind me that I do not have to depend upon my own strength alone.

Lord, do not allow pride, stubbornness, fear, or the influence of this world to harden my heart against Your truth.

Help me understand that genuine repentance is more than feeling sorry for what I have done. It is a willingness to turn away from sin and begin walking in obedience to Your Word.

Teach me to welcome the correction that comes from Your Word and the conviction of Your Spirit, knowing that You desire to bring transformation into my life.

Replace my selfishness with humility, my disobedience with submission, my bitterness with forgiveness, and my resistance with a sincere desire to please You.

Above all, Lord, help me never to confuse Your loving correction with rejection.

Thank You that Your mercy offers hope, Your grace makes change possible, and Your Spirit gives strength to those who sincerely seek You.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

In the name of Jesus Christ,

Amen.

YOU'RE INVITED!

The North Jersey United Pentecostal Church

We would love to have you join us!

Whether you are searching for a church home, beginning your walk with God, or simply desire to learn more about Jesus Christ and His

Word, there is a place for you here.

Come experience heartfelt worship, biblical preaching and teaching, prayer, fellowship, and the presence of God.

WEEKLY SERVICES

SUNDAY WORSHIP 11:15 AM

MIDWEEK WORSHIP & THE WORD — ENGLISH

Wednesday • 8:00 PM

SERVICIO EN ESPAÑOL Viernes • 8:00 PM

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Pastor Gary Evensen

Watch our services and Bible teaching on YouTube:

YouTube — @NJUPCINC

We hope to see you soon!