

Signs

God is Calling You Out of Darkness and Into His Light

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All words spoken by Jesus Christ are in **red text**.

Jesus said “You did not choose Me, but I **chose you** and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you” (John 15:16). “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44).

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who **called you** out of darkness into His marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9

The wonderous, glorious and life-changing truth: Christians who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord were chosen and called by God. All revelations of His existence and our desire to know Him did not initiate because of our own will—but because of His desire for us—for He called us out of darkness and into His truth-revealing light. What’s more, our miraculous transition from darkness and death into light and life compels us to praise and proclaim His grace, His love, and His Son to anyone who will listen.

Consider for a moment what it is like when you are in absolute darkness—when you can’t even see your hand in front of your face and those around you. All you can do is rely upon your senses of touch, sound and smell—plus emotions, mind and memory. So, as you move around you continually try to figure out what’s going on around you, and do your best to survive and fulfill your needs.

The above scenario depicts spiritual darkness. For those who are saved by God’s grace can attest we were dying in the midst of darkness and lies; bound by sin; unable to truly see ourselves and others, and was seeking any and all means to fulfill needs and the lust of our flesh. However, something began to change deep within our heart and soul—as God called us from darkness into light, and illuminated truth so that we could see. But what’s more, we were not chosen because of what we had done or what we could do. But rather, we were chosen because of something in the innermost part of our heart and soul which only God can see.

“He sent from above, He took me; He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the Lord was my support. He also brought me out into a broad place; He delivered me because He delighted in me.” Psalm 18:16-19

If you are reading this text, your life has been (or is being) touched by God. Those who are in absolute darkness rebel against anything associated with God, and will seek to avoid Him at any cost—including reading content such as this. Simple truth, Satan does not want to relinquish his property. However, because you continue to read means the Holy Spirit is working in your life.

Jesus said “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” John 14:16-17

Jesus said “When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.” John 16:13-15

Signs God is Calling You out of Darkness

Listed below are various internal and external influencers that provide evidence the Holy Spirit is working in your life; as His light illuminates what's going on inside you, and what's going on around you. Personally reflect upon each influencer and identify those that are applicable to you.

You may have a different "internal" perspective.

- You become more aware of what's on the "inside" as you realize:
 - There is an unfulfilled emptiness within your soul.
 - The uselessness of your vain goals and behavior.
 - When you sin you don't feel the same way, or you feel bad on the inside.
 - You have a growing:
 - Disdain for sin.
 - Desire for something better.
 - You have an indescribable awareness God is calling you to repent and turn towards Him.

You may have a different "external" perspective.

- How you see your life begins to change, as you realize:
 - You have been on a path that is headed towards destruction, or...
 - You may have reached the "bottom" and have nowhere else to turn.
- How you see others begins to change, as you become more aware of:
 - The collateral damage you have caused others.
 - The sinful influence some persons have upon you.
 - Some you associate with are confused, lost and unaware of their condition.
- You begin to see Satan's deceptual lies in television, movies, on the Internet, and so forth.
- You begin to realize:
 - The darkened condition of the world.
 - We are at the "threshold" of the last days.

You may have a different perspective of eternity, God and the Bible.

- You have a growing concern that if you die you may not go to Heaven.
- You have increasing awareness you are trying to avoid Him by holding onto lies and darkness.
- You have a growing urge to know more about God.
- When you read or hear scripture from the Bible:
 - It speaks to your heart.
 - You know it is absolute truth.

Past and present events may have a greater influence.

- That which you have repressed comes to the forefront of your thoughts, such as:
 - Words spoken to you by Christians.
 - Scripture you have heard.
 - Feelings of overwhelming remorse for what you have done.
- You may hear God's voice speak to you.
- You may encounter a Christian who provides counsel that speaks to your heart.
- God may "close the doors around you" and open only one that leads to Him.
- You may experience visions and dreams.

Kicking Against the Goads

The Holy Spirit uses the various influencers listed above to get our attention. However, those who are in darkness are usually stubborn, hard-headed, proud, self-centered, do not want to change, and have a “leave me alone” attitude. Plus, because they are in darkness, they are unable to see spiritual truth.

Jesus said “Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.” Revelation 3:17-18

To overcome internal “protective barriers” and a hardened-heart caused by sin and darkness, God calls us by spiritual goading. Goading is defined as being provoked or annoyed to stimulate some action or reaction. The term is based upon the practice of how farmers urge a stubborn ox into motion. Goads have a pointed end that is used to provoke and annoy an ox (via pain), and they move.

The term “kicking against the goads” (spoken by Jesus below) refers to when the beast kicks at the goad because it does not like being prodded with a pointed object, and does not want to move. Like a stubborn ox, many of us can testify how we kicked against the goads of God as He was calling us into righteousness.

Paul the Apostle (also known as Saul) was a zealous Pharisee who strictly followed Jewish law, hated Jesus Christ and persecuted Christians—some to the point of death. “As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.” Acts 8:3

But God saw something in Paul’s soul that transcended his hatred, pride and murderous behavior. Jesus said “He is a **chosen** vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.” Acts 9:15

However, Jesus had to get Paul’s full, complete and undivided attention to call him out of darkness. So Jesus goaded Paul by blinding him as he was walking on the road to Damascus. (Note: The term “the Way” was used to define the earliest growing Christian community.)

“Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ So he, trembling and astonished, said, ‘Lord, what do You want me to do?’ Then the Lord said to him, ‘Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.’ And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.” Acts 9:3-9

To gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the depth of God's grace and love, consider the fact God chose Paul. Paul hated anyone who believed in Jesus Christ; sought to throw them into prison; and had blood on his hands because he was guilty of murdering Christians. Most of us would have preferred to see someone like this spend eternity in the lake of fire because murder is considered by humans as one of the worst possible sins one may commit. But God had a different plan.

To some it may appear Paul's conversion was due to one encounter with Jesus as he was walking on the road to Damascus. However, it is possible Jesus had been working on him for some time by goading him. One may reach this conclusion because Jesus asked him if it was hard to kick against the goads (goads is plural or more than one).

Jesus sent Ananias (a disciple of Jesus) to pray over Paul. As Ananias prayed, Paul received his sight, was baptized, and then spent days with the disciples in Damascus. Thereafter, Paul began to speak about Jesus Christ to all who would listen, and became the greatest missionary the world has ever known as he spread the gospel to Gentiles (non-Jews), and wrote thirteen of the New Testament books.

When you consider what Paul had done before and after his transformation, it is safe to say there is a direct correlation between the depth of one's sin, and the degree of thankfulness when God's grace (forgiveness of sins) changes a person's life. Take a moment and consider the immensity and depth of the repressed guilt and shame Paul had—that came flowing forth to the surface—when Paul heard the voice of Jesus asking him **“Why are you persecuting me?”**

For an excellent informative overview on Paul, click on the following link: [Paul the Apostle](#).

The Holy Spirit

God provides a helper to those who are called out of darkness and into His light—the Holy Spirit—who is the third person of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In addition, the Holy Spirit:

- Goads, guides and teaches us.
- At times will live in us and move through us to communicate God's truth to others.
- Is an indicator of the guarantee of our eternal inheritance in God.

“But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.” 1 John 2:27

“Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” 2 Corinthians 1:21-22

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:13-14

“Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:12-14

But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. “These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For ‘who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?’ But we have the mind of Christ.” 1 Corinthians 2:10-16

If you are goaded by the Holy Spirit...YOU ARE CHOSEN AND BLESSED!

As described earlier, the Holy Spirit will use various techniques and means to goad our stubbornness, overcome our fleshly and sinful nature, change our direction, and cause us to move towards Him. For some it may require a little prodding. For others, like Paul, it may require a devastating “wake up” call.

Many persons have “walked down the aisle” in a church or at an event to accept Jesus as their Savior, consider themselves to be a Christian, but have not allowed Jesus Christ to be Lord over their life—which defined me. I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior when I was a teenager. However, I did not accept Him as my Lord because I continued to live my life of sin. A few years later, while serving in the United States Air Force, I was facing serious consequences for my behavior—including a military court-martial and going to prison—because I was guilty as charged for something I had done. I had made an absolute mess of my life; my future was bleak; and I was completely overwhelmed with indescribable fear.

Prior to this time the Holy Spirit had been working in my life, goading me in various ways, and illuminating various aspects of my life—but I would not listen. However, He now had my full attention. In the midst of my misery I had a dream (vision) of a very tiny island in the ocean. The island had very steep cliffs all around that rose straight up from the water’s edge more than a hundred feet. The island’s surface was flat with no vegetation other than grass. A group of people were on the island, surrounding and facing someone in the middle of the group (whom I could not see). Extending out from this group of people was a very long taut rope that was parallel to the ground along its distance and was tied around my waist. I was standing on the edge of the cliff at a 45-degree angle trying to jump off, but was unable because the person who was standing in the middle of the group was holding onto the rope. Jesus was holding onto the rope and would not let me go. My Savior declared in Matthew 28:20 **“I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”**

This is when I tearfully humbled myself, got down on my knees, bowed my head, and accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord. I finally realized I could no longer trust in myself to make the right decisions and needed to place my complete trust in God. Thereafter, things began to quickly change. I requested and was assigned a new military lawyer, was not court-martialed, was given a reduced punishment, and I did not go to prison. I soon joined a Christian church and my life has never been the same.

All of this occurred 50 years ago—and uncontrollable tears flowed again from the depths of my soul as I wrote my vision and testimony above. Why He choose me I do not understand—for He has continually extended His grace and forgiveness to me throughout my life, and has fulfilled all of His promises. In addition, as each trial and tribulation has occurred, I have gained a deeper appreciation of the importance of trusting in Him to guide me through every aspect of my life.

One more point before we continue. When a Christian sins, the Holy Spirit continues to goad us in the form of guilt, remorse, shame, and sadness in that we have done something that is against the will of our loving God. What's more, this pain is a good thing **“For whom the Lord loves He chastens.” Hebrews 12:6**

Some reject His light because they prefer darkness.

“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Jesus said “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” John 8:12

Jesus said “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” John 3:18-21

Is God calling you from darkness into His light?

Our Lord:

- **“Is longsuffering toward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9**
- **“Desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:4**

“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.” 2 Chronicles 16:9

“I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.” Jeremiah 17:10

Jesus said “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:16-17

Jesus said "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:35-40

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1:7-12

So, here are two questions to consider:

- Are you aware of sin in your life?
- Are you being goaded by the Holy Spirit?

If you answer yes to either, **YOU ARE BLESSED** because God is calling you out of darkness into His light!

What's more, God loves us more than we are able to comprehend. It is because of His patience, grace and mercy that causes Him to hold onto the rope that will not allow us to fall to an eternal death.

Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ I pray. Holy Spirit, thank you for Your truth, patience and perseverance as you turn me away from darkness, and guide me towards the light of God and His righteousness. Jesus...my Savior and Lord...I give you my heart, my life and all that I am...for You alone are worthy.

God Bless You!

Harold D. Thomas

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: 'Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.'" Ephesians 5:8-14

Can you think of someone who could benefit from reading this lesson? If yes, PASS IT ON!