

PREREQUISITES TO FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

John 4:29 (4:7-30)

Introduction: Everybody knows that nobody can predict what will take place on any given day and often at the end of the day some shake their heads in amazement and disbelief at all that had happened. The Samaritan woman's day started out like any other ordinary day but by the time her day had ended her life had been turned around and inside out. She had had an encounter with Jesus, an encounter which was illegal in some respects but regardless of legality, it brought a change in her life, it brought conviction.

I. CONVICTION ALWAYS FOLLOWS HEARING GOD'S WORD

1. The Samaritan woman's conversation with Jesus caused her to remember and be convicted of her sinful life and present condition of living in sin.
 - God's Word is constant and still today it will do the same thing as it did that day with the woman and Jesus. (*1 Corinthians 14:24-25*)
 - Often a pastor hears one of his church members remark as he/she goes out the door after a worship service, "you were sure picking on me today..." as if the pastor had been watching that person's activities that week.
 - The Holy Spirit applies God's Word to a person's conscience and convictions follows.
 - Until God's Word is received into the heart and the Holy Spirit brings understanding, a person's mind remains blind, deaf and prevents one from being convicted.
2. Only God is really aware of what is happening in a person's soul.
 - The Holy Spirit opens a "window" in a person's heart/soul with God's Word and that person's conscience begins to see the true condition of his/her life, heart and soul.
 - As Jesus once pointed out, the tomb may be beautifully sculptured and decorated on the outside, but on the inside is decay and death.
 - Thus it is with people. All seems well until the Holy Spirit uses God's Word to reveal what's on the inside of a person.
3. The Holy Spirit awakens the conscience to judge every act and thought of a person.
 - The Holy Spirit using God's Word stirs and awakens a person's conscience to previously unknown, forgotten facts about that person's real condition of his/her soul.
 - The Samaritan woman saw for the first time her real standing before God.

II. CONVICTION PRODUCES CERTAIN RESULTS

1. Being convicted creates a desire to know more about the condition of one's soul.
 - Remember what the Philippian jailer asked? "*...What must I do to be saved..?*"
 - Conviction of one's own true condition causes one to share his/her experience with others.
 - The Samaritan woman hurried off to tell others what had just happened.

2. When the heart, however, is unaffected, skepticism and doubt are voiced and prevail.
 - When the conscience is awakened, a person is more prone to want to receive more truth.
 - One's state of mind, the degree of awakening (if any) of the conscience determines the readiness to receive the things of God.
 - Remember Thomas who was always doubting?
3. An awakened conscience prompts the desire within the person to tell others.
 - The Samaritan woman hurried back to tell others of her experience with Jesus.
 - A person just cannot be quiet when conviction has been deep and strong enough. There will be a "come and see..." attitude.

CONCLUSION:

1. God's Word, with the Holy Spirit, can bring conviction to anyone.
2. The Samaritan woman was an alien to and hostile to God, a wreck of a human being, yet God reached her heart.
3. There are no circumstances, no condition that can keep a person from being accepted by God.
 - Anybody, upon hearing God's Word, being brought to conviction by the Holy Spirit, who repents, believes and surrenders to Jesus can and will be saved.
 - The woman knew very little, yet she hurried away to bring others to Jesus.
 - No believer has any excuse for not sharing his/her experience with Jesus.
 - One doesn't have to "preach."
 - Simply share within the circle of your own friends, kind.
 - Lepers shared with lepers.
 - Beggars shared with beggars.
 - Samaritans shared with Samaritans.
4. How can any person, after finding salvation in Jesus Christ keep from sharing with others?
5. It is God's Word and the Holy Spirit that reveal, convict, persuade, save.