

The Science of Prayer

Its ABC's

By Glenn and Ethel Coon

Name: _____

Date: _____

LESSON 3

The Agony of Being Sure

Introduction

When my wife and I began claiming Bible promises in a very special way, we were immediately challenged. Two of our very dear brothers frankly told us that they doubted we had received answers from God. They felt we were guilty of presumption. We felt that much was at stake. If they had properly evaluated the situation, we should be willing to back down at once. On the other hand, if we were exercising faith, we should move forward. Of one thing we were certain we did not merit answers. But could we, unworthy though we were, claim with certainty the promises of the Bible?

Were the promised solutions found in the Bible for us today under all circumstances and in all walks of life? We must find the answers.

To clarify our thinking, we made an outline of several questions and answers. We placed this outline right in the flyleaf of our Bible. This was so we could often refer to it and drill ourselves on the points made. After we had made the outline, we reviewed it again and again. We suggest to you, our student, that you follow the same procedure. The questions and answers more or less followed the outline below.

1. How do we know there is a God?

One of our brothers had previously prepared a sermon. It was titled, "How I Convince the Infidel there is a God." This sermon contained beautiful experiences of God's existence. Its proof was drawn chiefly from nature. My brother had explored extensively into various facets of nature to prove a mind controlled all created works. From the time a seed is planted (whether it be for vegetables, grass or flowers), until it germinates, springs forth from the ground, develops and bears its fruit, or its bloom, my brother showed in a convincing way that the seed declares it is controlled by law. It has order. It has beauty. It reveals design. It shows that a mind controls it with means-to-an-end. He summed up this portion of his sermon with the statement: the law, the beauty, the order, the symmetry, the design, the means-to-an-end in all created works postulates mind. There is nothing in our planet that reveals these characteristics where a mind is not involved. Even a humble, unattractive traffic light suggests that some mind put it there. How much more the works of nature!

We had heard of how a tiny flower had been used of God to convert a criminal behind bars. We, too, picked up a tiny flower. We observed its beauty, its symmetry, its design. We saw that the laws of life controlled it. It had order and means-to-an-end from the time it was a seed until its day was done.

Then we looked up into the vast vault of blue. We had loved to study astronomy. We could, with the Psalmist cry out, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." Psalm 19:1. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Psalm 14:1.

2. How do we know God is wise enough to solve our problems?

This was the next question in our outline. We still clutched the tiny flower. Wisdom was seen in its germination, its development from its first day to its beautiful fruitage. Then we looked into the starry heavens and we could cry out, ". . . he hath established the world by his wisdom, ..." Jeremiah 10: 12. Simple but profound proof.

3. How do we know God is powerful enough to solve our problems?

This was our next outlined question. We needed a God. Not merely one who existed, but one who was wise enough and powerful enough to solve problems we faced. We thought of astronomy. We reviewed the run-away speed of Arcturus. Arcturus is but one among the billions of orbits within billions of universes. Surely, "He hath made the earth by his power. ..." Jeremiah 10: 12. And the "heavens" are the "work of thy fingers."

Psalm 8:3. "Yes," we cried, "God is wise enough and powerful enough to handle our problems." But we needed another question answered.

4. Is God personally interested in a little speck like me?

We picked up the tiny flower again. There could not fail to be an answer. He made this flower (only a dot as compared to us) perfect-absolutely perfect. It was beautiful-perfectly beautiful. His personal interest is in that speck of a flower, from the moment it was a seed, all through its pilgrimage.

"Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven ..." (Matthew 6:30), shall He not much more take a personal interest in my problems? Yes, a thousand times yes. That silent flower speaks eloquently of our heavenly Father's care.

Then the next question was:

5. How do we know God communicates to us personally in the Bible?

We pondered on how completely foolish it would be to think of an infinitely wise, powerful, loving God as being unable to communicate to the intelligent creatures He has made. We outlined three evidences of God's communication to mankind in the Bible. First: We recalled the many years we had presented, in our public ministry, various prophecies of the Bible. They had, without exception, been fulfilled on time. There were no crystal ball errors such as our modern "prophets" admit.

Of the approximately 1,335 Bible prophecies, 1,000 have already met the point of fulfillment. Not one has failed. We recalled how a brother of ours had told of Josiah Litch. Litch was preaching on Bible prophecy in 1838. There were hundreds upon hundreds of unbelievers, infidels, and skeptics. Litch pointed out that in two years the Ottoman Empire would lose its independence. Later he even gave the date it would happen according to Bible prophecy. It would be August 11, 1840.

It is said that on that date when the prophecy was fulfilled to the very letter, one thousand infidels accepted the Bible as the Word of God. We said to ourselves, if infidels, on the basis of just one fulfilled prophecy, could accept the Bible as God's communication to man, what about ourselves? We know there are hundreds upon hundreds of fulfilled prophecies. Should not our faith be stronger in the Bible

as God's communication to man than the 1,000 infidels who were converted on the basis of one fulfilled prophecy?

Jesus said, "Now I tell you before it come, that, when it come to pass, ye may believe that I am he." John 13:19.

Second: We placed on our outline a list of dramatically changed lives. These people were murderers, adulterers, thieves, proud and arrogant blasphemers. We saw their lives completely changed through their reverent study of the Bible. This is what Bible promises can do.

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1:4.

Third: The most personal evidence we have is that which is within our own experience. We placed on our outline what we know beyond question the Book has done for us. When we have reverently studied its pages it has worked a transformation in our lives. When we have neglected its study we discover our carnality. What Jesus said is true: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." John 15:3.

6. Our Conclusion: The Bible promises are as sure as God Himself.

"By myself have I sworn. . . ." Genesis 22:16.

"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." Hebrews 6:17-19.

7. Others came to the same conclusion.

Joshua challenged millions in these words: ". . . and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof." Joshua 23:14.

Samuel declared, ". . . the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent [or turn back from His word]." 1 Samuel 15:29.

The Psalmist stated, "Thy word is true from the beginning: . . ." Psalm 119:160.

Jeremiah cried out "The Lord is the true God. .." Jeremiah 10:10.

Paul, the apostle, was certain that, "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." 2 Corinthians 1:20.

Even Balaam, the backslidden prophet of God, cried out, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he, should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Numbers 23:19.

Victorious souls before God's throne will sing, ". . . Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Revelation 15:3.

All heavenly beings have made their decision. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." Psalm 119:89.

One hundred million angels around God's throne cry out, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Revelation 5:12.

"Every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea ... heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Revelation 5:13.

And we cried out, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise." Psalm 57:7.

8. Therefore we Decided to make Bible Promises Personal.

We prayed before an open Bible as did George Muller, that famous man of prayer. We often took the Bible in our hands, opening it to a promise. We did as did Monica, mother of Augustine. She placed her finger right on the promise of God. She made the promises of God very personal. We have a personal God. Why not then accept his promises to us personally?

"If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3:29.

9. C. H. Spurgeon.

One of the greatest preachers of all time, once said, "Prayer pulls the rope below, and the great bell rings above in the ears of God .., he who wins with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously, with all his might."

10. Norman Macleod

Gave this testimony: "There is no such thing in the long history of God's kingdom as an unanswered prayer. Every true desire from a child's heart finds some true answer in the heart of God."

A PERSONAL MESSAGE:

Dear Student:

John Doe may have lost all confidence in the promises of the Holy Scriptures. This need not cause us to despair. If we can determine why he lost this confidence then we can immediately deal with the remedy.

Many dear souls have lost confidence in the Bible because they have not found its teachings relevant to the problems of their personal lives. Therefore, we are to give our joyful testimony, when they ask. Our testimony is that we, too, have not been as securely anchored to the wonderful, truthful, never-failing promises of God's Word as He would have us to be. We share with them what a change has come into our lives since we have begun to learn how to claim Bible promises.

We should be very cautious lest we sound to John Doe as if we were preaching at him. Rather we are merely sharing. This sharing is in deep humility. The credit for our victory belongs to our Lord, not to ourselves. And He is to be referred to again and again as the Source of that deliverance.

Years ago we had a group of people in our prayer room who wished to stop smoking. In order to help them and to increase their faith we invited to join us several men who had already received deliverance from the habit. Unfortunately, we neglected to brief them beforehand on how to share their deliverance experience. So these dear ones began to "preach" at those who were seeking, giving the appearance that they were uplifting themselves instead of Christ.

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We found that that kind of testimony had to be changed immediately in order for our meeting that day to be successful. It was very important for all to know that the source of victory is Jesus Christ, not our will power, although that comes from God and is necessary. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philippians 2:13. Therefore, God should receive all the credit. Those whose will power is weak, will be able to connect with the Source, and find deliverance. Let us always be very humble in our sharing with others. Otherwise, they will feel belittled as if we do not understand them, or as if we were uplifting self.

Cordially yours,

Glenn Coon, Sr. Glenn Coon, Jr.

QUIZ ON LESSON 3

1. The heavens declare the glory of _____ Psalm 19:1.
2. He hath established the world by his _____ Jeremiah 10: 12.
3. He made the earth by his _____. Jeremiah 10: 12.
4. We know God takes a personal interest in every soul because he has clothed the _____ of the field. Matthew 6:30.
5. Jesus said that fulfilled prophecy is to help us to _____ John 13:19.
6. We are made partakers of the divine nature by the precious _____. 2 Peter 1:4.
7. We are _____ through the words our Lord has spoken. John 15:3.
8. God's promises are and _____ 2 Corinthians 1:20.

Correct Answers on Answer Sheet.