

DOES GOD CARE?

If you're reading this post I'd be willing to bet that you're wrestling with this question. I don't know about your background or belief, and whether you would plainly state this question in the same way as I have done, but I do believe it is a question that many of us ask at some point.

You know what? I began asking tough questions like this after weathering a long season of storms...seriously...like a whole decade of them!

Part of what I sought after was to make peace with how a loving God could allow *this*, and why He wouldn't save us from *that* if He is truly a loving God and cares for us. Would you say that's a fair description of your inner grumblings?

If you kept pulling at that thread and other questions began to unravel, would it lead you to the burning question of *how* do you find contentment with your circumstances in a world with many quick fixes and home remedies? Have you tried all of them like I did?

Let me tell you how I found my solution....my peace.

The goal of your journey, as was mine, will be to discover the true value of who you are, to be willing to come to terms with who God really is, and ultimately, to pin-down what it is you believe...to know if God does, in fact...care. It's a journey of faith that we all must take, but to what extent will you spend the effort in *knowing* the answers?

What I believe may be different from what you believe. I am a Christian. The whole basis of Christianity is built on love and how that love is exemplified in the person of Jesus Christ, so it is not my place to condemn you if you don't believe what I believe. That would be contrary to the principles of my faith.

However, it is my hope that if you *do* stand on a different belief that you would still consider addressing the 3 points above using the Bible as the primary source and final authority to find your answers. Will you open the Scriptures and give it a shot?

Who is God?

Who are you?

Do you believe what the Bible says?

You see, I don't speak from head knowledge, but rather from heart experience. I *know* what I learned in that discovery process. I *know* God personally. I *know* who He made me to be. And I *know* that my life has been permanently changed through His Son, Jesus Christ. I *know* what I believe now...and it's not just because, "Momma said..." or, "My pastor said..." but it's because I got in His Word and have experience after experience, one on one, with God Himself!

I guarantee you, based on God's living Word, your discoveries to those three points will confidently give you the same results! The answers are all in writing. You just have to be *willing* to let it speak to you.

If you're struggling, let me encourage you with my flaws...if that's possible! I didn't stumble upon my Peace and Confidence overnight. It was a process...mostly because my nature

is to *defiantly* do things on my own and prove to others that I can. Ironically, knowing what I believed was not one of my pursuits. I was the one adopting other people's beliefs without having any personal faith experiences of my own....until...God intervened.

Maybe this is what He is doing for you right now? Maybe He's stepping into your path, getting in your face, and telling you, "Seek Me. Know Me. Trust Me. Follow Me." If so, please don't ignore that voice. Let me give you the tools and prompts to more efficiently use your time and discover the truth.

Before I do that, can I tell you how God intervened for me?

I became a Christian at a young age, but I hadn't experienced much growth in my faith until later on when the storms of life began to brew. As the dysfunction came and the rainy season hit, I had no idea how to handle the overwhelming nature of raw emotion.

The discovery of who I am revealed that I knew much about Christianity but very little about my own heart and spirit. You see, I didn't know how to connect what I knew in my head to what I was feeling in my heart. It was a crisis of belief, and for the first time I was faced with a choice of whether I would truly believe God at His Word and trust Him to be the Master of the storms or continue in my own strength, as if I could make the rain stop.

I don't like to see people struggle, but part of me is glad if you are standing at this crossroad having your own crisis of belief. There is enormous opportunity for healing at hand!

Before my intentional discovery process began, I was blinded to the truth and severity of my unbelief, although I could clearly see the effects of it! I had become one of the people that

author Chip Dodd speaks about in his book *Voice of the Heart*, “We ended up as adults who don’t know how to use our feelings in order to live fully. Consequently, we don’t know how to handle our woundings except by being more defensive, survival oriented, or self-sufficient. We develop philosophies that excuse our own impairments, and we eventually become wounders ourselves.”

Who really wants to be a wounder? I certainly didn’t. And I doubt you want to either.

I had sin in my life. Unbelief. And I was completely ignorant of how God intricately fashioned our bodies with emotions, thoughts, and behavior patterns. I had to learn more about how He made me, pair it with what I already knew in my head about Him, and connect the two in my heart with belief and trusting Him at His Word!

I want to encourage you with the concepts taught by Arthur Pink in his discussion *A Fourfold Salvation from Sin*. It helped me understand my faith journey better, and my faith *struggles* too!

Pink basically points out the process Christians go through in relation to sin. Once we make a decision to follow Christ and accept Him as our savior, we are freed from the penalty of sin, but all throughout our life we must grow to become more like Christ and learn to be free from the pleasure and power of sin. One day we will spend eternity free from the presence of sin, but for now, while we live in this world, we must stare sin in the face each day and decide what to do with it. Will we let it rule us, or will we overcome it?

My sin contributed to my discontentment. No one can fight the battle of sin in their own strength — though I gave it my best shot for a very long time. As Christians,

Jesus promised us the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit to be our navigational beacon and the key to overcoming sin. I didn't fully realize I had abundant power to weather life's storms, and in my spiritual ignorance, I was naïve enough to go off searching for the physical things that made me happiest. The more I tried to find happiness in my own strength, the more I found myself disappointed.

I could wish to have chosen more wisely in applying principles of my faith. It sure would have spared me a lot of trouble if I had done so, but the truth is that I'm stubborn and I had to learn things the hard way. We grow through mistakes made, and the result of my storms brought me closer to God, producing an intimate relationship that has proven to never fail.

It has been discovered that my faith in Jesus is the soul satisfaction I longed for. For me, true contentment goes no further than the cross of Christ, and there is nothing this world can offer that even comes close to comparing to the lasting satisfaction I've found with my heavenly Father.

God loves us so much that He longs to have a meaningful relationship with each of us, and just as any loving parent would discipline their child in order to teach what is best, our heavenly Father does the same. I was not, and still am not, exempt from this principle.

There is no question in my mind that God cares. He does. Any lingering doubt in my mind has been abolished this side of my fiercest storms, and I believe Arthur Pink

accurately summarizes in his sermon notes from long ago the “why” that is so applicable to my journey, and yours too:

God so orders His providences that our earthly nest is destroyed. The winds of adversity compel us to leave the downy bed of carnal ease and luxuriation. Grievous losses are experienced in some form or other. Trusted friends prove fickle, and in the hour of need fail us. The family circle, which had so long sheltered us and where peace and happiness was found, is broken up by the grim hand of death. Health fails and weary nights are our portion. These trying experiences, these bitter disappointments, are another of the means which our gracious God employs to save us from the pleasure and pollution of sin. By them He discovers to us the vanity and vexation of the creature. By them He weans us more completely from the world. By them He teaches us that the objects in which we sought refreshment are but ‘broken cisterns,’ and this that we may turn to Christ and draw from Him who is the Well of living water, the One who alone can supply true satisfaction of soul.

Whether you consider yourself a Christian or not, life is hard and struggles are real. Perhaps your struggles are different than the ones I faced, but basic emotions felt with any challenge are the same. Maybe you haven’t endured a divorce or grieved the loss of a child, but you have experienced sadness on some level, and it is in this way that you will be able to connect with what I write.

I hope that I am able to clarify that Christianity is not about pretending to be perfect or placing ourselves above anyone else. A wand is not magically waved at the moment of salvation,

so that we instantaneously have life all figured out. To the contrary, being a follower of Christ is about walking in humility, acknowledging wrongdoing, asking for forgiveness, and learning to love completely as we more intimately come to know and mimic the God we serve.

I am grateful for the rich truths I have gained and the work that remains before me in the process of my Christian life. Through this post I pray you are able to begin your journey and uncover the mystery in what it is you believe.

If you want additional guidance in beginning this discovery process, please submit your information below so I can help you get started. I'll share tools with you and give you pointed prompts that help you uncover truth.

In what ways has God shown you more about yourself and proven to you that He cares? I look forward to hearing your stories too!

Loved by Him,

Andrea GEHRETT