

BELIEVING IN GOD IS A CHOICE
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Before God can or will help us, we must believe and acknowledge there is a God and He is able to help us.

Many prefer not to think about God. Some go to great lengths to reason away His existence. In Psalms 53:1, David referred to such as fools. We must understand that our willingness or refusal to acknowledge God makes no difference whether we will answer to Him. The eighth chapter of Luke speaks of some who hear the Word of God, but allow Satan to remove the Word from their hearts before it can grow and change or save them. Some mock at what they do not understand. Because they have no hunger or desire for spiritual matters, they are given no discernment as to the meaning of what they hear. 1 Corinthians 2:14 says they cannot perceive the things of God because their flesh, and the pleasures they enjoy, keep them blind. Others become ignorantly willingly. 2 Peter 3:5 says, "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:" They seem to believe they will not be held accountable for their actions if they refuse to acknowledge a Creator. In this case, what they don't know can definitely hurt them. Freidrich Nietzsche is quoted as saying, "God is dead!" God could say, "Nietzsche is dead, and after death comes the judgment."

God is certainly capable of demonstrating His existence, but just as certain, we may not want that to happen. In the Old Testament, when the children of Israel questioned God's ability to sustain them, He answered. God sent them bread every day from the sky, but familiarity bred discontent and they soon complained about having just one thing to eat. So God sent them huge flocks of quail, which sounds good until we get to the end of the story. In the eleventh chapter of Numbers, God killed great numbers of them with a plague while the meat was still in their mouths. In the fourth chapter of Daniel, the mightiest king on Earth at the time was given a quick lesson regarding who really had power and who was in charge. Nebuchadnezzar got to live for a while like a beast of the field, naked and eating grass to survive. Seven years of madness later, the king was willing to acknowledge God. Nebuchadnezzar had to learn it is better to have God prove His power through provision than with judgment. In Isaiah 17:46, God promised Israel He would win a mighty battle against the Philistines for them, so that "all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." On that day, some were delivered and some destroyed, but both were a result of God proving Himself.

When we need help which no power on this Earth can provide, help is just a matter of placing a not so long distance call. The scriptures; Acts 2:21, Romans 10:13 and Psalms 55:16-17, all assure us when we call on the name of the Lord, we will be saved. Note that word "saved." We don't ask someone for help we do not believe has the ability to aid us. In order to be saved, we need someone we are sure is a Savior. Like His disciples, we can be safe so long as we keep our eyes on Jesus. We read in Matthew of a time when Peter, in response to the command of Christ, left the boat he was in to walk across the water to his master. As long as He looked at Christ, he was fine, but then he focused on the fierceness of his circumstances. Peter took his eyes off of God to look at the storm and His heart – and the rest of him – sank. Peter got help for his immediate problem when he looked again to God, but Jesus also offers help for eternal problems when we call on His name. He loved the world so much; He gave His son. Whoever believes on Him will not perish, but will have not only everlasting life, but also a more abundant life here and now. Isaiah said it like this in his fortieth chapter, "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

God is choosy about which calls He answers, He only responds to those who believe He can and will help them. We must have faith that God will reward our search and our desire for Him. Hebrews 11:6 says without faith, we cannot please God. Before we can come to Him, we must believe there is both a God and that He rewards those who seek Him. How do we acquire this level of faith? The best way is

through exposure to the Word, in study and in preaching. The tenth chapter of Romans tells us faith comes by hearing the word of God. God will not enter into a relationship with those who do not believe He is real, interested in us, or willing to help us. Our belief in Him is a compelling part of His decision to choose us. According to 2 Thessalonians 2:13, we are chosen for salvation through “sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.” Our hope, and our consolation, lies in our belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must understand and believe in the way created by the death of Jesus, for us to once again enjoy a relationship with our God. That belief in Christ is the “power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth”

We can refuse to acknowledge the life preserver created with the death of Christ, offered to keep us from drowning in our sins. We can choose to pretend there is no God. We can choose to ignore the immensely powerful help that is just a call away. We can even require God demonstrate His existence through His terrible judgment rather than His miraculous provision. But making such choices would pretty much seem to confirm David’s opinion of us.