

God All Around Us

Some people believe that God is distant and uninvolved in the world around us. They believe God created the universe, created the laws of science to govern the universe, and then stepped back to let the world run itself. I want to let you know that isn't the case. The Bible teaches that God is actively at work in the world around us, and countless people can testify that God hasn't taken a hands-off approach to running the universe. I want to share three teachings from the Bible that confirm this, share some testimony as to why I wholeheartedly believe those teachings, and encourage you to ponder the work of God for yourself. The Bible teaches God draws people to Himself, causes all things to work together for good in the lives of those who believe, and answers the prayers of His children.

God draws people to Himself:

“⁴⁴No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.” (John 6:44 NIV)

Something the Bible says about God is He loves us too much to leave us to our own devices. We have a God who seeks after the lost and brings them to salvation (Luke 15:1-10). People don't find a loving God. A loving God goes into the world and finds people. This reality is often one of the reasons people cite for their conversions to faith. Some people just see too much of God in their lives to refuse Him. If you asked me why I converted, that's what I would say.

I was aware of God drawing me to Himself for four years. When I finally did come to faith in Jesus, it seemed there was no way I could have said no. God's work in my life was too perfect for me not to get the idea. I'm not going to give a four-year testimony of why I believe, but I want to share some of my testimony to show ways God brings people to Himself. Maybe you will see as you read that God is doing some of the same things in your life that He did in mine. If you do, your story may have the same ending mine did.

One thing that made me believe was coincidences that were too perfect to be accidental. I saw many of those. Two years into my journey towards faith, I saw so many perfect coincidences that I had to say “God is doing something in my life, but I don't know what it is. What's He up to?” One coincidence took place after I joined the Marine Corps at 19-years-old. On my way to boot camp, the group I was with missed a connecting flight. As a result, we all made it to boot camp one day late. When we finally made it to boot camp the next day, every person in my group was assigned to the same training platoon. I lucked out greatly because of this.

Our Senior Drill Instructor was harder on us than some of the other drill instructors, but he had a soft spot in him. He genuinely cared about others, and he didn't like to take administrative action against people that could hurt their military careers. He was very merciful towards those who messed up. And during boot camp, I messed up so bad that I could have been kicked out of the Marine Corps. But my Senior Drill Instructor being who he was put his reputation on the line for me and pulled strings to keep me in training. I lucked out big time.

I've been someone prone to putting himself in bad situations over the years, but time and time again, I kept getting lucky breaks. I'm not that lucky. Someone above has been watching over me, and has been very involved in my life. The fact that I kept getting those lucky breaks let me know there is a God who was actively involved in my life. Maybe you've seen that too? Maybe you've also gotten some lucky breaks? Maybe you've seen odd coincidences that are pointing you towards God? If so, God may be drawing you to Himself.

Something else that drew me to Jesus is that God worked in my life to give me every Earthly thing I desired. Christians often say we are born with a God-shaped hole in our hearts that only God can fill. You can try to fill that hole with friends, money, possessions, hobbies, pleasure, and anything else we naturally desire, but none of it will fill the hole. While I'm not aware of any Bible verse that outright says this, that is the central message of the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes. A year into my journey towards Christ, God started giving me everything I wanted to show me how hollow life without Him really is.

At first, I wanted possessions. So, I took my military paycheck and accumulated possessions. I spent much of my childhood alone and lonely. So, God put me somewhere where I had a large group of friends I was close with. My family life was rocky before I enlisted. I saw that change during my time in the military. I was driven by a desire to have a life of purpose, and I thought I could find that purpose in a military career. After I decided I wanted to make a career out of the military, I got promoted to leadership in the shortest possible time a person can reach leadership under normal circumstances. And God arranged an over-the-top promotion ceremony to celebrate that milestone. I was stationed on a small base, and the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps happened to be there the day I was promoted. Being the man of the people he was, he decided to promote the people on base who were being promoted that day. I was promoted to the rank of Corporal next to one of my two best friends by the highest-ranking enlisted person in the whole Marine Corps. Talk about getting everything your heart desires.

The next day I was given a half day off to celebrate my promotion, and I went back to my barracks room. I remember feeling like I made it to the top of a mountain, and I was king of the world. I basked in that moment for a short while, but then I had a depressing thought. I thought "I have everything I want, but I still feel empty inside." God worked in my life to give me everything I wanted, but it didn't make me happy. He did this so He could go on to show me the thing my heart truly desired was a relationship with Him. And I didn't even get to enjoy that mountain top for long. The next day something tragic happened that made the next two years of my life miserable. I learned you can have every Earthly thing your heart desires one day, and lose it all the next day. Shortly thereafter, I went on a six-month temporary assignment where I made a lot of Christian friends. During that assignment, I admired how they all seemed to have a joy that I wish I had. After seeing what wouldn't make me happy, I began to see what could make me happy. The timing was once again perfect.

Maybe you see this in your own life? Maybe there is something you are looking for, but you're not sure what it is? Maybe you see this same journey playing out in your own life? I want to tell you the thing you are looking for is a relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. The love, joy, peace, and fulfillment Jesus offers are the things your heart is longing for.

I have one last story I would like to share about how God will move Heaven and Earth to reach one soul. I hated my last two years at my first military unit, and I left there as soon as I possibly could. I checked out of that unit December 23rd 2010 to go home for 3 weeks of leave, but I didn't have plans to spend Christmas with my family. On a whim, I decided to reach out to an old friend who recently deployed to Afghanistan. To my surprise, he had just got back from deployment and was doing his out-processing on a Marine Base that I could reasonably stop by on my way home for leave. When we talked, we decided to take advantage of the opportunity we had to reconnect and spend Christmas together in a nearby motel room.

My friend got the idea to get some synthetic marijuana, and we spent our first 24 hours together getting high. The last time we got high was the last time I ever smoked synthetic marijuana. Synthetic marijuana is known to make people lose their mind, and that happened to me. Our motel room turned into a version of Hell, and my friend turned into a demon. My delusion fit some of what is said about Hell, and it was horrifying. My friend made things worse when he decided to play a low-key song on his acoustic guitar with a creepy melody. I was freaking out. I told a pastor later that that experience scared the Jesus out of me. In a witty comeback, that pastor responded by saying that experience scared the Jesus into me. He couldn't have put it better.

Two months later I had seen enough to start reading the Bible, and two weeks after that I converted. By the time I had that bad experience on synthetic marijuana, I knew God was leading me to Jesus. I wasn't that I didn't know that I needed to come to faith. It was just I didn't want to come to faith. But that experience was one of the things that made me think that just because I didn't want to believe something, didn't make it a good idea not to believe it. After four years, God got me. And while my nearly 15-year journey as a Christian hasn't been perfect, I can testify that the God-shaped hole has been filled. My conversion was the greatest turning point of my life.

The point of all of this is you don't have to be seeking God to recognize His work in the world around us. God is making Himself known to people who aren't even seeking Him. He wants to be known. Maybe you've had some of the same thoughts I had leading up to my conversion, and you don't know what to make of them. I'm here to tell you the Bible has an answer. God is making Himself known to you. You may not believe at the moment, but God is using the coincidences in your life that are too perfect to say "I'm real, and I'm here."

God works all things for good in the lives of those who believe:

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters." (Romans 8:28-29 NIV)

The purpose of the last section was to show that God reveals Himself in the lives of people who don't believe. The purpose of this section is to show how He is actively at work in the lives of those who do believe. The above promise is one of the most famous promises in the Bible, and I will tell you from nearly 15 years of experience that it is true. I'm not going to be as

wordy as I was in the last section, but I want to share some of the ways God has turned all things for my spiritual good, and sometimes worked things out to bless me.

God has masterfully worked in my life to develop my faith and bring me into a closer relationship with Him. He has worked in my life to bring me back to Himself when I have gone astray. He's healed me of my need to be needed. He's greatly healed my codependency. He's been very involved in developing my prayer life. He's worked to purify my motives for doing Christian works. I've seen God work in my life to give me a dream, and bring that dream back to life after I gave up on it. As far as blessings go, I've seen God work things out in my life in ways that made it possible for me to get a nice house at a reasonable price. The promise of Romans 8:28 is about our spiritual good, but there have been times I've seen God work things out in my life to bless me. It happens.

I'm not the only person to express this, but God has truly been active in every detail of my life. It is important to note that this promise doesn't say God causes all things, but that He causes all things to work together for good. This is my testimony. If you have Christian friends, I encourage you to ask them what makes them so sure of what they believe. They may give you a rational reason for why they believe (one of the articles on this website is dedicated to rational arguments for Christianity), but there is a good chance they will tell you about what God has done in their lives.

God answers the prayers of His children:

“²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.” (1 John 3:21-23 NIV)

Before I became a Christian, I had a weak view of prayer. I viewed prayers as wishful thoughts you offer up to God that He may answer, but probably won't. As far as miracles went, I wasn't a believer. I believed a miracle might happen on rare occasions, but that God generally didn't get involved in the world in ways that went against the laws of nature. In the 21st century, it is hard to think about prayer any other way if you haven't been taught otherwise.

But that isn't what the Bible says about prayer. The Bible teaches that if you believe in Jesus, God hears your prayers, and answers them as He sees best. Prayer isn't wishful thinking. Prayer is something with real power to it. Miracles do happen. There are many stories of people who have received healing miracles that defy the laws of science. There are many stories of God doing things that are so bizarre, they can only be described as miracles. God is still doing the supernatural today.

It is important to note that before a person can pray to God with the expectation of an answer, they have to believe in Jesus (John 9:31). If you don't believe in Jesus, you can't claim this promise. And if you were to say “I'll give Christianity a shot, and see if all this prayer stuff is true,” the Bible forbids putting God to the test (Matthew 4:7). Prayer requires sincere faith, and it can't come from a heart looking for proof. Nevertheless, prayer is another way God makes

Himself known. In addition to asking your Christian friends why they believe, ask them about how God has answered their prayers. You may find God is more involved in our lives than you previously imagined.

Conclusion:

God is actively at work in the world around us. He is actively at work in the lives of those who believe, and He is actively at work revealing Himself to those who don't believe. All you need to see God is eyes that are open, a heart that is receptive, and a mind that can consider what society often rejects. If you never heard the message of Christianity before, I encourage you to check out this ministry's one-page flyer or free booklet. Both are found on this ministry's website. God bless you.