

Bible Tracts Inc.

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“Unfriended” By God

What happens when God goes silent? Every serious disciple of Jesus knows what it is like to sense God’s closeness to them. But maybe you have also experienced the silence of God’s voice in your soul. Recently a person referred to this as being “unfriended” by God. It is a modern term, but it expresses an old experience.

What do I mean by the silence of God? It is those periods in our walk with Christ where the sweetness and vitality of God’s Word seem missing or absent. Those precious and personal nuggets of Biblical insight we are used to finding day by day do not seem to come. I am referring to times in our prayer life where, like Jeremiah, “*when I cry and shout, He shutteth out my prayer*” (Lam.3:8).

THE NORMALCY OF SILENCE

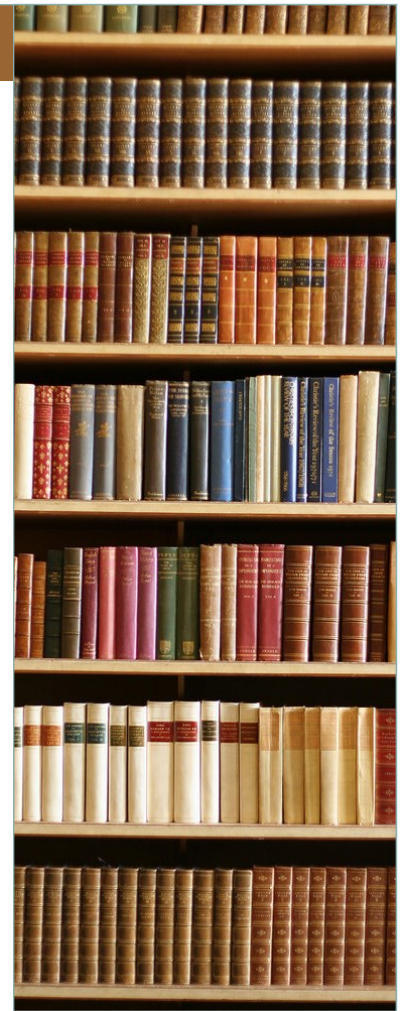
Most believers do not share with others when they are experiencing God’s silence. Sadly too many local churches are not safe places to share such an inner struggle. We fear being judged as being less than spiritual. We question whether some in our church would even understand our struggle due to their glib Christian walk.

So, what has God done? He has left us a school full of teachers who have experienced the silence of God. These are found in Scripture. “*The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple*” (Ps.19:7). Let me remind you of some people you already know who experienced the silence, the “unfriending”, of God.

Abraham had at least two periods of God’s silence. From Genesis 12-16 he went about ten years with no word from God. In chapters 17-18 he endured another thirteen years of silence.

Joseph knew God’s silence. After receiving precious visions from God, he was sold into slavery. God described Joseph’s silent years this way. “*He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: whose feet they hurt with fetters and he was laid in iron: until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him*” (Ps.105).

Have you ever considered **the parents** of the blind man in John 9? Imagine the urgency with which they must have sought God’s face, but no answer came. They, like **Job**, received no explanations, only silence.



*“Past usefulness
to God is a heady
thing. God,
though, wants it to
be a humbling
thing.”*



Mark J Smith, Director



THAILAND GOSPEL PARTNERS

Meet **Rashid Bhatti**. He is our newest gospel partner. At the end of 2018 he and his fellow Thai believers translated and printed **90,000** of our tracts in Thailand. He is holding up **“Seven Important Questions Boys and Girls Ask”** and **“Christmas Characters”**. They also printed **“Two Kinds of Death”**.

There are many people from Pakistan working in Thailand. These workers are Muslim. Thailand is 90% Buddhist. The believers in Thailand were struggling to share the gospel with the Muslim workers so they asked for help from Pakistani Christians. When the gospel workers from Pakistan arrived they brought our tracts. The Thai believers had not been using tracts in their outreach. They immediately began translating the tracts from Pakistan and then asked what other tracts we had.

The culture of the United States of America often stirs the curiosity of other cultures. The Buddhists had questions about Christmas. The Thai believers used their curiosity as an inroad to share the full meaning of the birth and work of Christ.

“Brother Mark, you better get ready. These Thai workers are going to be asking you to print tracts there soon.”

(from a phone call from Pakistan)

**SIGNIFICANT
HELP!**

THANK YOU!

In our last Bible Tracts Bulletin we shared our financial need at the end of 2018. Many of you took that need to heart and gave gifts at the end of the year. It was a huge blessing and it met our need.

Continued - **“Unfriended” By God**

There is a lot that ought to be said here for which there is no space. But I will note these two lessons. **First**, based on the number of Bible characters who endured God’s silence, it must be a normal discipline for serious believers. **Second**, it was after one of Abraham’s silent times that this was recorded. **“He believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness”** (Gen.15:6). Silent times will test the metal and measure of our faith.

THE TRAGEDY OF SILENCE

Do you remember these tragic words? **“He wist not that the Lord had departed from him”** (Judges 16:20). Before I comment on these words let me go to the end of Samson’s story. His **IS** in the Hall of Faith (Heb. 11). There he gets as much space as David and Samuel. So these words from chapter 16 are not the end of his story.

Speaking as a gospel worker who has experienced a measure of God’s power, Samson’s condition scares me. It is possible for a powerfully used servant of God to get to a place where they no longer have God’s power and **they do not even know it.**

The story of King Saul could be added here. Both Saul and Samson had God’s power at work in their lives, but they lost it. Times of spiritual power and usefulness to God can easily allow men to make room for sin. Perhaps, just like us, they told themselves something like this. **“God will allow me this one area of sin because He has seen how effective I am for Him in these other areas.”**

Dear gospel worker, past usefulness to God is a heady thing! God, though, wants it to be a humbling thing.

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continued - **"Unfriended By God"**

JESUS KNEW SILENCE

Jesus quoted from the Psalms more than any other book. This fact ought to prompt us to spend time in those 2,461 verses of poetry.

You and I know nothing of the depth of communication that was normal between Jesus and God the Father. This also means we cannot grasp the soul of Jesus as He hung on Calvary and The Father was silent. **"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"** is the cry of His heart in response to God's silence. These words came from the Psalms. *(Have I ever felt so desperate for God's voice in my soul that I actually dared to pray these words?)*

SILENCE AND SOUL WINNERS

What do you and I do during those times when God seems far away and silent? We must be like Jesus. Rather than sulk and focus on His own situation, Jesus did these things.

1 - **Rather than attack others, Jesus attracted others.** In the midst of His own pain, verbal attacks, and God's silence, Jesus attracted a thief to the gospel.

2 - **Rather than doing nothing, Jesus did something.** He did the next right thing. He made arrangements for His mother's care (Jn.19:26,27). The inner strength and calmness of voice while on the cross are a powerful example of self-control. In doing the next right thing even during God's silence is evidence of spiritual maturity and power.

3 - **Rather than showing fire, Jesus showed forgiveness.** The verbal taunts He endured while on Calvary came from all sides, yet He forgave. We can all quote His plea for their forgiveness. While we know the gospel is all about Jesus, Jesus made the gospel all about sinners.

Are you in a time when God seems silent? Then which of these three Christ-like actions should you begin to imitate first? During your last era of silence, which action do you wish you would have done? Then start doing it now. Let us prepare for the next silence of God.

If you are in a time when God is silent, then ...

- be in the Psalms,
- be attracting sinners,
- do the next right thing, and
- be quick to display compassion and forgiveness.

by *Pastor Mark J Smith*

PAKISTAN PRINTING

Another printing of our tracts was just done in Pakistan. Bro. Shahid Kaleem and our colabomers there are always excited when they have tools for doing evangelism outreaches.



The man above is giving out our tracts in an open air market.



These women are hand folding tracts in preparation for their distribution.

You can help the gospel reach more people. You can direct gifts toward Pakistan, India, Thailand, or Myanmar.

Published report of

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How Do We Do This?

Bible Tracts Inc. is a faith ministry. We give away tracts and pay shipping costs only through the consistent help of churches and individuals.



Please consider supporting BTI in reaching souls all over the world. Over a half million people have received Christ in the last 14 years after receiving one of our tracts.

All gifts are tax deductible

visit our web site:

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Charge It?

It looks like a credit card on purpose. A simple gospel outline using Scriptures is on the back of this credit card sized tract. The charge for our sins was laid on Christ. He paid our debt. A great tract for tipping.

CHARGE IT?

**He Is
Not
Here**

He Is Not Here

A great tract all year round, but especially at Easter time. It is short and simple. It declares that Jesus is the **Right** Man, the **Risen** man, but He must be the **Received** Man.

The New Birth

It is our hallmark tract! More people come to Christ after reading this one than any of our other tracts. **The New Birth** tells what being born again is **NOT** and then what it **IS**. Some churches use it in their new members classes. They want the Biblical salvation plan to be crystal clear.

**THE
NEW
BIRTH**

by Paul J. Levin

