

# The Faith of the Peanut Man

In Thursday's *Perspective*, the meekness of George Washington Carver – his patient and humble outlook on life – was highlighted. Today, here is a glimpse of his faith, and how important it was to him personally and in pursuit of his calling. *Wikipedia*, the online encyclopedia, tells some of his story.

Born into slavery in Diamond Grove, Newton County, near Crystal Palace (now known as Diamond, Missouri), his master was Moses Carver, a German American immigrant who had purchased George's parents, Mary and Giles. After slavery was abolished, Moses Carver and his wife, Susan, raised George and his older brother, James, as their own children. "Aunt Susan" taught him the basics of reading and writing and encouraged George to continue his intellectual pursuits.

When he reached a school for black children 10 miles away, he found the school closed for the night. The next morning, he met a kind woman, Mariah Watkins, from whom he wished to rent a room. When he identified himself as "Carver's George," as he had done all his life, she replied that from then on his name was to be George Carver.

Mrs. Watkins told him, "You must learn all you can, then go back out into the world and give your learning back to the people." That made a great impression on Carver.

Carver went on to gain fame for developing hundreds of useful products from the peanut, among other notable achievements.

He believed he could have both faith in God and science and integrated them into his life. He had become a Christian when he was 10 years old.

"God just came into my heart one afternoon while I was alone in the loft of our big barn while I was shelling corn to carry to the mill to be ground into meal. That was my simple conversion, and I have tried to keep the faith."

Carver viewed his faith in Jesus Christ as a means of destroying both barriers of racial disharmony and social stratification. He was as concerned with his students' character development as he was with their intellectual development. He compiled a list of eight cardinal rules for his students to strive toward:

1. Be clean both inside and out.
2. Neither look up to the rich nor down on the poor.
3. Lose, if need be, without squealing.
4. Win without bragging.
5. Always be considerate of women, children and older people.
6. Be too brave to lie.
7. Be too generous to cheat.
8. Take your share of the world and let others take theirs.

Those rules are important for application to us today in our time, just as they were in his.