

About Conversion

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.”

-Psalm 19:7

The word “conversion” is used in the Bible but once—Acts 15:3. Different forms of the word, however, are used more frequently, and the doctrine of conversion is so prominent in the teaching of Christ and His disciples that if it were expunged from the Christian faith there would be nothing left worth saving. The word itself means a turning, a change, a bringing back.

The Doctrine Stated

We were “*by nature the children of wrath*” (Eph. 2:2)—like Ephraim, wedded to our idols. To get back to God there must be a turning around, a change—a change of mind, of heart, of affections, of attitude toward God and toward sin, a change in everything needed to bring us back to God and in harmony with His Word. While the exact words, “Things I once loved I now hate, and things I once hated I now love,” are not in the Bible, yet the experience therein expressed is true of every sinner who has been converted to God. It takes a complete turning around, a complete about face, a new love in the heart and new life in the soul, to constitute a real evangelical conversion to God.

No Change, No Conversion

A fundamental change must take place before the sinner can become a child of God. There must be a change of mind, of heart, of life. Without such change, the sinner may unite with some church but he cannot become a child of God, for in Christ Jesus nothing will avail but to become “a new creature” (Galatians 6:15). And no sooner does the “new creature” exist within than the “newness of life” will begin to manifest itself without. “*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh... Faith without works is dead... How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*” When one is converted to God he will change his ways, forsake all sinful habits, and in his daily walk he will manifest the fruits of a righteous life within. Where such change does not take place—the tongue not being cleansed from filth or profanity, the pride continuing to be manifest in outward appearance, the crooked business ways continuing, the daily habits still indicating more pleasure in the sinful things of this world than in the things pertaining to the world to come—we conclude that since there is no change without, there has been none within, that the individual thus described is not converted to God. Where there is life within there is light without. Matthew 5:14-16.

Results of Conversion

As already stated, conversion means a change, a turning around, an about face, a transformation, a “newness of life.” This is what the Bible says takes place when one is really converted:

1. He becomes “a new creature.”

“*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*” (2 Corinthians 5:17). The life after turning to God is described as a “newness of life.”

2. He is adopted into God's happy family.

"If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin but the spirit is life because of righteousness . . . For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:10-15).

3. He is "clothed with humility."

The true standard of greatness is set forth in Matthew 18:1-3. It is universally true that when people are truly converted to God they become a meek, unassuming, humble people. Christ refers to Himself as being "meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29). His true disciples are like Him. Read Philippians 2:5-8.

4. He is clothed with righteousness.

"Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness" (Isaiah 1:27). When a person is converted, he brings his own righteousness [filthy rags] to the cross and receives the righteousness of God . . . Read Romans 10:3. This righteousness is no longer the "filthy rags" of which Isaiah writes, but the real righteousness of Jesus Christ that becomes the light which causes others to glorify God. Matthew 5:14-16.

5. He is zealous in the Master's cause.

"A peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9) is a proper description of God's people of all ages. The brightest examples of true conversion have invariably been men and women whose zeal for righteousness and truth were known to those about them.

6. He walks. "Not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Read Romans 7:9–8:1. No man has ever been converted to God without becoming like Him, spirituality included. Before conversion we walked *"according to the course of this world"* (Eph. 2:2), *"in the flesh to the lusts of men"* (1 Peter 4:2); but all this is changed when the transforming grace of God turns the individual around and gives him the heavenly vision.

7. He enjoys Christian fellowship.

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 John 1:7). It is as natural for people converted to God to have fellowship one with another while they walk in the footsteps of Christ our Saviour as it is for the people of this world to keep themselves in the fellowship of those traveling the broad road to destruction. Our fellowship here is but a foretaste of an endless and eternal fellowship with God and with saints in the realms of glory.

Excerpted from the book, *Doctrines of the Bible*, by Daniel Kauffman.