



May 20, 2020 | A Healthy Church Member is Genuinely Converted

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Romans 8:1-8

In compiling the list of what a healthy church member is and must be, one of the traits that should be first and foremost on the list is that they must be genuinely converted.

This is the type of member that knows the work of God’s grace in his or her own soul. We must be converted ourselves.

Conversion - the process of changing or causing something to change from one form to another.

Synonyms: transformation, regeneration, reformation, change of heart

UNDERSTANDING BIBLICAL CONVERSION

- THE DIAGNOSIS

- Man is fallen and depraved.
- All men suffer with the illness of sin.
- To properly treat and cure this illness, we must first recognize the illness and agree to the fact that we are sinners by nature.
 - i. Ephesians 2:1-3 ESV, *“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”*
- At the very root, man is alienated from and hostile toward God. He prefers to satisfy his sinful cravings and desires more than to honor and worship God.
- Man is a slave to sin.
 - i. Sinner by nature.

- ii. Guilty before God.
- iii. Deserves punishment from God.

The radical change that must be made is known in Christian theology as CONVERSION. This happens when there is a radical turning away from an enslaved life of pursuing sin to a free life of pursuing and worshiping God.

**CONVERSION IS A CHANGE OF LIFE, NOT MERELY A DECISION.
GOD AND THE HOLY SPIRIT MUST INTERVENE IN OUR LIVES
BECAUSE THE CHANGE IS SO DRAMATIC**

Conversion requires genuine conviction of sin that leads to turning around (repentance) and relying only on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation (faith).

KNOWING OUR OWN SOULS

- START BY LOOKING INWARD

- Knowing our own souls has both inward and outward implications.
- We must ask ourselves if we have received a change of heart by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
- DAILY SELF EXAMINATION IS A SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY THING TO DO
 - i. In what ways have I denied myself this day?
 - ii. Has my faith been weakened by unwatchfulness, or quickened by diligence this day?
 - iii. Have I this day walked by faith and eyed God in all things?
 - iv. Have I this day got nearer to God in times of prayer, or have I given way to a lazy, idle spirit?
 - v. Have I checked my attitude today?
 - vi. Have I given more than I have received?

The book of 1 John is helpful to study when it comes to self-examining the work of God in our souls. We can use the following proofs:

- DO WE WALK IN THE LIGHT OR DARKNESS?

- 1 John 1:6-7 KJV, *"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."*
- Genuine converts grieve at their sin, they hate their sin because they have a strong desire to walk in integrity and righteousness.
- If we continue to habitually sin and live in sin unrepentantly then we are not genuinely converted.

- 1 John 1:8-10 KJV, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

- **DO WE LOVE GOD THE FATHER?**

- 1 John 2:15-16 KJV, “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*”
- John declares that the love for the Father is a test of genuine faith.
- Love for God the Father is a test of genuine conversion.

- **DO WE LOVE OTHER CHRISTIANS?**

- 1 John 3:9-11 KJV, “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.*”
- The Christian walk is not a “solo sport”, we are charged and commanded to love one another.
- If our love for other Christians is cold then we need to really examine whether or not we have savingly believed on Jesus Christ.

- **DO WE HAVE THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT THAT WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD?**

- 1 John 4:13-16 KJV, “*Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*”
- True conversion is accompanied by the feeling of being truly adopted into the family God by an affirmation of the Holy Spirit. You bear the fruit of the spirit.

- **ARE WE PERSEVERING IN THE FAITH?**

- 1 John 5:4-5 KJV, “*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*”
- Those who believe overcome the world by faith in Christ.

- The genuinely converted believer continues to press onward in the faith and trusts his plan and will for life.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EVANGELISM

- We must not only look inward but we must also look outside.
- When engaging in the work of evangelism, the healthy church member must properly understand who it is that actually converts the sinner—it is the Holy Spirit.
- Evangelism is not a matter of executing a “clever technique” but it is about relying on the Spirit of God to bless the Word of God to bring about rebirth and conversion.