

FRUITS OF CONVERSION

Matt 18:3 – Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are **converted** & become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

A. **To be converted** – strepho (stref'-o); *to reverse your course*

1. Jesus said to be converted is to be childlike: innocent, faithful, obedient, & trusting.
 - a. They had just asked Him “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”
 - b. They were following Jesus, but had a long way to go in being converted.
 - c. In the context, Jesus discusses the importance of the soul; those who are converted to Him will not cause the weak to stumble, & they will go & search for them when they are lost.
 - d. Apart from these qualities, we are not truly converted & we cannot enter into His service or go to heaven.

2. Peter said we must repent (have a change of heart) before we can be converted.

Acts 3:19 – Repent therefore & be **converted**, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

3. John explained repentance (Luke 3:8-14):

- a. **Jews**, “He who has two tunics, give to him who has none; & he who has food, let him do likewise.”
- b. **Tax collectors** – “Collect no more than what is appointed for you.”
- c. **Soldiers** – “Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, & be content with your wages.”

4. **Prodigal** (Lk 15) – Came to himself, returned to his father, confessing his sins.
5. **Corinthians** (1 Cor 6:9-11) – Reversed their course from being “unrighteous”.

6. **Ephesians** (Acts 19) – Burned their books of magical arts.

7. **Jailor** (Acts 16) – Washed the stripes of Paul & Silas.

[**These** all repented & reversed their course; they were converted to Christ.

Conversion is not just an emotional experience. It takes place in our lives when we repent – fully repent. **Those who are converted to Christ...**]

I. ARE GOD'S NEW CREATIONS

He hasn't stopped creating

2 Cor 5:17 – Therefore, *if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation*; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

When & How

Gal 3:27 – For as many of you as were *baptized into Christ have put on Christ*.

Eph 4:22-24 – ...put off...*your former conduct*, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 & be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 & that *you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness & holiness*.

A. **But God has entrusted to each new creature an obligation to work with Him in our conversion, so that He can complete what He started.**

1. **Spiritual conversion** to Christ is like a physical birth.

a. **God** gives life to a newborn child. **He** instills within that child the capability of growth into maturity. **But** then God expects **US** to feed, nourish, love & protect that child. {**The same is true in one's conversion to Christ.**}

2. **Conversion** begins when God forgives us of our sins, & draws us near to Him (Eph 2:13).

3. **But conversion** also entails life-long process of personal responsibility.

a. It's like **converting** a room in your house? At times you will feel like everything is out of place. But

eventually, if you don't give up, if you persist, everything is neat & orderly again—but changed (converted).

- b. Because of the time & effort necessary for conversion, & because we sometimes fail God, it's easy to get discouraged & lose sight of the goal you are trying to achieve.

4. **Conversion** is also a battle (1 Pet 2:11).

[**God's** purpose in commanding us to be converted is to reshape our lives & mold us into the likeness of His Son. "**For** whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom 8:29).

Those who are converted to Christ...]

II. HAVE A NEW VISION FOR THEIR LIFE

2 Cor 5:14 – He died for all, that *those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him* who died for them & rose again.

Col 2:12 – buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead...

Col 3:1-4 – If then you were raised with Christ, *seek those things which are above*, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 *Set your mind on things above*, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, & your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

A. **Those who are converted to Christ do not have conflicting goals.**

1. They're not confused about what they should do with their lives, who their friends should be, how they should dress & deport themselves in public.
2. They are "under new management".

Gal 2:20 – I have been crucified with Christ; *it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me*; & the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me & gave Himself for me.

- a. Can you honestly say that about your life, & not feel like you're bragging or stretching the truth?
- b. Paul could say it, & we too should be able to say it with a clear conscience (Song: "I'll Live For Him")

B. Those who are converted to Christ seek first the kingdom of God & His righteousness.

1. The Jews said, "We have no king but Caesar" (Jn 19:15)!
 - a. They tried to establish their own righteousness & would not submit to the righteousness of God (Rom 10:1-3).
2. But those who are converted to Christ, SEEK the righteousness of God because they SEEK to be ruled by the law of God in their hearts (Matt 6:33)

Rom 7:22 – For *I delight in the law of God* according to the inward man.

John 14:21 – He who has My commandments & keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, & I will love him & manifest Myself to him."

3. Is your life a demonstration of your love for the Lord?

C. Those who are converted to Christ long to worship God at every occasion possible.

As The Deer (#589 H. F. W.)

As the deer pants for the water so my soul longs after You.
You alone are my heart's desire & I long to worship You.

I want you more than gold or silver only You can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver & the apple of my eye

You alone are my strength my shield;
to You alone may my spirit yield.

You alone are my heart's desire & I long to worship You.

1. Those who are converted to Christ realize God's worthiness to receive worship (Rev 4: 8, 11; 5:12).

2. This sense of longing to worship ought to be greater than any other longing we might have for anyone or anything else.

D. Those who are converted to Christ must give up everything that interferes with God.

Luke 14:33 – So likewise, *whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.*

Joshua 24:19 – But Joshua said to the people, "*You cannot serve the LORD*, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

1. Would Jesus say those words to us today?
2. We must be willing to give our lives for the *strength* of this church, & to represent it properly in this community.
3. We must be willing to sacrifice everything, jobs, pleasures, comforts, personal feelings, to serve in His Kingdom.

CLOSING

A. A lack of conversion to Christ:

1. Lies at the root of all sin.
2. Results in a religion of convenience & formality.

B. True conversion to Christ:

1. Leads to continual success in what the Lord has called us to do.
2. Have you been converted?

C. Four essentials to changing or reversing course:

1. **Faith** – changes our (mind) Acts 16:31
2. **Repentance** – changes our (behavior) Acts 17:30
3. **Confession** – announces our (loyalty) Acts 8:37
4. **Baptism** – changes our (relationship) Acts 22:16; Gal 3:27