

DOCTRINE MATTERS: ESSENTIAL TRUTHS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

Message 19: **Conversion:** Repentance and Faith

2nd Corinthians 13:5 (ESV)

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

Matthew 7:21-23 (ESV)

²¹ *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ ²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’*

The doctrine of **conversion**:

Conversion is our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation.

BIBLICAL CONVERSION: 4 essential questions (and answers)

(Borrowed from *Nine Marks of A Healthy Church* by Mark Dever)

Is change _____?

At the heart of conversion is the concept of _____.

In any area of life, whether we’re talking about electrical outlets or religious identification, converting means *changing*.

The Bible clearly teaches that all people need _____ change.

We’re *not* OK according to the Bible. The Bible presents people as dead in sin, the objects of God’s righteous anger, and foolishly deceived into being slaves to sin. (Eph 2:1-3, Col 2:13, John 3:36, Titus 3:3)

The Bible clearly teaches that no one in the world has escaped the stain of _____ (Rom. 3:11-20)

The Bible clearly teaches that the change we need is a _____ (Ez. 36:26-27, Rom. 3:19-20)

This is our condition according to the Bible – _____, _____, and _____.
Clearly, change is needed.

Is change _____?

The Bible says that fundamental change is both _____ and _____

God has made us all in His own image, with a capacity to love and serve Him. We’ve sinned, but the Bible tells us that we can return to God. A fresh start IS possible! This is how the Bible talks about those who repent of their sins and entrust themselves to Jesus for salvation: Ephesians 2:3-5, 1st Peter 1:3-4

Deep, lasting change is possible! (John 3:1-21; Acts 9; Eph. 2:1-10; 1 Peter 1:1-9).

_____ **change is needed?**

Culture says ...

But biblical conversion is ...

_____ **will this change involve?**

Conversion is not just _____

Conversion is not just living with _____

If Christian conversion is neither mere mental assent, nor a mere commitment to moral reform, then what exactly *does* it involve?

According to the Bible, we can never please God merely by the things we _____ or _____.

Our inability to please God by ourselves means that the real change of Christian conversion must involve relying on Christ alone in _____ and _____.

True repentance means that we turn _____ and turn _____

- We turn **away** from the many individual sins by which we have offended God's character and broken His law.
- We turn **away** from any attempt whatsoever to justify ourselves before God by appealing to our own orthodox beliefs or acceptable behavior.
- We turn **to** God, and look to Him to pardon our sin, to give us right standing before Him, and to bring us into close fellowship with Him.

True belief means that we trust only in the person, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- We trust Jesus **as God's appointed provision** for the forgiveness of our sins.
- We trust Jesus **for moral power** to effect real change in our thoughts, attitudes, motives, desires, affections, words, actions, and patterns of relating to God and others.
- We trust Jesus **to keep us** in this saving belief.

_____ **does this great change happen?**

The Bible presents conversion as God giving us the _____ to repent and believe.

Biblical conversion does involve our repentance and belief. But it is God who is behind the scenes working in our hearts to produce that repentance and belief in us. (Phil. 2:12-13)

Conversion must be God's work because we are unable to produce repentance and belief _____.

In preaching the Gospel, the Bible tells us that the preacher is really preaching to a bunch of lifeless corpses (Ezek 37:1-14; Eph 2:1-3). Therefore, whether we stand in the pulpit or sit in the pew, we are dependent on God to produce this repentance and belief in us.

1st, God calls people to Himself, enabling them to _____ and _____ the Gospel. (1st Cor. 1:23-24, Joel 2:32)

Then He graciously grants those He calls the _____ of repentance and belief.

(1st Tim. 2:25, Acts 11:18, John 15:16, Acts 2:39, Acts 16:14, 1st John 4:10)

Biblical Conversion is therefore ...

CONVERSION: AN OVERVIEW

What God does:

1. He gives life to the dead (Eph. 2:5)
2. He gives sight to the blind (2 Cor. 4:3-6)
3. He gives the gifts of faith and repentance (Phil. 1:29; Acts 11:18).

What people do:

1. We repent of sin (Mk. 1:15; Acts 3:19)
2. and we believe in Jesus personally for our salvation (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 3:21-26).

What happens:

1. I am forgiven.
2. I am changed.

Where is conversion in the Bible?

1. Jesus called people to repent and believe in him (Mk. 1:15). He said that unless someone is born again he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (Jn. 3:1-8).
2. Throughout the book of Acts, the apostles call people to turn from their sin and trust in Christ (Acts 2:38, 3:19-20, 10:43, 13:38-39, 16:31, 17:30).
3. Many of the epistles describe both our need to repent and believe in Christ and God's supernatural work to accomplish this (Rom. 6:1-23; 1 Cor. 2:14-15; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; Eph. 2:1-10; 1 Thess. 1:9-10; 2 Tim. 2:25-26).

Why is a correct understanding of conversion **essential**?

1. It clarifies how we should call non-Christians to repent of sin and trust in Christ.
2. It ensures we don't take shortcuts with the Gospel.
3. It reminds us as that we must rely upon God in all of our evangelistic efforts (individual and corporate).
4. It teaches the church to maintain a sharp distinction between itself and the world. (Our lives should be marked by the fruit of conversion)
5. Evidence of conversion is the prerequisite to baptism and the Lord's Supper.
6. It is the foundation of legitimate church membership.

*Theology is for **doxology** and **devotion**—that is, the praise of God and the practice of godliness.*

- J.I. Packer

NEXT WEEK:

Man – Why Created?