

The Test of True Conversion
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Introduction: True conversion is a display of a power that could only come from God.

- A. The scripture makes “matter of fact” statements about powerful things. **(Rom 1:16)**
 - 1. The changed hearts of men is *truly a display of God’s power* and wisdom.
 - 2. What occurs in the heart *is not always seen by men*. Time will reveal it!
- B. Can I know if I have been converted to Christ?
 - 1. That which is true will be confirmed by tests! **(2 Cor 13:5)**
 - 2. Many of the tests will come as we face the issues of life, especially persecution and suffering. **(Rom 5:3-5 NASV)**
 - 3. We need to be certain where we stand with the Lord. This is the challenge for each generation.

I. What is conversion?

A. It represents a complete turning in one’s life. **(Mt 18:3)**

στρέφω - (a) *turn* something toward someone (MT 5.39); (b) as making a change of substance *turn, change* something into something (RV 11.6); ... (c) *turn or change inwardly, change one’s ways, be converted* (MT 18.3)

- 1. The word can be also translated repentance. It also can represent the entire process of being born again. **(Acts 3:19)**
 - 2. The root of this change involves a turning from Satan to God. **(1 Thess 1:9-10)**
 - 3. This goes to the very core of *who we are* and of *how we make decisions*. Over time this change will be seen!
 - 4. This involves a *very thoughtful change* based upon *a genuine knowledge of God* and *a real change within one’s heart*. The real bottleneck of conversion is repentance! **(Acts 2:38)**
- B. Conversion demands our all.
- 1. Many look at the Lord’s church as a social club. Some local churches compete to gain disciples by appealing to personal desires and tastes.
 - 2. Jesus made it clear that true disciples must first be converted. **(Lk 9:23-24; Mk 10:29-30)**
 - 3. Conversion is rightly likened to a death, burial and resurrection! **(Rom 6:3-4)**
 - 4. We think differently *about everything!* We now have *a new life*. **(2 Cor 5:17)**
- C. God acts in conversion to remove our sins! **(Acts 3:19)**
- 1. The fact of forgiveness becomes *a dominate power in our thinking* for as long as we live.
 - 2. While the guilt of our sins cannot be seen or felt, God removes them with His very hands. **(Col 2:11-13)**
 - 3. Conversion involves a turning to God which involves a complete change of thinking and a change of relationship’

II. Satan teaches various counterfeits that he calls conversion

A. Satan has messengers and a message that they bring. **(2 Cor 11:13-15)**

1. He will proclaim the name of “Jesus” but *not the real Jesus*. (2 Cor 11:4)
 2. He will *be popular* and have *the approval of the world*.
 3. His followers will fail miserably but still be popular as long as they are not put to the test! (Acts 19:13-16)
- B. At the core of Satan’s “conversion” is a deep darkness and a loyalty to self.
1. Reason, self-examination become illusions. (Eph 4:17-19; 5:8-11)
 2. A complete reversal of definitions and reality is accepted as long as I can do what I want! (Isa 5:20-21)
 3. In Satan’s world wickedness becomes righteousness. God’s law becomes sin and “legalism.” Grace becomes lewdness! (Jude 4)
 4. These so “converted” are *very sensitive people* of whom the world must turn around. They are up and down and often very unstable.

III. Testing our own conversion

- A. We simply need to honestly *see our own hearts*! This can be a challenge.
1. A hardened heart will not care. Some have worldly reasons to be “converted.”
 2. What is our day to day decision making and our thoughts? (Col 3:1-3)
 3. These thoughts are a process of *growth and painful, careful progress*.
 4. People who have been converted to Jesus will show it in their actions, words and way of life. (Acts 4:12-13; 2 Tim 1:12)
- B. What do we rejoice in?
1. The joy of the Lord is only experienced in converted hearts. What the world rejoices in and the converted rejoice in *is very different*. (Jn 16:20-22)
 2. When God is in the center of our lives we can rejoice in spiritual things while losing physical things. (Heb 10:32-34; 12:2)
 3. When God is in view our lives will perplex the world and point others to Him.
- C. How do we deal with our relationships?
1. Converted people are *serving people*. It is not all about them. (Phil 2:14-18)
 2. How do we view the local church? Are they people who are *converted by the precious blood of Christ* or performers who *must satisfy my needs and wishes*?
 3. What is most important when one has offended me or sinned against me? Is the *Lord’s cause* my cause or is it *really all about me*? (Eph 4:30-32)
 4. One of the greatest marks of spiritual maturity is seen here.
- D. Have I ever made faith my own?
1. There can be real worldly motivations for “attending church.” (Gal 6:12)
 2. The danger of hypocrisy is real. (Jer 3:10; Lk 12:1-3)
 3. Hypocrites can change. They must be converted.
 4. It is better for you to become angry and leave than to be accommodated and spread your leaven among brethren!
 5. Genuine conversion involves accepting strong rebuke that bring continual change! Consider Peter’s later “conversion.” (Lk 22:31-32)

Conclusion: Let today be the day of your conversion!