

Salvation 101

Lesson 6

Conversion

PART I EXPLANATION

Introduction: Conversion is the change that takes place in the heart and life of a sinner as a result of regeneration. The primary elements in genuine conversion are repentance and faith. There is much controversy and disagreement among professing Christians regarding the relationship and role that repentance and faith play in salvation. Therefore, it is necessary to have a biblical understanding of genuine repentance and genuine faith.

Though regeneration and conversion are separated to better understand the differences between them, they are inseparable and simultaneous in the salvation experience. The primary difference between them is that in regeneration man is passive, but in conversion man is the active agent. (It is not God that repents and believes; it is the individual.) The action of God to regenerate the spirit produces a reaction in the heart of man to repent of sin and self righteousness and believe on Christ for His righteousness.

The instant that a person is regenerated, an awareness of the holiness of God and the exceeding sinfulness of sin produces a godly sorrow. Mr. Spurgeon defined this repentance as a change of mind toward sin, self, and the Savior. Alongside this repentance, God grants faith in the forgiveness of sin that is found in the life and death of Christ.

It is essential to understand that conversion is not the cause of regeneration rather the fruit of it. You are not regenerated because you repent and believe; you repent and believe because you are regenerated. This is a most important distinction to be made because; otherwise repentance and faith become a work of man that God responds to instead of being the gift of free grace. Because of this, we are to preach repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ knowing that God must do a work in their hearts.

This cause and effect relationship is comparable to the relationship between lightning and thunder. Though they happen simultaneously, there is a definite cause and effect relationship. The lightning bolt that flashes from the sky is extremely hot and when it contacts the cool air in the atmosphere it produces a crack of thunder that rumbles through the sky for miles. Clearly, the bolt of lightning is the cause and the thunder is the effect. So in the salvation of man, the regenerating power of the Spirit of God contacts the dead and sinful spirit of man and transforms it. The effect is the conversion of the heart which produces repentance and faith in the life of the individual. The new nature which has been instantaneously implanted into the regenerated soul experiences repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Another very common mistake is to view repentance and faith as a one time act, rather than a continuous experience in the life of a Christian. The Bible states this in a single sentence, “*The just shall live by his faith.*” When there is a genuine conversion, the fruits of repentance and faith will continue to be manifest in the life of the convert. Where these fruits are lacking, there needs to be great concern about the validity of the individual’s profession and an urgent need for them to make their “*calling and election sure.*” At conversion God implants the divine nature into the Christian which causes a hunger and thirst after righteousness and a desire to be conformed to the image of His Son.

Definitions: For English use the Webster’s 1828 Dictionary and copy all appropriate definitions for each word. For the Greek and Hebrew use a Strong’s Concordance and copy the definition. The Strong’s number is in parenthesis.

English: **Conversion** -

Repentance -

Faith -

Greek: (3340) **metanoeo** *met-an-o-eh'-o* -

(4102) **pistis** *pis'-tis* -

Hebrew: (5162) **nacham** *naw-kham'* -

(530) **emunah** *em-oo-naw* -

Quotation: “Concerning this word REPENTANCE... the very sense and signification both of the Hebrew and also the Greek word is, “to be converted and to turn to God with all the heart, to know His will, and to live according to His laws; and to be cured of our corrupt nature with the oil of His Spirit, and wine of obedience to His doctrine.” Which conversion or turning, if it be unfeigned, these four do accompany it and are included therein: CONFESSION, not in the priest’s ear, for that is but man’s invention, but to God in the heart, and before all the congregation of God; how that we be sinners and sinful, and that our whole nature is corrupt, and inclined to sin and all unrighteousness, and therefore evil, wicked, and damnable; and His Law holy and just, by which our sinful nature is rebuked: and also to our neighbors, if we have offended any person particularly. Then CONTRITION, sorrowfulness that we be such damnable sinners, and not only have sinned, but are wholly inclined to sin still. Thirdly, FAITH that God for Christ’s sake doth forgive us, and receive us to mercy, and is at one with us, and will heal our corrupt nature. And fourthly, SATISFACTION, or amends making, not to God with holy works, but to my neighbor whom I have hurt, and to the congregation of God, whom I have offended, (if any open crime be found in me); and submitting of a man’s self unto the congregation or church of Christ, and to the officers of the same, to have his life corrected and governed henceforth of them” William Tyndale

“Conversion turns the balance of the judgment, so that God and His glory outweigh all carnal and worldly interests. It opens the eye of the mind, and makes the scales of its native ignorance fall off, and turns men from darkness to light. The man that before saw no danger in his condition, now concludes himself lost and forever undone (Acts 2:37) except renewed by the power of grace. He that formerly thought there was little hurt in sin, now comes to see it to be the chief

of evils. He sees the unreasonableness, the unrighteousness, the deformity and the filthiness of sin; so that he is affrighted with it, loathes it, dreads it, flees from it, and even abhors himself for it. He that could see little sin in himself, and could find no matter for confession, now sees the rottenness of his heart, the desperate and deep pollution of his whole nature. He cries, 'Unclean! Unclean! Lord, purge me with hyssop, wash me thoroughly, create in me a clean heart.' He sees himself altogether filthy, corrupt both root and branch. He writes 'unclean' upon all his parts, and powers, and performances. He discovers the filthy corners that he was never aware of, and sees the blasphemy, and theft, and murder, and adultery, that is in his heart, of which before he was ignorant. Hitherto he saw no form nor comeliness in Christ, no beauty that he should desire Him; but now he finds the Hidden Treasure, and will sell all to buy this field. Christ is the Pearl he seeks." Joseph Alleine

"Can Christ be in thy heart, and thou not know it? Can one king be dethroned and another crowned in thy soul, and thou hear no scuffle?" William Gurnall

"Wheels of a clock move within, the hands on the dial will move without. When the heart of a man is sound in conversion, then the life will be fair in profession." William Secker

"The Bible, which ranges over a period of four thousand years, records but one instance of a death bed conversion - one that none may despair, and but one that none may presume." William Guthrie

"Wouldest thou know when thou hast been humbled enough for sin? When thou art willing to let go thy sins." Thomas Watson

"The wicked do but weep for their sins past, but the godly purpose to sin no more." Henry Smith

"If an unregenerate man should leave off sin under fear of death or hell, it would not be out of hatred to sin, but out of the fear of the punishment, as the bird is kept from the bait by the scarecrow." Thomas Manton

Confessions (Look up and read these articles)

New Hampshire Confession of 1833

Article VIII Repentance and Faith

London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689

Chapter 14 Of Saving Faith - paragraphs 1-3

Chapter 15 Of Repentance unto Life and Salvation - paragraphs 1-5

Spurgeon's Catechism

Questions: 29, 68-70

PART II EXPLORATION

Key Questions (*Answer in writing*)

1. What are the primary elements in conversion?

2. According to Webster, what is the difference between legal and evangelical repentance?

3. According to Webster, what is the difference between historical or speculative faith and evangelical, justifying, or saving faith?

4. Who is the object of our repentance? Our faith?

5. What would be an example of repentance that is not genuine?

6. What are the signs that someone has experienced genuine repentance and faith?

7. What does a person need to do who is lacking the fruits of repentance and faith?

8. What does it mean to live or walk by faith?

9. What is a common mistake people make when thinking of repentance and faith?

10. Is the individual passive or active in conversion? Why?

Key Scriptures:

Jeremiah 31:33 The New Testament (covenant) that God has made promised to put His Law in the Christian's _____ parts and to _____ it in their hearts.

Matthew 3:1-2 The message that John the Baptist preached was _____ .

Matthew 4:17 The message that Jesus preached was _____ .

Mark 1:15 The message of Christ was to _____ and _____ the gospel.

Luke 13:3 Jesus' message to those who thought that bad things were happening to others because they were greater sinners than themselves was that _____ ye repent ye shall _____ .

Acts 2:38 Peter's message in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost was _____ and be _____ .

Acts 13:39 All that _____ in Christ are justified from all things.

Acts 13:48 All that were _____ to eternal life _____ .

Acts 17:30-31 God _____ all men _____ to _____ because He has appointed a day where He will _____ the world in _____ .

Acts 20:20-21 Paul was an example to the Ephesians from the first day that he arrived by preaching _____ and from house to house both to _____ and _____ that they needed to have repentance toward _____ and faith toward our _____ .

Romans 2:4 It is the _____ of God that leads to _____ .

Romans 4:5 Salvation is granted to him that _____ not for it, but rather _____ on Christ for _____ .

Romans 10:17 Faith comes by _____ the _____ of God.

II Corinthians 7:10 There are different types of sorrow. Only _____ sorrow worketh repentance to salvation. But the sorrow of the _____ leads to _____ .

Ephesians 2:8 We are saved by _____ through _____ which is the _____ of God and not the work of man.

Hebrews 8:10 Those who are converted are called the _____ of God.

James 2:17-19 Faith without _____ is _____ . We can _____ our faith by our _____ . Even the devils _____ and _____ even though they have not been converted.

Key Chapter(s) (*Read daily and summarize in your own words the meaning of the chapter*):

Acts 9

PART III EXPECTATION

Memory verse: Acts 20:21

Personal Definition: *(Write a definition in your own words)*

Conversion -

Personal confession: *(Study the confessions and write your confession in your own words)*

Repentance and faith-

Meditation question: *(be prepared for discussion)*

Which comes first, regeneration or repentance and faith?

Extra Credit

Relate how repentance and faith were present in your conversion experience.