

# THE EXAMINER



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## Fruits or Evidences of Conversion - by Wm. E. Wallace, Lufkin, Texas

In this article we consider effects conversion should have on one's life. Conversion changes things, and that which is converted is that which has been changed. My automobile has something in it called a torque converter. It changes the horsepower of the motor into usable energy or power. The conversion of saline waters to palatable water fit for human consumption is a major accomplishment of modern technology. Conversion of coal into oils, and of petroleum into gasoline involve major industries. In the field of business we speak of convertible bonds; in international trade there are conversion equivalents. There is some kind of conversion process in every interest of life. Conversion is important in all walks of life. It is most important to one's soul (See **Matthew 18:3**).

### The Glow and Growth of a Converted Soul

The glow of a converted soul is an evidence or fruit of a change, a renewal, a conversion. But so is growth. Someone observed the greatest difference between being converted and living a converted life

is in the difference between turning and growing." The converted soul will glow in the majesty of usefulness and productivity, and he will grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ Jesus (**2 Peter 3:18**). There is a new radiance in his life, and an intellectual enlightenment. He is renewed in spirit and soul. He is recommitted in life. He has experienced an awakening.

The converted soul thinks in terms of a style of life in Christ, rather than in terms suggesting his style of life is being cramped. His natural abilities are re-channeled and he integrates his whole life with the church, and with the interests of fellow Christians. He views his responsibilities and privileges in terms deferential to his new found faith. He glows, and he grows. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (**2 Cor. 5:17**). In conversion a man enters a new relationship, a new fellowship, a new life, and makes a new start. "When we are made new, some of the things we once valued lose their appeal. Money, pleasure, position cease to have the old attraction for us.

On the other hand, love, duty, brotherhood, service, which may have counted for little in our scheme of things, become important and attractive. There is a transformation of values. Suffering, disappointment, hardship, instead of being mere doom or black misfortune, become the means of God's challenge, or of his discipline, like the tools of the potter which give the cup its shape both for use and beauty" (**Interpreter's Bible**, Vol. X, page 138). Evidences of conversion are seen in the integration of one's life in the interests of the church. Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. The converted soul will be devoted to the church; he will live his life for it. The effects that conversion should have in one's life are seen in the effects conversion had on early Christians. The converted individuals of **Acts 2** were steady in study of sound doctrine, in association with fellow Christians, in worship participation. They were magnanimous and cheerful in seeking the welfare of all, and they were happy and enthusiastic in their daily lives (**Acts 2:41-47**). When these early Christians were persecuted and scattered they showed the reality of their conversion and the strength of their faith by preaching the word everywhere they went (**Acts 8:1-5**). The fruits of conversion in these people are seen in what they believed, in what they did, and how they reacted. They worked and worshiped together enthusiastically. They reacted to hardship with a fervent

spreading of the gospel.

The fruits of conversion reach into every phase of a person's life. In **Colossians 3:1** Paul states: "If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above. Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." The expression "If ye then be risen with Christ" is synonymous with "if ye then be converted." Thus in the succeeding verses where Paul is dealing with the life of those risen with Christ, he is considering fruits of conversion. The chapter deals with a change in direction as to inclination -- the converted soul is heavenly bent and upward turned in his affections. He "mortifies" sinful, evil attitudes and deeds. He speaks cleanly. He deals honestly. He possesses an attractive disposition, a loving and a forgiving spirit (Note **Galatians 5:22** also). He worships God from the heart and submits to the authority of Jesus. In his family and livelihood activities he serves graciously, with fidelity and integrity. Read it in detail in **Colossians three**. In **2 Peter 1**, the apostle whose name the epistle bears reminds Christians of the effect conversion should have on one's life. He outlines the progressive steps of growth in the converted life and warns that "he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (**verse 9**). **2 Peter 1:5-7** outlines the life-fruits of a faithful, informed, gracious and converted soul.

**The Lost Art of Christian Living**

What is commonly termed "Christian Living" is certainly an evidence of conversion. Yet, so many of us fail to reflect conversion in our daily living. Christian living involves doing unto others as we would have them do unto us (**Mt. 7:12**). It means letting our lights (**Mt. 5:16**) of good influence show the way for others, being an example of "the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (**1Tim. 4:12**). The art of Christian living involves charm integrity, courtesy.... but let Paul describe it: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (**Philippians 4:8**). The converted soul will consider activities and actions in light of **1 John 2: 15-16**, and will try to stay on the right side of the line. He will shy away from worldly activities, earnestly avoiding the life which is "conformed to this world" (**Romans 12:2**). Where there is doubt as to any particular activity or action he will think in terms of **Romans 14:19-21**.

### There Is More to It than Glowing and Growing

There are multitudes of individuals who are converted from an immoral or pagan way of life to one of piety and ethics. Much can be said for the manner of life lived by those identified with various sects or

denominations. In fact, the lives of many of these people put a lot of "us" to shame -- "us" folks in the church of Christ.

A number of significant conclusions about "American Piety: The Nature of Religious Commitment" are made by research analysts Rodney Stark and Charles Y. Glock in a 1968 book with the title represented in the above quote (University of California Press, Berkeley). As to persons in liberal Protestant churches, the authors conclude, "Indeed, given their lack of commitment to orthodox theology, ethics are likely the central component of their religious perspective" (Pg. 48). Such conservative churches as the Church of The Nazarene are also known for emphasis on piety. But our topic of consideration -- the fruits of conversion -- involve something more than a new life of ethics or one of religious belief. Bible conversion involves Bible oriented morality and belief of truth (Note **2 Thessalonians 2:11-12**).

Religious commitment -- conversion -- is reflected in belief. If the wrong things are believed, something is wrong with the conversion process through which the person passed. If the conversion is perverted, the person is in a perverted relationship. In this article we are concerned with Bible conversion, the fruits of scriptural conversion. The authors of the book referred to above point out, rightfully, that there are four aspects to religious commitment: belief, practice, experience, and knowledge.

The right fruits of right conversion involve right belief, right action, right experience, and right knowledge. While the new convert will not have an understanding of all major doctrines, right conversion depends on right faith built on the right thing -- the word of God (**Romans 10:17**). So the fruits of conversion involve beliefs, actions, experience, and knowledge harmonious with the word of God. A man converted by the word of God into the church of Christ will show fruits consistent with what is revealed in God's word. The word of God or the Spirit of God in New Testament days did not "convert" souls into denominational or sectarian bodies. The conversion process revealed in the New Testament will make of people today what was made of folks back then. The fruits of their conversion will reflect beliefs, actions, experiences, and knowledge identifiable with those of New Testament Christians. People in sectarian and denominational relationships today are there because of non-Biblical conversion processes. In these relationships, their beliefs and actions reflect the fruits of a perverted conversion. On the other hand, it appears quite certain that there is a sizeable element among churches of Christ composed of those who are not really of us (**1 John 2:19**). The unsound, the worldly fruits they reflect are unscriptural and non-biblical. And what of those who have left their first love? It seems that a majority of those who once brought forth fruits worthy of repentance have lost them while being caught up in the despiritualizing influences of a secular and affluent society.

It is time for every one of us to "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (**Jeremiah 6:16**). It is time to do what John the Baptist charged his hearers to do (**Luke 3:8-14**). It is time to rearrange our life schedules to give the Lord, His Bible, and His church greater portions of our time. It is time to de-escalate our quest for luxury, amusement and worldly security. It is time to call a halt to our participation in relaxations and recreations that are detrimental to our soul's progress. It is time to save souls. It is time to repent. It is time to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, proving our repentance. ---- Via **TRUTH MAGAZINE XIII: 1, pp. 18-20, October 1968**

## GOD'S COMMANDS MADE OF NONE EFFECT

MATT. 15:1-9

BY TRADITION - GIVING OVER BY WORD OF MOUTH OR IN WRITING.  
"GOD COMMANDED..."

BUT YE SAY..."

HONOUR THY FATHER AND MOTHER - **MT. 15:4**  
HEAR YE HIM - **MT. 17:5; ACTS 3:22, 23**  
(**JO. 12:49; 14:26; 16:13**)  
DO FATHER'S WILL - **MT. 7:21**  
BELIEVE AND BE BAPTIZED - **MK. 16:16**  
REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED - **ACTS 2:38**  
WORSHIP IN SPIRIT & TRUTH - **JO. 4:24**  
GIVE AS GOD PROSPERS - **1 COR. 16:1, 2**  
BE NOT CONFORMED TO THE WORLD - **ROM. 12:1, 2**  
SEEK KINGDOM FIRST - **MT. 6:33**  
SET AFFECTIONS ON THINGS ABOVE - **COL. 3:1, 2**  
ALL SPEAK THE SAME THING - **1 COR. 1:10**  
WIVES SUBMIT TO OWN HUSBANDS - **EPH. 5:22**  
WOMAN NOT TO TEACH OR USURP AUTHORITY - **1 TIM. 2:11-14**  
BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH - **REV. 2:10**



IT IS A GIFT - **MT. 15:5**  
HAVE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE - **HEB. 2:1**  
BELIEVE WHAT PREACHERS PREACH - **COL. 2:8**  
THERE IS NOTHING TO DO - **ACTS 9:6**  
JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ONLY - **JS. 2:24**  
BAPTISM IS NOT ESSENTIAL - **1 PET. 3:21**  
WORSHIP AS PLEASE - **MT. 15:8, 9**  
GIVE OUT OF WHAT IS LEFT  
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A FANATIC  
GOT TO MAKE A LIVING  
MY HEART IS SET ON...  
CAN'T ALL SEE ALIKE  
EQUALITY OF THE SEXES - **E. R. A.**  
ORDAIN WOMEN TO PREACH  
ONCE SAVED - CAN'T FALL - **1 COR. 10:12**