

## "Conversion"

Would you like to change your life and start over? You can! Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. And this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." And today we're going to explore your opportunity to change your life. Stay with us.

Welcome to "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way" Today we're searching God's Word for the Lord's will. We go to the Bible, because we know the Bible teaches the spiritual truths that we need to get right and to stay right with God. Psalm 19 verse 7 says that, "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul." Some versions speak of restoring or reviving the soul. When we're converted to Christ, God restores and revives us. The more we know about the Lord and His word, the more our lives will change for the better. Jesus gives us an abundant life, and this comes about when we turn away from the ways of the world to the way of the Lord. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be part of your life each week.

The Lord Jesus was interested in giving people an opportunity to change and become what God desires them to be. The Lord Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3 and verse 3, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Born again? To be in Christ means one becomes a new creature! 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." Now we can rise above the sin in our past and be reborn. God's grace grants to us repentance, an opportunity to change our hearts and our lives. God's grace forgives us through the blood of Jesus Christ. Romans 6:3 to 4 says, "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."

If you like to study more about conversion, we offer the information on this program free. If you'd like a printed copy of our study, and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org) and on YouTube.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 1 Peter 1:22 to 25, and examine what it means to be converted.

Our reading today is from 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 22 to 25 and talks about our obedience to the truth.

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. For,

"ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS,  
AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS.  
THE GRASS WITHERS,  
AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF,  
BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER."

And this is the word which was preached to you.

Oh yes it is the word of God that is that seed that causes us to be born again. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that You have given to us Your good news about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Help us to love You for what You have done and to love that truth and be obedient out of that love. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

God's Word says in Titus 2:11 to 14, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." Now conversion means that we leave the past behind and start living a new life filled with righteousness and good deeds. Our hearts are set on serving God and looking for the return of our Lord Jesus. God's grace matters to us.

Well, how did this come to be? Why do we change and convert? Because the cross of Christ has drawn us to Him, to love and serve Him. We can't look at the cross and remain where we were. We see how He loves us and what He did for us on the cross, and it moves us to stop thinking of worldly ways and to start living for Christ. Paul explained in 2 Corinthians 5:14 to 15, "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." Because of Jesus we cannot travel the same way we used to. We belong to the Lord, we hear what He says, and we turn from what we think to what He says.

Conversion is a turning from what is wrong to what is right, from what is bad to what is good, and from what is false to what is true. It's not merely becoming a member of an organization; it's a whole new way of thinking and of life. First, conversion means leaving darkness and coming to the light. According to Acts 26:18, God sent Paul to the Gentiles "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." Who you serve matters? You'll either serve the Lord or serve Satan, who only wants to ruin your life, that is Satan. The Gentiles in Paul's day lived as pagans in darkness, not knowing the truth about God or eternal life. Now knowing God and learning truth, my friend, makes all the difference! It opens our eyes to what's good and what's right and the truth.

Second, conversion means that we leave a state of uncertainty or unbelief about Christ and begin placing our trust in Him. I've spent much of my adult life studying evidences for Christianity. I believe in the prophecies and in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament provides many reasons to believe Jesus is the Messiah. The empty tomb, the stone rolled away, the linen wrappings, and the faith of the disciples speak clearly about the truth of the resurrection. The more one reads the gospel story, the more one believes. John 20:30 to 31 observes, "Therefore many other signs (that is miracles) Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." Now studying God's Word brings faith, and faith brings life.

Placing our trust in Jesus Christ, based on the evidence from the prophecies and the resurrection, gives us hope and confidence that Jesus will keep His promises. We can have confidence that our sins are truly forgiven, and God hears our prayers, and a home awaits us in heaven. Placing our trust in Jesus reminds us that God means what He says in His promises. God is utterly truthful and trustworthy! Now if we take His promises seriously, we must also take His teaching and His commandments

seriously. Truly converted Christians regard Jesus as Lord. Just as they know His grace and forgiveness is real, they also realize that the Day of Judgment is real.

Third, conversion means that we leave the path of sin and begin walking in righteousness. Now this is repentance. It's not merely a turning away from sin; it's the determination to live a whole new life in Christ. Repentance has sorrows over a past life of sin, but repentance also hungers for righteousness. It takes the sacrifice of Jesus seriously enough to change lives. 1 Peter 2:24 reminds us that, "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." Jesus took our punishment so we might find healing from our sins and the damage they do and a life that's free from all the heartaches that sin brings. Repentance brings healing and correction for those who are broken and hurting. Repentance heals the soul by putting things back into place, and restoring them to the way that they're supposed to be. Repentance is a blessing.

Fourth, conversion means setting our hearts on Christ and the eternal. The Christian thinks beyond this life. He realizes that he's God's child, and the Lord has prepared a home for him in heaven. The Bible in 1 John 3:1 to 3, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

Christians love the Lord and want to please Him. They seek moral and spiritual purity out of love for God, and the world doesn't understand it. Hope in Christ means looking for His return and being prepared, knowing that when He returns we'll live with Him forever. Because of this, they don't think like the world thinks. Romans 12 and verse 2 says, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." The wonderful thing about loving God and living according to His will is that it brings about a better life. Each day they transform their lives by renewing their minds on God's word. When they live out the will of God, they prove to the world that that will is good, that it's acceptable and it's perfect. The Lord's way blesses everyone.

Colossians 3:1 to 4 encourages us, "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory." Now a person who looks at life with heaven on his mind will certainly live differently than the man who is obsessed with this world and its ways. He sees life differently. Sinful desires aren't so appealing, because he realizes the harm they do in this life and in the world to come. So he keeps his life holy, because he wants to lead people to the blessing of God. He wants everyone to come to know the Lord and live righteously.

Now as a practical example of what conversion means, let's look at Ephesians 4:25 to 32. Verse 25 says, "Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." Conversion means I must stop deceiving or pretending. When we came to Christ, we became part of God's family. And so Christians tell the truth because they love each other and belong to each other. Conversion means putting off the old ways and living by a new set of standards.

Verses 26 to 7 say, "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity." Everyone lives with difficulties and irritants that tempt us to get

angry. Conversion means controlling our tempers and our actions; we cannot allow the devil to cause us to take revenge on others. Angry words and actions only bring heartaches and conflicts. The Lord's way brings peace. God says in James 1:19 to 20, "This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God." Are you angry or are you at peace?

Verse 28 says that, "He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need." The words, "no longer," ring loud and clear in this verse. Christians don't spend their lives taking what belongs to others; they live by a work ethic. They earn in order to share with others who have need. They believe the words of the Lord Jesus found in Acts 20 and verse 35 that, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Christians are not takers but givers. They live to serve rather than to be served. Do you?

Verse 29 says, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear." An unwholesome word is bad, evil, or rotten; and it blesses no one. And so Christians must no longer gossip, complain, or speak evil against others. They must cease using filthy language and begin building others up. Their words instead bless others. Colossians 4 and verse 6 says, "Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how (each of) you should respond to each person." "Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances." What kind of words do you speak? The mouth speaks what is in the heart. What's in your heart?

Verses 31 and 32 say, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." Bitterness and anger can ruin your attitude, it can ruin your health, and your relationships. The world seems to thrive on revenge, but the Lord has a better way. Because the Lord forgave us, Christians can overcome their anger and can learn how to forgive and to be kind. The ability to forgive is a treasure; Christians love and even pray for their enemies. We don't treat others unkindly, but we treat them with kindness, we treat them with love, we want to be right with them and to be good to them. We treat them kindly, because we are God's children who have come to know His grace and kindness. Are you tenderhearted?

Now this all matters, because the way of the Lord is holy and righteous. It's not merely a good way; the Lord's way is the best way! Jesus said that His followers are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Changing hearts and lives to be like Christ impacts the whole world. The Lord's way makes this whole world better! God's ways are kinder and more loving.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful for Your love and thankful that You have done so much good to us and for us. Help us to love people, to care about them and to give ourselves fully and freely to Your will and to bless the lives of others. In Jesus name, Amen.

Conversion means that we enter the kingdom of God. Colossians 1:13 to 14 says, "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." When the Lord forgives your sins, He adds you to His church according to Acts 2 and verse 47. According to Acts 2:38 the Lord forgives us when we repent and are baptized. In baptism God saves us and adds us to His church.

God's holy word says in Romans 6:17 to 18, "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." Now no matter how enslaved to sin

you were in times past, you don't have to stay there. You can change! When a person obeys from the heart, he can leave his enslavement to sin and become a servant of righteousness. His obedience is to a form or pattern of teaching. Well, what is this pattern?

Well, we find this pattern in this very chapter! Romans 6:3 to 4 says, "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life." Now in baptism, we die with Christ, we're buried with Christ, and we're raised with Christ. Baptism is the time when God washes away our sins and gives us newness of life. We're born again in baptism! And you can become a Christian and have a new life today! Obey from your heart that form of doctrine.

We hope today's study about conversion has stirred your heart. If you want a free printed copy of this message and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org).

Or, call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now there's a schedule of our programs and a map of churches in your area at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). SEARCH is also on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry", that's all one word, and like our programs. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

Show God your love by worshiping at church. You need a church family. And if you can attend, don't neglect worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So, keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program and encourage them to watch. And as always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.