

# GROWTH RESOURCES

## TRUE AND FALSE CONVERSION

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**I wonder if you ever heard a testimony like this:** *I gave my heart to Jesus when I was 12. Then I became involved in crime, muggings, rape, murder, pornography, torture, gambling, money-laundering, adultery, perjury, treason, extortion, and other things I'd rather not mention. I will filled with anger, hatred and greed. But all the time I knew the Lord and gave my heart back to Him when I was 40 years old. **Something does not quite sound right about that.***

- Charles Grandison Finney: *Evermore the Law must prepare the way for the gospel. To overlook this in instructing souls is almost certain to result in false hope (people believing they are saved when they are not). The introduction of a false standard of Christian experience, and to fill the Church with false converts... Time will make this plain. And it certainly has.*
- AW Tozer has said: *It is my opinion that tens of thousands if not millions have been brought into some kind of religious experience by accepting Christ and they have not been saved.*
- D James Kennedy has said: *the vast majority of people who are members of churches in America, are not Christians.*

**Jesus warned it in the day of judgement: Many people will come to Him and say Lord Lord. He will say depart from me you worker of iniquity. I never knew you. (Matt 7:21-23)**

- **Iniquity is lawlessness. (1 John 3:4)**
- The law is pivotal in conversion. How can a man repent if he doesn't know what sin is. ( Rom 3:20)
- (2 Tim 2:19) *But the firm foundation of (laid by) God stands, sure and unshaken, bearing this seal (inscription); the Lord knows those who are His, and, Let everyone who name [himself by] the name of the Lord give up all iniquity and stand aloof from it. **Iniquity = lawlessness.***
- **If there is no knowledge of sin** – and Paul says *I have not known sin but by the law (Rom 7:7b), then there is no understanding that we have sinned against God* and there will be **no vertical repentance. Without repentance there is no salvation.**

**ILLUSTRATION:** *Speedster, being drunk, drove through hometown - dangerous speed of 180 km/h. The town had no law against speeding. So they passed the law that said 100 km/h was the maximum speed. He come through this time 18 km/h. **He was in transgression.** They grabbed him, levelled a R77 000 fine to him. **He had no money, no words to defence, the youth was led off to prison.** As **he sat in prison with no hope, no means of payment,** His father arrives at the door and says: *Son I know you are guilty, but because I love you, I sold all my worldly goods to raise the money to pay the fine for you. You are free to go.**

- **What then would the attitude be to the law? Well he is dead to the law by the sacrifice of His Father. His father paid his fine and now the law holds no dominion over him.**

- And what is his attitude now to his father? In the light of his father's sacrifice he is filled with a **humble gratitude** that is such a **demonstration of love**.
- Now he will bring forth the fruit of a new lifestyle that is pleasing in his father's sight. He will no longer be lawless.

*(Rom 7:4) Likewise, my brethren, you have undergone death as to the Law through the [crucified] body of Christ, so that now you may belong to Another, to Him Who was raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God.*

- **The law has no dominion over the Christian.**
- There is **no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus** (Rom 8:1) – **the law doesn't hold us because the Father has paid the price for us.**
- **DL Moody said: the law can only chase a man to Calvary, not go further.**
- But you should be married to another, Even Him who is raised from the dead. You should bring forth fruit unto God.

**So the law holds no dominion over us. We are filled with the humble gratitude toward God for His mercy demonstrated in Christ, his wonderful sacrifice, expressed on the cross. Now we bring forth a new lifestyle that is pleasing to God. We are no longer workers of iniquity.**

## **WHAT ARE THE FRUIT OF NEW CONVERTS?**

- *(Mtt 3:8) Bring forth **fruit that is consistent (evidence) with repentance** [let your lives prove your change of heart.*
- *(Col 1:10) That you may walk (live and conduct yourselves) in a manner worthy of the lord, fully pleasing to Him and desiring to please Him in all things, **bearing fruit in every good work** and steadily growing and increasing in and by the knowledge of God [with fuller, deeper, and clearer insight, acquaintance, and recognition].*
- Titus continually says – that those who believe in God be careful to maintain good works.
- Jesus himself said: Let your light be so shine before men that they will see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.
- *(Heb 13:15) Through Him, therefore, let us constantly and at all times offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, which is the fruit of lips that thankfully acknowledge and confess and glorify His name. – **Fruit of thanksgiving.***
- *(Gal 5:22) But the **fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes]** is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence,), faithfulness. (v.23) Gentleness (meekness, humility), self-control (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge].*
- *(Phil 1:11) May you abound in and be filled with the **fruits of righteousness (of right standing with God and right doing)** which come through Jesus Christ the Anointed One), to the honour and praise of God [that His glory may be both manifested and recognized].*
- **Warning:** *(Matt 3:10) ... every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*

**As witnesses of Christ we should do everything we cannot just to get church members, decisions or youth group members, but with God's help we must make sure that those who we bring to the Saviour have the fruit that accompanies salvation.**

**(Mark 4:3-20) - The parable of the sower would speak of true and false conversion is the mystery to unlock all the other parables.**

- The sheep and the goats – the true and the false
- The foolish virgins and the wise – the true and the false
- The bad fish and the good fish
- The wheat and the tares growing alongside each other

## **SIX CHARACTERISTICS OF A FALSE CONVERSION**

This parable is also in Matt 13 and Luke 8 – using the harmony of the gospels we are going to look at the characteristics of a false conversion. There are immediate results with the false convert:

1. (Mark 4:5). He hears the message and says I want that. **There is no weighing of the issues because they hear the gospel that is preceded by the Law. They're not made to tremble before the throne of a holy God.** They're told they need to get assurance they're going to Heaven. They think they're already going to heaven. Why? They go about to establish their own righteousness, being ignorant of the righteousness which is of God.
2. (Luke 8:6) – There was a lack of moisture. **There is no thirst for Good, for the living God.**
3. (Mat 13:6) – There is no root in themselves. **There is no depth of Godly character.**
4. (Mark 4:16) – They receive the word with gladness. **Again, there's no Godly sorrow because the Law hasn't been brought to them that they might see themselves in truth.** God's law is like a mirror. When you don't have a mirror you can walk around the whole day with a dirty face without knowing it.
5. (Matt 13:20) – They receive the Word with joy. **Their laughter isn't turned to mourning, and their joy isn't turned to heaviness.**
6. (Luke 8:13) – For a while they do believe. **There is a genuine false conversion experience. When the law is not preached, sin is not seen as exceedingly sinful.** Paul says by the commandment sin became exceedingly sinful. **And when sin is not seen in the light for what it is, being exceedingly sinful, there is no trembling before a holy God, there is no contrition, no sorrow for sin.** So the false convert receives the word with gladness, joy, and for a while they do believe. Matt 13:20, Luke 8:13.

## **THREE TESTS THAT EXPOSES THE CONDITION OF THE HEART**

One plant looks small on the outside, but grows good. Another plant looks good on the outside, but when the sun shines on him it reveals what is going on in the soil (the part we cannot see). **The same in the spiritual.**

The sunlight in the spiritual reveals the heart condition of the professing convert. **It reveals that which we cannot see.**

What does the sunlight represent? Tribulation, Temptation and Persecution.

1. **Tribulation** (Matt 13:21) *Yet it has no real root in him, but is temporary (inconstant, lasts but a little while); and when affliction or trouble or persecution comes on account of the Word, at*

once he is caused to **stumble** [he is **repelled and begins to distrust and desert Him Whom he ought to trust and obey**] and falls away.

2. **Temptation** (Luk 8:13) And those upon the rock [are the people] who, when they hear [the Word], receive and welcome it with joy; but these have no root. They believe for a while, and in time of trial and temptation fall away (**withdraw and stand aloof**).
3. **Persecution** (Mark 4:17) And they have no real root in themselves, and so they endure for a little while, then when trouble or persecution arises on account of the Word, **they immediately are offended (become displeased, indignant, resentful) and they stumble and fall away.**

## WHAT CAUSES GROWTH IN THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE?

**ILLUSTRATION:** If you purchase an expensive houseplant one of the worse things you can do is to say: *this plant cost me a lot of money, I am going to keep it away from the sunlight. I am going to keep it in the closet and shut the door.* That is the worst thing you can do. If you know what you are doing you will **put the plant in the sunlight and you will even rotate it to make sure it gets plenty of balanced light.**

- And in the same way the worse thing you and I can do with a new convert is to shield them from the sunlight of tribulation, temptation and persecution.
- **If he is genuine, the sunlight will cause him to grow.**
- **If he is false the sunlight will cause him to wither and die.**

Years ago when Russia was under communism a story is told of two Russia guys that broke into a prayer meeting. They were fully armed. They said, *if you are not prepared to die for your faith, get out of here. And **half those professing Christians left.** When the doors were closed they put their guns down, they got the Bibles out and said, "we are believers but we didn't want to risk fellowship until we sorted out the sheep from the goats".*

If severe persecution fell upon the contemporary church, if we had a Russian guard clean-up, the effect would be

1. **It would purify the church.**
2. It would rid the church of **murmurs, complainers and those who cause division.**
3. It would **reveal to the stony ground, the false convert, and the errors of his ways.**

## THE TRAGEDY OF MODERN METHOD OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL

You go up to someone and say excuse me, if you die tonight would you have assurance that you would go to heaven?

- *I hope I do. You say: you can know that if you die tonight you go to heaven. Would you like for me to share with you how you can know. Yes. So well Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins, He rose again on the third day. If you repent, put your faith in Him you can pass from death to life today and you can know if you die tonight you can go straight to heaven.*
- **There is no preaching of future punishment. No mention of judgment. No mention of hell. No opening of the divine law showing the exceeding sinfulness of sin and you get a decision for Jesus.**

- **But you know that something isn't quite right. This guy has got no zeal for the lost. He has no hunger for the Word. He doesn't really get into fellowship.**
- **So you make it your job to make sure he continues in his faith.** You read the Bible to him, you take him to fellowship etc. You shield him from the sunlight of temptation, persecution and tribulation and you manage to do so right **until judgement day when the eyes of a righteous God burns away into his guilty soul**, when the books are opened and **he stands before a holy and wrathful law and he is exposed to be a worker of iniquity.**
- **What a tragedy that you shield him from the sunlight. Wouldn't it be better to stand back and let the sunlight reveal to him his true condition? Rather than giving him a false assurance that he is saved.**

### **For years preachers are spending their time running after false converts:**

- Are you reading your Bible, come to church, are you praying? **See, the true convert will desire the sincere milk of the Word.**
- Are you in fellowship? **The true convert knows he is passed from death to life because he loves the brethren and he will get in fellowship with the brethren.**
- ***He puts his hand in the plough and doesn't look back to the things behind because he is fit for the kingdom – ready for use. (Luke 9:62)*** The soil of his heart was turned to receive growth.
- **The true convert says I know in whom I believe and am persuaded, that He is able to keep that which I committed to Him until that day. He is able to keep me from falling and present me faultless in the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. (Psalm 26:1)** *VINDICATE ME, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity; I have [expectantly] trusted in, leaned on, and relied on the Lord without wavering and I shall not slide. (Psalm 37:30) the mouth of the [uncompromisingly] righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks with justices. (v.31) the law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.*
- **The true convert no longer are they workers of iniquity. They don't lie, steal, kill, commit adultery, lust, hate, angry without cause, and covet.**
- **The true convert will not even look back, according to Jesus, let alone depart from his faith.**
- If he finds himself in the lion's den, he doesn't hold his fist to the heavens, he gets on his knees before God. Fiery furnaces, lion's dens and red seas is all established and strengthened and settle the true convert. The genuine believer brings forth fruit with patience. *(Luke 8:15) But as for that [seed] in the good soil, these are [the people] who, hearing the Word, hold it fast in a just (noble, virtuous) and worthy heart, and steadily bring forth fruit with patience.* With genuine convert there is not spectacular quick growth. Why? Because the roots are going deep into the soil of God's word and drawing out the moisture.

**It is those we honestly call backsliders who fall away because they never sled forward in the first place.** According to the true proverb the dog goes back to his vomit and the pig goes back to his wallowing in the dirt. Is it because he is a dirty creature. No he goes back to cool his flesh. That is why pigs get in the dirt. **And that is what happens with the false convert. The modern gospel doesn't use the law as Jesus did, so the sinner is not crucified with Christ.**

- Paul says the law as death to me and because the law kill me. **When the law is allowed to work what it does it drives us to the new life that is in Christ.**
- **It is only a matter of time before a false convert is drawn back to the filth of the world and all is to cool his sinful flesh because it is still alive within his heart.** His never been crucified with Christ.
- **That is the reason why we have so many mushroom converts. Converts that spring up everywhere and then disappear. Because their stony ground has not been ploughed up. They have not conviction of the law.**

**Am I saying a genuine convert never sins?** Of course not.

- **Every Christian has a battle with the world and the flesh and the devil.** And sometimes he does fall into sin. But that is the point, he falls into sin
- **While the hypocrite, the false convert dives into sin.**
- The Christian sins against his will,
- **But the hypocrite, false convert, makes provision for the flesh.**

***ILLUSTRATION:** A young man sat in preacher's office. I look at you and I don't have what you've got. I don't have the seal for the lost. I don't have a hunger for the word. Something is wrong in my Christian walk.*

- *Preacher asked: do you have love, joy, peace, goodness, patience, meekness, temperance. He said, no to 7 of the 9 fruits of the Spirit.*
- *Preacher said by your own conviction I don't see any proof that you are soundly saved. At that moment he did exercise the fruit of self-control. He wanted to rearrange the preachers face he told him later,*
- *but he went home **examined himself to see if he is in the faith, concluded that he wasn't and repented before a holy God and within three months he was such a fruit bearer** that he was entrusted with a ministry in his church.*

*Years ago Ray was associate pastor of a very large church and the senior pastor was real skinny. He use to make jokes about it. He only had one stripe upon his pyjamas. He use run around in the shower to get wet. He says I eat and eat and eat I never put on wait. I think he had his glorified body. His about 6gft something 120 pounds. This pastor had a shepherd's heart. He just loved the flock. He would take a lamb in his arms and so loved his people. Godly man filled with the fruit of the spirit. One night there was a knock on the door at 3am. One of his sons got up and opened the door and there was some guy wanting council at 3:00 in the morning. But knowing his father's heart he didn't hesitate. He went to his father's bedroom, knocked on the door and said dad someone's here to seek council. He set I'll be out in a minute. Tell him to wait for me in the living room. So the father got up, got dressed, walked down into the living room and as he stepped in the living room a fourteen inch blade machete came down upon the pastor and so sliced him, he has two teenage sons, they heard him scream and they found him and all his blood around the walls in the living room. They thought their father had been killed. They about killed the guy that did it. The guy was a very angry gentleman. The next day another pastor called Ray and said: did you hear what happened last night. Ray said who it's heavy. Heavy, said the other pastor, that guy went to my church. And*



*then he said: Fancy that, another Christian doing that to the pastor. Ray said, wait a minute, if someone tries to cut off the head of the senior pastor, you can probably come to the conclusion he lacks some in the area of love, goodness, gentleness, self-control. And we've got to stop embracing everyone that says you're a Christian, you've given your heart to Jesus.*

**The Bible speaks of false brethren, false apostles, false prophets, false teachers and true and false conversion.**

*(Matt 7:15) Beware of false prophets, who come to you dressed as sheep, but inside they are devouring wolves. (Matt 7:16) You will fully recognize them by their fruits. Do people pick grapes from thorns, or gifts from thistles? (Matt 7:17) Even so, every healthy (sound) tree bears good fruit [worthy of admiration], but the sickly (decaying, worthless) tree bears bad (worthless) fruit. (Matt 7:18) A good (healthy) tree cannot bear bad (worthless) fruit, nor can a bad (diseased) tree bear excellent fruit [worthy of admiration]. (Matt 7:19) Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire.*

Sometimes you hear things like: He has given his heart to Jesus. Everything is going right except he keeps on beating his wife.

- A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit.
- Neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.
- A fountain cannot bring forth sweet and bitter water.

**Shall we run around looking for Judases and when we see them throw them out of the church?**

- **No Jesus said don't do that, as you run around pulling out tares you may pull out wheat.**
- **Don't do that.**
- Just leave them. **On judgment day God will sort them out the sheep from the goats.**
- **Because we really truly don't know. God only knows the genuine from the false.**
  - Judas was probably good looking.
  - When the woman poured out the ointment Judas was the one who said we could have given it to the poor, He cared for the poor.
  - NO HE DIDN'T. The Bible tells us he was a worker of iniquity.
  - He was the treasurer and was stealing money from Jesus and the disciples.
  - He was a hypocrite, but he hid it so well.
  - When Jesus said, one of you will betray me, the disciples didn't say: oh yes and we all know who it will be. They suspected themselves rather than the honest treasurer who cared for the poor.
  - Jesus said it is the one who puts his hand in the dish. Judas did it. The disciples didn't even realize it was Judas then.
  - When he went out to betray Jesus, some of them thought he was going out to give money to the poor.
  - He hid it well from the disciples but not from God. You and I might hide it from those around us but not from God.

*(1 Pet 1:6) [You should] be exceedingly glad on this account, through now for a little while you may be distressed by trials and suffer temptations. (1 Pet 1:7) So that [the genuineness] of your faith may be tested, [your faith] which is infinitely more precious than the perishable gold which is tested and purified by fire. [This proving of your faith is intended] to redound to [your] praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) is revealed. **God will only put in sunlight if need be – it is for your good.** (Psalms 66:10) For You, O God, have proved us; You have tried us as silver is tried, refined, and purified. (v.11) You brought us into the net (the prison fortress, the dungeon); You laid a heavy burden upon our loins. (v.12) You caused men to ride over our heads [when we were prostrate]; we went through fire and through water, but You brought us out into a broad, moist place [to abundance and refreshment and the open air].*

- God takes us through fire not to burn us but to purify us.
- He takes us through water not to drown us but to cleanse us.

**The great determining factor of whether or not, we with God's help produce false or true converts is the right use of the law of God.** Whether or not we, we produce true converts **comes back on whether we imitate Jesus, follow in the way of the Master and use the law lawfully to bring the knowledge of sin.**

- **If you discovered you are a false convert or if you are not sure you are soundly saved it is time for you to repent and trust the Saviour for the first time.**
- Don't be mistaken about this all important issue. **Think of the holiness of God and His hatred of sin.**
- Now think about your own sin. All of them.
- **Go through the commandments and think of what God should do with you.**
- **Now think of Jesus dying on the cross to save you and cry out to Him and place your wholehearted trust in Jesus Christ. He will have mercy on you. You'll be a new creature. He will forgive you.**
- **If you are a Christian and you know someone who isn't saved, please get equipped and do what you have been commanded to do: share the gospel with them.**

*Bibliography: Notes taken from the sermon of Ray Comfort*



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