

HC 88-89–Evidence of the Truly Converted: Dying Away of the Old Self

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Jesus: Since this is the section of the Catechism that deals with our service to God, how come we are talking about conversion? Shouldn't that be in the part dealing with our salvation? Answer: Good works prove conversion! So if we are converted, there are works we must immediately start to do and continue to do. Today we will examine **the good work of “dying to yourself” to prove you are converted.**

Our headings are:

Conversion: Described

Conversion: Dying to the old Self

Our goals are: **That you will be moved to die daily to your former life as a child of Satan.**

Conversion: Described

Q & A 88. Q. What is involved in genuine repentance or conversion?

A. Two things: the **dying-away of the old self,** and the **coming-to-life of the new.**

1. There are 2 parts to conversion (or repentance): “the dying-away of the old self,” and “the coming-to-life of the new self.”

Some are confused because they don't understand how the word “repentance” is used here. Now there are 2 primary ways the word “repentance” is used in the Bible.

When used specifically, **repentance means “the act of being sorry for, being contrite for, hating, and forsaking your sins.”**

When used generally, **repentance “describes one’s coming to faith in Jesus Christ.”** This use of the word repentance is used **interchangeably with conversion.** Why? Because repentance is a large part of your conversion, it is often used to represent the whole. (Similarly, the largest tribe of Israel, Ephraim, was often used to refer to the whole Israel).

2. Now the “old life” and this “new life” are not 2 lives, rather, they are “2 ways of life.”

You don't turn into someone else when you become a Christian. There is no physical change to your body. If you had heart disease, you will still have heart disease. If you had allergies, you still have allergies. Your physical looks remain the same – though you might smile some more. The difference is that you **begin to live spiritually differently till you die in these 2 ways.**

3. How will you live differently after you are converted:

a. Things you did before that were transgressions of God’s law, you stop doing. (Dying to old self.)

b. Things you didn’t do, like worship and working for the Lord – you start doing. (Coming to new life.) Your old ways of life yield more and more to the new ways of life, as Christ works in you through his Word and Spirit.

4. Why do you need to have and show that you have new life in these 2 ways?

You have to change because the first way of life was “old,” decayed and corrupted and you shouldn’t stay there. If you stay there, you give evidence to your neighbor and to the Lord that you are still in that old, decayed, and corrupted place. You need to show that **you have moved from a spiritual cemetery to the mansion on the hilltop.**

5. There are some people who have fake “conversions.”

a. Some genuinely feel bad about their sins, so they decide to live a moral life, even attending church regularly. You can see this in the life of many kings of Judah and Israel, and in much like the life of Pharaoh, who pretended to be a believer (Ex 8) and asked Moses to pray for him. (But even asking for prayer is not proof of conversion.) **True conversion is a reversal of that old lifestyle... visibly and provably.** Pharaoh did not show that.

b. Some have sham conversion. Maybe they felt pressured by friends so they start talking like a Christian. Maybe they **don’t want others to think they were bad,** so they start attending church. But look how it should be!

1Thessalonians 1:9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and **how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,** 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead...

Believers had to be visibly and provably Christians.

Ephesians 4:22 that you **put off,** concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your

mind, 24 and that you **put on the new man** which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

6. Is conversion a quick change?

No. It rarely is a quick change. Conversion is a process – sometimes a long process. The outward realization of the inward reality takes time. You must learn more and more to die to the old live and live to the new life as you are nourished with the food of God's Word.

This is a reason to be patient with those coming into Christ's family.

Conversion: Dying to the old self

Q & A 89 Q. What is the dying-away of the old self?

A. It is to be genuinely sorry for sin, to hate it more and more, and to run away from it.

1. Now let us consider the details of the first part of conversion: The dying away of the old self.

a. It is common to think of death as a funeral...worms and rotting bodies. But there is another death that you must have before you die at the end of your life: You have to die to your old ways. This is a death that God requires of all believers.

Colossians 3:5 Therefore **put to death your members which are on the earth:**

fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6

Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. 8 **But now you yourselves**

are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds...

The doctrine is clear: You must **do you uttermost to make sure you are separated from these sins.**

b. The problem comes when some do not have the proper concept of death! They think death means "cease to exist." That's the way the Jehovah's Witness and Seventh Day Adventists interpret things. **But death means separation! So you don't die in your person, but you die in your practices.** You separate yourself from them. You shut them out of your plans and your actions. The bad things you used to do, you don't do them anymore. **This dying is an action-an action every Christian must do!**

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How **shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?**

2. Further, "dying" connotes a process...a continuing action: it is not simply a one-time thing.

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, **that I practice.** 20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. **21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.**

This contradicts the revival crusades conversions of the Charismatics, **where quick belief is promoted:** "Say "yes" and sign on the line and you have a free ticket to heaven."

3. Dying to sin starts with sorrow for sin.

a. Sorrow for sins means sadness or regret. You have real pain in your heart for your transgressions.

The thief on the cross said it well when he spoke to the other thief on the cross: **"We are getting what we deserve."** **In the parable of the Publican, the Publican said: "Lord, have mercy on me a sinner."**

These both express this idea of true sorrow. They made no excuses for their sinfulness. They blamed no one else. So sorrow is not the pain you get from being punished. **Sorrow is inward pain for hurting God.**

2Corinthians 7:10 - For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

If you are not sorry for your sins, **why would you want to leave them behind** or be separated from them?

b. Sorrow for sin requires hatred of sin. Sin must be detested, detested because it is abominable to God.

God hates sin. So you must hold your spiritual nose when you come near sin...like you might hold your nose when you come to a dead rotting body.

c. Sorrow requires fleeing from sin. The greater the distance from sin, the better.

Flee like Joseph from Potiphar's wife – literally and figuratively.

Apostle Paul said in 1Corinthians 6:18 **Flee sexual immorality.**

And again, he said in 1Corinthians 10:14 -Therefore, my beloved, **flee from idolatry.**

In 2Timothy 2:22 **Flee also youthful lusts.**

This is true death to sin.

4. Look at examples of how you are to truly die to sin.

a. Avoid those who encourage you to sin...even a family member or a friend (which is often the case).

Offending God is the worst thing you can do in your life. And **even if your family member or friend were offended** by your refusal to compromise, take that offense. **It might make them try to find out why their sin** is so offensive to you and to God. Maybe they are upset because you **won't go to a party on Sunday** instead of church. Maybe they want you to **join them in their improper marriage ceremonies.** Maybe they think **you should sleep around** and not get married. Hold your ground.

b. Be busy doing other things that are good and God-glorifying. When you put off a bad habit – when you die to a sin - you need to replace it with living the truth. **If you waste time playing computer games** or on YouTube, **get out and cut the grass...or shovel the snow...or send a good text** to someone and ask how he is doing...or **pray for Karen who just lost her husband.** This might also mean you have to **avoid certain universities or schools where the environment or the teachers might hinder your growth.** Whatever **causes you to dishonor Christ** and imperil your soul, **flee from it.**

c. Constantly remind yourself you belong to Jesus Christ and think of the shame you would cause him if you let the old life resurrect in your heart, mouth, or actions.

5. Keep in mind that you can only die to sin through the help of God's Holy Spirit.

Try in your own might, you lose. Your attachment to sin will be too strong.

Conclusion:

Conversion is dying of the old self and the coming to life of the new. In the **dying of the old self**, you realize this is a **long continuous struggle in life.** Foundationally, you die to sin – you quell your lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life. Remember, to die to sin means you must separate yourself from it.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. You were saved by grace, through faith, and not of yourselves. If you were saved by yourself you would boast about it. But you can't because you weren't.

2. Yet, to show you were saved, there must be noticeable changes in your life...in your talk...in your walk...and in your thought. There are no secret Christians. Repentance or conversion is visible and demonstrable. Let God's Spirit work in you to bring out these changes! Separate from the old devilish ways! Work hard so they are never resurrected.

3. If you refuse to die to sin and live for Christ, it means you haven't been changed in your heart; you are not regenerated. If that were the case, you need to ask God to make you his child. Remember, it doesn't matter if you are a member of a Christian church – if you don't repent – and show it consistently by dying to sin– you are NOT converted.

Finally, if you are an unrepentant sinner to God, he can change you from a sinner to a saint. He will take you and clean you. He will give you a new name, and new heart, a new record, and a new life – a life which you will then live to bring glory to the one who saved you. And God will say, “Welcome home.”