

Heidelberg Catechism Q&A90 – What is true Conversion – Part 2

Brothers and Sisters in the Lord: You learned that conversion (sometimes called “repentance” in the generic use of the word) is marked by 2 things:

- 1. The dying away of the old man, and**
- 2. The coming to life of the new man.**

You have seen what the **dying away of the old man is**: Dying away of the old man is to have sorrow for sins, to hate them, and to turn away from them. This “dying” process takes place throughout your life.

Today you will hear the details about the 2nd part of conversion: The **coming to life of the new man.**

Our headings are:

What does living as a new man look like

What are the results of living as a new man

What happens to those who reject living as a new man,

Our goals are: **That you will daily bloom as a true branch that has life from the Vine – Jesus Christ – and produce much fruit, proving to yourself, your neighbors, and your Lord, that you have been truly converted.**

90 Q. WHAT IS THE COMING-TO-LIFE OF THE NEW SELF?

A. It is **wholehearted joy** in God through Christ and **a delight to do** every kind of good as God wants us to.

What does living as a new man look like

1. God demands, that as you die to your old self, you live a new life in faithful obedience and fruitfulness.

The new lifestyle replaces the old lifestyle. This is called “the coming to life of the new.” Those who are saved must not and cannot continue to live in sin. (Romans 6:1) God forbids that!

If the old life simply dies and nothing replaces it, what use is that new life? The old life must be replaced and yield to new life.

2. How does this happen...how does the new lifestyle take the place of that old lifestyle?

That old life, characterized by sin, must be **pushed back, squeezed down, and killed.**

The new life **must arise and conquer**.

This is a lifelong battle. You forget this at your own peril.

Romans 6:11 Likewise you also, **reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin but alive to God** in Christ Jesus our Lord.

“Reckon” means “to calculate or compute.” **So you must prove that you are dead to sin!** And you must **prove you are alive** to obedience! **Prove it by fighting**. Dead men don't fight.

3 . Now the details of what living as a new man looks like:

a. You will put on new spiritual clothes.

Colossians 3: 12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering** **13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another**, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. **14** But above all these things **put on love, which is the bond of perfection.** **15** **And let the peace of God rule in your hearts**, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. **16** **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. **17** And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

The Colossians did not perfectly obey the Lord immediately when they were regenerated (no one does), **but they started to show these characteristics**. They started to dress like Christians for the world to see. **They showed their new spiritual clothes**.

How does this translate to today? When you have a conversation with someone, you will not only talk about your job and promotion (which are okay to talk about), but you will talk about a new valuable book you are reading...or how you experienced God's mercy this week.

Yes, it is okay to talk about a new video game or the I-phone, but it must never be at the cost of talking about something that is more needful...spiritual things...edifying things...things that show love...things that reflect your position in Jesus. This is how you live as a new man. This is your spiritual clothes. They will prove you are saved!

Matthew 3:8 "Therefore **bear fruits** worthy of repentance,

John the Baptist told the one who stole to stop stealing and work so he would have things to give to others...and the one who broke the Sabbath was told to stop and use the Sabbath properly.

His point was that conversion shows – it shows positively – and life flourishes!
Have sorrow for sins? Yes. Have joy in obedience? Yes.

b. You will have spiritual worship.

Joel 2: 13 So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.

Today, most Canadians have religious talk, which is the only “spiritual garment” they offer, but how many have new life – in their heart and show it by worship and obedience?

4. Consider illustrations from the Bible and history of those who were truly converted and showed that new life by their good life.

Instructions are great, but examples are great teachers too!

a. Manasseh, the horrible son of Hezekiah, truly repented and changed his perverted lifestyle after God brought him back from Babylonian captivity.

2Chronicles 33:12 Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and **humbled himself greatly** before the God of his fathers, 13 and **prayed to Him;** and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then **Manasseh knew that the LORD** was God.

It doesn't matter how sinful a man may have been before conversion, when his old nature is killed, and when the new life takes over, he bears good fruits.

b. The Ethiopian Eunuch was truly converted and showed it by returning to Ethiopia and evangelizing the entire nation. No one thought much of the “scorched face” eunuch, but he showed new life by having many, many spiritual children.

c. John Newton, (1725-1807) who wrote *Faith's Review and Expectation* which we now call *Amazing Grace*, was a rotten young man who became a slave trader, and yet, when he was converted, his life was characterized by an amazing devotion to the Lord. **He eventually joined the anti-slave trade movement.**

5. While you are commanded to have a new life, you must not forget it is God who works in you to fight sin and it is God who gives you joy.

God is the source and means of the killing of the old self and the coming to life of the new.

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God **who works in you both to will and to do** for His good pleasure.

This is why there is no room for self in salvation. Give credit to the one who moved you to die to your old self and to live for Christ.

Isaiah 57: 15 For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And **to revive the heart of the contrite ones.**

Isaiah stated the same thing: God gives life to the man whose heart has stopped. But God's work is not like the simple work of an emergency room doctor who resuscitates a man's heart – which still eventually dies. God revives the heart to live forever.

Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by faith in the Son of God...**

Galatians 2:20, points to the means through whom God gives new life – his Son. So don't take the credit for any good you do or accomplish. Give praise to the Lord.

What are the results of living as a new man?

1. You have deep, heavenly joy in Christ when you are converted.

Romans 14: 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, **but righteousness and peace and joy** in the Holy Spirit.

This is a joy that none can take away and it is a joy that will stay with you in heaven. Yes, you will have struggles in life, you will get sick, you might lose your job, you might not be rich, but you will have the joy of your salvation. You are not the frozen chosen. You are the cheerful children of Christ your comfort.

2. So if you find that you have no joy or it is less than you should have, address two is-

sues:

1. Do I really believe in Jesus –that he died on the cross to make me a Christian?

2. If I do believe in Jesus, what can I do to get the joy back? You will have to roll back the curtains to the cross and see the Lord Jesus dying for your sins. Nothing else will rekindle your love...

3. Let me illustrate that joy of salvation in the life of King David when he repented of his sins.

David recounted how he lost the joy of living as a convert to Jesus– that joy that God had given to him. The context is negative, but the lesson isn't. He desired it and received it.

Psalms 51:8 Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice. **12 Restore to me the joy** of Your salvation...

Isn't this also an incredible thing...that though you might lose the joy of your salvation from time to time...it is always available for reclaim from your heavenly Father?

What happens to those who reject living as a new man?

1. Clearly there are some who reject this command to repent and be converted and show it.

They choose to live for themselves apart from God and God's people, and they choose to live as hypocrites in the church – choosing to serve God by outward actions but not from the heart. These have always been around! They will not get this joy. What will they get?

2. Those who reject the call to die to themselves and live for Jesus will face the full force of God's judgment.

2Kings 17:13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, "**Turn from your evil ways,** and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets." **14 Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks,** like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God.

Proverbs 29:1 He who is **often rebuked, and hardens his neck, Will suddenly be destroyed,** and that without remedy.

Those who stiffen their necks against God, God would break their necks like the stubborn animal in the Old Testament who refused to be yoked. There is not greater motivation to repent than a threat of eternal death!

Conclusion:

Your conversion is marked, not just by the dying of the old man, but of the coming to life of the new man. You show that by publicly displaying joy, being godly, and worshipping! In doing this, you bring joy to man and God!

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. You have been graciously saved by God through faith in Jesus! Are you showing it? You show it by changing your life - in your walk, in your talk, and in your thought.

2Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

You must show Jesus you are saved and you must show your neighbors you are saved.

There are no secret Christians. “Secret Christians” are a contradiction. Repentance and conversion are visible and demonstrable.

2. But do not forget that you are only able to die to sin, and live to righteousness (repent) as God’s Spirit works in you – the covenant child of Jesus Christ. So praise him for that. And don’t fight the Holy Spirit.

4. If you refused to die to sin and live for Christ, it means you haven’t been changed in your heart; you are not regenerated and you need to be. 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 – you are NOT converted.

Finally, if you are a stranger who is an unrepentant sinner, God 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 can and must live to bring glory to the one who saved you.