

UNTO A PERFECT MAN

Our last study helped us to see how a person actually comes to Christ and experiences genuine conversion. When this takes place in our lives, our "disease" of sinfulness has been brought to the heavenly Physician, and He begins the only available healing process.

At this point, some extremely important questions arise. For instance, when we submit our lives to Christ, what happens to our many past sins? What happens to all of our desires, which are ungodly and unChrist-like? What happens to the habits that we have developed from childhood that produce sin, which are as much a part of us as is our bloodstream? Do Christians sin after conversion? What is God's attitude toward a reborn Christian if he does sin? Can a Christian fall away from Christ after he has once been converted? These are important to answer.

Let us focus on two vital points in this study. First, exactly what happens to us at conversion? Second, where, when, how are all of our sinful habits weeded out of our lives? How does God relate to us and our sin problem?

1. As we have already studied, the Bible makes it very clear that we are all sinners. (Review Romans 3:10-18,23.) Thus we all need Christ and forgiveness. In John 5:1-9, we have a record of one of our Lord's many acts of healing. This story is very helpful as an illustration of what saving faith is, and how we can know we are recipients of God's promises to forgive us. Can you find these secrets, especially in verses 8 and 9? Put them in your own words.

2. In Luke 7:36-50, there is a story of the woman who anointed Jesus' feet with ointment from her alabaster box. Though some present seemed shocked because Jesus accepted her act, they were even more shocked when He forgave her sins. The story says she was a great sinner. Read verses 48-50. Upon what basis did she know that her sins were actually, and totally, forgiven?

3. Analyze the following Scriptures in order to gain a fuller understanding of what conversion is, what it involves, and the full acceptance by God that is promised.

- (a) John 3:1-5 _____
- (b) John 20:30,31 _____
- (c) Romans 5:1 _____
- (d) Romans 8:1 _____
- (e) Micah 7:18,19 _____

4. The converted individual has a future to face as God's child. Will he sin again? Do "Christians" sin? What about our ugly, sin-producing habits? What happens to them? An illustration from nature can help us understand the future, daily life of the Christian. Read Mark 4: 26-29. Note the three phases of the life of a plant: Seed sprouting, growth to earing time, and the matured ear. The Christian life has the same three phases. Find them in these texts:

- (a) Seed sprouting: 2 Corinthians 5:17 _____
- (b) Daily growth: 2 Peter 3:17,18 _____
- (c) Final maturity: Ephesians 4:13 _____
5. One critical point in relation to question four is found in Galatians 2:20 and 1 Corinthians 15:31. What is this most important truth?
- _____
- _____
6. In relation to both questions 4 and 5, will a Christian, as he or she grows, sin? The Bible answers this question many times. Read about godly Moses and his mistake in Numbers 20:1,2,7,8,11,12. Could we say that true Christians do sin, but far more accidentally than intentionally. The Christian doesn't want to sin, but he is still learning and growing, not full-grown. As he grows, and is re-converted daily, as self is crucified daily, God reveals his habits that cause sin and removes them. Thus, the Christian finds that he is not falling where he once did. Growth is taking place, but it is a life-long process.
7. What, then, is our part from day to day? James 4:17 _____
8. What is God's part as He works with us from day to day? Phil. 4:13; 1 John 2:1 _____
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