

Study Guide #14 – Conversion

XIV. That as the natural or carnal heart is at enmity with God and his law, this enmity can be subdued only by a radical transformation of the affections, the exchange of unholy for holy principles; that this transformation follows repentance and faith, is the special work of the Holy Spirit, and constitutes regeneration or conversion.

1. That as the natural or carnal heart is at enmity with God and his law

• The natural/carnal heart:

Romans 8:6, 7 “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

1 Corinthians 2:14 “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

Romans 7:14 “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.”

• Are we born enemies to God?

Matthew 18:3 “And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 19:14 “But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” (see also Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16)

1 Corinthians 14:20 “Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.”

Thought Question(s):

- 1. What is meant by the term “carnally minded”? and how does it affect our attitude toward God’s law?
- 2. What is it about children that fits them for the kingdom of heaven?

2. This enmity can be subdued only by a radical transformation of the affections, the exchange of unholy for holy principles

• Subduing the enmity:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: ⁴ (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) ⁵ Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

Galatians 5:24, 25 “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

Galatians 6:15 “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.”

Colossians 3:2, 5 “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. . . . ⁵ Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

Thought Question(s):

- 1. Against what foe should our spiritual weapons primarily be trained?
- 2. How ought we to crucify the flesh “with the affections and lusts”?

3. This transformation follows repentance and faith, is the special work of the Holy Spirit, and constitutes regeneration or conversion

• It follows repentance and faith:

Acts 3:19 “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”

Acts 26:20 “But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should *repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.*”

Acts 16:31 “And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

• It is the work of the spirit of God:

Titus 3:5 “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

Note: The word translated regeneration (παλιγγενσία - paliggenesia) literally signifies rebirth or being “born again”, and this is defined by the apostle as the “renewing of the Holy Ghost”.

John 3:6 “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

Romans 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

1 Corinthians 6:11 “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Ephesians 4:30 “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

1 Peter 1:2 “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

Thought Question(s):

- 1. Why must conversion follow repentance?
- 2. Why is conversion the “special work of the holy spirit” and not the work of each man?