Conversion

Intro: Conversion is a turning or a change. Conversion to God and Christ is greatly needed in the church today. This is seen in the personal conduct of many claiming to be Christians (Phi. 1:27 “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;”). It is reflected in the indifference of many to the Lord’s work (1 Cor. 15:5 “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”), and can be observed in the way members treat each other (cf. 1 Pet. 1:22-23 “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; 23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”).

I. FALSE CONCEPTS OF CONVERSION
   A. The Holy Spirit converts one directly
   B. An experience of faith

II. TRUE CONVERSION
   A. Based on Truth
      1. Rom. 1:16-17 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
      2. Rom. 10:17 “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
      3. Heb. 11:1 “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”
   B. A turning from and a turning to
      1. At Lystra; Acts 14:15 “And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and all things that are therein:”
      2. 1 The. 1:9 “For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;”
      3. 1 Pet. 2:25 “For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”
   C. In obedience to the Lord
      1. 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;”
      2. Acts 15:7 “And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.”

III. CONVERSION
   A. Change of heart—faith
      1. Heb. 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”
      2. Rom. 10:10 “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
      3. John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
B. Change of life—Repentance
1. Luke 13:3 "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
2. Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.
3. 2 Cor. 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

C. Change of state—Baptism
1. Rom. 6:3-4 "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
2. Gal. 3:26-27 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

IV. Bible Examples of Conversion
A. Saul
1. Persecutor of the church
   a. Acts 8:3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.
   b. Acts 26:9-11 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
   c. 1 Tim. 1:13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

2. His conversion
3. Acts 9:20-22 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? 22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

4. Preacher of the truth and the one church with the result of being persecuted.

B. Ephesians; Acts 19:18-19 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

V. Evidences of Conversion
A. 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.

B. Worship; John 4:23-24 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

C. Rendering Christian duty; Tit. 2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

D. Faithfulness; 1 Cor. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
E. **Love of the brethren; John 13:34-35** “34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Conclusion: Have you turned away from everything and turned to Jehovah? Have you brought forth work worthy of your conversion? If not, obey God today.