

# Personal Transformation #1:

## Conversion: Dead to Self & Alive to God

### General Purpose:

This course will examine some of the major elements that help produce God-honoring transformation in our lives. The course will explain what they are, how they work, and how we can embrace and apply them intentionally in order to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the *Process of Change*.

### ELEMENTS OF CONVERSION

Our goal is not human effort, such as being on our best behavior or the making of empty New Year Resolutions, but instead pursuit of the spiritual fruit that results from being truly born again. Therefore, we must begin by considering the essential elements of our salvation experience:

1. **Faith** - The bedrock of true conversion.

#### Acts 2:37-38

*Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

2. **Repentance** - To turn around and go in another or opposite direction. The Greek word is metanoia, which means to have a change of heart. Repentance involves a humble recognition that our own ways are not right, and that God's ways are. Repentance causes us to realize that it is our holy privilege to reject our own human wisdom in favor of His higher ways.

#### 2 Corinthians 13:5

*Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?*

### 3. **Baptism** – A symbolic outward expression of an inner reality.

- The main purpose of water baptism is to confront a new believer with the need to identify with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. To be clothed in Christ.

#### Romans 6:3-11

*Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

- This practice serves as a metaphor that articulates the concept of repentance and offers the new convert a tangible expression of what it means.
- The purpose of water baptism is NOT principally to identify publically with Christ. Many baptisms, by necessity, have been done privately or even secretly.
- It's all part of "counting the cost" prior to making the commitment to follow Christ.

#### Luke 14:26-33

*If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This*

*man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace. So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.*

- The example of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-38)
- **Notable observations:**
  - God seems to have already captured the eunuch's attention before Philip arrives.
  - The eunuch is eager to express his faith before Philip has even finished his presentation. (They have not yet discussed whether the eunuch believes...)
  - The eunuch already understands about water baptism and is eager to embrace it. How can this be?
  - It must be that baptism, and its implications, were an integral part of Philip's gospel message. Is it part of yours?

## THE DEATH METAPHOR

Willfully embracing death to self is an essential element of authentic Christianity.

### Romans 8:12-13

*So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

### 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

*For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.*

### Philippians 3:7-11

*But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for*

*whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

### Colossians 3:1-3

*If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

### 1 Peter 2:24

*He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.*

## 1. Daily Death

### 1 Corinthians 15:31

*I protest, brethren, by the boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.*

- The Death Principle is not merely a symbolic illustration; it's a way of life.

### Luke 9:23-24

*And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.*

- This death doesn't happen all at once. It's put into practice every day and every time the opportunity to behave "Christ-like" collides with our own habitual self-interest. It's then that we choose who rules our lives and whose interests we serve.

### Romans 8:12-13

*So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

- Abraham's Example

Genesis 22:9-12

*Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there, and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." And he said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."*

God's great TEST for Abraham → Kill that which you love above anything else.

## 2. Alive to God

- Dying to self is not enough to produce mature Christianity.
- We need an exchange of life, a decrease of ME and an increase of CHRIST.

Romans 8:4-9

*[We] who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.*

- Conviction By The Spirit

John 14:16-17

*And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.*

John 16:7-8

*But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment.*

- Leading By The Spirit

John 10:27

*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*

Romans 8:13-14

*For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

As we die to ourselves, and live for Christ, we get to know God better.

**Discussion Question:**

1. Do you recognize in yourself the readiness to “put to death” something you hold very dear in order to obey/honor Jesus, your Lord? Can you point to a personal history of having done that?

**Homework:**

Memorize Galatians 2:20.