



# CONVERSION

## Temcat Study

I wish to share a short testimony about spiritual understanding and its relationship to true conversion. In my own experience I was ‘in the church’ for most of my life and really thought I was a great Christian. I really thought myself superior spiritually and had no doubt that I was ‘born again’. After all, didn’t I love religious things? Didn’t I love to sing hymns? Didn’t I know lot’s of doctrines and could discuss them with the best? Hadn’t I been baptized and didn’t I want to be saved in heaven?

Yes, but so did the Pharisees in Christ’s day. The big key that I now know showed that I wasn’t converted was the fact that self was still leading in my life. I even wanted to work for God, to do great things for Him but I was just a polished tool in the hands of the devil because I wasn’t converted. As long as I thought about self—as long as I was easily angered, offended, felt sorry for myself in any way, resented or was envious of others, or made excuses for my behavior, I wasn’t converted. Sure I was baptized but self had been buried alive and didn’t die at all.

You see, The unconverted heart can enjoy and thrive on certain types of food—it loves knowledge of facts, it loves stories, it loves history and to see all the interesting conspiracies and intrigue in the world, it loves to learn about wickedness in the church or other places; but it finds real spiritual food that deals with real heart religion, very hard to swallow and tends to read as little of it as possible. Of course the unconverted one must read some Bible and SOP otherwise he couldn’t feel so ‘spiritual’ so he will read some, but it isn’t his preference. The unconverted one LOVES to tell others about religion and doctrine—but not about heart religion because he doesn’t have it to give.

It is because the things of the Spirit are only taught by the Spirit; and for the person that is only partly surrendered, the Holy Spirit is not within him, but is still outside of him trying to get the person to surrender so He can come in and begin to teach the person the things pertaining to the spiritual life.

“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;” 1 Corinthians 1:23

"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." 1 Corinthians 2:13

I shamefacedly tell you that I walked this way for most of my life. I piled up knowledge and facts and historical information—I was smart—But I was NOT CONVERTED—all my selfish ways continued with little interference.

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, [even] as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able [to bear it], neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas [there is] among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” 1 Corinthians 3:1-3

A few years ago now, I began to learn about the character of God and Jesus, what His Glory really is, then as I looked at self I fell on my face before God and after much weeping repentance (Which is ongoing) and much struggle of my will (Which is also ongoing) I finally surrendered to the will of God. I finally said—OK, I may not like it the way it is but You are God, I am nothing—I accept Your will as mine—I will obey no matter what I feel like.

I realized that the Holy Spirit had tried time and again to get me to make this full surrender, but always some thing would rise in my mind that I didn't really want to give up, it might be a material thing, or a entertainment thing, but more often it was an emotional thing. I would have to give up all self pride, all self seeking, all ego, all resentment, all self pity, all excuses for bad behavior, all saying, “Well I don't feel good so it OK for me to be rude or unkind.” So I pushed the Spirit away time after time and kept living my 'Christian' life in my own way, walking in the sparks of my own kindling.

As this true rebirth began to blossom in my heart as the Holy Spirit could work from the inside now, things began to change dramatically. No longer was I the center of my thoughts—I began to be able to see others differently and above all, the things of God began to open up before me in a way I never dreamed. The Holy Spirit taught me more in a few weeks than He had been able to teach me all my life when I hadn't surrendered. The Bible and SOP gleamed with light—we often say “It was like it was all rewritten fresh and new for us”.

Spiritual things are only discerned by the truly converted person. Remember the ones who walked away from Jesus saying “This is an hard saying, who can hear it?” They DID understand, but they didn't want it to be the way it was—so they walked away and rejected the truth because they didn't like it that way. It didn't fit in with their plans and so they didn't 'understand' it.

If you find yourself having a hard time to read real spiritual material and your taste runs to history, stories, facts and things like that—the problem is not with the spiritual articles—the problem is an unconverted heart. Because once surrender is TOTAL—then and ONLY then does the Spirit come in as your personal teacher—and even a child can understand the scriptures when the Holy Spirit teaches them. They become as sweet as honey to our taste and we will love them more and more. This is not something put on, as the performing of a religious duty, it is a genuine passion for spiritual things that has to be experienced to be understood.

Oh, how deceived I was for years in these things and my heart aches for those I know who are in the same delusion. I can only say—put it all on the alter—fall on the Rock and be broken, for you will NEVER know the joy of the Lord UNTIL you surrender EVERYTHING! Until you can say OK—Have Your own way Lord—crucify me until I'm completely dead.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22, 23.

This is the evidence of whether the Spirit is within us or not—if even one of these fruit is missing—we are not converted. I urge you not to be deceived—one can think he is converted and not be—but once he is really converted—he KNOWS the difference. Many external victories can be had by the unconverted Christian, he may have given up many evil habits—but as long as he is holding back even one tiny particle of self, he will not experience the true power of the Holy Spirit in the former rain. And without the Early rain—and the complete image of Jesus being in us without spot or wrinkle, there is no Latter rain and we won't be sealed unless we receive the Latter rain. This is so serious! We don't have time to play our little 'self' games. Probation is soon closing for us.

“There are only two courses which it is possible for you, your wife, or me, to pursue. We must yield ourselves wholly to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, or follow our own natural impulses, and these impulses are not as harmless as we think they are. Things which are offensive to God are often construed by us into virtues. The eyes of the Lord are too pure to behold iniquity; he registers evil as fruit borne by an unsanctified heart. When the heart is fully surrendered to God, and our will is in harmony with God's will, then the fruit will be good for the wisdom which cometh down from above is first pure, then peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruit. The grace brought to us through Christ will enable us to be pure, uncorrupted, holy.” *PH096 pg. 42*

“Christ is a complete Saviour. It was a perfect sacrifice that he offered on Calvary's cross, that man might have a full and complete sanctification. Wonderful is the provision that he has made, yet many who claim to believe have only a nominal faith. Their profession does not convert them. They have not surrendered all to Christ. They have not opened the door of the heart to welcome him as a heavenly guest. They love themselves and their own ways, failing to realize that their ways, their words, and their characters are opposed to God. Such can never reach perfection unless they see themselves as they are. If the natural disposition is not changed, if it remains as it was before Christ spoke to them, they are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot. Christ says to them, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." I can not plead in your behalf; for you have no desire for my glory.” *The Youth's Instructor 09-21-99*

“Our characters are by nature warped and perverted. Through the lack of proper development they are wanting in symmetry. With some excellent qualities are united objectionable traits, and through long indulgence wrong tendencies become second nature, and many persons cling tenaciously to their peculiarities. Even after they profess to accept the truth, to yield themselves to Christ, the same old habits are indulged, the same self-esteem is manifested, the same false notions

entertained. Although such ones claim to be converted, it is evident that they have not yielded themselves to the transforming power of the truth.

"These things are not only harming their own souls, but are misleading others, who look to them as representatives of the truths which they profess to believe. Here we may see why some of our ministers as well as laymen have not greater power. They have not made an entire surrender to God. They do not realize the sinfulness of clinging to their own ways, following their own ideas, which are crude and narrow, and without symmetry. They hold tenaciously to the theory of the truth, and try to present it to others, but it is so beclouded by their own peculiarities that its brightness is obscured; it appears unattractive, and too often is refused." *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald 04-12-92.*

"You may be tall and well proportioned in self, but none such can enter here. None can be admitted who are grown-up children, with all the habits and customs, the disposition, the characteristics, which pertain to children. You have nurtured your suspicions, your criticisms, your bad temper, your dignity, and you can not be permitted to spoil the feast. All who enter through the door have on the wedding garment, woven in the loom of heaven. Your leaven of distrust, your want of confidence, your power of accusing, closes against you the door of admittance.

"Within this door, nothing can enter that can possibly mar the happiness of the dwellers here by marring their perfect trust in one another. Those who have educated themselves to pick flaws in the characters of others, have thus revealed a deformity of character which has made families unhappy, which has turned souls from the truth to choose fables. You can not join the happy family in the heavenly courts, for God has wiped all tears from their eyes. You can never see the King of beauty, if you are not yourself a representative of the loveliness of Christ's character.

"Abiding with Christ is choosing only the disposition of Christ, so that he identifies his interests with yours. When you give up your own will, your own wisdom, and learn of Christ as he has invited you to do, then you shall find entrance into the kingdom of God. Entire, unreserved surrender he requires. Give up your life for him to order, mould, and fashion. Take upon your neck his yoke, submit to be led and taught, as well as to lead and teach. Learn that unless you become as a little child,( that is trusting and childlike not pettish and childish) you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Abide in him, to be and do only what he wills. These are the conditions of discipleship." *The Gospel Herald 04-23-02.*