

Real Change: Conversion

Session 6: Conversion and the Church

Getting Started

1. Has anything in our study of conversion in these past few classes surprised you? If so, what? Why?
2. Can you think of any reasons why conversion is important not just for individual Christians, but also for local churches?

Main Idea

All those who are converted – and only those who are converted – should join a local church. When the church is filled with Christians, the Holy Spirit will fill the church with the fruit of spiritual growth, genuine fellowship, and more.

Digging In

In this study we're going to draw from all we've learned about conversion in the previous studies and see how conversion impacts the church. In order to do that, we're going to look at the portrait of the earliest church which Luke gives us in **Acts 2**.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles and caused them to speak in tongues. In the midst of this, Peter stood up and proclaimed the meaning of these events, culminating with his explanation of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Let's pick up the story with his hearer's response in **verse 37**:

1. What did Peter's hearers experience at the conclusion of his address? How did they respond (v. 37)?
2. What did Peter tell his hearers to do? (vv. 38, 40; see also v. 41)
 -
 -
 -
3. Who does Peter say that God's promise of forgiveness is for (v. 39)? What does this teach us about conversion?

4. What does it mean that “there were added that day about three thousand souls” (v. 41)? What were the three thousand added to?
5. What did these new believers devote themselves to as a church (v. 42)?
6. What did the new believers do with their possessions (vv. 44-45)? What does this teach us about their attitude toward one another? (Think back to our study of 1 John 3:16-18 from last time.)
7. What did the believers do “day by day” (vv. 46-47a)?
8. What did the Lord do to the church day by day (v. 47b)? What does this teach us about how the believers related to those outside the church?
 -
 -
 -
9. What do you think would have happened to the church in Acts 2 if, instead of being filled with genuinely converted Christians, it was filled with an even mix of genuine Christians and false professors? What do you think that would have done to their:
 - Devotion to the apostles teaching?
 - Generosity with their possessions?
 - House-to-house fellowship?
 - Evangelistic efforts?
10. What are some ways that churches today might unwittingly allow unconverted persons into their membership?
11. What are some ways that churches can help ensure that:
 - Those who join the church are truly converted?
 - All those who are converted join and plant their lives in a local church?
12. How does this overall picture of life in the early church encourage and inspire you? What aspects of this picture are missing from your experience of the church? How could you go about cultivating them?