



THE FOUR D'S OF CONVERSION

Conversion can be summed up in four words:

DECISION, DENIAL, DEDICATION, DETERMINATION

And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

Luke 9:23

DECISION [MAKE UP MIND]

"If anyone wishes": desires to be a disciple.

"to come": join the ranks of followers.

"after me" be a follower of Jesus.

DENIAL [GIVE UP SELF]

"deny self": Surrender life to the Lord.

DEDICATION [GIVE OVER TO CHRIST]

"take up cross daily" Daily live as a Christian.

DETERMINATION [MAKE EFFORT TO FOLLOW]

"follow me" abide by His teachings.

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**It's a life-changing decision to**

**Decide** to follow Jesus.

**Deny** oneself.

**Dedicate** oneself to live as a Christian.

**Determine** to persevere and endure.

***It's the best decision anyone can make!***

# THE CONFLICT: LIGHT VS. DARKNESS

## **The darker the night, the brighter the light.**

In the darkness, it is said that a lit match can be seen at least a mile away, but during the daytime it is unseen even a short distance away.

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Living in a small town during the mid twentieth century, it was the talk of the town when a man decided to divorce his wife. Why such a furor? Because it was frowned upon by the people who lived there. Marriage was considered to be a life-time commitment. Their view of divorce was similar to the Bible's teaching of divorce.

In the last 50-75 years the morals of society in general have been drifting away from the morals taught in the Bible. Such drifting has caused a rift between those who hold to Bible principles and those who do not. And the rift continues to grow.

Today, for example, divorce is condoned and practiced by many. This change is accompanied by a number of other moral issues. Anyone who frowns upon divorce stands out like a bright light in the darkness. As Christians, we need to understand what is happening and why it is happening today. The accusations against us. The opposition to us. And the hatred of us. Why? A look at some passages in the New Testament helps us understand.

Christians Being Maligned Is to Be Expected

When one decides to live as a Christian today, his or her conduct will be spoken against. All sorts of evil, harmful, and often untrue statements will be hurled against you. Your decision to "march to the beat of a different drummer" infuriates those who do not love God. To them you are out-of-step, not them. Their beat (political correctness) is far different from that of a Christian.

For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you.

1 Peter 4:3-4

Opposition Is to Be Expected

Godliness and worldliness are antagonistic to each other, just as light is to darkness. One's faith will be put to the test. Expect it!

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you.

1 Peter 4:12

Hatred Is to Be Expected

Strong emotions will be displayed in words and actions against Christians. A Christian's strong love for the truth will be met with a strong hatred of the stand you take.

Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

1 John 3:13

Why Is It Happening?

“This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”

John 3:19-20

[Note: It's interesting these words closely follow the well known verse (3:16): “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”]

What to Do?

Do not be ashamed. Be blessed. Glorify God. Make sure that any suffering you experience is because you are a Christian, not for wrong-doing.

If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

1 Peter 3:14-16

Don't wish for the opposition to go away. Realize trials that test your faith will come. And when properly endured, they strengthen your faith.

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

James 1:2-4

Let Your Light Shine!

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:10-16

‘GIVE AN INCH AND LOSE A MILE’ – Meaning: If you agree to part of what someone wants, eventually, they will get all of what they want. ***Beware of compromising!***



WORD STUDY

enhance your
Bible knowledge



Ponder This

SACKCLOTH

Sackcloth (Hebrew: *sak*; Greek: *sakkos*) a warm coarse dark material woven from goat's or camel's hair. It was worn as a sign of mourning or anguish, also marked by fasting and sitting on an ash heap. The shape of the garment could have been either a loose-fitting sack placed over the shoulders or a loin cloth. The word sack is a transliteration of the Hebrew word rather than a translation.

Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the sons of Israel assembled with fasting, in sackcloth and with dirt upon them. The descendants of Israel separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.

Nehemiah 9:1-2

When Mordecai learned all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city and wailed loudly and bitterly.

Esther 4:1

"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."

Matthew 11:21 (also Luke 10:13)

I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood.

Revelation 6:12

– Easton Bible Dictionary/Vines Expository Dictionary

The Three Most Important Words

The three most important words in real estate are "location, location, location." Where the property is located is critical. A beautiful dwelling in a crime-infested area has little appeal or value, while a modest house in a quiet and secure neighborhood is very appealing and has great value.

Likewise, the three most important words in Christianity are "application, application, application." Knowledge of God's Word is imperative, but without application it is of little value. Unless one applies the morals and principles taught in the Scriptures, one is a Christian in name only. Knowledge is not an end in itself, but a means to an end.

In Luke 19:30-37, the account of the "Good Samaritan" illustrates this very principle. Jesus' parting words to the listeners who understood His message were "... go and do ..."

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.

Philippians 4:9

F.Y.C. is a monthly publication by Ron Adams.

Articles written by others are duly noted.

Bible references are from the NASB except where another translation is referenced.

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