



179 Degrees:

can students Truly convert to christ?

(A Roundtable Discussion)

The goal of our time together is to have a discussion centered on conversion. As the years of history prove to us, the process of conversion is much more complicated than we imagine – what is “true” faith? How do we account for hypocrisy? What can we do to help engender genuine faith in students?

Please dive in to our conversation. Don't dominate (no one has all the right answers in this subject), and be ready to rethink the way you have always done ministry.

Questions to Help Fuel Discussion:

1. What is conversion?
2. Is conversion a prayer at camp?
3. Can you just “grow up” a Christian, or do you have to have a “decision day”?
4. When was Paul converted? When was Peter? Which one should be our model?
5. Can an adolescent fully turn to Jesus?
6. How does repentance/confession play a role in conversion?
7. What does God really want out of His people? (What does God want us to convert into? What is the goal of conversion?)
8. Why do students convert?
9. How can we best help students convert to Christ?

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11:15 Welcome

11:20 Overview, Groundrules, Why is this more complicated than you think? (McKnight's book – theological AND sociological)

11:30-12:30 Discussion

Questions to Help Fuel Discussion:

1. What is conversion?
Conversion is transformation of identity (to character of Christ), involving both affirmations and behaviors. Teens so prone to convert b/c their identity is not yet set.
2. Is conversion a prayer at camp?
Then how does the prayer at Camp fit in?
3. Can you just “grow up” a Christian, or do you have to have a “decision day”?
Three major ways of conversion in the breadth of Christianity:
 - i. *Social (Community) – ethnic: not “born” Christian, but hard to separate, no set date, key is the process*
 - ii. *Liturgical (Priest) – unpacking what you are, experiencing what you have already accepted*
 - iii. *Personal (Individual) – making your faith your own**Humans have all three components in them, all 3 dimensions.*
4. When was Paul converted? When was Peter? Which one should be our model?
Paul's allegiance changed in a moment, but his character took more time – the person who wrote Romans has changed from the person who wrote Galatians. Peter is a good model because of the series of decisions that he made for Christ.
5. Can an adolescent fully turn to Jesus?
??? No one can fully be like Jesus in this life, but there is a level of maturity from identity that God wants us to have. It is doubtful for a person to have this consistency before they are in their 30's.
6. How does repentance/confession play a role in conversion?
For Jesus, they are integral. Confession reminds us that we are not yet fully converted, and it reminds us of the goal of our lives: to be fully like Christ.
7. What does God really want out of His people? (What does God want us to convert into? What is the goal of conversion?)
To be fully like His Son, who is the exact representation of His being. God wants us to experience His joy. This is the Kingdom, the Tree that bears good fruit. Anything less is not abundant life.
8. Why do students convert?
 - i. *6 major motivations: 1. Find pleasure, avoid pain 2. Embrace intellectually satisfying system 3. Discover self-esteem 4. Lasting relationships with others 5. Experience or enhance power 6. Experience the divine.*
 - ii. *If our ministries are missing these elements, students will leave.*
9. How can we best help students convert to Christ?
All conversion is conversion to a group – LR Rambo. We need to make our groups something worth being part of. We need to understand our roles as the conversion advocate – this is a life worth having.
5 Appeals: Mental (system of meaning), Emotional, Pragmatic (life techniques), Persuasive (want to b/c of leader), Power (now or future).