

DANGEROUS RESPONSES TO THE GOSPEL



Hostility

In Acts 17, Luke shares Paul's missionary journey to Thessalonica. Some of the Thessalonians accepted the gospel, but others were jealous and angry at Paul so they sought his arrest. The early Christians were in constant danger because of the gospel. Many were imprisoned regularly and some were even killed. Very few messages arouse as much hatred and hostility as the gospel does. Some people hate the idea of relying on someone else for salvation or being told that they are sinners. Pride leads many people to reject the gospel and despise anyone who adheres to it.

Disbelief

Later in Acts 17 Paul headed to Berea and shared the gospel with the Bereans as well. The Bereans studied the Scriptures in order to determine whether or not Paul's teachings were true. Thankfully many Bereans recognized the truthfulness of the gospel and turned to Jesus for salvation, however many people study the evidence for and against Christianity and come to the conclusion that the gospel is false. They might want to believe the gospel and become a Christian, however they do not believe and therefore cannot justify blindly living for something they think is false. Even though the evidence for Christianity greatly outweighs the evidence against it, some people fail to recognize this.

Apathy

In Acts 19, Paul visited Ephesus and came across some people who were unwilling to accept the gospel out of stubbornness. Many people hear the gospel but they are not willing to even consider it because they are so set in their ways. People who respond with apathy do not necessarily disbelieve the gospel, however they do not care enough to even consider the truthfulness of the gospel. Even if they were convinced that the gospel is 100% accurate, they would not change their current belief system simply because that is what they are used to and / or it is what their family believes.

Passivity

One of the most common responses to the gospel is passivity. Many people accept the gospel is true, and some even claim to be Christians, but very few actually allow their new beliefs to influence their lifestyles. These people assume that since they "believe in Jesus" they are Christians, but they fail to recognize their need to trust in Jesus alone for salvation and to turn away from their sinful lifestyles. People are under the false impression that Heaven is the default eternal destination for people and only the worst of the worst go to Hell. This foolish belief leads to a lack of desire to fully commit to Jesus as Lord since it seems unnecessary.



PROPER RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL

Belief Acts 16:31

The first positive response to the gospel is belief. Recognizing that the gospel is true leads to the next step of counting the cost.

Count the Cost Luke 14:26-33

Next we need to count the cost of following Jesus. Jesus expects His followers to be ready to abandon all we have in order to follow Him. This denial of self is too much for many people to handle.

Faith Ephesians 2:8-9

If we count the cost and realize that Jesus is worth anything we might be called to abandon, we put our faith in Him for salvation. This means that we trust in Jesus and Jesus alone to save us from our sins.

Repentance Acts 3:17-21

Connected with faith is repentance. Repentance is recognizing our sinfulness and turning away from our sinful lifestyles in order to follow Jesus.

Joy Acts 8:26-40

Gospel literally means "good news". The gospel is the greatest news we could ever hear: we are sinners who deserve to be punished for all eternity, but God came down and took the punishment we deserved onto Himself. How can we not respond with pure joy?

Transformation 1 Timothy 1:12-17

If we do not change as a response to the gospel, then we are doing something wrong. After we put our faith in Jesus and repent of our sins, we are new creations (Galatians 2:20). Our lives should reflect this transformation.



TRUE CONVERSION = FAITH + REPENTANCE

God's love overcomes

A growing number of "Christians" believe that God's love will overcome His justice and that He will save everyone from hell. This is an unbiblical and dangerous view that denies God's justice which is a central part of who He is.

Believe in Jesus

Many well meaning Christians say that in order to be saved from our sins, we must simply "believe in Jesus". Although this is not completely false, many people do not explain the importance of *faith* and *repentance* and as a result simplify conversion.

Incorrect views for how to go to Heaven

Be a good person

Many people believe that we can earn salvation by doing good deeds and being a good person. The problem with this view is that according to God, nobody is "good" in His eyes (Romans 3:10). We all fall short of God's standards and rely on His grace to save us.

Obey the 10 Commandments

Closely related to those that believe that they will go to Heaven by being a good person, are those who believe that following the 10 Commandments will somehow allow them into Heaven. This view is unbiblical since it states that we can earn salvation through our actions.

TRUE CONVERSION:

Faith

·Belief is not enough to save us (James 2:19)
·We not only have to believe the gospel, but we also have to put our faith in Jesus in order to be saved
·Saving faith: *trusting in Jesus alone for salvation*
·"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast."
Ephesians 2:8-9

Repentance

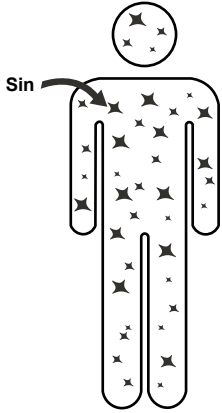
·Faith and repentance go hand in hand
·Repentance: *"a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ."* - Wayne Grudem¹
·"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
Acts 2:38

We are saved by trusting in Jesus alone for salvation and also being sorry for our sin and turning away from it in order to pursue godliness. Ultimately we are saved not by our own efforts, but by Jesus' effort on the cross.



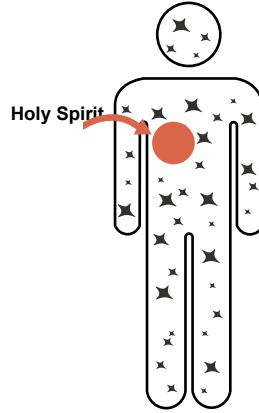
INDWELLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Spiritually Dead



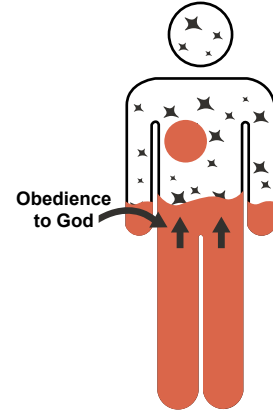
Before conversion, all people are spiritually dead and are in need of a Savior (Ephesians 2:1). Following conversion, the Holy Spirit enters into the new believer.

Indwelling



All believers have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of them. This is God's seal on His followers (Romans 8:9, Ephesians 4:30).

Filling



The more we surrender to God's will and obey Him, the more we are filled by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and the more He helps us in our walk with God.

As the Holy Spirit takes control of us, we begin to exhibit what is called "The Fruit of the Spirit". This means that we exchange sinful traits for godly ones. Rather than being worried, we are at peace. Rather than being rude, we are kind. Rather than being sad, we are joyful. Galatians 5:22-23 lists all of the Fruit of the Spirit.

The Fruit of the Spirit



Peace

Patience

Love

Faithfulness

Joy

Goodness

Kindness

Gentleness

Self-Control



ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Justification

Justification is a legal act that God performs which allows those who accept Christ's payment on the cross to be recognized as righteous in God's sight rather than as sinners (2 Corinthians 5:21). God does not see our sin when He sees us, instead He sees Jesus' payment.



Adoption

As believers, we are adopted into the family of God as His children (John 1:12, Galatians 3:26). God is our loving Father who provides for us (Matthew 6:25-34), draws us to Himself (Ephesians 1:4-5, 2 Timothy 1:9, John 6:44), and ultimately saves us (John 3:16, Titus 3:5).



Regeneration

Regeneration is also known as being "born again". When we become Christians, God makes each of us into a new creation by giving us a new spiritual life (Galatians 2:20). This causes us to sin less (1 John 3:9), love more (1 John 4:7), and exhibit the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).



Assurance

All true and authentic followers of Jesus will never lose their salvation and will never turn away from their faith (John 10:28). Many people falsely believe they are true Christians (Matthew 7:21-23) but all true believers will never cease to be Christians or saved.





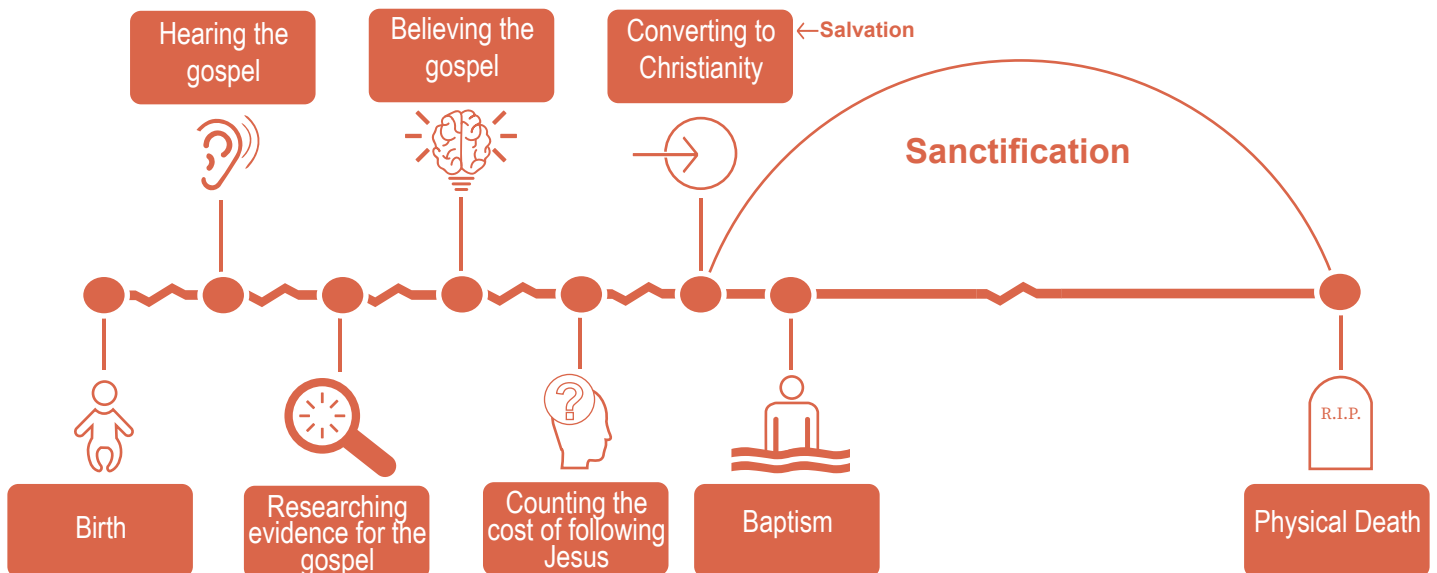
SANCTIFICATION: GROWING IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Sanctification is the ongoing process of becoming more like Christ in our daily lives.



Our sanctification will not cease until we are in our resurrected bodies.

The Spiritual Journey of a Believer





Salvation



Spiritual Disciplines

Evangelism

Theological Knowledge

Accountability

Christlikeness

Relationship with God

Serving God

Stewardship

Obedience to God

Fruit of the Spirit

Daily surrender to God

Memorization of Scripture



Disciple Maker

