

IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP ON KEEPING ON.

TO WALK, YOU TAKE ONE STEP AND FOLLOW IT WITH ANOTHER. And another. Your first step was Conversion. Your walk with Jesus is a reiteration of that first step. Put simply, walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:25), is one conversion after another. This not only takes you to heaven, but enables you to be useful along the way, and enjoy the trip!

THE NECESSITY OF CONTINUING CONVERSIONS does not cast a shadow over the validity of your first conversion. When you came to Jesus seeking the salvation he offers -- as a youngster, youth or adult -- God met you, redeemed you, and made you his child forever.

YOU WERE SAVED BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH, PLUS NOTHING (Eph. 2:8-9).

In this way, God protected you from the danger of believing you could earn your own salvation. You were saved by what he did for you, rather than anything you did, or ever could do, for him.

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ALL THESE THINGS HAPPENED AS PART OF A SINGLE EVENT: CONVERSION!

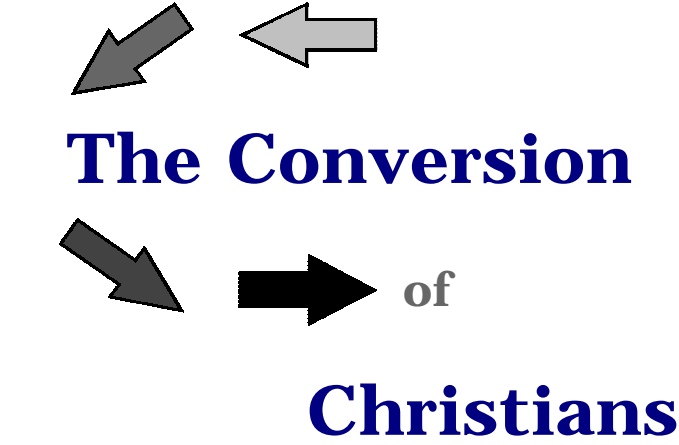
They did not occur in sequence as a series of separate happenings. Rather - simultaneously, as well as, instantly and automatically -- they took place when you invited Jesus to be your Savior and were reconciled to God through Jesus. Isn't that terrific!

HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO EXPRESS YOUR GRATITUDE TO GOD for Jesus, and the gift of new life in him? This little prayer is one way of doing so. Read it and see if it expresses how you feel.

Dear God, Thank you for Jesus and the gift of new life in him. Thank you for forgiving me, treating me just-as-I'd never sinned, indwelling me with your Holy Spirit and making me a part of your family. Help me show my gratitude by what I am and do, as well as, by what I say. In Jesus name, Amen.

ISN'T GOD GOOD to have provided so much through new birth!

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THEN PRAY THIS SIMPLE PRAYER: Dear God, As I think about my walk with Jesus, I am aware of certain areas where I have fallen short. You know, better than I do, where I still need to be converted. However, I do recognize (be specific), and I now confess them as sin. I repent of (be specific). I don't want to want (be specific) to be part of my life any more. Thank you for cleansing me, and being willing to use me just as I am! In Jesus' name, Amen.

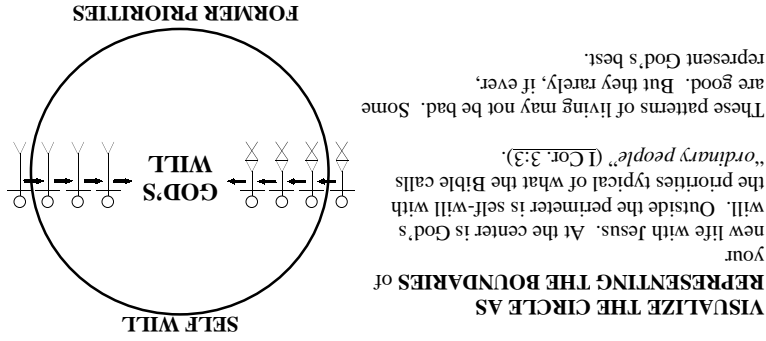
WHEN YOU'VE PRAYED THIS PRAYER it doesn't mean you suddenly have it all together, or that you ever will in this life. Walking involves the risk of stumbling, even falling. But you don't have to stay down! It's possible to get up and go on again. Fellowship with other growing, caring Christians can be helpful. The Church is not made up of perfect people. It's a Body of losers who want to be winners. We need each other! The Bible says: "Let us be concerned with one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another, all the more since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming near." (Heb. 10:24-25, Today's English Version.)

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As you can see, the closer you stay to the outer edge, the farther you are from the will of God and the more vulnerable you are to former ways of thinking, feeling and deciding. As you move toward the center, you become more secure in God's will and more resistant to life's backward tug. Your *initial* Conversion was a deliberate decision to take your first step with Jesus. *Continuing* conversions are the equally deliberate steps you take thereafter, as you discover the joy of walking with Jesus.

This means---



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THE IMPORTANT THING is that you grasp the on-going nature of "being saved" (1 Cor. 1:18). Conversion is open-ended. As a follower of Jesus, you most exciting challenge is learning to let God transform you, by renewing your perspective, as you discover more and more of his wonderful plan for you (Rom. 12:1).

with a small "c,"s" may prove helpful.

SOME PEOPLE CALL THIS PROCESS surrender, consecration or sanctification. Properly understood, each term is rich in meaning. If these words are unfamiliar to you, the concept of *continuing conversions*

would do in a variety of life situations. Similarly, being born again is your entry to a lifestyle characterized by home. Changing priorities, values and patterns of living, as you learn to do what Jesus which permit Jesus to exercise increasing control over your entire being. For come a series of other conversions with small "c,"s" throughout your lifetime following your **INITIAL CONVERSION** with a capital "C" must

BUT BIRTH AND GROWTH ARE NOT THE SAME.

CONVERSION IS A CRISIS WHICH ORIGINATES A PROCESS.

It has a beginning, but no end.

WHEN YOU DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS, it was a turning point which, however subtle or dramatic, marked the beginning of a new life. It is often called conversion, or being "*born again*" (Jn.3:3-7). Instantly, automatically and simultaneously you were forgiven, justified, regenerated and adopted into the family of God. Those are big words, but their meaning is bigger still! Think of it --

- ◆ **GOD FORGAVE YOU!** He declared you to be fully acceptable to him in Jesus (Rom. 3:21-24, Eph. 1:3-8).
- ◆ **YOUR GUILT WAS REMOVED!** God treated you as if you were just -- which is what being justified means -- and restored the relationship lost through sin (Rom. 5:1, 8:33a).
- ◆ **YOU BECAME GOD'S CHILD!** The Holy Spirit came to dwell within you, and provided you with a new power source which made it possible for you to begin to follow Jesus. That's being regenerated (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:1-7; Gal. 5:16).
- ◆ **AND GOD BLESSED YOU!** Bit by bit, He has been making actual the inheritance for which you are now eligible, for you were adopted into his

IN A HEALTHY MARRIAGE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF LOVE GROWS.

Similarly, as a follower of Jesus, your understanding of commitment grows. For this reason the apostle Paul prayed, "*May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love; and may you be able to feel and understand, as all God's children should, how long, how wide, how deep and how high his love really is.*" (Eph. 3:17a--18b TLB).

JESUS DID NOT GIVE HIS FOLLOWERS A LIST OF DO'S AND DON'TS.

He knew these tend to intimidate people. Instead, Jesus modeled the kind of life he wants you to live. Asking **what would Jesus do?** in various situations, is a great way to start. If you'd like to know more about Jesus, and how he dealt with life, check out www.winsome.org .

ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH YOUR CURRENT COMMITMENT TO JESUS?

Would you like to improve it? Perhaps you need conversion in some of the following areas -- attitudes . . . behavior . . . conversation . . . emotions . . . ethics . . . finances . . . habits . . . intellect . . . lust . . . money . . . morals . . . motivations . . . priorities . . . relationships . . . values.

DO YOU RECOGNIZE AN AREA WHERE YOU HAVE FALLEN SHORT?

The object is not to document your shortcomings, but, for you as an individual, to confront them with courage before Jesus. **Would you like to do that?**