

Knowing the Holy Spirit

Part 4

The Spirit Who Converts

TALKING WALKINGPOINTS

Leader's Guide

2026-8-23



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Observation—*What do I see?*

- 1 According to John 16:8, of what three things does the Holy Spirit convict non-believers?
- 2 Pastor Doug noted that repentance and faith really are two sides of a single coin (see Acts 20:21). Look up “repentance” at WebstersDictionary1828.com (definitions #2 & 3 relate to repentance unto salvation). Rephrase what you learn there.

Now look up “faith” there (definition #4 discussed saving faith). Rephrase what you learn.

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- 3 What is the relationship between the Spirit's convicting ministry and the Scriptures?
- 4 Look closely at John 16:8–11, explaining these three truths:
"The Holy Spirit convicts the world concerning their **sin**, because they do not believe in Jesus."

"The Holy Spirit convicts the world concerning **righteousness**, because Jesus has ascended back into heaven to be with God the Father."

"The Holy Spirit convicts the world concerning **judgment** because Satan, the ruler of this world, has been judged."

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- 5 Review what you've learned about the Holy Spirit's convicting ministry regarding sin, righteousness and judgment, then mark your position on the following continuum:

● ●
Denial & Resistance **Agreement & Responsiveness**

- 6 Review the definitions of “repentance” and “faith”, then mark your position on the following continuum:

● ●
Rejection & Unbelief **Acceptance & Reliance**

- 7 What should you do in response to the above two evaluations of your response to the Holy Spirit?

① Of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

② **Repentance** is the pain, regret or affliction which a person feels on account of his conduct, because it exposes him to God's judgment. If this sorrow flows only from fear of punishment, it does not necessarily lead to salvation. But if the sinner's pain/regret/affliction flows from a knowledge that he has offended a holy God, then it leads to salvation.

Saving faith involves the mind's assent that the Bible is true, plus a positive response of the affections toward God, and an entire reliance upon Christ, with an unreserved surrender of the will.

③ The Spirit authored the Scriptures (see 2 Peter 1:21), so he uses the Scriptures to convict sinners. Acts 7:51-52 teaches that rejecting the prophetic message of Scripture equals "resisting the Holy Spirit".

④ The fundamental sin that the Holy Spirit exposes is not a list of individual sins, but rather the unbelief which rejects Jesus—the only solution for individual sins.

Jesus's return to the Father (through death, resurrection, and ascension) vindicates him as the Son of God. Wicked human courts condemned him as a fraud, but his exaltation to heaven proves that verdict wrong, demonstrating that Jesus was righteous all along.

The ruler of this world" refers to Satan. Jesus's death and resurrection are the decisive defeat of the Satan. The Spirit convicts the world that judgment has already been rendered, and they are siding with Satan, who is defeated.

Putting it together, these three form a courtroom reversal. Jesus is on trial and condemned to die — but the Spirit reveals the truth is the opposite: the world actually stands guilty for its unbelief, and Jesus stands vindicated as the true Son of God. Instead, Satan, the instigator of Jesus' unjust condemnation actually stands condemned, and Jesus is acquitted and vindicated. "Judge" and "judged" trade places!

⑤ Read the question, ask who needs clarification, then give folks a minute to mark their continuum. Then, discuss your answers.

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⑦ Be prepared with your own brief, concrete thoughts on this, but let group members go first.

Sermon Summary

As orthodox Christians we talk about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. We affirm that there is one God who manifests Himself in three distinct persons. Today we will focus on how the Holy Spirit works to bring about conversion. The Holy Spirit Works through the Word. It is through the Scriptures that God reveals our sin and calls us to a Savior—the Lord Jesus Christ. Conversion represents the human response to God's call. It consists of two related elements: repentance and faith. The New Testament is clear that people are saved by grace, through faith (Eph.2:8-9).

Faith The kind of faith that saves has at least two components: knowledge and trust.

1. Knowledge - There are certain basic truths that must be believed for salvation. Jesus claimed to be God; so, belief in His deity is the central issue in salvation (Rom. 10:9; John 8:24; John 20:31; Heb. 11:6).

2. Trust - Saving faith also includes a component commonly referred to as "trust." Such belief must be joined by an act of our will to place our trust in Christ as our sin bearer. Saving faith is the kind of belief that has trust and confidence in Christ for salvation and thereby implies a commitment to follow and obey Him (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; 1 Tim. 1:16; Rom. 1:4–5). Just as conversion requires faith, it also demands repentance.

Repentance Please note that Paul and Jesus proclaimed to both Jews and Gentiles the need for both repentance and faith (Acts 20:21; Mark 1:15). Saving repentance is especially a change of mind about Jesus and your need for a Savior because of your sin. Saving repentance also includes a change of attitude towards sin. You begin to see sin for what it really is, as an affront to a holy God and the very thing that cast this world into chaos. It is the reason Jesus had to come and die for us. The primary instrument and power by which such faith is generated in the hearts of believers is the Word of God, both in its form of law and especially in its form as gospel (Rom. 1:16, 10:17; Heb. 4:12; James 1:18, 21; 1 Peter 1:23; John 20:30–31).

How does the Word of God generate faith and repentance? It informs our intellects of the truth concerning sin and salvation. Genuine faith and repentance respond with humble assent. The message of how Christ died for our sins and arose from the dead, along with other biblical truths has the power to stir our emotions and prod our wills resulting in saving faith and repentance. The Holy Spirit is the ultimate author of everything in the Bible. The Holy Spirit convicts the hearts of sinners by working on them indirectly through the inspired Word (John 16:8). It is no accident that Jesus' teaching about the convicting work of the Spirit (John 16:8–11) is immediately followed by Jesus' promise that the coming Spirit of truth would guide the Apostles into all truth (John 16:12–15). Through the Spirit-inspired Word, truth is placed before the sinner, in such a way that he is convicted to repent and believe so as not to suffer condemnation (Acts 7:51–52).

The Holy Spirit also works directly upon a sinner's heart through acts of special divine providence. Our understanding of providence begins with the fact that the sovereign God has complete knowledge of, and is sovereign over, everything that happens, both in the natural world and in human history. We can certainly affirm that the Holy Spirit does work upon the sinner's heart through providential means: (1) The Holy Spirit may confront the person with troubling circumstances that cause them to think seriously about their life, and the tenuous path they are on. (2) The Holy Spirit may bring about a moment of spiritual clarity (Luke 15 :17-20; Acts 16:14). I don't believe that the Holy Spirit's providential urgings infallibly and irresistibly produce faith and repentance. I believe the decision is still up to the sinner, whose will is free to say yes or no. God does not force Himself on us (Matt. 23:37; John 5:39–40). My point is that God works in the hearts of non-believers both via the Word and special providence to draw them to Jesus. The Holy Spirit convicts the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. Some will respond to His drawing, and some will not. But one thing is sure. All are invited.

Two very practical implications: this knowledge motivates us to pray for our lost friends and family members (Col.4:2-5); knowing that the Holy Spirit is working behind the scenes to draw people to the Savior should give us more confidence as we seek to share our faith with others. God simply calls us to sow the seed of the Word (Matt 13:3–9) and then to leave the rest to Him.

Application/Challenge

- Pray for the salvation of your lost friends.
- Actively look for opportunities to engage them in spiritual conversations.
- Leave the results to God as you continue to pray.

Jesus is Better



...so Perseverently! Confidently!

Click Here!



Have you ever wondered...

- ...if you can be confident you're going to heaven? (Hebrews 10:35)
- ...if you can fall away from God and lose salvation? (Hebrews 6:4-6)
- ...if your faith measures up to what God requires? (Hebrews 11)

Join other TCC men and women for an in-depth
exploration of the fascinating ~ *and often troubling* ~

Book of Hebrews.

Beginning in September

Wednesday evenings or Thursday mornings

(6³⁰-8pm)

(9³⁰-11am)

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Monday—Conversion Is Necessary Because We Are Naturally Turned Away from God

Read: Ephesians 2:1–3; Romans 3:10–18 & 8:7–8 and John 3:19–20

- According to Romans 3, what is humanity's natural attitude toward God?
- What does Ephesians 2:1–3 say about our spiritual condition?
- Why can't conversion simply mean becoming a better person?
- How does this truth affect the way we understand evangelism?

Tuesday—Conversion Begins with God's Gracious Work

Read: John 3:3-8 & 6:44; Acts 16:14; Ephesians 2:4–9 and Ezekiel 36:25–27

- What does Jesus say is necessary before someone can come to Him?
- What does Acts 16:14 teach us about Lydia's conversion?
- Why is the new birth necessary?
- How should God's role in conversion affect our understanding of grace?

Wednesday—Conversion Involves Genuine Repentance

Read: Mark 1:14–15; Acts 2:37–38; 3:19 & 17:30; 2 Corinthians 7:9–11 and 1 Thessalonians 1:9

- What does Jesus command people to do in Mark 1:15?
- How does Acts 3:19 describe repentance?
- What difference does 2 Corinthians 7:10 make between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow?
- According to 1 Thessalonians 1:9, what did the Thessalonians turn from and turn to?
- Can someone genuinely come to Christ while loving his sin?

Thursday—Conversion Involves Faith in Jesus Christ

Read: John 1:12 & 3:14–18; Acts 16:30–31; Romans 10:9–13; Ephesians 2:8–9 and Philippians 3:7–9

- What does Acts 16:31 say a person must do to be saved?
- What does John 3:16 mean by “whoever believes”?
- According to Philippians 3:7–9, what did Paul give up as a basis for his righteousness?
- What is the difference between believing facts about Jesus and trusting Jesus?
- Why can good works never become the basis of our justification?

Friday—Genuine Conversion Produces a Changed Life

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:8–10; Titus 2:11–14; 1 John 2:3–6 and Matthew 7:16–20

- What does 2 Corinthians 5:17 say happens to someone who is in Christ?
- How does Ephesians 2:8–10 distinguish the root from the fruit of salvation?
- What does 1 John 2:3–6 say about obedience?
- What changes should we look for in someone who has genuinely been converted?

Saturday—Conversion Results in Perseverance and a New Relationship with God

Read: Colossians 1:21–23; Hebrews 3:12–14; John 10:27–29; Philippians 1:6; 1 Peter 1:3–5 and 1 John 5:11–13

- What does Jesus say characterizes His sheep?
- What encouragement does Philippians 1:6 give the Christian?
- Why do the warnings of Hebrews matter if God preserves His people?
- What does perseverance reveal about the reality of someone's conversion?
- How can a Christian distinguish between genuine conversion and a false profession?
(Matthew 7:16-27)