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TESTIMONY AND Conversion

There is a difference between receiving a testimony of truth and being truly converted. For instance, the great Apostle Peter bore his witness to the Savior that he knew that Jesus was the Son of God.

“[Jesus] saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?”

“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:15–17).

And yet later, in His injunction to Peter, the Lord gave him and us a guide to become truly converted and to extend that conversion for a lifetime. Jesus said it this way: “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32).

Jesus taught Peter that there was still a great change that must go beyond having a testimony to being able to think, feel, and act as truly converted disciples of Jesus Christ. That is the mighty change we all seek. Once we obtain it, we need that change to continue until the end of our mortal probation (see Alma 5:13–14).

We know from our own experience and from observing others that having a few great moments of spiritual power will not be enough. Peter denied he knew the Savior even after he had received a witness by the Spirit that Jesus was the Christ. The Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon had direct testimony given to them that

the Book of Mormon was the word of God, and yet later they faltered in their ability to sustain Joseph Smith as the Prophet of the Lord’s Church.

We need a change in our hearts, as described in the book of Alma: “And they did all declare unto the people the selfsame thing—that their hearts had been changed; that they had no more desire to do evil” (Alma 19:33; see also Mosiah 5:2).

The Lord taught us that when we are truly converted to His gospel, our hearts will be turned from selfish

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles used the “parable of the pickle” to teach that conversion is an ongoing process rather than a one-time event: “Line upon line and precept upon precept, gradually and almost imperceptibly, our motives, our thoughts, our words, and our deeds become aligned with the will of God” (“Ye Must Be Born Again,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2007, 19). Consider reviewing the parable of the pickle with those you teach. What can each of us do to move forward steadily in the gradual process of conversion that President Eyring and Elder Bednar both discuss?

concerns and turned toward service to lift others as they move upward to eternal life. To obtain that conversion, we can pray and work in faith to become the new creature made possible by the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

We can start by praying for the faith to repent of selfishness and for the gift of caring for others more than ourselves. We can pray for the power to lay aside pride and envy.

Prayer will be the key as well for receiving the gift of a love for the word of God and for the love of Christ (see Moroni 7:47–48). The two come together. As we read, ponder, and pray over the word of God, we will come to love it. The Lord puts it in our hearts. As we feel that love, we will begin to love the Lord more and more. With that will come the love for others that we need in order to strengthen those whom God puts in our path.

For instance, we can pray to recognize those the Lord would have His missionaries teach. Full-time



We need a change in our hearts like the one experienced by the people of Lamoni in Alma chapter 19.

missionaries can pray in faith to know by the Spirit what to teach and testify. They can pray in faith that the Lord will let them feel His love for everyone they meet. The missionaries will not bring everyone they meet to the waters of baptism and to the gift of the Holy Ghost. But they can have the Holy Ghost as a companion. Through their service and with the help of the Holy Ghost, missionaries will then, in time, be changed in their hearts.

That change will be renewed again and again as they and we unselfishly continue over a lifetime to act in faith

to strengthen others with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Conversion will not be a single event or something that will last for just one season of life but will be a continuing process. Life can become brighter until the perfect day, when we will see the Savior and find that we have become like Him. The Lord described the journey this way: “That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24).

I promise you that it is possible for each of us. ■

My Change of Heart

By Dante Bairado

When I first learned about the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, I felt the Spirit testify of its truthfulness. Through prayer, my testimony became even more certain, and I decided to be baptized.

Soon after my baptism, people in my ward began asking me how I felt about serving a mission. To be honest, I didn't know exactly what to say. The idea of leaving my family and school to serve a mission seemed absurd.

Then one day I started thinking about my conversion. I remembered the missionaries who had taught me, who

had patiently answered my questions and helped me understand the gospel. I realized that without their help, I never would have discovered the true Church. As soon as I made that realization, the desire to serve blossomed in my heart. I could feel the Spirit telling me that I should serve a full-time mission.

I know that missionary work is the work of our Heavenly Father and that we can help bring souls to the wonderful knowledge of the restored gospel.

The author lives in Fortaleza, Brazil.

CHILDREN

Let Your Testimony Burn Bright

Gaining a testimony is like building a fire. Just as we have to add wood to keep a fire burning, we must pray, repent, serve others, study the scriptures, and keep the commandments to help our testimonies grow.

To learn more about how to build your testimony, read each of the scriptures listed below. Color the part of the flame that matches each scripture you read. The more scriptures you read, the brighter the fire—and your testimony!

- A. Mosiah 2:17
- B. Alma 5:46
- C. Alma 32:27
- D. 3 Nephi 15:10
- E. John 5:39

