

## # 10- Christian Conversion

**1. Why do you think this study is described as “Christian” conversion. Is there any other kind? If so, what distinguishes “Christian” exactly and how would this impact the way we discern true conversion?**

*Conversion is not uniquely Christian, but Christian conversion is unique and uniquely true... Conversion has come to be understood in purely subjectivistic terms as changed behavior. The objective realities of conversion, its divine origin supernatural change and eternal results-- have been downplayed and rejected. If the truth of the gospel is tied to a testimony of transformation and change, then non-Christians can point to similar stories of transformation and change in non-Christian religions, sects, cults and even among users of certain drugs...*

David Wells, *Turning To God*

**2. After reading the following letter to R. L. Dabney, how does this effect the way we gain Christian assurance, or grow in “faith?”**

Dear R.L. Dabney:

*Yours of the 28th, just received, relieved a tension of feeling which has held me painfully ever since Mrs. Dabney's last. I dreaded to hear, and then to hear you are in any degree better was an inexpressible comfort. It melted me to hear of your prayers for faith and dying grace. The stress of such constant and severe bodily pain is enough of itself to try you; and the tempter is sure to use it to affect your hope. Pray on, dear old soldier, of course; but listen to me awhile. I want to give you a morsel of honey out of one of my dead lions, though, in fact, there is a large herd of them still living, and they roar on me often till I am sick with fears.*

*You want more faith. Do you remember, in the stress of your trial, how faith comes? Let me remind you, although you know it. You know we are sanctified through the truth. Sanctification is just the growth of the particular graces of the spirit, of which faith is one. Just here is where Christians make a great mistake. When they want more faith, or want to know whether the faith they have is the right sort of faith, instead of looking at the things to*

*be believed, they turn their eyes inward and scrutinize their faith. They want to see something in their faith to trust in, something that will certify their faith. Of course, self-examination is all right, but not when it practically substitutes faith for our Lord, grace and righteousness. Even a great theological thinker is as apt to make that mistake when he has come into the practical stress of this awful world as a common Christian.*

*Now, suppose a traveler comes to a bridge, and he is in doubt about trusting himself to it. What does he do to breed confidence in the bridge? He looks at the bridge; he gets down and examines it. He doesn't stand at the bridge-head and turn his thoughts curiously in on his own mind to see if he has confidence in the bridge. If his examination of the bridge gives him a certain amount of confidence, and yet he wants more, how does he make his faith grow? Why, in the same way; he still continues to examine the bridge.*

*Now, my dear old man, let your faith take care of itself for awhile, and you just think of what you are allowed to trust in. Think of the Master's power, think of his love; think how he is interested in the soul that searches for him, and will not be comforted until he finds him. Think of what he has done, his work. That blood of his is mightier than all the sins of all the sinners that ever lived. Don't you think it will master yours? Think of his great righteousness: will it not avail for all you hope to gain? That great work is enough; it needs not to be supplemented; it meets every demand. It warrants you to come into the King's very presence, assured of welcome, because you can come in the name of the King's Son. ...Think of the Master when you want your faith to grow.*

*Now, dear old friend, I have done to you just what I would want you to do to me if I were lying in your place. The great theologian, after all, is just like any other one of God's children, and the simple gospel talked simply to him is just as essential to his comfort as it is to a milk-maid or to a plow-boy. May God give you grace, not to lay too much stress on your faith, but to grasp the great ground of confidence, Christ, and all his work and all his personal fitness to be a sinner's refuge. Faith is only an eye to see him. I have been praying that God would quiet your pains as you advance, and enable you to see the gladness of the gospel at every step. Good-bye. God be with you as he will. Think of the bridge!*

*Your brother,*

*C. R. Vaughan*