

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

# What Does Conversion to the Lord Mean?

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Matthew 16:21-24

**1 You went through the right forms. You did what the pastor said; but did you ever change your heart?**

**You wanted to be saved. You wanted to go to heaven. You wanted the right things for your life, but did you ever realize conversion to the Lord means commitment? Receiving Jesus as Savior implies committing yourself to Him as Lord! 2 What does real conversion mean? 3**

**Matthew, chapter 16, verses 21 through 24 defines the answer. From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me,**

**he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.** <sup>4</sup>

First of all it . . .

## **I. Means Denying Yourself - Dying!**

Means denying yourself; dying. In verse 21 <sup>1</sup> <sup>5</sup> Lord Jesus denied Himself when He submitted His will completely to the Father's plan. <sup>6</sup> In Gethsemane He said, **Not My will, but Yours be done.** <sup>2</sup> <sup>7</sup> Then, He practically jumped into the arms of the enemy! <sup>3</sup> <sup>8</sup> He could have summoned 10,000 angels to rescue Him. <sup>4</sup> But He didn't! <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 16:21 - From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 22:42.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 22:52-54 - Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour — when darkness reigns." Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 26:52-53 - Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my

Then, He says to you in verse 24, **Deny yourself!** <sup>10</sup>

Conversion means a complete break with your old life. Romans, chapter 6, verse 2 says, **We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?** Now you are to focus on pleasing the Lord out of gratitude for the cross. <sup>11</sup>

In verse 23 the Lord says to Peter, **Get behind Me, Satan!** Why? He was trying to direct things according to Peter's plans; the way of the world!

When the Lord was tempted in Matthew, chapter 4, verses 1 through 11, He was tempted three times. <sup>12</sup>

In verses 3 and 4; <sup>5</sup> **man's way** would be miraculously feed the poor to reduce temporary physical suffering. <sup>13</sup> **God's way** is to feed them the Word to increase their spiritual understanding and save them for eternity! <sup>14</sup>

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Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 4:1-4 - Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

In verses 6 and 7; <sup>6</sup> **man's way** is to spend all your time doing miracles and astonishing people. <sup>15</sup> **God's way** is to teach them the Way of Life so they may come to faith. <sup>16</sup>

In verses 8 through 10; <sup>7</sup> **man's way** is to accomplish your ministry anyway that works as long as you get results. <sup>17</sup> **God's way** is do things the way God does them to honor Him! <sup>18</sup>

So, the Lord told Peter to get where a disciple belongs; behind his master!

An architect stated that some of his clients ask him to design a house for them, but they have already designed it themselves! What they really wanted was

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew 4:5-7 - Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down." For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.' Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 4:8-10 - Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

**for him to sanction their plans and draw on paper what they have already decided. Is this you?**

**You ask for wisdom and guidance from the Lord but actually have your own life planned out. It's not His way you are seeking but His approval of yours. <sup>8</sup> If God is the boss, let Him run your life! <sup>19</sup>**

**So verse 25 says, <sup>9</sup> you need to lose your life in Christ by crucifying your own desires and replacing them with the Lord's.**

**I heard that when Michelangelo was producing his famous painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, He did it by the light of a candle. Suspended under the ceiling the shadow from his body would often get between the candle and the painting. He had to maneuver himself often to get his shadow out of the way.**

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<sup>8</sup> "Listen to the Architect", Our Daily Bread, October 5.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 16:25 - For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

**In life God wants it the same way. Don't try to work within your own shadow. Get out of the way. <sup>20</sup>**

**The Lord told you that you needed to die to bear fruit.  
<sup>10</sup> Then He died! What happened?**

**Fifty days later 3000 people responded to the gospel message; then 5000! You can't bear fruit until you die to yourself first! Then Jesus can take control. <sup>21</sup>**

**Second, real conversion . . .**

## **II. Means Taking Up Your Cross - Sacrifice!**

**Means taking up your cross; sacrifice. <sup>22</sup>**

**Again, in verse 21, <sup>11</sup> the Lord became our example of sacrifice when He went to the cross. Like I mentioned before, when the crowd came to arrest Him, He volunteered to make that sacrifice. He denied Himself His life so that you could have yours! <sup>23</sup>**

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<sup>10</sup> John 12:24 - I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 16:21 - From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Then, in verse 24, <sup>12</sup> the Lord tells you to take up your cross!

Many who are handicapped say, “Well. This is the cross I must bear. That is not the cross the Lord is talking about here. Those situations are usually thrust upon you against your will. <sup>24</sup> Romans, chapter 12, verse 1, says, **I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship.** The cross is not something you experience. It’s something you take up! Conversion means responsibility; sacrifice. It means being a good steward of God’s blessings. <sup>25</sup>

Romans, chapter 6, verse 4, says, **We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death . . .** You die to the old life when you are baptized. You are supposed to leave that old life behind! <sup>26</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Matthew 16:24 - If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.



**This is the way you prepare for eternal life with God and the abundant life right now! <sup>27</sup>**

**Third, real conversion . . .**

### **III. Means Following Jesus - Imitating!**

**Means following Jesus; imitating. <sup>28</sup> In verse 24, Jesus says, **Follow Me.** <sup>13</sup>**

**The Jews had the Law of Moses to give them direction. In Christ, you have a Savior to lead the way!**

**<sup>29</sup>**

**The word has the idea of following behind or **imitating.****

**<sup>14</sup>**

**Remember playing “follow the leader” when you were a kid. In the Christian life it’s the same way. God’s goal for you is to be like Christ; to develop His mind, His thoughts. <sup>30</sup>**

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<sup>13</sup> Matthew 16:24 - Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

<sup>14</sup> ἀκολουθέω.

What does the world mean when it says, “Follow me”?

<sup>31</sup> It usually means, **Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.** <sup>15</sup> This is in reference to a story Lord Jesus told about a rich farmer who had an abundant crop. <sup>16</sup> He torn down his warehouses and built bigger ones to store his harvest. He thought he had it made for years to come. <sup>32</sup>

But James says, <sup>17</sup> **What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.** <sup>33</sup>

The world says, “Follow me and I will give you pleasure.” <sup>34</sup> The Lord says, “Follow Me and I will give you life!” <sup>18</sup> <sup>35</sup>

Conversion really means obeying Lord Jesus and following His example. <sup>36</sup> Romans, chapter 6, verse 4, continues, **. . . just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.** One of the reasons we use the ceremony of

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<sup>15</sup> Luke 12:19.

<sup>16</sup> Luke 12:16-21.

<sup>17</sup> James 4:14.

<sup>18</sup> Matthew 16:25 - but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

**Christian baptism is to impress upon you, and everyone who observes, the idea that you are entering a whole new way of life. It's to be a Christ controlled life! <sup>37</sup>**

**When you make a full commitment to Lord Jesus He will give you heaven when you die and meaning and purpose to your life right now!**

**Conversion is worth it!**

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