

A Turning Point

Introduction. A man was driving in an unfamiliar area late at night. He had a destination, directions displaying on his phone, and enough fuel to get there. But quickly after taking off, his phone spoke: “Make a U-turn.” He had a choice. He could keep driving because turning around would feel embarrassing. He could tell himself, “I’ve already started in this direction and I won’t turn back.” Or he could admit that continuing in the wrong direction wouldn’t make the direction right — it’d only take him farther from where he needed to be.

The turning point came not when he heard the instructions, but when he acted on it. He picked the next safe place to turn around.

That’s often how God works in a life. Conviction may tell us that we’re headed the wrong way. Scripture may confront us. A sermon, a conversation, a loss, or a thoughtful moment may awaken us. But the decisive issue is whether we’ll keep going because we’ve gone so far — or whether we’ll turn.

The Bible calls that repentance: not merely feeling sorry about the road we’ve taken, but changing direction and coming back to God. Today I want you to focus you on four crucial steps that you need for your conversion to Jesus Christ. The lessons are in Acts 2:37: “Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”

I. They Needed to Hear the Word

- A. Peter used three Old Testament passages (Joel 2:28-32; Psalm 16:8-11; 110:1) to move from the Holy Spirit’s arrival to Jesus’ exaltation as “Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).
- B. He combined the miracles, wonders, and signs performed by Jesus with His resurrection (which they could’ve witnessed and investigated) to accurately and reasonably show that He was the true One to whom they owed obedience.
- C. The Word develops faith (Romans 10:14-17) because it’s God’s Spirit-filled method to teach and convict us (1 Corinthians 2:9-13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Titus 2:11-12).

II. They Were Deeply Affected

- A. The Word of God had an effect on the people at Pentecost. The people were “cut to the heart” at the awful realization that in crucifying their long-awaited Messiah they had rejected their only hope of salvation.
- B. The ones “cut to the heart” are the “humble of heart” because they realize their need and are open to God’s salvation. The Word of God really changed people when they came into contact with it:
 - 1. Josiah (2 Kings 22:8-13; 23:1-3).
 - 2. David (2 Samuel 12:7-13).
 - 3. Nineveh (Jonah 3:10-11).
 - 4. Jeremiah (Jeremiah 20:7-12).
 - 5. The jailer at Philippi (Acts 16:25-34).

- C. The Word should have an effect on you. It's able to examine and cut to the center of your core (Hebrews 4:11-13). It's the "sword of the Spirit" that will judge us at the last day (Ephesians 6:17; John 12:48). It never returns to God empty (Isaiah 55:10-11).

III. They Respected God's Authority

- A. They asked Peter and the apostles. These men had proven that they were inspired by the Holy Spirit when He fell on them (John 14:15-18; 16:5-11; Acts 2:1-4). They were now ambassadors of Christ, spreading God's message of salvation in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20-21).
- B. They didn't do what they thought was best or what they had dreamed up in their minds or what they had experienced in the past, either by the raising of their parents or religious tradition.
 - 1. Not that long after the first century, the Roman Catholic Church and Greek Orthodox churches followed the seven ecumenical councils and papal bulls.
 - 2. Beginning in the 1500s and carrying forward to today, people are more interested in the doctrines of Martin Luther and John Calvin than they are the harmonized doctrines of the Bible.
- C. The people on Pentecost were learning that you live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4; cp. John 13:34-35), even when it didn't agree with your past or your current thoughts.

IV. They Wanted the Right Answer

- A. They asked, "What shall we do?" Understanding the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, they wanted to respond.
- B. Their response, which was affirmed by Peter, was to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38).
 - 1. Jesus placed a blessing on people who obeyed (Luke 11:28), and repentance has to be genuine (Joel 2:12-13; Acts 3:19).
 - 2. This washes away your sins because it's how you call on the name of the Lord (Acts 22:16).
- C. When you make the commitment to follow Jesus, don't go into it halfway because that's not what Jesus wants (Revelation 3:15-16). In other words, don't be indifferent (Zephaniah 1:12; Matthew 22:5: "paid no attention," NIV; Luke 10:38-42).
- D. Changing your life might be really difficult. But Christ sacrificed His life and went through the torture of crucifixion for you. Is it really that unreasonable for you to put away the sins of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21)? Is it really that unreasonable to sacrifice what you love (job, hobbies, family, clubs, teams, etc.) to be able to serve the Lord (Matthew 19:16-22)?

Conclusion. Perhaps you're at a turning point today. You can't rewrite every mile behind you. You can't undo every decision, restore every lost opportunity, or erase every consequence. But by God's grace, you can choose the next direction. The devil says, "You've gone too far." God says, "You can turn around." The road behind you may explain where you are, but it doesn't have to determine where you're going.