

Conversion, A Growth Process

John Pollock

Recorded December 2, 2017

I'd like to begin today by reading a statement taken directly from the Pacific Church of God website. It's found within our Statements of Belief under the heading "Conversion." Our website reads:

God intends conversion to be a growth process with the aim or goal to become perfect as Christ is perfect. The process includes yielding to God and being led by His spirit to eradicate materialism, self-centeredness, bad character traits and bad attitudes. To replace them, God desires growth in the fruits of the spirit, especially in love towards God and love of the brethren. This doctrine comprises the bulk of the behavioral instruction, correction, exhortation and admonition of the Bible.

We read here in our Statements of Belief that conversion is a growth process. What is meant by a growth process? I think we all know what growth means and I assume that we all know what a process is. In case we're not aware of what a process is, let me define it for you: Process is *a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end.*

What are to be the results of a growth process? Our belief statement reads:

... the aim or goal to become perfect as Christ is perfect.

I don't disagree with that statement in any way and we can find or see in one's life markers, fruits if you will, that lead us to becoming perfect as Jesus Christ is perfect.

Now regarding our Statements of Belief on conversion, I've recently been asked by an individual why the topic or subject or even the word knowledge is not included in our statement regarding conversion. This person believes that knowledge is a vital ingredient in our conversion process and I can't disagree with that in any way.

I find this question that this individual asked of me very interesting because we find in Hosea 6:6 as well as Colossians 1:10 and Colossians 3:10, in 2 Corinthians 10:5 and in 2 Peter 3:18 that knowledge is very important. But this question was asked of me and I began to ponder on the fact that the authors of our Statements of Belief regarding the conversion process, that they did not include the aspect of knowledge.

I studied it, looked at it, pondered it, and I came to realize that since our statement includes the fruits of the spirit, especially that of love, and that the fruits listed in Galatians 5:22 do not include knowledge, and the fact that knowledge found in the love chapter in 1 Corinthians 13, that knowledge takes a back seat to faith, hope and love,

especially that of love, I came to the conclusion that the most important aspect of our conversion growth process is utilizing the fruits of the spirit, especially love.

Let me cite an example. The ministry, on a somewhat regular basis, receives paper after paper after paper after paper from supposed converted individuals with their new finding, their new truths, their new knowledge; knowledge as to this aspect of a doctrine or knowledge to some doctrinal topic. Up to a few months ago I would receive a telephone call once every week or so from an individual expounding his new revelation and new knowledge of a subject, of a topic, of a doctrine. Quite frankly, after a couple of months of him trying to convert me to his new beliefs, I would see via caller ID who exactly was calling and I simply decided to stop answering the phone. You see, contrary to his belief that conversion is some recent epiphany of new found knowledge, conversion is not an epiphany, it is not an event, it is not a new truth finding as espoused by this individual.

Conversion is a process, and that's one reason that in our Statements of Belief regarding conversion that there is no statement about knowledge, because conversion is a process. Knowledge is not a fruit of the spirit. It is listed in the love chapter but it takes a back seat to faith, hope and love, and especially that of love. Thus, a reason as to our statement on conversion which reads in part:

The process ...

The growth process.

... includes yielding to God and being led by His spirit ...

We should all be exercising God's spirit. And to what end?

... to eradicate materialism, self-centeredness, bad character traits and bad attitudes. To replace them, God desires growth in the fruits of the spirit, especially that of love.

Now please understand I'm not saying that knowledge is not important. I'm simply stating what our Statements of Belief reads regarding the conversion process.

Today, in this sermon titled

Conversion, A Growth Process

we will look at the manifold fruits (manifold simply means *many, various*), on-going results, if you will, of conversion. But first I want to review some basic scriptures regarding conversion. Let's turn to Hebrews 6. I'm just going to spend a little time in this message going over some basics of conversion.

Hebrews 6:1. *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, ... (NKJV)*

Here we find what is written in our Statement of Belief, that we are to grow with the aim or goal to become perfect as Christ is perfect – a fundamental aspect of conversion.

Next, turn to Matthew 5. These are basic scriptures that we are all familiar with.

Matthew 5:48. *Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (NKJV)*

We find here another admonition to strive toward perfection, this time referencing the Father who is perfect and remember that in character, both the Father and the Son are the same. Now turn to Acts 26. From the New Living Translation:

Acts 26:20. *I preach first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem, and throughout all Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that all must turn from their sins and turn to God and prove they have changed by the good things they do. (NLT)*

We find there that we are to change. Change is a part of the growth process, striving to put on the mind that is in Christ. You will find that in Philippians 2:5. Now turn to 2 Corinthians 5:17 from the New Living Translation.

2 Corinthians 5:17. *What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore for the old life is gone, a new life has begun. (NLT)*

The conversion process is one of becoming a new person. Not the materialistic, self-centered, bad-attitude person as listed in our Statements of Belief. Bottom line: basic to conversion is a process of change, striving to put off imperfection as we strive to put on perfection.

So at any given time, how do we know where we are in this growth process? How do we know how we are doing? How do we know if we are putting off the old and putting on the new? Well, there are markers and today we will look at seven markers. There are others, but today we will review just seven specific markers that I've researched. But first, we ask another question: What exactly is a marker? A marker is *an object used to indicate a position, place or route*. For the purpose of today's message, a marker is used to *indicate a position*.

So what are the seven markers of growth process of conversion?

Marker 1: Faithfulness.

Please turn to Matthew 24:45. Christ's own words here.

Matthew 24:45. *"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? (NKJV)*

I want you to note that this is a question. I think so often we read this as a statement. This is a question, and here is the answer.

- 46) *Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.*
- 47) *Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. (NKJV)*

We find here that a faithful servant is one who is doing what his master asked him to do. And what is it that we, as Christians, are asked to do? Well, we're asked to do many, many, many things, aren't we? Helping others – 3 John 5; being good stewards of the smallest of things – Luke 16:10-12; to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God – Micah 6:8. What else is asked of us? Let's turn to Colossians 3. Again, there is a lot asked of us and we're reviewing just a few.

Colossians 3:12. *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;*

- 13) *bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*
- 14) *But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.*
- 15) *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.*
- 16) *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*
- 17) *And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (NKJV)*

I find the wording here very interesting. *Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.* Lord is a title of Christ and when you look this word Lord up, it's very interesting. It's Strong's 2962 transliterated as kurios and it means according to Strong's *supreme in authority*. It's interesting that according to The Englishman's Concordance, Strong's 2962 is listed 751 times in the King James Version of the New Testament and that same title, Lord Jesus, is used as Lord God in reference to the Father as well. And when it's referenced that way, it's the exact same Strong's word and the exact same definition. We look through a glass dimly and on certain topics, certain subjects, we certainly do. In the physical flesh, we look through a glass dimly.

What else is a faithful servant asked to do? Galatians 6.

Galatians 6:6. *Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.*

7) *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*

8) *For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.*

9) *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*

10) *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. (NKJV)*

We find here that the faithful servant is generous and does good to all. So we find in marker number 1 that faithfulness covers a great, great deal in our conversion process.

Marker 2: Gentleness.

Please turn to Ephesians 4. Some refer to Ephesians 4 as the unity chapter. I will be reading from the New Living Translation.

Ephesians 4:1. *Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling for you have been called by God.*

2) *Be humble, be gentle. Be patient with each other.*

3) *Always keep yourselves united in the holy spirit and bind yourselves together with peace. (NKJV)*

And we'll speak of peace in a moment.

4) *We are all one body, we have the same spirit and we have been called to the same glorious future.*

5) *There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism,*

6) *and there is only one God and Father who is over us all and in us all and living through us all.*

...

11) *He is the One who gave these gifts to the church, the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.*

12) *Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and to build up the church, the body of Christ,*

13) *Until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son, (knowledge of Jesus Christ) that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord measuring up to the full stature of Christ (NLT)*

What's the full stature of Christ? Perfection.

22) *Throw off your old evil nature and your former way of life which is rotten through and through, full of lust, full of deception,*

23) *instead, there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes.*
24) *You must display a new nature because you are a new person created in God's likeness, righteous, holy and true.*

...

31) *Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words and slander as well as all types of malicious behavior.*

32) *Instead, be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another just as God through Christ has forgiven you. (NLT)*

I find it interesting that even though gentleness is only mentioned once in the unity chapter, the chapter in its entirety speaks volumes for the need for each of us to be gentle; for each of us to move forward with gentleness in our lives. Turn to 1 Timothy 6:11. This is directed to Timothy but by extension, it's addressed to each of us here today.

1 Timothy 6:11. *But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. (NKJV)*

Colossians 3:12. We were here just a few moments ago. I'll be reading from the New International Version.

Colossians 3:12. *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*

13) *Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievance you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

14) *And over all these virtues, put on love which binds them all together in perfect unity. (NIV)*

I think it's an understatement that you all would agree with that love is a binding ingredient. We find it throughout scripture. Love is the binding ingredient. We will speak of love in a moment, but love is the glue that holds compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience all together. It's love that does that.

15) *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts Members of one body, you were called to peace, and be thankful.*

16) *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

17) *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (NIV)*

In reading verses 16 and 17, at least when I read it, I reflected back to a sermonette given at this past feast, that of the need for each of us to be grateful, to give thanks to God the Father through Jesus Christ for all that they've done for us, for all that they are doing for us and for all that they will continue to do for us.

Marker 3: Patience.

Turn back to Colossians 1. We find here a lengthy greeting to the brethren and beginning in verse 9, as his greeting continues, we read:

Colossians 1:9. *So we have continued praying for you ever since we first heard about you. We asked God to give you a complete understanding of what He wants to do in your lives and we ask Him to make you wise with spiritual understanding.*

10) *Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord and you will continually do good, kind things for others all the while you will learn to know God better and better. (NIV)*

We find here that a way to know God, to have the knowledge of God, is to live a way that honors God. Doing good deeds, being kind to others, love, if you will.

11) *We also pray that you will be strengthened with His glorious power so that you will have all the patience and endurance you need. May you be filled with joy always thanking the Father who has enabled you to share the inheritance that belongs to God's holy people who live in the light. (NIV)*

Patience is a vital attribute of a Christian. Galatians 5:22.

Galatians 5:22. *But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (NLT)*

We have here the fruit of the spirit, one of which is patience. With that in mind turn to Romans 15:5.

Romans 15:5. *Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6) that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (NKJV)*

So the author of patience is the Father and it, patience, is exemplified through Jesus Christ. Turn to 2 Thessalonians 3:5.

2 Thessalonians 3:5. *Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ. (NKJV)*

Jesus Christ is our example of patience. Within this third marker, that of patience, we find that this attribute is produced in many ways. We'll look at 5.

1. Patience is a product of the testing of our faith: James 1:3
2. Patience is a product of trials: Romans 5:3-4

3. Patience is a product of sowing good seed within our calling: Luke 8:15
4. Patience is a product of the hope that each of us has: Romans 8:25
5. Patience is a product of God's words itself. This goes hand-in-hand with the hope we each have.

Turn to Romans 15:1. From the NLT:

Romans 15:1. *We may know that these things make no difference ... (NLT)*

The things he is referring to are listed in chapter 14. Go back and study these. Basically we are not to become a stumbling block for any of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Romans 15:1. *We may know that these things make no difference but we cannot just go ahead and do them to please ourselves.*

2) *We must be considerate of the doubts and fears of those who think these things are wrong. We should please others. If we do what helps them we will build them up in the Lord.*

3) *For even Christ didn't please Himself. As the scripture says, Those who insult you are also insulting Me.*

4) *Such things were written in the scriptures long ago to teach us. They give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promise. (NLT)*

So we see that patience is a product of the testing of our faith, trials, sowing good seed, hope and scriptures; God's word in print written to give us hope and written to give us encouragement as we wait patiently for His promise.

Marker 4: Love.

Turn to 1 John 3:11.

1 John 3:11. *For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,*

12) *not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.*

13) *Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.*

14) *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. (NKJV)*

There's a lot of meaning here in this particular verse.

14) *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. (NKJV)*

One aspect of our salvation is based on the love we have toward the brethren.

15) *Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

16) *By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

17) *But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?*

18) *My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. (NKJV)*

In other words, in works.

19) *And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.*

20) *For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.*

21) *Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.*

22) *And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.*

23) *And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. (NKJV)*

The purpose of conversion includes the clear fact that we are to grow in love towards the brethren. Herbert W. Armstrong stated many, many times that love is the outgoing concern or outward concern for another. The Guidepost Family Topical Concordance defines love as follows: *unselfish, benevolent concern for another, brotherly concern, brotherly affection.*

Jesus Christ Himself gave a new commandment regarding love. Turn to John 13:31.

John 13:31. *So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him.*

32) *If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately.*

33) *Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you.*

34) *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*

35) *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (NKJV)*

In addition, turn back to Matthew 22:37-39.

Matthew 22:37. *Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'*

- 38) *This is the first and great commandment.*
39) *And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (NKJV)*

Included as a marker in our growth process of conversion is that of loving our brethren as well as loving our neighbor and the key scriptures of this marker are found in 1 Corinthians 13. You all know where I'm going with this. We've read it hundreds and hundreds of times and yes, we're going to read it once again because it's a vital marker, if not the primary marker in our conversion process. From the New Living Translation.

1 Corinthians 13:1. *If I could speak in any language in heaven or on earth, but didn't love others, I would only be making meaningless noise like a loud gong or a clanging cymbal.*

2) *If I had the gift of prophecy and if I knew all the mysteries of the future and knew everything about everything but didn't love others, what good would it be to me? And if I had the gift of faith so that I could speak to mountains and make them move, without love, I would be no good to anybody.*

3) *If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrifice my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would be of no value whatsoever.*

4) *Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude.*

5) *Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record when it has been wronged.*

6) *It is never glad about injustice but rejoices when the truth wins out.*

7) *Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful and endures through every circumstance.*

8) *Love will last forever but prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special language will all disappear.*

9) *Now we know only a little and even the gift of prophecy reveals little.*

10) *When the end comes, these special gifts will all disappear.*

11) *It's like this: when I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things.*

12) *Now we see things imperfectly as in a poor mirror but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely just as God knows me now. (NLT)*

God knows exactly what I'm thinking right now, what I'm speaking right now, what you're thinking and what those across the street are thinking.

13) *There are three things that will endure: (this is interesting) faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love. (NLT)*

Love, brethren, is a vital key. I believe it is the primary key, the primary marker in our growth process of conversion and that love is the perfect segway to the fifth marker.

Marker 5: Obedience.

Turn to 1 John 2:8.

1 John 2:8. *Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.*

9) He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.

10) He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. (NKJV)

Now here's the tie if you will, between love and obedience. Verse 3:

3) Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

4) He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5) But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.

6) He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

7) Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. (NKJV)

Keeping the commandments of God, in other words obedience to God's commandments, is a vital marker in our process of conversion. And don't ever think that we can't obey God's word. We can. Turn to 1 Peter 1:22.

1 Peter 1:22. *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, (NKJV)*

God's spirit is a catalyst in obedience and again we see here that the spirit is also an aid in our love towards one another. Obedience comes from our heart. Turn please to Romans 6:15. I'll be reading from the New Living Translation.

Romans 6:15. *So since God's grace has set us free from the law, does this mean we can go on sinning? Of course not!*

16) Don't you realize that whatever you choose to obey becomes your master. You can choose sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God and receive His approval.

17) Thank God. Once you were slaves to sin, but now you have obeyed with all your heart with the new teaching God had given you.

18) Now you are free from sin, your old master, and you have become slave to your new master, righteousness.

19) *I speak this way using the illustration of slaves and masters because it's easy to understand. Before, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness. Now you must choose to be slaves of righteousness so that you will become holy.*

20) *In those days when you were slaves to sin, you weren't concerned about doing what was right.*

21) *And what was the result? It was not good. Since now you are ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom.*

22) *But now you are free, free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do these things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life.*

23) *For the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. (NLT)*

All this: overcoming our old master, becoming slaves to a new master, doing what is right, becoming free from the power of sin; doing things that lead to holiness, the opportunity of eternal life itself, all these things begin right here, they begin in the heart. Reading verse 17 once again:

17) *Thank God. Once you were slave to sin but now you have obeyed with all your heart the new teaching God has given you. (NLT)*

A marker in the growth process of conversion is that of obedience.

Marker 6: Peacefulness.

Turn to James 3:13.

James 3:13. *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.*

14) *But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.*

15) *This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.*

16) *For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.*

17) *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*

18) *Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (NKJV)*

Regarding those who make peace, Matthew 5:9:

Matthew 5:9. *Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God. (NKJV)*

Living at peace with one another, being at peace with oneself, is truly a characteristic of a converted mind. Please turn to Romans 14.

Romans 14:19. *Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. (NKJV)*

That's the love we need to have towards the brethren, towards other individuals. With this in mind, turn to 1 Peter 3.

1 Peter 3:8. *Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;
9) not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.
10) For "He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.
11) Let him turn away from evil and do good. Let him seek peace and pursue it. (NKJV)*

In our growth process of conversion, we find here that we are to turn away from evil and we are to seek peace and pursue it. Question: Is there a difference between seeking peace and pursuing peace? Answer: Yes. Seek means *an attempt to find something*. While pursue means *to follow in order to catch, continue, proceed along the correct path*. In other words, once we have identified peace by seeking it, once we have found peace, then we are to follow what we found, proceed along the correct path that brought us to the understanding of peace.

In scripture, we find three sources of peace. Turn please to Philippians 4.

Philippians 4:6. *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;
7) and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (NKJV)*

A source of peace we find here is from God.

A second source of peace is that of Jesus Christ Himself. Turn to John 14.

John 14:25. *These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.
26) But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.
27) Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (NKJV)*

On the day I wrote that scripture in my notes, North Korea shot off yet another intercontinental ballistic missile, and the bottom line on that is verse 27: *Let not your hearts be troubled, neither be afraid.*

A third source of peace is from God's spirit. Once again you know where I'm going. Galatians 5:22.

Galatians 5:22. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23) gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (NKJV)*

Brethren, we are admonished to live in and pursue peace.

Marker 7: Fruitfulness.

2 Peter 1:5. *But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6) to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7) to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8) For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (NKJV)*

We find here that a way to know Christ, to have knowledge of Christ, is to add these six attributes to faith, all being summed up in love. And once again, what we add to our faith is virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and it all adds up to love.

10) Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11) for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (NKJV)

Listed here in these seven verses we find an expanded version, if you will, of the fruits of the spirit found in Galatians 5:22. What we seen in 2 Peter is the effort, if you will, that each of us must put forward in the conversion process. That's why we are admonished in verse 5 of 2 Peter to do something. It reads *for this very reason giving all diligence add to your faith ...*. This is our responsibility. An effort on our part to exercise God's spirit and thus we will add those attributes, those fruits listed in Galatians 5.

That's easier said than done, right? Well in answer to that, it is easy if, and there's the quantitative factor, if we will abide in Christ it will be done, it can be done. Turn to John 15.

John 15:1. *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.*

2) *Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.*

3) *You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.*

4) *Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.*

5) *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*

6) *If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.*

7) *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*

8) *By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. (NKJV)*

What does it mean to abide in Christ? Here in verse 6 and 7 the word abide is Strong's 3306 transliterated as meno and it means *to stay in a given place, state or relationship*. This specific word abide found here according to The Englishman's Concordance can also be translated as continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand and tarry and that's found in various places throughout the New Testament. So if we abide in Christ, following the lead of the holy spirit, we can be assured that we produce the required fruits as we proceed through the growth process of conversion. And as verse 8 states: *By this the Father is glorified*. In other words, by abiding in Christ, by tarrying in Christ, by keeping that relationship with Christ, our Father is glorified.

We bear the good fruits, thus we glorify His Father and we glorify our Father.

Today we've looked at seven markers within the growth process of conversion: faithfulness, gentleness, patience, love, obedience, peacefulness, and fruitfulness. Understand, please, that these seven are not all inclusive of a converted mind or the conversion process.

When you have an opportunity, visit our website and request a sermon by Rick Railston given November 28, 2009 and it's titled The Markers of a Converted Mind. In that sermon he addresses five additional markers that we didn't even touch on today. Also Rick's sermon of August 27, 2016 titled What is the Depth of My Conversation? And for further study on this subject, refer to any topical concordance and simply look up the word conversion. There are many, many, markers in the conversion process.

In conclusion, I want to once again define a marker: *an object used to indicate a position, place or route*. Today we have looked at seven markers of our growth process, that growth process of conversion, seven markers used to indicate our progress within the process of conversion. Once again, conversion is not an epiphany, it's not an event. It is a process. The event of our conversion was the baptism, the laying on of hands. The process is that of conversion. Once again the seven markers

we reviewed today are faithfulness, gentleness, patience, love, obedience, peacefulness and fruitfulness, all of which are markers of conversion, a growth process.