



Converted to Perverted

Adapted from “Stumbling Blocks” series by Dennis Marquardt

In the early part of the previous century a young man was born who later proved to be a hard worker. He made great efforts to become a good artist, dearly loved his mother with whom he lived while trying to make ends meet after his father died. He was ambitious in his work, and concerned about the people of his country. He fought hard as a soldier, earning one of the highest awards for bravery. He was disciplined as a young man, neither drinking nor smoking. He had a gift for moving crowds of people when he spoke. His name was Adolph Hitler.

He was a man of great passions, devoted deeply to those things he believed in, but his conversion to these ideas led to a perversion of most things considered sacred. Why? Because he was devoted to the wrong things. He was zealous, but without knowledge. You can be sincere, and yet still be sincerely wrong. It is not enough to be devoted to something. You must be devoted to the right thing.

Image and perception are not the ultimate goals, truth is, God’s truth. The word of God teaches that we are to be devoted to the Lord our God. We are supposed to keep God’s priorities in their proper order. Where our devotion is, there our talents, time, and finances will be. To not be devoted to the right things can lead to a perversion of our priorities.

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COURAGE

C1: Make a list of your priorities. Write out why these priorities are on your list. In the introduction, you learned a little about Adolf Hitler. He was a man of great passions and deep devotion. Yet, he was devoted to the wrong things. Examine why the priorities you listed are on your list. What did you discover?

C2: Read and answer the following.

Luke 6:27–36 (ESV) “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”

- Write out what Jesus tells his followers their priorities should be. Now, compare Jesus’ list with your list from C1. How do the lists compare?

Luke 9:51–62 (ESV) When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village. As they were going along the road, someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” To another he said, “Follow me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” And Jesus said to him, “Leave the dead to

bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” Yet another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.” Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

- From these verses, what do you think the disciples cared most about? Have you ever found yourself caring about yourself more than others? Describe.

C3: Read and answer the following.

Galatians 2:9–10 (ESV) And when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

- From these verses, what concern does Paul have?

- How are you breaking through your own stumbling blocks to develop spiritually?

C4: In the next seven days make a list of the things you are devoted to, where you are using your gifts, talents, and resources for the Kingdom of God. What did you glean from these seven days?

STRENGTH

S1: The title of the lesson is “Converted to Perverted.” When it comes to the things of Christ, how can things become perverted?

S2: The Bible is filled with average men doing extraordinary things for God. For the next thirty days do a study on a man in the Bible (Abraham, Moses, David, Gideon, Nehemiah, Jeremiah, Paul, Matthew, etc.). What did you glean from the life of the man you studied? How does this speak to you where you are today?

S3: Read and answer the following.

Luke 6:27–36 (ESV)

Luke 9:51–62 (ESV)

- What are 6-10 things you can glean from these passages of Scripture?
- On a scale of 1-4 with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate yourself on how well you practice these passages of Scripture in your life. Write out a plan to improve.

S4: Where you spend your time, talents and finances gives you a good look at where your desires lay. For the next thirty days, chart where you are spending your time, talents and finances. What can you glean from your thirty-day chart? How well does your chart align with God’s priorities? How can you improve in these areas?

ENDURANCE

E1: Read and answer the following.

Matthew 23:15 (ESV)

- What can you glean from this verse about perverting the gospel?
- When you see a phrase like “perverting the gospel,” what does that mean to you?
- What is it that Jesus had a problem with regarding the Pharisees?

E2: Read and answer the following.

Luke 6:27-36 (ESV)

- Write out the specific ways we are supposed to live as godly men?
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate yourself on how well you live these out in your daily life. Write out a plan to improve.

E3: It has been said, “If you want to know if you have a servant’s heart just pay attention to your attitude when you are treated like a servant.” Read and answer the following.

Luke 9:51-62 (ESV)

- What can you glean from these verses?

- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate yourself on how well you respond when you are treated like a servant. Write out a plan to improve.

E4: Every day, for the next thirty days, answer these four questions.

- Where is my energy spent?

- Where are my finances going?

- Where is my time spent?

- How much of me does God really get each day?