

what about *Follow-up?*

The answer is that God does the "follow-up." The exciting thing about true conversion is that there will be little need for what is commonly called "follow-up." A true convert will not need to be followed around. He will put his hand to the plow and will not look back (Luke 9:62).

Of course, he will have to be fed, disciplined, and nurtured. These things are biblical and most necessary. This can be done simply by encouraging him to read the Bible daily, answering questions he may have, and teaching him the principles of fellowship, prayer, evangelism, etc.

Sometimes there is confusion between "follow-up" (meaning "we need to follow the new convert around because he will 'fall away' if we don't") and discipleship (meaning "instructing him to continue in the word of Christ" - John 8:31). Look what happened after the Ethiopian eunuch was saved -- he was left without follow-up. The Spirit of God transported Philip away and left the new convert in

the wilderness. Not only that, but he was returning to an entirely un-Christian nation. This

is because his salvation

wasn't dependant on Philip, but on his relationship with the indwelling Lord. Those whom God saves, He keeps

(Hebrews 7:25). If He is the author of their faith, He will be the finisher (Hebrews 12:2). If He has begun a good work in them, He will complete it (Philippians 1:6). He is able to keep them from falling and present them faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 1:24).

The Crux: True and False

The point upon which all this pivots is the subject of true and false conversion. True conversion is when a person sees their true state before a Holy God, they repent and put their trust in Jesus Christ -- they are born again. A false conversion often happens when a person has been told to come to Jesus because He will give them a happier life, there is a lack of understanding as to what sin even is, there is no repentance, and the person is often told to repeat a prayer -- but they have not been born again.

In the case of a false convert there is usually an initial burst of enthusiasm and excitement, but time begins to reveal that there is something wrong. Over time the false convert seems to have no internal motivation to keep him pursuing godly things -- this is because he's not been born again. The false convert has no zeal for the lost, he is a stranger to holiness, he has no hunger for the Word, and no depth of prayer life.

The true convert, on the other hand, has a strong, almost insatiable desire to pursue godly things -- this is because the Holy Spirit resides in his heart, and he is a

new creature in Christ. A true convert does not need to be "followed-up" because he has an internal motivation to

seek after the things of God. For example, a true convert

will not have to be chased down and dragged to church... he will desire to be in fellowship with God's people. The Bible says, "newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word," (1 Peter 2:2). A healthy lamb will have a healthy appetite. You don't have to force-feed a healthy lamb. Someone who's soundly saved will desire the sincere milk of the Word. They'll discipline themselves. If you don't see any internal motivation in a person, you need to allow for the possibility that this person has not been saved at all.

Aspirin and False Assurance

"Following-up" a false convert is the equivalent of giving an aspirin to someone with a brain tumor. You may be able to somewhat improve the symptoms -- for a time... but if that person wants to have any hope of living... the tumor has to be dealt with.

The danger in following-up a false convert is that the "aspirin" of outwardly imposed behavioral changes and/or church activities, may give him a false assurance that the "brain tumor" of his eternal salvation has been taken care of.

In other words a false convert who is followed-up often ends up building some friendships in the church, learning to talk the "church-talk" enough to get by, finding social activities he enjoys, and eventually even getting baptized and "joining" the church -- and like a deadly opiate this "aspirin" dulls his senses with a false assurance of salvation. In Matthew 7:21-23 the Lord Jesus gives a terrifying look at what it will be like for that person on the Day of Judgment. None of us would ever want to have a part in walking someone down that road! So rather than "following-up" a false convert, we must urge him to heed the warning of 2 Cor. 13:5, "**Examine** yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves..."



Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-40)