

Have You Been Transformed or Just Baptized?

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Rom. 12:1-3

B. The Barna Group surveys on the impact Christianity has on people's lives.

1. May 2006, a survey showed that 51% of respondents said that they had been greatly transformed by their faith - Matt. 7:15-20
2. May 2004 survey shows that most respondents don't practice what they claim to believe; a report on four religious groups:
3. Evangelicals (7%), people who believe the Bible is accurate, that they have a personal responsibility to share their faith, that their faith is very important in their lives, that Jesus Christ did not sin, that God is the Creator and ruler of this universe, that Satan is a real being
4. Born Again Christians (33%), people who accepted Jesus as their Savior, but do not necessarily accept the Bible as completely accurate, do not always accept a personal responsibility to share their faith with others, do not always believe that Jesus was holy, do not always believe that God is the Creator, believe that Satan is symbolic
5. Notional Christians (33%), people who consider themselves Christian, but don't profess personal faith in Jesus
6. Atheists and Agnostics (12%)
7. Only Evangelicals and Atheists / Agnostics were consistent between their beliefs and their activities.
8. Born Again Christians were indistinguishable from Notional Christians or followers of other religious beliefs, such as Islam, Buddhists, or Scientology. They were like the world generally speaking
9. Born again and notional Christians were more likely to purchase a lottery ticket than atheists or followers of non-Christian religions (15% born-again, 23% notional, 10% non-Christian, 12% atheists).
10. November 2003 survey results regarding is morally acceptable: gambling, co-habitation, abortion, adultery, pornography, profanity, lying
11. Evangelicals 10%; Born again 37%; Notional 65%; Atheists 74%

C. It's not just that the world approves of sin; it is that the religious world approves of sin

1. More frightening than this is the fact that professed members of the Lord's church are beginning to imbibe the spirit of the decadent religious world
2. Are you truly transformed or were you just baptized?

I. BEING A CHRISTIAN INVOLVES CHANGING HABITS

A. Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:17-24 - Those in the world are past feeling; it doesn't bother them and they don't care

B. We cannot hold to the ways of the world - James 4:4; 1Peter 4:1-4

II. THE CHANGE IS NOT INSTANTANEOUS

A. Habits are hard to break.

1. It is a matter of growth - Prov. 4:18; Eph. 2:19-22, 4:15; Phil. 2:14-16

B. Some put off becoming Christians until they feel they have defeated sin

1. That day never comes. We will always face temptation

2. The problem of sin doesn't stop when we become Christians. Instead, we often become targets for the Adversary - 1Peter 5:8-9

3. They are attempting to fight sin without weapons. They need the whole armor of God; that armor includes salvation - Eph. 6:10-17

4. We need help from each other - 1Thes. 5:6-11

C. Baptism begins our commitment to Christ - Rom. 6:4; Titus 3:3-7; 2Cor. 5:17

D. Renewal comes through knowledge - Col. 3:9-10; 1Peter 2:1-3; 2Peter 3:18

III. THE CHANGE MUST BE SEEN IN OUR LIVES

A. Col. 1:21-23; Eph. 5:25-27; 1Thes. 4:3-5; 1Peter 1:13-16

IV. THE CHANGE MUST BE PERMANENT

A. 2Cor. 5:14-21; Ez. 18:31-32

B. Christians who continue to dabble in sin make being a Christian harder, and when they fall away, make it easier to become completely reprobate

1. 2Peter 2:20-22; Heb. 6:4-6, 10:26-27