

### *Financial Giving at Crossway*

it might not  
be obvious

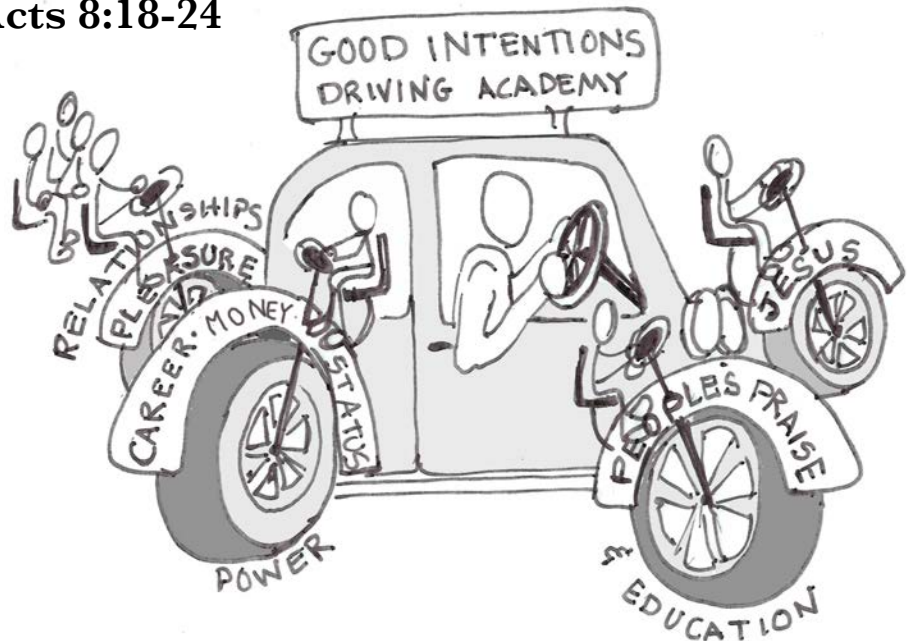
- Expectation of all Christians
  - Generously give money to support ministry
    - Give first where you experience spiritual care and oversight
    - 10% of income is a good base guide (“tithing”)
      - “First fruits”: give from what you receive, rather than from what is left
    - Giving is a sacrifice / an expression of God’s value to you
    - One important way to be a part of God’s work (joy)
- How to give to Crossway
  - Box on back table: cash or check (considering other ways...)
  - Bank transfer (ask Jim Eddy [jeddy55@gmail.com](mailto:jeddy55@gmail.com) for details)
  - Giving on the website (we pay a fee)

### *Buffet Meal*

- What is a buffet meal (like Brody Cafeteria)?
- “Buffet thinking”: taking a variety of things from a variety of places to fit into my life
  - When is this potentially a good approach?
  - What is it a bad approach?
- What might it look like in our relationship with God?

# The Danger of Partial Conversion

Acts 8:18-24



Chinese: page 1777

Spanish: page 1395

Brown: page 1099

Green: page 749

## *Learning from a Story*

- Identifying with a character
  - Sometimes the author has a specific intent
  - Sometimes we are to choose (and our choice tells us something about ourselves)
- I want to experience this story through the man named Simon
  - Perhaps this was Luke's intent for new churches and new Christians

### *Setting the Scene*

- News of Christianity came to a new place (Samaria)
- Simon (from Samaria)
  - expert in sorcery (power from evil spirits)
  - all people were amazed, praised him, paid attention to him
  - he boasted in his greatness; people said he was a Great Power
  - this spiritual power fed his pride and sense of importance
  - Then the change: “Simon himself **believed and was baptized**. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.” *Acts 8:13*
  - **Coming to Jesus, he lost his power and importance**

### *Setting the Scene*

- News of Christianity came to a new place (Samaria)
- Simon (from Samaria)
  - **Coming to Jesus, he lost his power and importance**
- Philip, Peter, John:
 

Christians with the power of the Holy Spirit

  - Their power was greater than Simon’s power
  - People shifted attention from Simon to the Holy Spirit
  - Peter & John laid hands on people,  
and those people also received the Holy Spirit
- Simon saw a new path to power and importance in Jesus

*Acts 8:18-24*

18-19: Simon offered to buy the ability to give the Holy Spirit

20-23: • “Astonished by the great signs and miracles”

24: • How ‘magicians’ got more powers: buy it

- Today, what happens if you pay more?

- “Use what you have to get what you want or ‘need’”

- Simon had money

- Simon wanted power, praise, and attention

- Easily comes into the church...

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- Recall Ananias & Sapphira

*Acts 8:18-24*

18-19: Simon offered to buy the ability to give the Holy Spirit

20-23: Peter sharply rebuked Simon

24: • Possible errors

- Thought God’s gift was for sale (like magic)

- Wanted God’s gift for personal gain (like magic)

- **Tried to fit God into merely human ways**

- **Wanted to use the power of God**

**to serve himself rather than God**

- Peter

- Saw error of Simon’s heart: intention was wicked

- Simon was filled with bitterness, and enslaved to sin

- Peter gave Simon the invitation to repent

*Acts 8:18-24*

18-19: Simon offered to buy the ability to give the Holy Spirit

20-23: Peter sharply rebuked Simon

24: Simon begged for prayer to escape disaster

- The question: Did Simon accept the ways of God, rather than just trying to get power from God?
- We don't know if this was true repentance
- We don't know the final outcome
- ***Uncertainty invites us into the story***

*The Big Idea*

**God deeply loves us**

**yet His ways and His plans for us  
may be radically different from our own**

**HUMILITY. SERVING OTHERS. GIVING UP POWER AND IMPORTANCE.**

**SUBMITTING TO OTHERS  
(EVEN WHEN WE'RE 'RIGHT')**

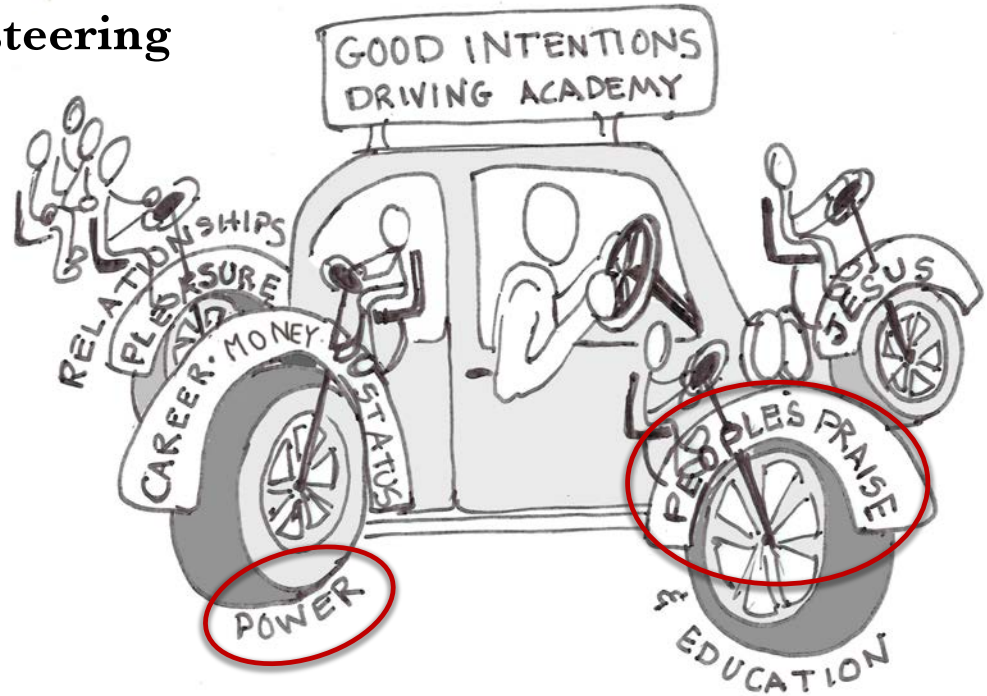
**PUTTING OTHERS  
BEFORE OURSELVES**

**BOLDLY CONFRONTING EVIL**

**OBEYING HIM EVEN IF IT IS COSTLY**

**To accept His love  
means we must also submit to  
His ways and His plans**

## Four wheel steering



## Four wheel steering

**BEING A CHRISTIAN MEANS THAT WE HAVE JUST ONE STEERING WHEEL, AND JESUS CONTROLS IT**

**SYNCRETISM = COMBINE PARTS OF DIFFERENT WORLDVIEWS OR RELIGIONS**

- **OKAY IN A POLYTHEISTIC OR POSTMODERN CONTEXT**
- **NOT OKAY IN CHRISTIANITY ... LIKE TRYING TO DRIVE NORTH AND SOUTH SIMULTANEOUSLY**

*What it looks like have multiple steering wheels...**"PARTIAL CONVERSION"***

- Using Christian ministry to make money
  - Paying Christian ministers can be good
  - But only with good motives ... on both sides

*What it looks like have multiple steering wheels...**"PARTIAL CONVERSION"***

- Using Christian ministry to make money
- Using Christianity for fame or power or pleasure
  - Abuse of power in the church is an offense against God!
  - It must not be tolerated!
  - “Where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.” *James 3:16*

*What it looks like have multiple steering wheels...**"PARTIAL CONVERSION"***

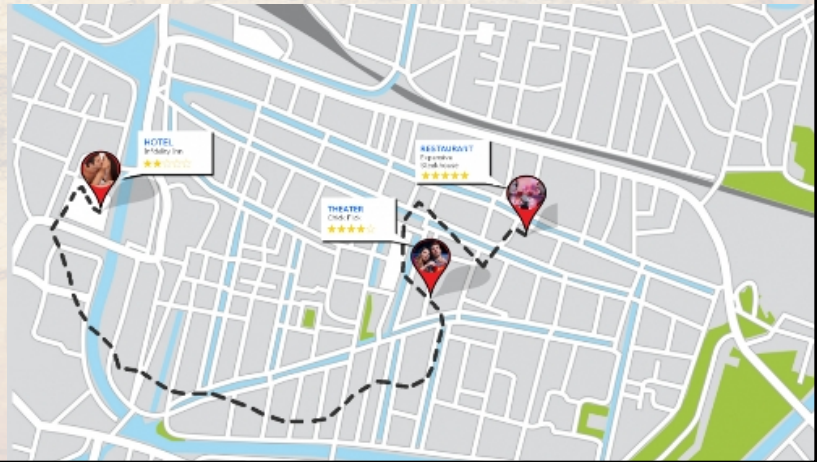
- Using Christian ministry to make money
- Using Christianity for fame or power or pleasure
- Following Jesus yet also being driven by selfish goals
  - Financial success, career success, academic success, feel better about self, build friendships, improve family life, ...
  - He might give these things, but **they must never steer life!**
  - **Wanting to use the power of God and His church to serve myself is wickedness!**

*What it looks like have multiple steering wheels...**"PARTIAL CONVERSION"***

- Using Christian ministry to make money
- Using Christianity for fame or power or pleasure
- Following Jesus yet also being driven by selfish goals
- “Brody cafeteria” Christians
  - Filling our trays with our favorite ideas and perspectives that treat Jesus as “one among many”
  - Following Jesus in “religious spaces”, yet wandering toward the gods of academia, success, pleasure, worry, revenge, guilt, materialism, human praise, ... the rest of the time
  - The feeling of **being torn** or **juggling** may be a symptom

*What it looks like have multiple steering wheels... "PARTIAL CONVERSION"*

- Imagine:
  - A GPS record of your heart's direction
  - What does your heart point, and where does your life go?



### *Application*

- **Seek *first* Christ and His Kingdom**

Jesus said: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”

*Luke 14:25-27*

- Hate = obey Jesus even when it seems to hurt us or others
- Having multiple destinations leads to juggling and being torn
- Jesus doesn't fit in a slot on our calendars
- The Christ is also Lord, whether or not we accept it
- **Involves ongoing confession and repentance...**

### *Application*

- **Seek *first* Christ and His Kingdom**
- **Follow Christ, even when it hurts**
  - When might it hurt to follow Christ?
    - Turning away from other goals: self-importance, human praise, self-worth, control, comfort, security, peace, ...
    - “But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of **the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whose sake ***I have lost all things. I consider them garbage***, that I may gain Christ and be found in him.” *Philippians 3:7-9*

On one occasion, Jesus told the disciples that He was willingly going to die

Peter told Jesus that this was wrong

Jesus rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said.

“You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but **merely human concerns.**” *Mark 8:33*

**“Merely human concerns” can be tools of Satan to take us away from Jesus and His ways**

### *The Big Idea*

God **deeply loves us**

yet His ways and His plans for us  
may be radically different from our own

HUMILI

TANCE.

BOLD

COSTLY

OUR SELFISH PLANS  
ARE FILLED WITH BITTERNESS AND CAPTIVE TO SIN  
AND ARE DESTROYING US AND THE ONES WE LOVE

To accept His love  
means we must also submit to  
His ways and His plans

PATH TO PROFOUND  
FREEDOM  
AND JOY

- **WHAT IS ACTUALLY DRIVING YOUR LIFE?**
- **CONFESSION:**
  - ADMIT SIN TO GOD
  - ADMIT SIN TO TRUSTED FRIENDS
- **REPENTANCE:**
  - SUBMIT TO HIS LEADERSHIP ONCE AGAIN
  - WITH COURAGE AND BOLDNESS
  - AND STEP WITH JOY INTO THE GREAT LOVE OF GOD!