

FROM ORDINARY TO EXTRAORDINARY

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Text: Acts 4

Acts 4:13 *When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, **ordinary** men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.*”
NIV

In Charles Schulz's "Peanuts" comic strip, Lucy asks Linus, "Do you think people ever really change?" "Sure," replies Linus, "I feel I've changed a lot this past year." Lucy says, "I meant for the better."

-- Robert C. Shannon, 1000 Windows, (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1997).

I have often heard people say that they do not believe that anyone can truly change. They will concede that people often become worse, but almost refuse to believe that anyone can completely change for the better.

Here we have an example of two men who have been completely transformed by Jesus Christ. Nothing about their natural appearance was impressive, yet there was something extraordinary about them. The truth is that they had been with Jesus and their lives would never be the same again.

Note with me the personal *traits* of these men before and after being with Jesus.

I. PETER AND JOHN WERE ORDINARY MEN.

A. These men were uneducated and unimpressive by all human estimations.

B. At first the Sanhedrin thought they could stop these ordinary men.

II. PETER AND JOHN BECAME EXTRAORDINARY MEN.

A. Peter and John were transformed by knowing Jesus.

The transformation that takes place at conversion is meant to be obvious and powerful.

In Russia, in 1989, the number-one graduate-study subject was conversion, but not from a Christian or spiritual point of view. They understood the political significance that if there is a way to change a person's values, motivations, goals, and lifestyles, you have the ultimate power beyond nuclear weapons. So they wanted to know: If it's possible, how can we as a political force for the state use sudden conversion?

-- Bruce Larson, "What about Sudden Conversion?" Preaching Today, Tape No. 72.

B. Peter and John became courageous and impressive in action.

CONCLUSION

Ron Fowler makes a powerful statement when he says, "While other institutions can provide services, only the church offers a gospel that can transform a life from the inside out."

-- Ron Fowler, Leadership, Vol. 14, no. 2.

The church was never meant to be reduced to a social institution. The church was meant to be a body of believers that preached and modeled transformed lives. The personal traits of our lives before and after conversion should be our greatest witness.