

I am a New Creation in Christ

WHO ARE WE? IDENTITY IN CHRIST · 2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21 · NOVEMBER 24, 2024 · PASTOR RUTH CARVER

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17, ESV)

How the Apostle Paul Became a New Creation in Christ (Acts 9)

As New Creations in Christ, We Experience Two New Realities

- Legal reality
 - Our sin is completely pardoned.
 - The Holy Spirit comes into our lives.
 - We have the promise of eternal life.
 - We become a child of God, a citizen in God's kingdom, part of the Body of Christ, and a temple of Holy Spirit.
- Heart reality
 - We have a change of loyalty from self to God.
 - We view everything differently (2 Corinthians 5:16-17).
 - We see people as God sees them.
 - We see Jesus Christ as He really is.
 - More and more, we desire to follow Christ rather than self.
 - More and more, we want to serve Him and be like Him.
 - More and more, we want to live holy lives.

Our Reconciliation to God Comes with Expectations (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

- We have the ministry of reconciliation.
- We are Christ's ambassadors.

How God Made Reconciliation with Himself Possible (2 Corinthians 5:21)

- Jesus became sin for us.
- We are the recipients of the exchanged life.
- We are the beneficiaries of substitutionary atonement.

Our Own Stories of Becoming New Creations in Christ

- Some are dramatic like the Apostle Paul's.
- Some are gentle like Timothy's.
- Some are messy like John Newton's.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. 2 Corinthians 5:20 says that our message to non-believers is this: "Be reconciled to God". To *reconcile* means to bring back into proper adjustment. How could you explain to a non-believer what being in proper adjustment to God looks like?
2. Jesus says, "Go and sin no more" in John 5:14 and John 8:11. Talk about this in light of the idea that God's gift of grace to us comes with expectations.
3. We read this in Acts 4:13 (ESV): "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus." Do you think people can recognize that you have "been with Jesus"? Why or why not? How does this relate to being a new creation in Christ?
4. Discuss this statement by theologian David Garland: "Humans may attempt to reconcile with one another, but if they are not also reconciled to God there will be no real reconciliation."
5. Discuss this statement in light of the fact that God wants Christians to be his ambassadors to non-believers: "An ambassador must always realize that he is an embodiment of his home country in his receiving State, meaning the way and manner in which he presents himself determines the way his country will be regarded by his receiving State. He must uphold his country's integrity at all times."
6. Think about your own conversion, if you are in Christ. Was your conversion more like the Apostle Paul's (dramatic), Timothy's (gentle), or John Newton's (messy)?
7. How is God calling you to "put off the old man and put on the new man"?

DIG DEEPER:

- If you're not sure if you're "in Christ," scan the QR code at right and someone will contact you this week.
- Listen to *Stricken, Smitten and Afflicted*, a hymn text written in 1804 by Thomas Kelly, in an arrangement sung by Fernando Ortega: [youtube.com/watch?v=x-QFx5RRqFM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-QFx5RRqFM)
- Put on the "new man" by growing in Christ through one of these Bible studies:
 - Women's Bible Study, Friday am: Contact Cathy at Williams-cathyr@gmail.com
 - Women's Bible Study, Wednesday pm: Contact Katherine at kathriebe@gmail.com
 - Men's Bible Study, Wednesday pm/Thursday noon: Contact Jim at jcaler@eastbrook.org
 - Eastbrook 301, Sunday am: Contact Jim at jcaler@eastbrook.org
 - Middle & High School, Sunday am: Contact Nic at nfridenmaker@eastbrook.org
 - Young Adults, Thursday pm: Contact eastbrook20s30s@eastbrook.org

