

New Creation: A Bible Study on 2 Corinthians 5:17–20

Main Passage:

2 Corinthians 5:17–20

Supporting Passages

Romans 12:10, 18; Matthew 5:21–24

Aim

To help us see that in Christ we are made new, brought back into relationship with God, and sent out to represent him to others.

Big Idea

God reconciles us to himself through Jesus, gives us a new identity, and calls us to live as his ambassadors, His “reconcilers”.

Opening Question

What is something people call "new and improved" that is really only a minor update?

What makes the change Paul describes in Christ different from that?

Read Together

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17–20 slowly as a group.

If time allows, also read Romans 12:10, 18 and Matthew 5:21–24.

Discussion Guide

1. What stands out to you most in this passage?

2. Paul says that anyone in Christ is a new creation (v. 17). What do you think that means for a person's identity?

3. Why does it matter that reconciliation is something God does for us, rather than something we achieve for ourselves?

Paul says, "All this is from God" (v. 18), and that God reconciled us to himself through Christ.

4. What is the difference between being made new and simply trying to behave better?

5. What do you think the "ministry of reconciliation" looks like in ordinary life?

Paul says God has given believers both the ministry and the message of reconciliation (vv. 18–19).

6. Paul also says we are Christ's ambassadors (v. 20). What does that tell us about the way we speak, live, and represent Jesus?

7. What fears or excuses tend to stop Christians from speaking openly about Jesus?

8. Romans 12:10 calls believers to be devoted to one another in love and to honor one another above themselves. How does that shape the way we treat people inside the church?

9. In Matthew 5:21–24, Jesus says reconciliation with a brother or sister is urgent and should not be ignored. Why do you think unresolved anger matters so much to God?

10. Is there a relationship in your life where God may be calling you to take a step toward peace?

11. Who around you might need to hear the message of reconciliation this week?

Personal Application

Take a few quiet minutes and reflect on these three areas.

1. Receive It

If you belong to Christ, your identity has changed. Paul's point is not that you are slightly improved, but that something genuinely new has happened because of Jesus (v. 17).

2. Live It

Reconciliation with God should shape the way we relate to other people. Romans 12:18 and Matthew 5:23–24 both press believers toward peace, love, humility, and restored relationships.

3. Share It

Christians are not only saved by the gospel; they are entrusted with its message. Paul says God makes his appeal through his people as they call others to be reconciled to God (v. 20).

Prayer Points

Thank God for making us new in Christ (v. 17)

Ask God to deepen your relationship with him (vv. 18–19)

Ask for courage to speak about Jesus with clarity and kindness (v. 20)

Ask for grace to forgive, seek peace, and repair broken relationships where possible (Romans 12:18; Matthew 5:23–24)

Leader Notes

This passage begins with what God has done through Christ before it speaks about what believers are called to do.

Try to keep drawing the group back to relationship with God, not just duty.

In our main passage, reconciliation is not presented as bare forgiveness alone, but as being brought back to God through Christ.

A helpful thread for the whole study is this:

God makes us new (v. 17)

God brings us back to himself (vv. 18–19)

God sends us out with that same message (v. 20)

Suggested Answers

Question 2: "New creation" speaks about a real change of identity in Christ. Paul describes the old as gone and the new as here (v. 17).

Question 3: Reconciliation starts with God's initiative - Jesus' death on the cross opened the way! That keeps salvation rooted in grace rather than human effort or performance (v. 18).

Question 5: The ministry of reconciliation includes both the way we live and the message we speak. Believers do not save people, but they do point people to the one who does (vv. 18–19).

Question 6: An ambassador represents another kingdom. Paul's language suggests that Christians represent Christ publicly and are meant to speak on his behalf with both humility and confidence (v. 20).

Question 8: Reconciliation with others matters because the gospel changes not only our standing before God but also the way we live with one another. Romans 12:10 calls believers to sincere love and honor.

Question 9: Jesus treats anger, contempt, and broken fellowship seriously. In Matthew 5:21–24, he teaches that reconciliation with others should be dealt with urgently and honestly.

Pastoral Cautions

Try not to let the conversation become a guilt session about evangelism. Paul's emphasis is first on what God has done in Christ, and then on the privilege of joining in his work.

Do not reduce reconciliation to "being nice." The heart of the passage is reconciliation with God through Jesus, and that restored relationship then overflows into human relationships.

Make room for unbelievers or unsure people in the group. Paul's appeal, "Be reconciled to God" (v. 20), is a genuine invitation as well as a truth Christians proclaim.