

2 CORINTHIANS 5:16–21, “NEW YOU”

¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Discussion Questions (Choose a manageable number to discuss)

1. An image projected may diverge from reality (as in the Colorado balloon hoax and the crashing of the White House dinner party). But in what case is image essential to convey reality?
See John 1:18 and 2 Corinthians 4:4–6.
2. How did God shine the light of his knowledge into your darkness?
3. How (v. 16) was Saul’s human point of view radically transformed into the apostle Paul’s otherworldly perspective? See Acts 22:6–8.
4. What (v. 17) is the basis of this “new creation”?
See also verses 21 and 14.
5. Who qualifies for this radical change of identity?
6. How might the “boom!” transformation from old to new reality be demonstrated in the case of an anorexic young woman? . . . A young man enticed by pornography? . . . A workaholic businessman? . . . A frazzled homemaker? . . . A depression-ridden senior?
7. How (v. 18) did God move us from being on the outs with him to being welcomed into his inner circle?
8. We have just been singing, “Hark! the herald angels sing.” But to whom (v. 19) has proclamation of the reconciliation message been entrusted?
9. If God has confined himself (v. 20) to making his appeal through human ambassadors, what is the outlook for his kingdom?
How much of the urgency that Paul expressed (see also 6:1–2, 11) do we sense?
10. Pastor Chris Castaldo candidly acknowledged stopping just short of allowing publicizing his new book to degenerate into self-promotion. What disciplines may we need to practice in order to function as true ambassadors for Christ?
11. How does the process of increasingly becoming “Christ reflectors” work? See 2 Corinthians 3:18.
12. Conclude by reading verse 21 together, and then offering brief prayers of thanksgiving for the great exchange that God in love initiated.