

The New YOU in Christ!

New Creations In 2 Corinthians 5.17 the Apostle Paul says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has gone and the new has come!” If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, that statement describes you! Paul is saying that the same God who created us in the first place has re-created us in the image of His Son. The thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, purposes, habits, speech, and conduct that belonged to the old self have been re-placed with new ones! Or have they?

If we’re honest, we all recognize that while Paul’s statement is absolutely true - we ARE new creations - there certainly seems to be a lot of that old creation hanging around. We say things, do things, think things, and act in ways that reflect more our old self than this new self; we have a sort of identity crisis going on. **Transformation is the end-result you are looking for through this journey and adventure.**

Identity Crisis This ‘identity crisis’ is explained by the fact that there is a struggle going on inside us. In Galatians 5.17 Paul says, “For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.” The sinful nature (our old self) does not want to give way to the new self (which is being led and empowered by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us). So what are we to do?

Take Action We’re not called to simply throw up our hands, declare “that’s just the way it is,” and wait around to go to heaven (an approach that far too many take). Rather we’re instructed to take action! In Colossians 3.5 Paul says, “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature...” and, in 3.10, “put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.” This requires active engagement in our own growth in Christ; the New YOU must take action!

Yes, take action and live more and more as the New YOU in Christ. We are going to study the book of Colossians and discover from it the secret to living a 'new kind of life' ...**Christ in YOU, the hope of glory.**

Colossians 1:27

This is not a curriculum – it's an action tool designed to help you take the things you are learning in sermons, Sunday School classes, small group Bible studies – your own quiet devotional times, etc. and organize them under Five Areas of Biblical Wisdom:

1. Character
2. Spiritual Disciplines/Practices
3. Serving/Ministering to Others
4. Making Disciples
5. Growth and Maturity in Christ

As we take action and pursue experiences with God, those experiences should result in becoming more like Jesus on a daily basis. Our faith will become more active and faithful if we intentionally strive to discover how God is working in revealing Himself to us in one of these five areas.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

This is a year-long task. Our purpose is to intentionally focus on the things that will **transform** our lives and conform us to being more like Christ in every area of our lives.

This tool allows you to take what can be a large volume of weekly 'input' from various sources, without neglecting, forgetting or never using it. It's one thing to have 'content', another to act on it. therefore, this tool will assist you in receiving and applying.

Two things to remember:

Reflection: is a deliberate time of prayerfully thinking in which you examine your own heart and life as it relates to a particular Christian character trait, spiritual formation, service in ministry, making disciples and growing in your faith. You will make discoveries through your normal, everyday/weekly experiences [sermons, Bible study, Sunday School, connections, etc.] Write them down and then plan an action step to take.

Action: should be actual things you plan to do as a result of your reflections. The important thing is to be specific and realistic.

FIVE AREAS OF FOCUS

1. CHARACTER: that is always Christ-like

Key Thought: The New YOU increasingly makes adjustments to reflect the character of Jesus Christ.

There should be a noticeable difference [improvement] in our character – something that takes deliberate reflections to gauge.

It should be obvious that we are changing our attitudes, conduct, speech, purpose, virtue and personality. People should see the change, How does this happen?

This comes about only as the Holy Spirit [Who dwells within us] works upon our spirits. We must be receptive to the Holy Spirit's leading and conviction. Remember, none of us have arrived to complete maturity. We must cooperate with the Holy Spirit or we will hinder His work.

Scriptures to study:

- Galatians 4-5
- Ephesians 5
- Philippians 2:1-11
- Colossians 2-3
- 1 Peter 2-4
- 1 John 4

2. SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES/PRACTICES

Key Thought: The New YOU, with growing consistency, actively seeks to grow by applying the “basics of the faith” to one’s lifestyle.

Any worthwhile pursuit takes discipline and hard work. What every Christian needs to do is get “back to the basics” and improve one’s Christlike technique. Growing in faith as a disciple of Jesus Christ will not just happen – we must intentionally put ourselves in the best possible position to allow the Holy Spirit to mold and shape us. This means that we need to prioritize the basic principles and practices of the faith. Weekly worship, study of God’s Word, prayer, meditation, giving, fellowship, connecting, fasting and Crazy Love actions, etc. These activities don’t save us or hold some magical power, but they are the means of encountering God.

These spiritual disciplines are both corporate and personal. That is, we are to engage and embrace them as essential activities for cultivating and maintaining our relationship with God.

Scriptures to study:

- Deuteronomy 6 – 11
- Psalm 1
- Matthew 5 – 7
- Colossians 3
- 2 Corinthians 9:6-15
- Titus 2 – 3
- Hebrews 5 – 6

3. SERVING/MINISTERING TO OTHERS

Key Thought: The New YOU increasingly follows Jesus' model of serving others, realizing we are an extension of Him to those in our sphere of influence.

There is no doubt in Scripture that we are to follow Jesus. He said, "Come and follow me and I will make you fishers of men." As we purposely give our lives increasingly to serve others, we discover the power of Crazy Love.

Jesus said, "I have come not to be served, but to serve and give my life as a ransom for others." Mark 10:45

Jesus told His disciples "As you have done unto one of the least of these, you have done it unto me".... "Go and make disciples."
Matthew 25:40; 28:15-20

Scriptures to study:

- Matthew 9
- Mark 9 – 10
- Romans 12
- 1 Corinthians 12
- Ephesians 4
- Philippians 2 – 3
- 1 Peter 4

4. MAKING DISCIPLES

Key Thought: The New YOU understands the importance of connecting with others. When Jesus called us, He also commissioned us to go and “make disciples”.

Although this is very similar in nature to Serving/Ministering to others, this is more about a one-on-one relationship with others. It is personally developing a relationship with someone and nurturing them to maturity. It is taking responsibility for one’s family and friends to develop their relationship with Christ.

One of Jesus’ tasks, while He lived on earth, was to establish a group of followers who would carry on His mission after He was gone. This is to be done both corporately and individually.

Pray that God will reveal to you someone you can personally disciple.

Scriptures to study:

- Deuteronomy 6 – 11
- Joshua 24
- Matthew 28: 19-20
- Mark 3
- Luke 6, 9, 14
- John 1:35-48
- John 13 – 17
- Acts
- Colossians 1
- 2 Timothy 2

5. GROWTH AND MATURITY IN CHRIST

Key Thought: The New YOU increasingly understands life from God's perspective and lives accordingly.

When we think of growth – wisdom is what should pop into our minds. In 1 Corinthians 2:16, Paul makes a startling statement. In discovering wisdom and the work of the Holy Spirit in giving us understanding, he says, “We have the mind of Christ.” What Paul is saying is that unlike those who don't know Jesus and don't have the Spirit dwelling within them, Jesus' followers are given a special understanding of who God is, what He's done through the cross, and what He's doing in the world right now. In short, we share in God's view of the world, not the world's view of itself.

Therefore, understanding God's Word goes far beyond just Bible knowledge when we are enabled to discern God's way for us and choose it over whatever alternative the world offers, we are practicing “Biblical Wisdom”. Wisdom from God's Word must permeate every area of our lives from the use of our money to sexuality. Wisdom is admitting that God's way is best and walking wholeheartedly in it.

Scriptures to study:

- Deuteronomy 4-5; 31-33
- Psalm 90
- Proverbs 1-4
- John 15
- 1 Corinthians 2:6-16
- 1 Corinthians 3:18-23
- Colossians 1:9-14
- James 1-3

REMEMBER: VERY IMPORTANT

Again, this is not based on curriculum. It's a tool designed to help you take action on the things you're learning. With that in mind, it would be helpful to think of this tool as the means of funneling everything you read and experience through these 5 areas of our lives: Then reflect upon how the Holy Spirit is leading you.

Ask yourself questions like: [sample questions]

What have I seen in Jesus' character that needs to be applied to my life?

Do I see the value of reflecting on the things that keep me close to God?

What is God specifically saying to me today?

Are there things that need to be changed in my life?

Do I need to encourage someone today or get out of my comfort zone and do something for someone else?

What did I learn from my time spent with God today?

Do I have someone I can share my insight with today?

Is my heart burdened for a particular service, person, need or ministry?

WEEKLY REFLECTION NOTES

Record the key insights and points from your Sunday Worship, Sunday School, Bible Study, quiet devotional time, Christian books or articles, etc. As the Lord leads, use these for reflection and action.

Week of January 1 – 7, 2012 – Notes of Reflection

PRAYER NOTES

INSPIRATIONAL EXPERIENCES

WEEKLY REFLECTION AND ACTION PLAN

Week One: January 1 – 7

CHARACTER

“I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on your laws.”

Psalm 119:30

- Reflection
- Action

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES/PRACTICES

“Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your laws.”

Psalm 119:18

- Reflection
- Action

SERVING/MINISTERING TO OTHERS

“Your promises have been thoroughly tested and your servant loves truth.”
Psalm 119:140

- Reflection
- Action

MAKING DISCIPLES

“Your word, O Lord, is eternal, it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth and it endures.” Psalm 119:89-90

- Reflection
- Action

GROWTH AND MATURITY IN CHRIST

“Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.” Psalm 119:37

Reflection

Action

WEEKLY REFLECTION NOTES

Record the key insights and points from your Sunday Worship, Sunday School, Bible Study, quiet devotional time, Christian books or articles, etc. As the Lord leads, use these for reflection and action.

Week of January 8 – 14, 2012 – Notes of Reflection

PRAYER NOTES

INSPIRATIONAL EXPERIENCES

WEEKLY REFLECTION AND ACTION PLAN

Week Two: January 8 – 14

CHARACTER

- Reflection
- Action

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES/PRACTICES

- Reflection
- Action

SERVING/MINISTERING TO OTHERS

MAKING DISCIPLES

- Reflection
- Action

- Reflection
- Action

GROWTH AND MATURITY IN CHRIST

- Reflection
- Action

WEEKLY REFLECTION NOTES

Record the key insights and points from your Sunday Worship, Sunday School, Bible Study, quiet devotional time, Christian books or articles, etc. As the Lord leads, use these for reflection and action.

Week of January 15 – 21, 2012 – Notes of Reflection

PRAYER NOTES

INSPIRATIONAL EXPERIENCES

WEEKLY REFLECTION AND ACTION PLAN

Week Three: January 15 – 21

CHARACTER

- Reflection
- Action

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES/PRACTICES

- Reflection
- Action

SERVING/MINISTERING TO OTHERS

Reflection

Action

MAKING DISCIPLES

Reflection

Action

GROWTH AND MATURITY IN CHRIST

Reflection

Action

WEEKLY REFLECTION NOTES

Record the key insights and points from your Sunday Worship, Sunday School, Bible Study, quiet devotional time, Christian books or articles, etc. As the Lord leads, use these for reflection and action.

Week of January 22-28 – Notes of Reflection

PRAYER NOTES

INSPIRATIONAL EXPERIENCES

WEEKLY REFLECTION AND ACTION PLAN

Week Four: January 22 – 28

CHARACTER

- Reflection
- Action

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES/PRACTICES

- Reflection
- Action

SERVING/MINISTERING TO OTHERS

Reflection

Action

MAKING DISCIPLES

Reflection

Action

GROWTH AND MATURITY IN CHRIST

Reflection

Action

WEEKLY REFLECTION NOTES

Record the key insights and points from your Sunday Worship, Sunday School, Bible Study, quiet devotional time, Christian books or articles, etc. As the Lord leads, use these for reflection and action.

Week of January 29 – February 4 – Notes of Reflection

PRAYER NOTES

INSPIRATIONAL EXPERIENCES

WEEKLY REFLECTION AND ACTION PLAN

Week Five: January 29 – February 4

CHARACTER

- Reflection
- Action

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES/PRACTICES

- Reflection
- Action

SERVING/MINISTERING TO OTHERS

Reflection

Action

MAKING DISCIPLES

Reflection

Action

GROWTH AND MATURITY IN CHRIST

- Reflection
- Action

EXTRA NOTES

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