

# Happy New You!

## January 1, 2012

### 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Today's New International Version (TNIV)

<sup>16</sup> So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup> that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> God made him who had no sin to be sin[a] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Life through time lapse:** If we could look at our life through time lapse photography what would we see? What would we see differently? What would we have missed in that fast and frantic sprint that is our life? We tend not to see the depth of our lives as it stretches behind us. We tend to be fixated on this present moment – this one small frozen frame of our existence – and we are often unaware of the deeper story, the little growths over years, day by day, moment by moment – we miss the nuances. In the bigness of this present moment we lose track of who we really are – which is tragic because we desperately need to know that story – we need to know that we are alive, that we are growing – that our future is in good hands.

- Marks on the door – the joy of measuring our growth.
- We need to know we will grow.
- When we stop believing in growth we stop trying for growth.
- Can we have confidence in the transforming power of God?
- It tests the reality of our faith (John 13:35).
- It leads people to belief or unbelief.
- What does the Bible teach us? In 1 Corinthians 5:16, Paul teaches this amazing truth that a believer becomes a *new creation*, someone who is being wonderfully transformed into something new, but before we grab hold of that promise we need to consider three things from the teaching of Paul:
  1. The context into which Paul is speaking
  2. The foundation of Paul's confidence in God's transforming power
  3. Paul's necessary condition for transformation

#### 1. The context into which Paul is speaking

Some of the Corinthian Christians believed they were Christians, professed they were Christians, but lived lives that did not demonstrate the deep relational quality we call love which is the sign that Christ is actually at work in our lives.

**Where are you in your walk?** This deep relational quality we call love is the outward manifestation of the inward reality of our spiritual lives. It is the benchmark against which we need to ask those important questions concerning; how are we going in our Christian walk? This is an important question at the beginning of this New Year; *Where, in the journey from the person you were to the new creation you are becoming, are you?*

#### 2. The foundation of Paul's confidence in God's transforming power

*So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.* 1 Corinthians 5:16

**Resurrection transformed Paul:** Paul reminds his readers that there was a time when he, Paul, considered Jesus to be just a man, he considered him purely from a worldly point of view – in fact Paul hated Jesus and his turn coat followers – but that utterly changed – something transformed both Paul's mind and his life – according to both Luke and Paul, that something was an actual encounter with the resurrected Jesus (1 Corinthians 15, Acts 9) – It was the resurrection upon which Paul's beliefs and expectations of personal transformation are based.



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### The evidence of 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

- Earliest evidence supports resurrection.
- Earliest behaviour supports resurrection.
- While a person dying does not make the things they believe true, the difference between the disciples and a jihadist is that were eye witnesses and new the truth of Jesus resurrection.
- No one dies for a lie – so, yes! Jesus rose from the dead
- Transformation of James.
- Resurrection promises transformation.

### 3. Paul's necessary condition for transformation

So lastly we come to Paul's one necessary condition for transformation.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ...* (2 Corinthians 5:17a)

- If – requiring a condition to be satisfied – the condition of being **IN-CHRIST** – central teaching in Paul.
- Connected like vine and branches: John 15:5.
- In its essence Christianity is not a philosophy, it is not a value system, it is not a how-to-book or a do-it-yourself guide. It is a living relationship with God – and without that, there is no personal transformation – without spending time **IN-CHRIST** this year – there will be no real personal growth for you – and as Jesus says; *apart from me you can do nothing.*
- Prayer testimony
- Healing Centre testimony
- Our testimony.

**God's promise is true and can be trusted:** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!* (1 Corinthians 15:17), believe this, in very depths of your being. If you are in Christ Jesus, if you have given your life to him, then you are a new creation and all that is necessary for your transformation is in place – you just need to live in this truth, as John says; *And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.* (2 John 1:6)

### Getting the most out of this New Year

1. **Remember your testimony:** Stop and expose your life to the time lapse camera. Consider the hundreds of moment by moment transformations that have happened in your life. Plot them on a faith line with the events that impacted on you, people who have encouraged and supported your faith, and the ideas that have revolutionised your spiritual life.

### My faith line

**Face up to where are you now:** Where in the journey from the person you were to the new creation God is growing, are you?



2. **Ask God to raise in you a new level of faith.** That you will really believe in your identity as a new creation. Regularly speak into your life the truth that God is transforming you from the inside out.
3. **Determine to pray:** Consider how to practically order your life so that you live more and more in Christ. If you are to be **IN-CHRIST** – you need to practically and with determination – spend more time in prayer this year. Make it so.

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