

## ***The Meaning of Being a New Creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17-21)***

### **I. BEING A NEW CREATION IN CHRIST HAS VAST IMPLICATIONS**

A. Paul’s dramatic declaration that we have become a new creation in Christ, with all things becoming new, has vast implications. The “he” that is a new creation is our spirit man. All things pertaining to our spirit become new. The “real you” is your spirit man, which is alive in Christ.

<sup>21</sup>***But now the righteousness of God apart from the law [earning it] is revealed... (Rom. 3:21)***

<sup>17</sup>***If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away...all things have become new...<sup>19</sup>God was in Christ reconciling the world...not imputing their trespasses to them...<sup>21</sup>that we [our spirit] might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)***

B. ***Old things passed away***: We were under condemnation before God. We were powerless with regard to sin (at the heart level). We were under darkness, lacking ability to understand the Word or receive God’s direction for life. We were destitute, without hope of a good future in God.

C. ***All things have become new***: We are accepted and enjoyed by God. Our former powerlessness and darkness have passed, and now we have the authority of Jesus’ name and the indwelling Spirit, which enable us to resist sin, sickness, and Satan; walk in victory over sin; and receive understanding of God, His Word, and His will. Now we have a significant destiny in God.

D. The gospel is the good news of salvation, about receiving God’s righteousness (in three tenses):  
1. ***Justification***: our legal position—past tense, focused on my spirit (I have been saved)  
2. ***Sanctification***: our living condition—present tense, focused on my soul (I am being saved)  
3. ***Glorification***: our eternal exaltation—future tense, focused on my body (I will be saved)  
We experience the fullness of our salvation over three time frames. One third of our salvation is complete—the salvation of our spirit. Our spirit has been created anew in holiness (past tense).

E. To understand the glory of the new creation, we must first understand that God created humans with three parts—spirit, soul, and body. Man is a spirit, he has a soul, and he lives in a body.

<sup>23</sup>***May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless... (1 Thes. 5:23)***

F. Our spirit is the place where God dwells—He lives in us. Our soul speaks of our personality, consisting of our mind, emotions, and will. Our body has five senses, which enable us to receive from the physical world. Many believers do not know who they are in their spirit. As we receive training for our body and soul, so we must receive training related to our spirit.

G. Before Adam sinned, his spirit governed his soul and body. His physical appetites, five senses, and emotions were subject to his spirit. After he sinned, he became spiritually dead and lost his ability to relate to God. Everything was reversed, and his body and soul gained power over his spirit. His spirit lost the place of dominion and became subordinate to his body and soul.

H. At the new birth, our spirit is joined to the Spirit, and we are filled with His supernatural life.

<sup>17</sup>***But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. (1 Cor. 6:17)***

- I. At the new birth, our spirit man was so radically refashioned that Paul uses the term “created.”  
<sup>24</sup>*Put on the new man which was created...in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph. 4:24)*  
<sup>10</sup>*Put on the new man who is...according to the image of Him who created him... (Col. 3:10)*
- J. The challenge is that we do not feel or discern our spirit. Our spirit man is “spirit” and therefore, it is invisible and indiscernible, even “hidden” from our five senses. We cannot measure it by our emotions (soul) or our five senses (body). Paul referred to our true life, or our spirit man in this age, as being “hidden” in Christ. Our born-again spirit is called “the hidden person of the heart.”  
<sup>3</sup>*For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>*When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (Col. 3:3-4)*  
<sup>4</sup>*The hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle spirit... (1 Pet. 3:4)**
- K. As Jesus stands boldly before God with righteousness in His spirit, so do we, even in this age.  
<sup>17</sup>*We have boldness...because as He is, so are we in this world. (1 Jn. 4:17)*

## II. A NEW ORIENTATION: LIVING ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT

- A. Paul contrasts two orientations to life that each believer must choose between (Rom. 8:1, 4, 5). Our primary orientation is determined by the information that we most rely on, either from our five senses or from our spirit. We are to shift our primary orientation from living by our five senses, physical appetites, and emotions to living by what has occurred in our spirit. We do this by living with confidence that we are enjoyed by God, as we dialogue with the indwelling Spirit, confess the Word, and choose godliness. This all begins with knowing who we are in Christ.  
<sup>5</sup>*For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. (Rom. 8:5)*
- B. We are transformed by changing the way we think. We must live in agreement with God’s Word.  
<sup>32</sup>*You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (Jn. 8:32)*  
<sup>2</sup>*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind... (Rom. 12:2)*
- C. The renewing of our mind always includes the confession of the Word back to God. Confession engages our inner man in the salvation process. Paul quoted from Deut. 30:10-14 in this passage.  
<sup>8</sup>*The word is near you, in your mouth...that is, the word of faith...<sup>9</sup>*that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart...you will be saved [delivered from the penalty and power of sin]. <sup>10</sup>*For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation [complete deliverance]. (Rom. 10:8-10)*  
<sup>10</sup>*Turn to the LORD...with all your heart...<sup>11</sup>*This commandment...is not too mysterious [too difficult to understand] for you, nor is it far off [out of reach]. <sup>12</sup>*It is not in heaven, that you should say, “Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us...” <sup>13</sup>*Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us...” <sup>14</sup>*But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. (Deut. 30:10-14)*******