



LIVING THE NEW LIFE

BY RICHARD ELWELL

A vibrant illustration of a tropical jungle scene. It features several Bird of Paradise flowers with bright orange and yellow petals and dark purple centers. The foliage includes large, dark green Monstera leaves with characteristic holes, and various palm fronds in shades of green and blue. The composition is dense and layered, creating a sense of depth and lushness.

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ULTIMATE OUTCOMES

WHY IDEAS MATTER.

www.ultimateoutcomes.org

Ultimate Outcomes is a non-profit organization founded on the fruit of the 30 plus years Pastor Richard Elwell and his wife Marty spent in church ministry, developing studies that would help their congregants discern and apply God's truth. Richard was a firm believer that the outcomes in our lives are a result of what ideas we choose to believe and follow.

After Richard died of a rare liver disease in 2018, Ultimate Outcomes has taken on the mission of sharing the Elwells' insights with all who desire to live a better life and are willing to look to God for understanding of the way they are to go. To that end, it makes available for free download on its website: Bible studies, Sunday school curriculum, and sermon podcasts.

Richard earned a Master of Divinity degree from the International School of Theology and was the founding and senior pastor at University Park Church, San Bernardino, CA for over 30 years. His passion was always to make God's truth understandable and applicable to all who hunger for it. Marty holds a Master's Degree in Teaching Processes from Claremont Graduate University. Her passion has been to train women and provide curriculum for parents who want to raise their children up in the ways of the Lord.



PREFACE

After my husband's death, I was reminiscing with my mother-in-law who shared with me that she had never seen anyone change more than Richard did in coming to Christ. She added to her statement, "It's a good thing, Marty, or you never would have married him."

My husband truly became a new creature in Christ at age 23 when he put his faith in Jesus. The atheist became an ardent believer; the one who worked to undermine people's faith became a pastor and worked tirelessly to build up others in the faith; the alcoholic stayed sober; and the hedonist became a faithful husband and a loving and wise father. Sometimes my husband would reflect on where he would be if Christ hadn't grabbed hold of him. He saw in childhood friends what he would have been: drunk, divorced and estranged from his children, and living on the edge with no resources. Thank God, Christ transformed him into something new.

What would have been a sad, wasted life became one that imparted life. Coming to Christ, giving up the old life and being made new is always a good thing. If this hadn't happened to Richard, I wouldn't be writing this preface, our five wonderful children would never have been given the gift of life, and University Park Church would have never been planted.

My prayer is that in going through the study, *Living the New Life*, you will gain greater understanding of what it means to come alive in Christ and experience the abundance of a relationship with him. Knowing his transformed life impacted you would please Richard to no end.

-Marty Elwell



STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to help believers understand what it means to be a new creation in Christ. Once we put our faith in Christ a process of renewal begins so we can more fully reflect God's image and serve his purposes.





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A NEW CREATION

LESSON FOCUS

INTRODUCTION

When you think of the idea of something being new, what characteristics come to mind?

Fresh, functions well, premier condition, highest state, exemplary

This lesson will look at the idea of those in Christ becoming a new creation.

Jeremiah 13:23

Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.

Can people make themselves into something new?

We try to change, but we continually go back to whatever we were. To be truly made new we need an outside agency that can change us on the inside, in other words, we need God.

RENEWED AND RECONCILED

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

2 Corinthians 5:14-21

¹⁴For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

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.

1. In this passage, what are two things that happen to us once we put our faith in Christ?

In Christ we become a new creation and through Christ we are reconciled to God.

2. What is implied by the idea that we have been reconciled with God?

Prior, there was something wrong in the relationship.

3. How is the idea of becoming new, related to the idea of being reconciled?
They are mutually dependent. It is necessary for us to become new in order to be reconciled and in order for us to be made new we have to be reconciled. Change is necessary for reconciliation, and reconciliation brings change.



Illustration: Children on drugs often steal money from their parents, which breaks the trust relationship between them. To restore the relationship they have to stop using drugs. Once they stop using drugs, they will no longer steal.

4. What condition is necessary for us to become a new creation? (vs. 17)

We have to be in Christ

5. What does it mean to be in Christ? (vs. 15)

We submit to and function under his authority. We offer ourselves to him, surrender to his leadership.



Illustration: We live in the United States so we function under its laws and social order. If we were to live somewhere else, we would be under different authority.

6. What does it mean to become a new creation?

Creation refers to something that was made by a creator

New means to be recreated in a right condition, something unlike what was before.

7. In becoming a new creation, what are the old things that pass away and what are the things that become new?

Old heart and desires change to become in agreement with God's heart and desires.

Old conduct (behavior) changes to become what pleases God.

Old thinking changes to thinking God's thoughts.

8. How can it be true that we are a new creation and still experience moral corruption?

We are not always in Christ.

Hebrews 10:14

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.



Remember: God has made us perfect through the sacrifice of Jesus for all eternity, but we are still in the process of being changed. Being made new is an on-going process.

RENEWAL AND THE TWO GREAT COMANDMENTS

Matthew 22:36-40

³⁶"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

³⁷Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

1. How does being obedient to the two great commandments relate to our being new creations?

It is evidence of the newness in us. We are unable to love God and others fully without being renewed. We can only consistently do what we ought to do once we are renewed.

2. When we use the expression that someone "is a new person," what do we mean?

There has been a big change in them for the better. You don't use the expression if a person is the same or worse.

3. How can we gage the degree of renewal in our own lives?

We examine what we were like before and compare it to how we are functioning now. Am I being beneficial to God and others by better thoughts, desires and actions?

SPIRIT-BREATHED

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

1. What does our original creation have in common with our becoming a new creation?

God originally breathed life into man. We are given new life by the breath of the Spirit in us. Both have the purpose to bring honor and glory to God by reflecting his image.

2. What does it mean to behold the glory of the Lord?

To see God for all he is, not have a limited view of him.

3. What effect does beholding the glory of the Lord have on us?

We see ourselves for who we are in comparison to God. It causes us to see our need to be changed into something new.



Remember: It is our hope and future to be changed more and more into Christ's image.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. In what way did beholding the glory of the Lord influence you today?
Were you aware of his presence throughout the day? How did knowing Christ impact you?
2. How do you go about beholding the glory of the Lord?
Did you see him at work in every situation? Did you experience him through his word and creation?
3. What is the freedom you are experiencing in the Spirit of God?
Did you experience freedom from evil desires, corruption or decay?

PRAYER

Thank Jesus that he died to bring you into a relationship with God and renew you. Thank the Spirit for living in you and making you new for God's glory and honor.

LESSON 2

A NEW MIND

REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

1. If everything is new in Christ, then why are we still struggling with moral corruption?
Being made new is an on-going process. We aren't always living and functioning in Christ.
2. Why does our relationship with God depend on our becoming new?
The old can't be reconciled. To be in right relationship we have to be made new.
3. What is the evidence of becoming new?
Godly thoughts, attitudes, and actions, good fruit

LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will look at our minds being renewed.

1. What is the distinction between our mind, heart, spirit and body?
Our mind is our intellect and reason. Our heart relates to feeling and emotion. Our spirit is what connects to God. Our body is our existence in the physical realm. The body is material while the others are non-material.
2. How does our mind affect our heart, spirit and body?
Our mind directs the others. What resides in our mind sets the course for our life and what we choose to do.

THE RENEWED MIND

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Romans 12:1-2

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

1. What does it mean to have a renewed mind?
One that has new thinking, perspectives and beliefs. One that is receptive to and thinks like Christ.
2. What results from our minds being renewed?
We are able to do what pleases God; we can think his thoughts and act on his will. We become a new and different being.

3. What is the difference between being conformed and being transformed?
If we are conformed, we become like something, of the same substance and form. If we are transformed, we are changed into something new of a new substance and form.
4. What are some examples of being conformed and examples of being transformed?
We conform to the expectations of people around us. We are transformed when we take on a new belief, which completely changes the way we think about something.



Illustration: A cake is conformed to the pan it is baked in. The batter is transformed into a cake by being baked.

5. Why does our transformation start with mental renewal?
Because the mind is the control center. Our ideas change our behavior. Knowing and understanding truth is the first step.
6. What part does being a living sacrifice play in the renewal of our minds?
We offer ourselves to Christ so that he does a work in us. We give ourselves over to his ideas, to be taught by him. We sacrifice ourselves to give to him.
7. What are we able to do after becoming transformed that we can't do without being transformed?
We can do what God wants and see that it is good and works well.

THE RIGHT MINDSET

Romans 8:5-6

⁵Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.

1. What does it mean to set our minds on something?
What we set our mind on is what will be magnified in our life.
2. What is the relationship between our mindset, our behavior and the consequences of our thoughts and actions?
Our mindset determines our actions; our actions have good or bad consequences depending on our mindset.

IDEAS HAVE OUTCOMES

1. How do the ideas we think about affect our view of life?

They determine our actions and the impact that we have on others. The way we view life determines what we focus on and do.



Illustration: The way we view the nature of man has a huge impact on our life. If we hold to the biblical view that man is fallen and his own sin is his biggest problem, then we will look for a solution to overcome our sin. If we think that our problems are due to society, or what other people do, then we will blame others for our problems and never overcome our sin.

2. What are examples of ideas that renew our mind?

If I think my purpose is to glorify God, then I will think about what he says is right to do rather than give into my worldly desires. I will stand for the truth regardless.

3. What are examples of thoughts that conform us to the world?

If I think my purpose is to do what benefits me, then I will do what I want rather than what pleases God. I will end up conforming to the culture rather than stand on the truth.

4. What is the will of God that we can test if our minds have been renewed?

The truth and commands that are contained in the Bible. The impact of the love of Christ in our life.

TAKE EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

³For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.

⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...

1. How does this passage correspond to Romans 12: 1-2?

The battle starts in the mind.

2. What are we waging war against?

The ideas people believe that hold them captive. Wrong ideas are the enemy that needs to be destroyed, not people themselves.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. What are you doing every day to think God's thoughts?
2. How can you guard your mind from giving into harmful thoughts?
3. How can you gage your own mental renewal?

PRAYER

Thank God for renewal of your mind. Pray that your desire would be to fill your mind with God and his truth so that you would live a new life in him.

A NEW HEART

REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

1. What does being a new creation mean we are?
United with Christ, made right, recreated in a right condition
2. Under what condition are we made new?
When we put our faith in Jesus and what he has done for us.
3. How does the renewal process begin?
With the transformation of the mind, a change in our thinking.
4. What are those who are transformed able to do that they couldn't do before?
Test God's will and see that it's good. Be able to do what God wants and see that it works.

LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will look at our hearts being made new. What is the relationship between our mind and our heart?

Ideas are planted in the mind; the heart is what grabs hold of the ideas and acts on them. The ideas that we believe and love take residence in our heart.

THE HEART AND MIND RELATIONSHIP

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Luke 8:4-15

⁴ And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable, ⁵ "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. ⁶ And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. ⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. ⁸ And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." As he said these things, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

⁹ And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, ¹⁰ he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.' ¹¹ Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. ¹² The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. ¹³ And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. (cont.)

¹⁴ And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. ¹⁵ As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

1. What does the idea of hearing, understanding and receiving the word of God show us about the relationship of our mind and heart?

What we hear and understand with our mind gets planted in a receptive heart.

2. Why do we need a good heart?

Only a good heart will receive the truth and provide the necessary conditions for it to grow.

3. What are the various types of hearts that would need to be renewed to become good?

Hard heart – won't listen, has to be broken up

Shallow heart – wants ease

Worldly, crowded heart – focuses on the world



Remember: Only a renewed heart receives the word in a productive way.

A NEW AND RESPONSIVE HEART

Ezekiel 36:26

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

Hebrews 8:6-12

⁶ But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.

⁷ For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.⁸ For he finds fault with them when he says: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,⁹ not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord.

¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.¹¹ And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.¹² For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

1. What is the difference between the old and new covenants?
Old is external – the law is in the mind, controlling outside force
New is internal – the law is written in the heart, desire to obey
2. What is the difference a new heart makes in our relationship with God?
New heart wants to do God's will and not offend or disobey God. It enables us to listen to and please him. It is responsive to him.
3. What is the difference between God's law being put in our mind and being written on our heart?
When it is put in our mind we know what we should do. When it is written on our heart we want to do what we should do.
4. Who does the writing on our heart and how does that relate to being a new creature?
God writes the law on our heart, which means that our newness depends on his work in us. We can't force it; we only can give our self over to him to work in us.

OUT OF THE HEART

Proverbs 4:23

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

1. How does the condition of our heart affect everything else in our life?
The condition of the heart determines what our life is like, the path we will follow.
2. How does having a new heart affect us?
It changes our whole view of life. We think about and experience things differently. We can see and understand the things of God. We want what God wants.

A DWELLING PLACE

Ephesians 3:17a

¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...

What is the ultimate purpose of our heart?

To be a place where Christ dwells, a temple for God to live in.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. Are you thinking good thoughts?
Paying attention to what is good and true
2. Are you receiving God's truth?
Embracing, taking in God's word
3. Are you welcoming Christ's presence in your heart?
Inviting him in

PRAYER

Thank Jesus that he died to make you a new creation. Pray for his work to be done in your heart so that you would truly want what God wants.

LESSON 4

A NEW SPIRIT

REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

1. What is the relationship between our mind and our heart?
Our mind determines what we pay attention to or let in, our heart determines what we hold onto. The heart is the reservoir of what we put into the mind. We believe with our mind, our heart is devoted to whatever we truly believe.
2. Why does renewal start in the mind?
We have to understand truth with our mind for it to get planted in our heart. You have to comprehend an idea before you can embrace it.
3. Why is the renewal of our heart central to our salvation?
The heart has to be changed and made new as it is the core of who we are and what we are devoted to. Who we are and what we do proceeds from the condition of our heart.

LESSON FOCUS

In this lesson, we will look at the renewal of our spirit.

Ezekiel 36:26

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

What is the difference between our heart and our spirit?

WISDOM FROM THE SPIRIT

PROVERBS 20:27

The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all his innermost parts.

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

⁶Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. ⁷But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. ⁸None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—¹⁰these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.

For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual ¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ¹⁶ "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

1. What is the function of our spirit?

To communicate with God, understand what comes from God, the unseen immaterial realm.



Illustration: A satellite dish receives the unseen communication from a satellite and makes it available to be seen on a television set.

2. What does a new spirit enable us to do?

We have the ability to hear from God and can understand and see what we couldn't understand and see before.

3. What is the difference between spiritual truth and non-spiritual truth?

Spiritual is a whole new source of information (6th sense) to understand immaterial reality. Non-spiritual truth is gained through reason, the senses, and experiences to understand the material world.

4. What is a natural person as described in verse 14?

A person who doesn't have spiritual insight, who only looks to the natural world for understanding. A spiritually dead person who does not have a renewed spirit.

5. Why does a natural person think the things of God are foolish?

He rejects God and is therefore separated from God and can't hear from him. He has no spiritual connection to God.

6. Are the things of God the only things that are spiritually discerned?

No, there are different spirits, some of which are evil. You can also have a spiritual connection to other people.

7. What do we call information that is spiritually discerned?

Intuition, discernment, inspiration, conscience, 6th sense

8. How does spiritual discernment distinguish humans from the rest of God's creation?

Humans were created in the image of God with a spirit for the purpose of bringing him glory. Animals weren't given a spirit from God. Animals act on instinct.

9. How reliable is our intuitive sense?

It is easy to be led astray by false prophets or evil spirits. The claim doesn't make something true. We are to test the spirits, check them against reality and God's word.

NEW SPIRIT/GOD'S SPIRIT

Ezekiel 36:26-27

²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

1. What is the nature of our new spirit?
It's alive and comes from God. It has power to enable us to follow God.
2. Does everyone who has God's Spirit have identical spirits?
We are all different and God works in us differently for his purposes.

THE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT IN PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Isaiah 26:9

My soul yearns for you in the night; my spirit within me earnestly seeks you. For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

John 4:24

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

1. Why is a renewed spirit essential to worship and prayer?
2. What happens if our prayers aren't spiritual in nature?



PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. How do you make room for God's spirit in your heart?
Confess sin and seek God.
2. How are you trying to seek God with your spirit?
Commune with him through study and prayer.
3. How do you know if you are connecting spiritually with and being inspired by God?
Refreshed, humbled, thankful, touched

PRAYER

Thank God that through a new spirit you can commune with and learn from him. Pray that you would be aware of anything that separates your spirit from him, confess your sin, and seek God and his way.

LESSON 5

A NEW BODY

REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

1. What is the relationship between our mind, our heart and our spirit?
All of them belong to the immaterial realm. The mind processes ideas and gains understanding. The heart stores up the ideas one treasures and holds onto. The spirit communes with God.
2. Why is our renewal in all three of these parts of us necessary for being reconciled with God?
We need to ask the question, "What am I like if any one of them is not renewed?" The mind would be ignorant. The heart would have impure motives and desires. Without the renewal of the spirit, there is no connection to God.

LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will look at God's future promise of a new body. What role does our body play in relation to our mind, heart and spirit?

The body is where the other three reside. It is the vehicle through which we act out what we hold in the mind and heart. The condition of the physical body affects the immaterial realms.

THE RENEWED MIND

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Romans 7:21-8:13

²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

⁸ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

⁵ 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 set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

⁶ For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

¹² So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

1. What is the war that Paul describes in Romans 7 between?
The mind/inner being (heart, spirit) against the body/flesh
2. What is our inner being?
Mind, heart and spirit
3. Why is there conflict between our body and its desires and our mind and what it wants?
Our inner being has been regenerated; our body hasn't been.
4. What is the solution to our bodily desires?
Feed the inner being. Set our mind on the things of God; put to death the flesh.

THE PROMISE OF NEW BODIES

Philippians 3:20-21

²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

1. When will we receive new bodies?
In heaven or when Jesus comes from heaven to complete our salvation.
2. How will our new bodies be different from our old ones?
The old is lowly; the new is glorious. Our physical bodies are so amazing that it is hard to even imagine how glorious our new body will be.

THE NATURE OF OUR NEW BODIES

1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 50-56

⁴² So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

⁵⁰ I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

1. Looking at the comparison of our old and our new bodies, what our new body be like?
It will be immortal and imperishable. It will not be degenerating.
2. What is the difference between having a natural body and a spiritual body?
A spiritual body will have a whole new set of capacities; it won't be limited. It won't be born into sin or deteriorating.
3. Why is gaining a new body our final victory over death?
God's work will be completed; it won't be undone. It is imperishable.

DEAD OR ALIVE

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1. When we die are we dead or alive?
The physical body is dead but the spiritual is alive.
2. How does the description of the dead being asleep give us insight into the condition of believers before they are given a new body?
In sleep the body is immobile, but the mind/spirit is still active in a dream state. When you wake up you are unaware of the time that passed.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

²³Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

1. What is Christ's ultimate goal in our renewal?
That we be made completely holy and whole in spirit, body, and soul.
2. Whose work is our renewal?
It is God's work, not ours. Our work is to give ourselves over to God.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. In what ways do you experience the battle between your unregenerate body and your regenerated mind, heart and spirit?
2. Are you surrendering your will to the will of God's Spirit within you? Are you setting your mind on what the Spirit wants or what the body wants?
3. Is the power of your flesh being put to death so you are able to say no to sinful desires?

PRAYER

Thank God that he wants to renew you completely in mind, heart, spirit and body. Thank him for the glorious day when you will be complete. Pray that in the meantime you would yield more completely to the work of the Spirit in you.

A NEW KINGDOM

REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

1. If in Christ we are a new creation, why are we still struggling with our old nature?
Part of us has been regenerated, but part of us hasn't. The inner self wants Christ, but the flesh wars against it. The battle will be won completely when we get a new body.
2. How do we win the battle between our inner self and our flesh?
We have to put to death the flesh and live by the Spirit. We set our mind and heart on God and the things above, not the world.

LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will look at the new kingdom that we have become citizens of.

Matthew 3:1-3

¹ In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ²“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” ³ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’”

Matthew 4:17

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Why do both John the Baptist and Jesus use the announcement of a new kingdom to introduce Christ's earthly ministry?

It signifies a change in governmental principles, a new leader and new rules to live by. It is a choice to put oneself under God's authority where the law is written on the heart, not enforced by outside regulations.



John 18:33-38

³³ So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

³⁴ Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?"

³⁵ Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?"

³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."

³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?"

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."

³⁸ Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in him."

1. Why did Jesus come into this world? (vs. 37)
To bear witness to the truth.
2. To what truth did Jesus come to bear witness? (vs. 36)
That he is the king of a new kingdom. He was offering citizenship into a different kingdom with a new king.
3. What does he mean by saying his kingdom is not of this world?
It doesn't operate in the same way as the world. It is different as it operates under different founding principles. It is also everlasting instead of perishing.
4. How can his kingdom be in this world, if it is not of this world?
It functions within this world, but operates on other principles that are not of this world. It is a kingdom motivated by love, not self-interest.

Luke 17:20-21

²⁰Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, or ²¹nor they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."

1. What does it mean to have Christ's kingdom within us?
We internalize the truth of Christ's teaching. We choose to be under the authority of God, not the outside authority of the world.
2. How does having Christ's kingdom in us relate to being a new creation in Christ?
Our heart and mind being changed enable us to function as citizens in Christ's kingdom.

Matthew 18:3-4

³“Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

1. What qualifies us to become citizens in the new kingdom?

A humble, child-like attitude that recognizes dependence upon God. We repent and choose to put ourself under God's authority to trust and follow him.

2. What does it mean to be converted?

To recognize where we are wrong and see what is needed to change. Convert is to change into something new.

3. What are citizens in the new kingdom like?

Submissive servants who are under Christ's authority. They don't think too highly of themselves; they are approachable like Christ with child-like humility, faith and dependency.

THE VALUE OF CITIZENSHIP IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM

Matthew 13:44-46

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶who on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all he had and bought it.

Why is gaining citizenship in Christ's kingdom worth more than everything else?

It is imperishable; nothing else will last. The material world can't be compared to the spiritual privileges and opportunities that are limitless in God's kingdom. In God's kingdom we are continually being renewed and made better.



CHRIST'S KINGDOM: PRESENT OR FUTURE

Daniel 7:13-14

¹³ "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Has Christ's kingdom come, or is it yet to come?

Both. Now we have Christ's Spirit ruling within us. In the future Christ will rule over everything.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. What is your attitude and relationship to the king of your new kingdom?
2. What threatens your being a good citizen in your new kingdom?
3. Are you enjoying the peace and security of your new kingdom?

PRAYER

Thank Jesus for all he has done for you, for bringing you new life in a new kingdom. Pray that you would truly place yourself under his leadership with child-like submission, dependence and love.

A NEW CONDUCT

REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

1. What is different about Christ's kingdom and the kingdom of the world?
They operate under different rulers, laws and principles. Christ's kingdom is eternal and built on humility, love, and the idea of benefiting others. The world is transient and based on power and self-interest.
2. How does being made new relate to the coming of Christ's kingdom?
We have to be made new to be able to live by the principles of the kingdom of Christ.

LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will look at the change in behavior that results from being made new in Christ.

1. What does our behavior reveal about us?
Our behavior shows what we believe and value, what we really want to do, what is in our mind and heart.
2. When a person's behavior changes what does that reveal about that person?
That they believe and value something new. There has been a change of mind/heart and an acceptance of new beliefs, which lead to a new attitude.



Illustration: A run-down house being fixed up is evidence of one of two things: either new ownership or a change in focus of the current owner.

NEW NATURE/NEW BEHAVIOR

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Romans 12:9-21

⁹ Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

1. Why does achieving Paul's description of Christian conduct require us to have a new nature?
We can't do those things without a new nature; they are contrary to what our old nature wants to do.
2. Without a new nature, why can't we consistently act contrary to our old nature?
Without being changed it takes too much effort to sustain. We easily fall back into old patterns of behavior.
3. How are these descriptions of the actions of the new man contrary to the actions of our old man?
The old man wants people to pay for their evil, looks down on others, and pushes for own way, resulting in conflict rather than peace.
4. What is genuine love and what does it have to do with hating evil?
Genuine love wants what is best for other people. That means that you recognize what is hurting someone else and want to make it right. You hate evil because evil is anything that destroys and hurts others.
5. What is so radical about this new approach to resisting and conquering evil?
We don't try to defeat it on our own. We have to surrender to and commune with Christ so we can conquer evil. We don't view other people as our enemy; it is the wrong ideas that they believe and hold on to.
6. What is it about our new nature that gives birth to being consistent in prayer, being patient in tribulation, and rejoicing in hope?
The new nature relies on and abides in Christ so what comes out of us is because Christ is in us. We want what Christ wants and are empowered by him to do what we are unable to in our old nature.



Remember: The more we abide in Christ the more consistent we will be in what he calls us to do.

7. When you meet someone new and they say, "You're a Christian aren't you?", what are they responding to?
They can see through your actions and how you respond to provocation and difficult situations that you are different.

GOOD FRUIT

Luke 6:43-45

⁴³ “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

1. What is the prerequisite to engage in consistent good behavior?

A good heart acting out of a new nature leads to good behavior. Becoming good to do good, rather than thinking that doing good will lead to becoming good.

2. How can we know if we've been made new in Christ?

We examine our words and conduct and whether or not they reflect Christ. New life in Christ should lead to a new way of thinking and new behaviors.

GOD IS LOVE

1 John 4:7-11

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

What do God's nature and our new nature have in common?

Our new nature comes from God and is a mirror of God's nature. Since God's nature is to love, our new nature loves too. It wants to bless and benefit others.



PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. What have you done this week to intentionally benefit another person?
2. Is there anyone in your life that you think you are too good to associate with?
3. How have you shown that you are willing to bless those who have harmed you?

PRAYER

Thank God that he wants to make you new in all ways. Pray that you would yield more to him so that the things you do reflect his nature, showing his presence in your life.

A NEW ENVIRONMENT

REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

1. Why doesn't the fact that in Christ all things have been made new mean our struggle against sin is over?
In one sense we are new, but we still exist in the old. The inner man is at war with the flesh. Being made new makes the conflict more evident.
2. How can we use our behavior to gauge our renewal?
We see changes in our thoughts and actions. We don't do what we did before. We are convicted when we do things we shouldn't.

LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will conclude the study of the new life by looking at God's future promise of a new environment.

1. What is an environment?
An environment is the surroundings or medium in which we live.
2. What is the difference and relationship between our physical and spiritual environments?
Our physical environment is created by relationships with people and the world. The spiritual is created by our relationship with God. They both impact us. The physical impacts the spiritual and the spiritual impacts the physical.

A NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Revelation 21:1-8

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

⁵And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

⁶And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

Revelation 21:22-22:5

²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

1. In what way is the new heaven, the new earth, and the new city of God different from our personal renewal?

Everything in them will be completely new; nothing will be left that is old. Our personal renewal at this time is partial; it isn't complete.

2. What are some of the unique features in the new city of God?

God is present and everything revolves around him. The life and light are from his presence.

3. What is absent from the new city of God?

Sin, pain, suffering, detestable things. There is no death, no sun, no temple, no sea, no barriers, no curse.

4. How would you contrast the old order of creation with the new order of creation?

The old order is subject to entropy; it is decaying and a struggle. The new order is full of life and well-being; everything is continually improving. There is nothing corrupt in it.

5. What does the purity of the water flowing from the temple symbolize?

It proceeds from God and brings life. There is nothing impure in it.

6. What kind of life does the water of life provide?

It is completely pure and brings health and wholesomeness; it enables us to function in a new way.

7. What kind of life does the tree of life provide?
Healing of relationships, free from the curse of the fall.
8. Who inhabits the new city of God?
Those whose names are written in the book of life; those who are being made new.

THE GROANING OF CREATION

Romans 8:18-23

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

1. Why does creation itself eagerly long for the revealing of the sons of God? (vs. 19-21)
It will be set free from its bondage to corruption; It is looking to be released from entropy and breakdown.
2. Why is our current suffering not worth comparing to our future glory?
Our current is temporary and seems huge, but experiencing glory (the radiance of God) will make it seem like nothing. David Crowder in his song *Lay Down Your Burdens* says, "There is no sorrow that heaven can't heal"

LOST MEMORY

Isaiah 65:17

¹⁷ "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind."

Why is the absence of remembering the old an important characteristic of the new?
We won't feel sorrow about the past. We won't remember those who didn't make it. Whatever is painful won't be remembered.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. Are you more interested in preparing for the new environment or in trying to fix this environment?

In what ways?

2. Is your spiritual environment being renewed already?

How?

3. Are you seeking the reality of God's presence in your life even now?

How?

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

PRAYER

Thank God that he has prepared a perfect place where all things will be completely new. Pray that your focus would be on him and the work he is doing, rather than on the evil around you. Pray that you would seek his presence more each day.

