Session 13

Made NEW

CENTRAL TRUTH | We are new creations who are reconciled to God and empowered to help others know Him.

Summer break can feel like the longest or best two to three months of the year, depending on your situation. Regardless of what your summer is like, you and your classmates and friends change over those months—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Seriously, sometimes people come back to school and look or act totally different, to the point that you might feel a bit surprised or even guilty that you didn't recognize them. While these changes can seem dramatic, nothing is more dramatic than the change that happens when you trust Jesus as Savior. He makes you a completely new person, spiritually, as He reconciles you to God and empowers you to help others know Him so He can change their lives too.

REFLECT

What questions do I have about God?

What questions do I have about myself?

What questions do I have about the world and those around me?

Explore SCRIPTURE

Memorize 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

2 CORINTHIANS 5:6-10

6 These people are dangerous reefs at your
love feasts as So we are always confident and
know that while we are at home in the body we
are away from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith,
not by sight. 8 In fact, we are confident, and we
would prefer to be away from the body and
at home with the Lord. 9 Therefore, whether
we are at home or away, we make it our aim to
be pleasing to him. 10 For we must all appear
before the judgment seat of Christ, so that
each may be repaid for what he has done in
the body, whether good or evil.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-15

11 Therefore, since we know the fear of the
Lord, we try to persuade people. What we
are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to
your consciences. 12 We are not commending
ourselves to you again, but giving you an
opportunity to be proud of us, so that you
may have a reply for those who take pride
in outward appearance rather than in the
heart. 13 For if we are out of our mind, it is for
God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.
14 For the love of Christ compels us, since we
have reached this conclusion, that one died
for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for
all so that those who live should no longer live
for themselves, but for the one who died for
them and was raised.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

16 From now on, then, we do not know anyone
from a worldly perspective. Even if we have
known Christ from a worldly perspective,
yet now we no longer know him in this way.
17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is
a new creation; the old has passed away,
and see, the new has come! 18 Everything is
from God, who has reconciled us to himself
through Christ and has given us the ministry
of reconciliation. 19 That is, in Christ, God was
reconciling the world to himself, not counting
their trespasses against them, and he has
committed the message of reconciliation
to us. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors
for Christ, since God is making his appeal
through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be
reconciled to God." 21 He made the one who
did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him
we might become the righteousness of God.

Refer to page 5 for a description of the 7 Arrows of Bible Reading.

Day 01

JOHN 3:1-3

READ & RESPOND

Nicodemus was a Pharisee who, unlike so many of the Pharisees, believed that Jesus came from God. He went to Him one night and had the discussion that today's passage is from. Jesus told Nicodemus that to be a part of His kingdom, he must be born again. The dialogue that follows has comical moments, as Jesus spoke in symbolism and Nico was a pretty literal guy. But his reaction was fair. What does being "born again" actually mean? Being born again is a spiritual reboot by God. When you put your trust in Jesus, God gives you a new life—eternal life—and officially adopts you into His family. This spiritual heart transformation isn't something we earn by working hard; it's a gift of God's grace that we receive by faith in Christ.

← **Why do you think a powerful Pharisee would be afraid to talk to Jesus in the daylight?**

↓ **Why is Nicodemus's "success" not enough to get him into the kingdom?**

↔ **How does this change the way you look at "religious" people who might still be missing the point of knowing Jesus?**

MEMORIZE

Write out **2 Corinthians 5:17** on a notecard. Read the passage out loud five times. Next, read it in a whisper five times. Finally, say it in your head with your eyes closed five times.

PRAY

Lord, thank You that my past mistakes don't define me. Please give me a new heart and the courage to stop relying on my own efforts. Help me fully trust You today.

Day 02

2 CORINTHIANS 5:6-10

READ & RESPOND

When we are born again, our hearts long for home—the presence of Jesus Christ. We don't see Him with our physical eyes, but our faith confidently tells us that He watches us, that He is near, and that He is intimately involved in our earthly lives. And for that reason, we show our love by obeying His commands (see John 14:15). One day, we will all give an account of what we did with our lives. The judgment seat of Christ doesn't determine our salvation—that was already settled—but it will be a time of examination and reward. He will reward us for faithful works and will not reward us for neglecting our opportunities. So, while we are in this life, we prepare our hearts for home by doing His good works.

← **Why did Paul need to remind the early church that their current home is temporary?**

↓ **What does it mean for your daily choices to prioritize "pleasing Him" over pleasing your peers?**

↷ **In what area of life do you need to stop living by "sight" and start trusting God's plan?**

MEMORIZE

Write out **2 Corinthians 5:17** on a piece of paper or notecard. On the back, write only the first letter of every word. Keep attempting this until you can use only the first letters to say the verse comfortably.

PRAY

Jesus, shift my eyes from what I see to what is eternal. Help me live today not for popularity or comfort, but to please You. May my life reflect the reality of Your presence.

Day 03

2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-15

READ & RESPOND

Those good works for Jesus we talked about yesterday compel us to share the gospel with others. We want to please Jesus, to live for Him. Our God-given "heart transplant" comes with a new set of spiritual eyes. We see people and the world differently. Our concerns, standards, and desires change. Where we once lived for ourselves, we live for Christ. We serve Him and His kingdom purposes. The Holy Spirit, through a process called sanctification, works in us and makes us more and more like Christ. And as we become more like Him, we find our purpose, value, and priorities in Him.

What is the main point Paul is making about his motivation for sharing the gospel?

Why is it our natural tendency to live for ourselves rather than for Jesus?

How does seeing people through Christ's eyes—instead of by worldly standards—change how you treat someone you dislike?

MEMORIZE

Instead of writing out **2 Corinthians 5:17** in words, draw the verse using icons or symbols. Translating the passage into images helps you to process the meaning of the words.

PRAY

Jesus, thank You for loving me enough to die for me. Help me stop living for my own reputation and start living for Yours. May Your love control everything I do.

Day 04

2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

READ & RESPOND

Did you know that as a believer, you have a job? You are an ambassador for Christ. An ambassador acts as an official representative of a nation in a foreign land. Christians are the representatives of Christ's kingdom. We represent the interests of heaven, our homeland, and reflect its official positions. Jesus gave us a message to share: "Be reconciled to God." That's the job—spread the message! Christ did the reconciliation for us by becoming sin so that we become God's righteousness. He paid the sin debt we owe and cleared our sin account. Wiped it to zero. Completely reconciled. Why? Because He loves us (see John 3:16). So, believer, we have a job to do! We must share His message of reconciliation.

↑ **God took the initiative to reconcile us to Himself. What does this tell you about His character?**

↓ **Paul calls us "ambassadors." If you represent heaven, how does that change your identity?**

→ **As a new creation, what is one "old" mindset or grudge you need to leave behind?**

MEMORIZE

Record yourself reading **2 Corinthians 5:17** different ways: (1) in a normal voice, (2) in a whisper, (3) as fast as you possibly can. Can you think of other ways? Be sure to listen back to the recordings.

PRAY

Jesus, thank You for making me new. Help me to stop viewing others through my own judgment and start seeing them through Your love. Use me as Your ambassador to bring reconciliation to my world today.

Day 05

ROMANS 5:10-11

READ & RESPOND

When sin came into the world through Adam and Eve, the personal and familiar relationship God had designed to have with us was broken. Instead of a special relationship between Creator and creation, we became His enemies. A payment had to be made to remove the sin debt—a payment that we are incapable of paying. But because He loved us so much, God sent Jesus to earth, where He lived a sinless life (so He had no debt), and had Him make the payment for us. The price? Death on the cross. In a great exchange, He took our debt and gave us His righteousness. We are completely undeserving of the reconciliation He made for us, yet His love for us is just that great! That's something to boast about!

Before we were friends with God, what was our relationship like? How did He fix it?

What does it say about God's character that He loved us and initiated peace before we even cared about Him?

How does it feel to realize that we couldn't fix our own broken relationship with God—that it required Him to act first?

MEMORIZE

Rewrite **2 Corinthians 5:17** in today's modern language. You could even text-speak it, but be sure to keep the theology accurate! Paraphrasing in everyday language helps us comprehend what we're memorizing.

PRAY

Lord, thank You for loving me even when I was far from You. Help me to live in that peace today and show that same grace to everyone around me.