



**"Gospel Renewal"**  
(2 Corinthians 5:16-21)

Study Guide for the week of  
February 12, 2023

**The Ministry of Reconciliation - [2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2](#)**

**Some questions to answer and discuss:**

1. When have you seen someone change in a significant way?
2. Why did Christ die for everyone? ([5:15](#))
3. How did Paul change the way he looked at people? ([5:16](#))
4. What is true about every person in Christ? ([5:17](#))
5. What happened when God sent His Son to earth? ([5:18](#))
6. What does God do with our sins when we are reconciled to Him? ([5:19](#))
7. How is a Christian an ambassador? ([5:20](#))
8. Why should we listen carefully to the message about Christ? ([6:1-2](#))
9. What difference does it make that Christians are counted as Christ's ambassadors?
10. Where is your ministry of reconciliation?
11. What is one way you can represent Christ to your friends and coworkers this week?

**Life Application Bible Notes**

[5:11](#) Having a "fearful responsibility to the Lord" does not mean that believers become paralyzed. On the contrary, knowing God's perfection and that he will judge everyone's actions ([5:10](#)) should spur Christians to good deeds, to what pleases our God. The fear of the Lord also frees believers from all of life's anxieties and worries. Knowing that God is "for us" ([Romans 8:31](#)) can keep believers unafraid of earthly powers—people, governments, or the forces of nature ([Proverbs 3:25, 26](#)). God takes care of his own. The fear of God gives us uncommon courage in the face of life's troubles.

[5:12](#) Those who "brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart" are the false preachers (see [2:17](#)), who were concerned only about getting ahead in this world. They were preaching the Good News for money and popularity, while Paul and his companions were preaching out of concern for eternity. You can identify false preachers by finding out what really motivates them. If they are more concerned about themselves than about Christ, avoid them and their message.

[5:13-15](#) Everything that Paul and his companions did was to honor God. Not only did fear of God motivate them ([5:11](#)), but Christ's love controlled their actions. The word for "controls" means "to hold fast." In other words, the love of Christ was constraining them to certain courses of action. They knew that Jesus, out of his great love, had given up his life for their sakes. He had not acted out of his own self-interest, selfishly holding on to the glory of heaven

that he already possessed ([Philippians 2:6](#)). Instead, Jesus had willingly "died for everyone." Because Christ died for us, we also are dead to our old life. Like Paul, we should no longer live to please ourselves; we should spend our life pleasing Christ.

**5:17** Christians are brand-new people on the *inside*. The Holy Spirit gives them new life, and they are not the same anymore. We are not reformed, rehabilitated, or reeducated—we are re-created (new creations), living in vital union with Christ ([Colossians 2:6, 7](#)). At conversion we do not merely turn over a new leaf; we begin a new life under a new Master.

While this newness is true individually, Paul is saying much more. Not only are believers changed from within, but a whole new order of creative energy began with Christ. There is a new covenant, a new perspective, a new body, a new church. All of creation is being renewed. So take notice. This is not a superficial change that will be quickly superseded by another novelty. This is an entirely new order of all creation under Christ's authority. It requires a new way of looking at all people and all of creation. Does your life reflect this new perspective?

**5:18, 19** God brings us back to himself (reconciles us) by blotting out our sins (see also [Ephesians 2:13-18](#)) and making us right with him. When we trust in Christ, we are no longer God's enemies, or strangers or foreigners to him. Because we have been reconciled to God, we have the privilege of encouraging others to do the same, and thus we are those who have the "task of reconciling people to him."

**5:20** An ambassador is an official representative of one country to another. As believers, we are Christ's ambassadors, sent with his message of reconciliation to the world. An ambassador of reconciliation has an important responsibility. We dare not take this responsibility lightly. How well are you fulfilling your commission as Christ's ambassador?

**5:21** When we trust in Christ, we make an exchange: He takes our sin and makes us right with God. Our sin was laid on Christ at his crucifixion. His righteousness is given to us at our conversion. This is what Christians mean by Christ's atonement for sin. In the world, bartering works only when two people exchange goods of relatively equal value. But God offers to trade his righteousness for our sin—something of immeasurable worth for something completely worthless. How grateful we should be for his kindness to us.

**6:1** How could the Corinthian believers ignore God's message? Perhaps they were doubting Paul and his words, confused by the false teachers, who taught a different message. The people heard God's message but did not let it affect what they said and did. How often do you ignore God's message?

**6:2** God offers salvation to all people. Many people put off a decision for Christ, thinking that there will be a better time—but they could easily miss their opportunity altogether. There is no time like the present to receive God's forgiveness. Don't let anything hold you back from coming to Christ. The right time is now!

Study Guide questions and notes are from

