



Links Players

Why Links? - Transformation

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5: 17, ESV)

Transforming the golf swing from one move to another is usually hard-fought. Taking the time to adopt a new move that fits the overall mechanics of your current swing can be hazardous to your mental and emotional health. Furthermore, assuming you've adopted the right idea, you must commit to the number of "reps" it will take to make it second nature.

Changing our swing is one thing; adopting change in our life is a new ball of wax. One of our colleagues recently remarked, "no one likes change except a baby with a wet diaper." That's funny!

What Paul is after here is much grander than we initially expected. In the original language, this verse reads as follows: "...if anyone is in Christ, **new creation**. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

Paul is teaching us that a whole new world has dawned with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul's more specific point is that when someone is "in Christ," they immediately find themselves in the "new creation."

It might take a few moments for that idea to sink in but stay with it. Paul's point is that when we are born again, we are ushered into the "new creation" that began two thousand years ago when Christ conquered Adam's sin-cursed world of sin, death, and the grave.

Biblically speaking, the "age to come" dawned when Jesus walked out of that tomb. Many scholars now say that we are in the "already-not yet" of Christ's reign. That's a mind-bender. Nevertheless, it's true. The objective world-to-come has been inaugurated at Messiah's first coming and will find its consummation at his second coming.

What does this have to do with personal change? One way to answer that question is as follows: We are becoming what we already are "in Christ!" That requires Spirit-enabled insight by beholding the glory of God in the face of Christ found in Scripture.

So, who are we? According to the surrounding texts, we are those who no longer live for ourselves but for him, who died and rose again for our sake (2 Cor. 5:15). Additionally, we discover that living to please him is learned over a lifetime (2

Cor. 5:9). Furthermore, we are ambassadors of Christ, imploring those committed to the present age to abandon their loyalties to an old regime that is cursed and dying (2 Cor. 5:20).

A whole new way of existing has arrived through Jesus Christ. That's a change worth pursuing!

Prayer - Jesus, open our eyes to see ourselves as you see us. Open our eyes to who we are "in Christ."

READING - 2 Corinthians 5: 1-21

OPENING QUESTIONS: Discuss the most complicated swing change you've ever made among yourselves.

1. In verses 1-5, Paul uses two metaphors to describe our earthly and heavenly existence. What are they? What do they signify? What pledge has the Lord given us to assure us of our future heavenly existence? Discuss.

2. In verses 6-10, Paul begins with, "So, we are always of good courage...." How does "So" tie into the previous five verses? Paul also says of Christians that we have a new motivation. What is that?

3. In verse 15, Paul tells us something else about our new existence in Christ. Is this something that happens immediately or over time, or both? Discuss.

4. No matter our vocation, what does Paul teach us about our calling (see verse 20) in the "new creation." Discuss what it might mean to be an _____.
