

# 5-Day Bible Study



# YOU ARE A NEW CREATION

By Christopher Reese



Throughout this Bible study are links corresponding to Scripture verses on Bible Gateway that are synchronized with insightful reference resource notes.



## Day 1:

### A New Creation ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#))

The late pastor and author Adrian Rogers began one of his New Year's sermons with this observation:

“ We have already begun this New Year. We're on the threshold of something, we don't know what, but something is going to happen this year. Jesus may come this year, or we may go this year, but we know—we know—that we must face this New Year with power, and with faith, and with joy, and we must live in victory this New Year. ”

[Adrian Rogers, “Setting Sail in a New Year,” in *Adrian Rogers Sermon Archive* (Signal Hill, CA: Rogers Family Trust, 2017)]

In this same spirit, we want to focus in this Bible study on our walk with Christ and how we might serve him with a renewed heart, mind, love, and power. In the following five studies we'll examine five Scripture passages that explore different dimensions of our new life in Christ, beginning with [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) and a look at our status as new creations.

---

## A New Creation

Writing to the church in the Greek city of [Corinth](#), the apostle [Paul](#) declared, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).

We begin our study with this verse because it's foundational to our identity as Christians, and the cornerstone of all the other truths we'll be discussing. Paul begins by specifying that he's talking about those who are “in Christ.” Anyone who has accepted Christ as their Lord and his sacrificial death for their sins is *in Christ* ([Romans 6](#)). Being in Christ means we're so closely identified with him that numerous things that are true of him are also true of us. We're “crucified with Christ” ([Galatians 2:20](#)), “buried with him” ([Romans 6:4](#)), “raised with Christ” ([Colossians 3:1](#)), and “seated . . . with him in the heavenly realms” ([Ephesians 2:6](#)). To be in Christ is to have a deep and profound connection with our Lord and Savior.



Paul goes on to say that if we're in Christ we're a "new creation." C. S. Lewis makes a helpful point in understanding what it means to be a new creation by highlighting two Greek words for *life*—*bios* and *zoe*. *Bios* refers to natural, biological life, while *zoe* refers to spiritual life. In his book [Mere Christianity](#) he writes,

*“ in our natural state we are not sons of God. . . . we have not got Zoe or spiritual life: only Bios or biological life which is presently going to run down and die. Now the whole offer which Christianity makes is this: that we can, if we let God have His way, come to share in the life of Christ. If we do, we shall then be sharing a life which . . . always has existed and always will exist. Christ is the Son of God. If we share in this kind of life we also shall be sons of God. ”*

[C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperOne, 2001), 177].

This is why [Jesus](#) emphasized that anyone who wished to enter the kingdom of God had to be born again ([John 3:3](#)). We're born into the world naturally and biologically, but to enjoy eternal life with God we have to be reborn spiritually, by which we become new creations. As Charles Stanley [helpfully elaborates](#),

*“ The new birth experience is exactly what God says it is—a fresh beginning. When we are born again, we not only have our sin forgiven and our guilt removed, but we also receive the Holy Spirit—who comes to indwell us and live Christ's life through us. We can never be what we were before, because we have been born into His life—with a new spirit and nature. And because of that, our desires and goals should be conformed to those that God has for us. ”*

Theologians refer to this new birth as *regeneration*. When God regenerates us, we not only begin with a “clean slate” in relation to our sin and guilt, but also become a vessel of Christ's life through the Holy Spirit. Max Lucado [explains colorfully](#),

*“ [Regeneration] is more than a removal of sin. It is a deposit of power. It is as if your high-mileage, two-cylinder engine was extracted, and a brand-new Ferrari engine was mounted in your frame. God removed the old motor, caked and cracked and broken with rebellion and evil, and replaced it with a humming, roaring version of himself. He embedded within you the essence of Christ. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” ”*

Although the new birth is a transformative experience—literally, a new you—Scripture also teaches that becoming like Christ is a lifelong process and that along the way we will all “stumble in many ways” ([James 3:2](#); [Philippians 2:12](#)). Thus, we should follow Paul's example and when we stumble or fall, pick ourselves up, and forget “what is behind and [strain] toward what is ahead” ([Philippians 3:13](#)).



---

## Reflections

- What changes are you thankful for that have taken place in your life since you became a new creation?
  - What are some ways you would like to more fully live into your new life in Christ?
  - Is there some failure in your past that you should let go of so you can “press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called” you ([Philippians 3:14](#))?
- 

## Day 2:

### The New Self ([Ephesians 4:22-24](#))

Our status as new creations in Christ is foundational to everything else we’ll be discussing in this series. This is illustrated in our Scripture passage for today, [Ephesians 4:22-24](#):

“*You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*”

Because we’re new creations, as we saw in [2 Corinthians 5:17](#), we have a new self, and Paul has this truth in mind as he gives these instructions to the believers in [Ephesus](#).

Using figurative language, Paul compares our old and new selves to clothing, and he wants us to wear one set (the new self) and put the other set away (the old self). What Paul is actually describing with this metaphor is the conflict that every believer experiences between our old, [sinful nature](#) and our new-creation self that is “created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” As he does in many other places in his letters, Paul is urging us to become in practice what we already are in Christ.

Although Christians are new creations, they still contend with their old, sinful nature. For example, Paul writes [to the church in Galatia](#):

“*The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other; so you are not free to carry out your good intentions (Galatians 5:17 NLT).*”



One of the key characteristics of the new self is that it's led and illuminated by the Holy Spirit ([Romans 8:14](#)).

Embracing our new self requires a deliberate effort. We must resolve to wrap ourselves in the new self as well as hang up the old self, and this will be a daily necessity, just as it is with our actual clothing.

So, how can we tell the difference between the old self and the new self? In the same chapter of Galatians we read from above, Paul gives a fairly long list of behaviors that naturally flow out of each self—the old and the new. Concerning the old self, the “flesh,” Paul writes,

“*The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21).*”

By contrast, the words and actions of the person who embraces the new self—a self led by the Holy Spirit—reflects these qualities: “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)).

The late pastor and author James Montgomery Boice insightfully observed,

“*We, like Lazarus, have been brought out of death into life by Christ. As part of that spiritual miracle our old graveclothes, which were appropriate for a corpse but not for a living body, have been taken off, and we have been re clothed in wedding garments in preparation for that great wedding supper of the Lamb [Revelation 19:6-9]. From this point on we should act like members of the wedding party.*”

[James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 167.]

---

## Reflections

- How have you experienced being renewed and transformed by the Holy Spirit?
  - What spiritual practices or disciplines have you found most helpful for putting aside the old self and putting on the new self?
  - Write out or mentally compose a prayer in which you ask God to help you set aside your old self and to make the new self a greater reality in your life by His Spirit.
-





## Day 3:

### Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind ([Romans 12:2](#))

So far we've seen we are new creations in Christ and that this involves being [regenerated](#) as a new self. We also saw last time that Scripture instructs us to turn away from our old selves and to walk forward into our new selves, comparing that act to changing from one set of clothes into another—from grave clothes to wedding garments, in James Montgomery Boice's memorable image.

One statement from [Ephesians 4:22-24](#) that we didn't discuss, but will explore in today's study, is this: "You were taught . . . to be made new in the attitude of your minds" ([vv. 22-23](#)). This passage provides a helpful segue to today's Scripture, which is [Romans 12:2](#):

“*Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*”

Notice that both passages focus on the *mind*. As we'll see, the mind plays a uniquely important role in experiencing the fullness of life that Jesus desires us to have ([John 10:10](#)). If we want to grow spiritually, we must cultivate a Christian mind.

One unfortunate aspect of modern Christianity is that the mind is often ignored, downplayed, or even denigrated. There's a tendency sometimes to view Christian faith as primarily an emotional experience or as something that pragmatically “works.” While our emotions are important and part of being made in God's image ([Genesis 1:26-27](#)), and while Christianity does transform our lives in practical ways, the primary way we mature as believers is through growth in our *knowledge* of God.

This is why Paul frequently emphasized the importance of the mind and knowledge. He praised the Christians in [Rome](#) for being “filled with *knowledge* and competent to instruct one another” ([Romans 15:14](#)). He stated that one aspect of following Christ is to “demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the *knowledge* of God” and to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” ([2 Corinthians 10:5](#)). He desired that all believers “reach unity in the faith and in the *knowledge* of the Son of God” so they would “become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” ([Ephesians 4:13](#)).

Practically speaking, as Christian scholar J. P. Moreland points out, developing a Christian mind involves seeing “all of life in light of a Christian worldview.” He goes on to explain,

“*A worldview is the sum total of all the things one believes, especially in regard to reality, truth, knowledge, and value. A Christian worldview is a biblically grounded set of beliefs about all of life, from work, recreation, and finances to God, life after death, and morality. One tries to think of all of life in light of the teachings of holy Scripture and, more specifically, of the Lord Jesus. There is no secular/sacred separation in such a mind.*”



[J. P. Moreland, “How Does One Develop a Christian Mind?” in [\*CSB Apologetics Study Bible\*](#), ed. Ted Cabal (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1416.]

Thus, we want to view every area and issue of life through the lens of the Christian worldview so we have God’s perspective on every matter of importance. In order to do so, [Romans 12:2](#) describes two courses of action. The first is: “Do not conform to the pattern of this world,” or as the [J. B. Phillips translation](#) renders it, “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own [mold].”

[\*The Believer’s Bible Commentary\*](#) observes that the term “world” here means “the society or system that man has built in order to make himself happy without God. It is a kingdom that is antagonistic to God.” This is why James says “anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God” ([James 4:4](#)). This doesn’t mean we should separate ourselves from society and retreat to the mountains, but we should resist any aspect of society that runs contrary to God’s revealed will in Scripture.

The second course of action for developing a Christian mind is: “be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” The primary way our minds are renewed is through study of and meditation on Scripture. Paul explained to [Timothy](#) that Scripture is useful for “training in righteousness so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)).

Commenting on the need to renew our minds, [Charles Stanley](#) relates,

“ [We] are responsible for renewing our mind ([Rom. 12:2](#)). Though God saves us and gives us a new spirit, He does not give us a new brain. Disobedience and rebellion have dug or worn many ugly trenches in our minds. So we must meditate on the Bible, which expresses the thoughts of God. Meditation is more than reading—it involves thinking about what the words mean and then applying the truth we discover. When we meditate on His Word and depend upon the Spirit’s power to help us put it into practice, our minds undergo the wonderful process of transformation. That is how we obtain “the mind of Christ” ([1 Cor. 2:16](#)). ”

Just as we must put off the graveyard suit of the old self and put on the wedding clothes of the new self, so we must also turn away from the world’s ways of thinking and seek daily to renew our minds through Scripture and a focus on Jesus. We’ll then gain the mind of Christ and be able to discern God’s good, pleasing, and perfect will.



---

## Reflections

- Why do you think the mind plays such a key role in our spiritual growth?
  - What are a few key ways the Christian worldview differs from the worldview of modern society and culture?
  - What activities or practices have you found most helpful in studying and meditating on Scripture? Have you tried memorizing Scripture? Can you quote a verse(s) from memory? (See the [Scripture Engagement section](#) on Bible Gateway for further information.)
- 

## Day 4:

### A New Command: Love ([John 13:34-35](#))

We're exploring vital aspects of living into our new life in Christ. This is not a destination we'll reach this side of Heaven; it's a life-long journey, and this study gives us the opportunity to reflect on where we currently are.


It seems fitting that, for we who are new creations in Christ—who have a new self—Jesus would also provide us with a new set of instructions. This is what we find in Jesus' teachings in the [Gospels](#). One instruction he stressed above all is the topic of today's study found in [John 13:34-35](#).

“*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*”

In one sense, this was not a new commandment for God's people. In the [book of Leviticus](#), God had instructed, “love your neighbor as yourself” ([Leviticus 19:18](#)). What was new, however, was *the way* in which Jesus' followers were to love: they should no longer love others as they loved themselves, *but as Jesus had loved them*.

Jesus' love for his disciples (and for us) is multifaceted, but two important ways he demonstrated his love was through *service and sacrifice*. Concerning service, Jesus called the 12 disciples and spent three years teaching them about God and modeling how they should do the work of [God's kingdom](#). One particular act of service exemplified the servant attitude that Jesus wanted the disciples to imitate. Shortly before instructing them to love another, Jesus washed his disciples' feet. This was highly countercultural, as the *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* [explains](#).





“ After travelers had come a long distance, the host was to provide water for their feet as a sign of hospitality, but personally washing someone else’s feet was considered servile. Filth and dust were common in streets, and it was customary to wash one’s feet when entering a home. ”

This task was normally done by the lowest of the household servants, so it was astonishing that a teacher and prophet like Jesus would wash his followers’ feet. But Jesus had an important lesson to impart: “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” ([John 13:14-15](#)). Thus, *service* is an important aspect of how we should love as Jesus loved.

Second, Jesus’ love was a *sacrificial* love. “Greater love has no one than this,” he told the disciples: “to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” ([John 15:13](#)). As the Good Shepherd, Jesus would lay his life down for the sheep ([John 10:11](#)). Amazingly, as Paul declared, “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” ([Romans 5:8](#)). It was the “Son of God,” Paul said, “who loved me and gave himself for me” ([Galatians 2:20](#)).

Consequently, when Jesus says we should love another as he has loved us, this love involves both service and sacrifice.

The decision to love someone is an act of our *will* rather than an emotion or feeling. For various reasons we may not have warm feelings toward certain people, but we’re still commanded to love them. We must often choose to love in spite of our feelings.

Biblical scholar Christopher Wright helpfully elaborates that the love of Jesus is

“ not just sentimental feelings of being nice, but real practical proof that we love and accept one another; in down-to-earth caring, providing, helping, encouraging, and supporting one another; even when it costs a lot or hurts a lot to do so. Love in action, in other words. ”

[Christopher J. H. Wright, [Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit: Growing in Christlikeness](#) (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2017).]

Returning to our [John 13](#) passage, notice how Jesus concludes it: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” According to Jesus, love should be the defining characteristic of his followers.

Interestingly, there are numerous examples of this throughout the history of the church. The early church theologian Tertullian quotes pagans marveling about Christians: “See . . . how they love one another . . . how they are ready even to die for one another.” The emperor Julian attempted to re-establish paganism in the [Roman Empire](#) but realized it was only the Christians who were helping those in need. He lamented to a pagan priest that Christians “support not only their poor, but ours as well; everyone can see that our people lack aid from us.”

[Stark, Rodney. [Cities of God](#) (p. 31). HarperOne. Kindle Edition.]



From the earliest days of the church until now, Christians' love in action, more than anything else, draws the lost to Christ.

Christopher Wright summarizes,

“ When Christians love each other, in practical, sacrificial, costly, barrier-dissolving ways, then the love of God (or rather, the God who is love) can be seen. The world should be able to look at Christians and how they live together and love together and see something of the reality of God being demonstrated. The invisible God makes himself visible in the love that Christians have for one another. ”

[Christopher J. H. Wright, [\*Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit: Growing in Christlikeness\*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2017).]

May the love of Christ overflow in your new self, pointing those around you to the God [who himself is love](#).

---

## Reflections


- What new insights or questions do you have about the love of Jesus in light of today's study?
  - What comes to mind for you as you reflect on Jesus washing the disciples' feet?
  - What might be some practical ways you can grow in your understanding and demonstration of Christ's love?
- 

## Day 5:

### New Mercies ([Lamentations 3:22-23](#))

A prominent theme running throughout this study is our absolute dependence on God. We rely on God to regenerate us, help us put on the new self, renew our minds, and to help us love like Jesus through the power of the Spirit. In other words, we're continually in need of God's love, faithfulness, and compassion.

The author of the [book of Lamentations](#) recognized this and wrote the statement below to encourage the people of Israel, who were in exile in [Babylon](#) because they had continuously turned away from the LORD. Yet, he reminded them of this good news:



“ Because of the LORD’s great love, we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ([Lamentations 3:22-23](#)) ”

These words are a great encouragement for us as well. Although we may experience trials and difficulties, we can be certain of God’s love and faithfulness.

The Hebrew word for “love” in [verse 22](#), *hesed*, is often used for the love God has for those who are in a covenant relationship with him (as Christians are today). *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary* [explains](#) that *hesed* “denotes ‘kindness, love, loyalty, mercy,’ and is variously translated as “steadfast love,” “loyal love,” “covenant faithfulness,” and “loving-kindness.”

This love flows from God’s own nature, since, as [the apostle John](#) tells us, “God is love” ([1 John 4:8](#)). We see a similar idea in the Old Testament when God revealed himself to Moses as “the LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love [*hesed*] and faithfulness, maintaining love [*hesed*] to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin” ([Exodus 34:6, 7](#)).


Because love is part of the fabric of God’s being, “his compassions never fail” ([v. 22](#)). [According](#) to John MacArthur, the Hebrew word translated “compassion” here “is a comprehensive term that encompasses love, grace, mercy, goodness, forgiveness, truth, compassion, and faithfulness.”

We’re also told that God’s compassions are new every morning. The great Victorian preacher Charles Spurgeon noted that “if every day brings its trouble, every day also brings its mercy. No one can say that so truly as the person who has known what it is to prove God’s great faithfulness in the midst of great affliction.” Spurgeon knew this firsthand, having suffered from frequent bouts of depression.

[[The Spurgeon Study Bible](#): Notes (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1075.]

The author of [Lamentations](#) concludes the passage with a statement of praise: “great is your faithfulness” ([v. 23](#)). Outside of the Bible, this sentence is probably best known as the title of the famous hymn “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”, which is taken from today’s passage. The three stanzas of the hymn are a helpful meditation on these verses, and the first half of the chorus quotes from [verse 23](#): “Great is Thy faithfulness! ‘Great is Thy faithfulness!’ Morning by morning new mercies I see.”

The hymn was written by Thomas O. Chisholm, whose poems appeared in various religious periodicals in the early decades of the 20th century. However, Chisholm suffered from poor health throughout his life, which forced him at one point to resign from a pastoral role he had briefly held. He later worked as a life insurance agent before retiring in 1953. In a letter written in 1941, he reflected on his past difficulties:



“*My income has not been large at any time due to impaired health in the earlier years which has followed me on until now. Although I must not fail to record here the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God and that He has given me many wonderful displays of His providing care, for which I am filled with astonishing gratefulness.*”

[All of the above on Chisholm is found in Kenneth W. Osbeck, [101 Hymn Stories](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1982).]

Charles Stanley offers [this reflection](#) on the relevance of today's passage for our lives,

“*Do you know the Lord as trustworthy, reliable, and consistent? Or do you question whether God will be there for you in your hour of need? From cover to cover, the Bible proclaims, “God is there, and He cares!” He never abandons us.*”

May you experience God's love and faithfulness in a multitude of ways in your new self—and all the more so when you encounter difficult and discouraging circumstances.

---

## Reflections

- As you reflect on [Lamentations 3:22-23](#), what comes to mind?
- When you've encountered a trial, how have you experienced God's faithfulness and mercy in the midst of it?
- Look up the lyrics to “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” online. Does reading this poetic work in light of the author's background discussed above affect how they speak to you?

---

Christopher Reese (MDiv,ThM) (@creese) is a freelance writer and editor-in-chief of *The Worldview Bulletin*. He is a general editor of the [Dictionary of Christianity and Science](#) and [Three Views on Christianity and Science](#). His articles have appeared in *Christianity Today* and he writes and edits for Christian ministries and publishers.

*Use your Bible Gateway Plus membership to explore the more than 50 helpful Bible reference resources available to you at the click of your mouse as you study important scriptural directives for your life.*

If you enjoyed this Bible study, invite your friends and social followers to become members of Bible Gateway Plus by going to the signup page ([biblegateway.com/join/new-creation](https://biblegateway.com/join/new-creation)) so they'll get this free PDF too.