

The New Creature

We must base our self-images on what God declares to be true about us.

Otherwise, we are believing lies that will diminish or destroy our effectiveness.

Three Ways to View Ourselves After Salvation

Almost all of us hold one of these three views, and the quality of our Christian experience is greatly influenced by which one we hold.

View #1: Salvation provides forgiveness, but I still have the same sin nature I had before.

Under view #1, I am not very good at resisting temptation because I believe my nature is to sin. My frequent falls confirm to me that my view is correct: at the core of my being is a sin nature. Walking with God is a constant battle. I believe that the "me" on the inside (my nature) is still wrong. I think, *God wants me to do good, but because of my nature, I want to do evil. For me to say 'yes' to God is to say 'no' to myself. It is natural for me to sin and unnatural to obey God. Everything I like is illegal, immoral, or fattening!*

If this view of salvation were correct, then salvation would free us from sin's penalty, but it would do nothing to free us from sin's power.

Under view #1, we can get forgiven, but we cannot get free. We cannot experience victory.

I held View #1 for several years of frustration and failure before I was taught that I had received a new nature.

View #2: After salvation, I have two natures: the new nature and the old nature (i.e. the new creature and the old creature, the new man and the old man).

When I learned that I received a new nature in salvation, I was also taught that the old nature did not die. Therefore, I now believed I had two natures, and my experience seemed to confirm that this new viewpoint was correct.

It felt like I had two warring factions inside me. I stood in the middle like a neutral figure, and I had to choose which of the two natures would dominate me. Sometimes I chose my new nature and sometimes my old nature. The pressure was constantly on me to make the right choice. My life was a war—only now the war was not between God and me, it was between me and me!

I felt like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and on any given day, I didn't know who was going to show up!

During these years under View #2, I could have quoted 2 Corinthians 5:17 correctly, but I didn't really believe it. We'd have to change the Bible to make it agree with what I believed:

2 Cor. 5:17 (Revised Distorted Version) If anyone be in Christ, he has a new creature, but the old has not passed away. Not all things have become new. No. Now, the new creature and the old creature now live inside you together, and you are DOOMED to a life-long struggle between your two natures. You won't be free until the day you die!

Then one day something wonderful happened. God used 2 Corinthians 5:17 to correct my thinking.

2 Cor. 5:17 "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old has passed away. Behold, all things have become new."

(KJV) Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

I suddenly realized, "Wait a minute! **God doesn't say I have a new creature; He says I am a new creature**, and the old has passed away.

View #3: I don't have a new creature and an old creature. I am a new creature; and the old has passed away.

I thought, *Wow! If this is true, this changes everything! This would mean that obedience to God, loving people, serving people, and doing good works are all consistent with who I now am, because God has changed who I am.*

Ephesians 2:10 suddenly made a lot more sense:

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

(KJV) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

As new creatures, we haven't been designed for sin; we've been designed for good works.

This realization was life-changing for me. I had been held in bondage by theological beliefs that didn't line up with what God actually says. As I got rid of false beliefs, chains fell off me. I began to experience wonderful freedom from sins I had never been able to conquer.

We must put our faith in God's assessment of who we are.

We are exactly who God says we are.

It is impossible to walk in victory unless our self-images are in line with truth. It's the truth that makes us free.

The results of holding View #1 or #2 are completely predictable.

Watered-down views of redemption are inadequate to set us free from the power of sin.

Salvation is not just having something we didn't have before (e.g., forgiveness and eternal life). God has also changed who we are!

If we're struggling in our attempts to live a victorious Christian life, perhaps we haven't realized who we are. God doesn't want us to try to be someone we're not: He simply wants us to realize who we are "in Christ" and to act accordingly.

"Victory is preceded by an awareness of identity." (Birthright)

Victory is preceded by knowing who we really are.

What happened to the "old self"? That question is addressed by the chapter some have called the most liberating chapter in the whole Bible: Romans 6.

Romans 6 explains the basis for our freedom from sin's dominion and also why many Christians never experience this wonderful freedom.

We will never conquer sin through our own will power and determination. If people don't understand what Paul explains in Romans 6, they will never experience freedom from sin's dominion during their lifetimes. Instead, they will experience the frustrating hopelessness Paul describes in Romans 7 when he tries to battle sin with the power of his own flesh.



Metamorphosis



Two Greek words mean "to take the form of," but they have very different connotations.

I. The word translated "masquerade" means to take an outward form inconsistent with who you really are on the inside.

E.g. 2 Cor. 11:14 Satan takes the form of an angel of light.

(KJV) ...Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

II. The second word, "metamorphosis," means to take an outward form consistent with who you really are on the inside. In fact the outward form *expresses* who you really are on the inside.

When a caterpillar undergoes metamorphosis into a butterfly, it is not disguising itself as a butterfly or masquerading as a butterfly. The outward form is consistent with the caterpillar's true nature. Mom and Dad were butterflies. The caterpillar has had butterfly nature from Day One, but you wouldn't have known it by looking at him. Not until metamorphosis takes place. Afterward, **his outward form matches his inner nature for the first time.**

This word appears several times in the New Testament.

E.g. Philippians 2:7 Jesus took the form of a servant...

(KJV) ...and took upon him the form of a servant,...

Jesus wasn't disguising himself as a servant. He was taking on an outward form that expressed His inner nature. As we watch Christ wash His disciples' feet, we discover a window into the heart of God.

Likewise, there was nothing about Christ's physical appearance that tipped people off as to who He really was. You could not figure out that Jesus was God manifest in the flesh (John 1:1, 14) simply by looking at him. **With one notable exception!**

Do you remember what took place on **the Mount of Transfiguration?**

Jesus took Peter, James, and John up to the mountain and there they beheld His glory.

Matthew 17:2 says, "**He was transfigured before them.** His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light."

(KJV) And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

Jesus was not disguising Himself. **Not only was His transfigured form consistent with who He really was; it expressed who He really was.**

Anytime we find this word "metamorphosis", we should recognize that the outward form does not express the inner nature until the metamorphosis takes place. Then there is agreement.

**Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...**

**(KJV) And be not conformed to this world:
but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...**

Until metamorphosis takes place, our outward form does not look like who we really are.

In the physical realm, **what is the "trigger"** that causes the metamorphosis? The trigger is a hormone change that takes place at a certain age.

But what about the spiritual realm? Is there a certain age at which all born-again Christians become godly? Obviously not. Some begin growing right away, and some are saved for **10, 20, 30, 40 years and do not change** because they are not pulling the trigger. **What is the trigger which causes sanctification to take place? What causes us to become more** like Christ in our behavior, speech, and attitudes?

Romans 12:2 says that metamorphosis is triggered by the _____

To "renew our minds" means to update our minds with correct information.

The Sanctification Process: Becoming More Like Jesus

John 8:23 He said to them (the Pharisees), "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world."

(KJV) And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

How do you see yourself? From below or from above?

Look what Jesus says about believers in the following passage:

John 17:16-17 **They are not of this world, even as I am not of this world. Sanctify them in Thy truth. Thy Word is truth.**

(KJV) They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

It's possible for people who are "not of this world" to act like they are "of this world". Not only is it possible, but that's exactly what's going to happen unless these people believe the truth about their new identity.

The change (metamorphosis) occurs by the renewing of the mind. Conversely, metamorphosis will not occur without the renewing of the mind.

Therefore, it's possible for someone "in Christ" to act like they are still "in Adam". It's possible for a person who is the righteousness of God in Christ to act unrighteously.

Why would they do such a thing? They don't know who they are.

"Once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8).

(KJV) For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

When we understand our new identity, it changes the way we live.

Answers for Fill-in-the-Blank Questions

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renewing of the mind

Please note: We only have time to cover about 1/3 of the “Freedom in Christ” series during the Regional Conference, but the entire series is available on CD in our conference book store.

Ministry and Speed Reading Resources by Jamie Lash:

- 1) Freedom in Christ (There is No Chain that Can't be Broken)—CD only
- 2) This Was Your Life! (Preparing to Meet God Face-to-face)—book, CD, and DVD
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Ministry website: www.LifeGivingWords.com

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