"New Creation People"

2 Corinthians 5:14-19

STRENGTH for the Journey with Joe Stowell

Part of the RBC family of Ministries

Group Study Introduction

Use the following questions and exercises as your group time allows. Feel free to skip one or more questions in each section as necessary. If you have less then thirty minutes for group discussion, we recommend skipping the "Getting Started" section. Be sure to save time for prayer at the end of your meeting, using the "Strength through Prayer" section.

Getting Started:

Joe Stowell says that his favorite recent movie is Bourne Identity.

• What recent movie stands out in your memory?

• Joe states that many people, like Jason Bourne in Bourne Identity, are clueless as to who they are—as they run from party to party, relationship to relationship, job to job, career to career, and so on. At what point in your life have you had the least-anchored sense of identity?

Strength through Scripture:

Open your Bibles to 2 Corinthians 5 and have a volunteer read verse 17 out loud.

1. Joe says that before we can know who we are, we have to know where we are—"in Christ." What does being "in Christ" mean to you?

2. What feelings do you have as you envision the original creation: Adam and Eve in perfect harmony, finding fulfillment and joy in each other without any hindrance and in absolute fellowship with the Almighty God?

3. What feelings do you have as you reflect on how the fall brought ruin to the glorious creation of God: brokenness, death, shame, despair, emptiness, disappointment, and a world that functions by blame?

Notes:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!."

2 Corinthians 5:17

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4. How intensely do you identify with Joe's statement that our hearts cry out, "Why doesn't God fix this?"

5. How much consolation do you find in the first paragraph of the Call to Action below?

Digging Deeper:

If your group has enough time (i.e., you've listened to the audio on your own), answer one or more of these optional questions.

1. Why is it significant to realize that in Genesis 1 Jesus Christ was creating the world through the power of the Holy Spirit?

2. Have one member of the group read Galatians 3:27 out loud. What does it mean to be "baptized into Christ"?

3. When you were born again by the power of the Holy Spirit, you received a secure sense of identity. How secure do you feel in that identity?

Strength through Sharing:

1. "You're not who your dad, mom, enemies, critics, or friends say you are, but who God says you are." How strongly do you believe that? Do your actions and emotions back up your belief?

2. Decide as a group whether to now do the writing exercise in the Call to Action below, and perhaps share the ideas you come up with at the end of the exercise, or whether to do the exercise later on your own.

Strength through Prayer:

Spend a few moments as a group in silent, personal prayer. Thank God for sending His Son to pay a great price so that we could be born again and receive a secure sense of identity.

You may want to begin your prayer with these words:

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"Almighty God, thank You for making me a new creation in Christ. And thank You for beginning the process of fixing our broken world. Empower me by Your Spirit to demonstrate to others what it means to be a new creation person. In Jesus' wonderful name, I pray."

When you are finished with this time for silent, personal prayer, you may want to move into a time of group prayer, praying for one another.

Closing Call to Action:

The big question is: If the world is so broken, why doesn't God fix it? The great news is that Jesus came to begin the long-term process of fixing it. Someday we'll get to the end where there will be no more tears or sorrow or death. But in the meantime, God has called us to be new creation people.

Get a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle. At the top of the left column, write OCP (Old Creation Person); at the top of the right column, write NCP (New Creation Person). In the OCP column, write down how you lived out the identity of the Old Creation Person: e.g., revenge, greed, self-centeredness, gossip, slander. In the NCP column, contrast each of those Old Creation Person issues with what Jesus has put into our lives as a New Creation Person: instead of revenge, forgiveness; instead of greed, generosity; and so on.

Then think of one or two situations where you could live out your NCP reality, where you could surprise someone (such as your spouse or a coworker) with the expression of what it means that you are a new creation in Jesus Christ. Write down that idea at the bottom of the sheet of paper.

Notes:

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