

I. Read II Corinthians 5:16-17

- A. In verse 16, Paul is pointing to the great difference in perspective or *world and life view* that must occur when someone is converted and truly realizes the significance of Christ's gospel. The language is a bit confusing, but in context with verse 15 it becomes more clear. Professor Hendriksen explains:

“Despite his interest in the earthly, historical Jesus, Paul here is not alluding to a time when he had seen Christ in human appearance. Rather, he refers to the time during which he was still unconverted and became acquainted with Christ's teachings. In that time, he refused to acknowledge Jesus as God's Son and honor him as Messiah. From the moment of his conversion, however, Paul saw Jesus Christ through spiritual eyes and understood that Christ's death and resurrection occurred for the benefit of all believers.”

This new perspective toward Christ revolutionized Paul's life. From the moment of his conversion, his life would never be the same.

What difference should it make in:

1. Priorities:
John 6:33; Luke 9:25

2. Use of money:
1 Peter 4:10; Luke 18:18-27

3. Perspective toward marriage:
Ephesians 5:21-33; Proverbs 18:22

4. Perspective toward raising children:
Proverbs 22:6; Psalm 127:3-5

5. Perspective toward church:
Hebrews 10:24; Ephesians 5:25b; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27

B. In verse 17, Paul speaks of being “in Christ” implicitly saying that some (perhaps most) are “out of Christ”. What is the difference, if there is a difference, and is this sort of exclusionary thinking nice? (See Matthew 25:31-33.)

C. What does Paul mean when He says that those who are “in Christ” are “new creatures”

What practical, as opposed to positional, consequences follow from being a “new creature”? (See Acts 26:20.)

D. What sort of “new things” result from the change occurring at conversion? (Read Romans 5:1, 10; Philippians 1:21-24, 27; Romans 8:14-15; Philippians 4:19; Colossians 1:13-14.)

E. What are some common misunderstandings regarding verse 17 among evangelicals?

F. What sort of emotional response should a proper understanding of verse 17 cause in us?