

## What Does It Mean to Be a New Creation in Christ?

We previously discussed that one of the benefits of redemption is that we become a new creation. We will now explore what this statement means. To understand what is new we must first look at what was old. Paul refers to our pre-redeemed state as the old nature. The old nature is controlled by the sinful inclinations of the heart as stated by God in Genesis 8:21. Paul gives a picture of this sinful heart in the following references:

**Romans 7:5 NLT:** When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death.

**Romans 7:18 NLT:** And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't.

**Galatians 5:17 NLT:** 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.

We can see that the old nature is corrupted by the desire to sin. All of us have this nature regardless of how good we appear on the outside, Romans 3:23. It is our old nature that causes us to seek the things that are opposed to God. When we receive the redemption of that Jesus provided, we become new creations. Jesus was explaining this process to Nicodemus in John 3:3 NLT: **Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."** The 'born again' experience is the process that God uses to make us the new creation. An analogy that God uses to express this process is that of circumcision. Circumcision was originally an outward expression of inner submission to God.

Paul using this analogy to describe the 'born again' process in Colossians 2:11-12 NLT: **Also it was in union with him that you were circumcised with a circumcision not done by human hands, but accomplished by stripping away the old nature's control over the body. In this circumcision done by the Messiah, you were buried along with him by being immersed; and in union with him, you were also raised up along with him by God's faithfulness that worked when he raised Yeshua from the dead.** The act of circumcision of the heart was rendering the old nature impotent to control our new life. It was like the cutting away of the evil foreskin of our heart. We are then left with our empowered new life that desires to do the things of God.

The battle then becomes keeping the old nature under control so that it will not influence us to sin. We do this by transforming our minds by reading and studying the Word of God, immersing our souls in the truth of God's Word. We then must focus on walking in the Spirit (focusing on spiritual matters rather than worldly matters). Paul describes it this way, Galatians 5:16-17, 25 NLT: **So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.** It is the Spirit that will live in us, guiding on the paths of righteousness and empowering us to deeds that will demonstrate the new nature within us. The end result of this process is a greater love for God and our fellow man.