

LifeGroup Questions

Based On: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

May 3, 2016

Overview:

An ambassador is an official representative from one country to another country. They are given the authority to speak on behalf of the country they are representing. It is a prestigious position often given to people of high ranking social status. They need to be diplomatic in solving problems. They also must be fully aware and seek the interest of their home country. An ambassador is an appointed position.

How do you become an ambassador for God? In 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Paul explains that this only happens if you are “in Christ.” Paul uses this phrase to frequently describe believers in his letters. Once you are “in Christ” you become a new creation. It doesn’t matter if you have been “in Christ” for an hour or for 20 years. Being “in Christ” means you have a new position before God. Your job with this new position is to offer the ministry of reconciliation to others who are not yet “in Christ.”

The idea of being a new creation is sometimes hard to understand. There might be days, weeks or years that you don’t feel like a new creation. Your past, present, and future sins can weigh you down causing doubt about your new position before God. This is the difference between position and practice. Paul wrote in Romans 7:15, 19 “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.” Even Paul struggled with his practice (actions) agreeing with his new position in Christ.

So what does all this mean; being an ambassador in Christ as a new creation? Paul states in 2 Corinthians 5:20 that God is making His appeal through you. God has appointed you as His ambassador. You did not earn this position. You were chosen. This doesn’t mean there won’t be a struggle between your new position in Christ and your actions. It does mean that over time you should become a better ambassador. All this is by God’s grace and not by your works. Don’t be fooled that you can earn the position of an ambassador. It was God’s grace that made you one and it is His grace that will help you act like one.

Bible Study: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:16. You can’t make a second first impression. How do you get past looking at someone in a purely human way?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. You are a new creation in Christ. Discuss how you are a new creation in Christ even when you sin. How does struggling with sin or past guilt not affect you status of being a new creation in Christ?
3. A lot of Christians either use or have heard the phrase ‘free grace’. Does sin become easier to fall into when thinking of grace as free versus thinking about the cost paid by Christ on the cross? Why or why not?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-20. In these verses Paul uses the word reconciliation 5 times. Think of a relationship with a friend, relative, or co-worker that needs to be restored. What steps have to happen for an earthly relationship to be restored? In what ways does this restoration compare to being restored to God?
5. Discuss what it means to be an ambassador for Christ.
6. “Reconciled people live reconciled lives.”¹ How and when should someone’s life change after they become a Christian? What role does Christian community have in changing someone’s life?

¹ Hafemann, S. J. (2000). *2 Corinthians* (p. 252). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

7. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. This is a great summary of what happened on the cross. Christ became sin so that those who believe would become the righteousness of God. Do you think of yourself as being the righteousness of God? Why or why not?