

# A WINNING FAITH: AMBASSADORS OF FAITH

Use this guide for personal or small group study.

## REFLECT >>>

1. In light of Paul's great words in these verses, how do you respond to 2 Corinthians 5:17 (The Message): "Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new." If you have seen the movie, "I Can Only Imagine," reflect on the fresh start experienced by both the son and the father.
2. Why does Paul focus on Christ's love for us and not our love for Him in these verses?
3. In 2 Corinthians 5:20 (The Message) Paul writes, "Become friends with God; He's already a friend with you." What are the essentials of a friendship with God? List a few identifying markers.

## READ YOUR BIBLE >>>

- 2 Corinthians 5:16-20
- John 15:5-12

## **APPLY** GOD'S WORD TO YOUR LIFE >>>

1. What kind of evidence is there in your life that you are bearing fruit in Christ in light of John's words in chapter 15? What happens when we get cut off from the "vine" or our main support?
2. Is there "fruit" that you would like to grow more of in your life? Describe. What is your plan to do so?
3. As you look back upon your life, what blessings have you witnessed from being connected to the Body of Christ, the vine?
4. In light of Paul's words to 'become friends with God,' why is it essential in our walk with God to slow down and spend time with Him?
5. Think about these three things that happen to a person when they are offered a fresh start in God: 1) You open up your life to God and get to know Him; 2) You're given a brand new life, which gives you a purpose to live for; and 3) You get a future in heaven! Discuss the ramifications of these changes for a person.

6. Luther reminds us that daily we must die to sin and rise to newness in our forgiven life in Christ. What should a fresh start with Jesus look like in your life?
  
7. Notice the stunning words of Jesus from John 15:15 (The Message): “I’m no longer calling you servants because servants don’t understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I’ve named you friends because I’ve let you in on everything I’ve heard from my Father.” How does this Good News impact your relationship with our Lord?

The Apostle Paul realized that on the cross a broken and shameful humanity had at least in principle been destroyed and that now “in Christ” a new and fresh start with people was being created. Paul went out as our first great missionary to the western world to proclaim this Good News. Some of the most amazing words are found in verse 17: “If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” Paul is talking about significant change in a person’s life. More than just new clothes or a hairdo! He is talking about inner change that only God could make and that John Newton would centuries later sing about in the hymn “Amazing Grace.” Isn’t it wonderful to affirm that God is always doing something new? Corrie ten Boom would say, “Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.” What a friend we have in Jesus, indeed!

## **PRAY >>>**

Lord, thank You for Your Son, Jesus, and His sacrifice on the cross to make us right with You and His resurrection to promise us a new life. Help us to remain in Your love and grace so we can live for You, being Your ambassadors in this world sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. In His name we pray. Amen.