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THIS CHANGES  
**EVERYTHING**

NOTHING IS THE SAME WHEN WE ENCOUNTER JESUS

**FOLLOW-UP DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL**

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE STARTED: \_\_\_\_\_

PUBLISHED BY YM360

# THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

*THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING: Nothing is The Same When We Encounter Jesus*  
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Published by youthministry360 in the United States of America.

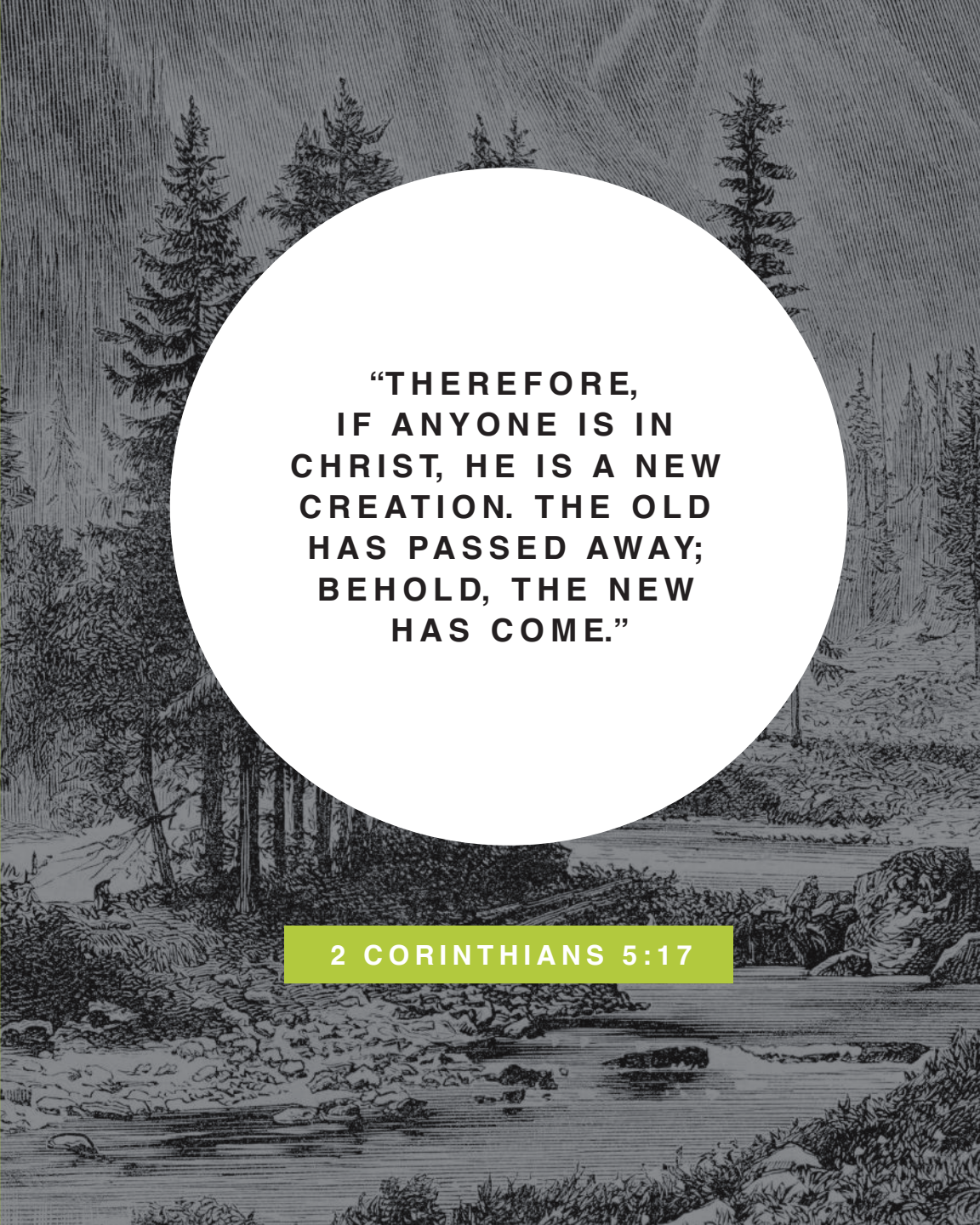
ISBN 13: 9781935832645

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A black and white woodcut-style illustration of a forest landscape. In the foreground, a river flows through a rocky, wooded area. The middle ground shows a dense forest of tall, thin trees. In the background, a mountain range is visible under a sky with horizontal hatching. A large white circle is centered in the upper half of the image, containing text. At the bottom, a green rectangular box contains the text '2 CORINTHIANS 5:17'.

**“THEREFORE,  
IF ANYONE IS IN  
CHRIST, HE IS A NEW  
CREATION. THE OLD  
HAS PASSED AWAY;  
BEHOLD, THE NEW  
HAS COME.”**

**2 CORINTHIANS 5:17**



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# GETTING STARTED

How do you feel about change? Some people love it. Some people hate it. Regardless of how you feel, there is a powerful truth at work in the world, and that is this:

## **The Gospel changes everything.**

At some point in the not-so-distant past you probably spent a few days going through *This Changes Everything* with your youth group. And you learned that as human beings, we are desperately in need of a Savior. You learned that through the Gospel, through the power of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, God made it possible for us to be once-and-for-all set free from the consequences of sin. You learned that we are called to live our lives in accordance with how the Gospel has changed us. And you learned that because of God's promise to redeem all things, you can enjoy the good times and make it through the bad times without losing hope. Maybe you thought you were done talking about the changing nature of the Gospel. Maybe you thought you had learned all there was to learn.

## **The truth? You're just getting started.**

This book will take you on a four-week journey of going deeper into exactly what the Gospel changes and how this change takes place. Embrace this journey. Give it your best. Commit to sticking with this book until the end. It will only take a few minutes each day. And you'll find that your life will be richer as a result of spending such quality time in God's presence.

LET'S GET STARTED. LOOK AT THE NEXT PAGE TO LEARN HOW THIS BOOK WORKS.

# HOW THIS BOOK WORKS

## START WITH THIS ADVICE

Whether you're super-committed and read your Bible each day or struggle to read a few verses a couple of times a week, the key to sticking with this through four weeks is commitment. Your routine may change, but your commitment to meet God each day has to be there. Tell yourself that whether or not you read this journal at the same time each day, or if you read it whenever you get a few extra minutes, you'll make it a priority in your daily life.

## HAVE YOUR BIBLE OPEN

Resist the urge to ignore the spots where this book will tell you to read a passage of Scripture. This book is only a guide for the Book. **The close relationship with God that you want only happens by reading and doing what's in the Bible.** Have it open as you go through this book.

## EACH WEEK IS STRUCTURED THE SAME, BUT IS REALLY DIFFERENT

Each week's content works in similar ways. **But, each day is different.** Some will take 3-5 minutes, some 10-15. Some will ask you to look at two or three passages of Scripture; some will just ask you to think about a concept. The variety will make it easier to stick with and help you learn in different ways that are suited to you.

## WHAT IF I MISS A DAY OF READING? OR THREE?

Don't give up! Take this at your pace! The goal is for you to grow closer to God. If you miss a day or two . . . or four . . . don't throw in the towel. Pick this book back up and start where you left off. **You can do this!** And by doing it, you'll show the world that God makes an incredible difference in the lives of His followers. So, hang in there! You've got this!

Well, that's what you need to know to get started! **Turn the page to read the introduction to Week 1.**



# INTRO

## WEEK ONE

*Before starting Week 1, read this short introduction.*

When you take a step back, it's hard to imagine something that changes everything quite like the Gospel changes everything. This life-giving news not only alters the trajectory of our own lives, but the entire universe. The idea that Jesus died for your sins in order to make a way for you to have a relationship with God is the most revolutionary, most transformative, most incredible thing that you will ever encounter.

Of course, the Gospel changes our lives, but it does so in very specific ways. This first week, we're going to unpack how the Gospel changes us inwardly. Our hearts are one of the ways we begin to look more and more like Christ: how we think, how we view our sin, who we love, and fundamentally how we changed overall. It's important to spend time here because outward change without inward change is legalism, religion without the Holy Spirit. Inward change without outward change does nothing. Your faith is dead if it doesn't accompany action.

The Bible is clear - Jesus takes our hearts of stone (or pride or greed or racism or selfishness or fill-in-the-blank with the sin or sins you struggle with) and gives us a heart of flesh. A heart that breaks for what breaks His heart. A heart that is guided by the Holy Spirit, by the precepts of Scripture, by prayer, and by communion with fellow Believers. What the Bible doesn't say is that this is an easy process. Or a pain-free process. Or a quick process. But it's one with beautiful and life-long ramifications.

If you're ready to learn more about what this will look like, let's jump in.



# WEEK ONE

## DAY ONE

### THIS CHANGES WHO WE ARE

*Read today's devotion below and answer the questions on page 11.*

Sometimes we know in our HEADS that the Gospel changes everything, but we have a hard time connecting the dots to our HEARTS. We're going to jump into our four-week study of *This Changes Everything* by taking a look at our theme verse, 2 Corinthians 5:17:

**“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”**

It's almost impossible to read the Bible and not see this theme of taking old things (or people) and making them new. It's everywhere. From Genesis to Revelation, God is in the business of taking old, broken things and not only repairing them, but restoring them in a way that makes them new again. The purpose of this is not only to renew us, but to bring Him ultimate glory.

This is the thesis of Scripture. When we encounter God, everything changes as He begins a work in us. Let's take a look at some of the other examples in Scripture of God's redemptive work within the lives of those He's changed.

“And I will give them one heart and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them.” - Ezekiel 11:19-20

What does it mean to have a heart of stone? What does it mean to have a heart of flesh?

“Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” - Ephesians 4:22-24

How do you “put off your old self”? How do you think you can “put on the new self”?

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.’ And He who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’” - Revelation 21:1-6

How does this passage of scripture make you feel? How do you apply it to your present life?

# WEEK ONE

## DAY TWO

### THIS CHANGES HOW WE THINK

*Read through the devotion on page 12 and answer the questions on page 13.*

The transformation that we undergo when Christ takes hold of our lives is at once instant and also a process. Huh? When we come to faith in Christ, we are instantly transformed. Our sin is removed and, through the lens of the work Jesus did on the cross, God sees us as holy. In a moment. BUT, the process of becoming like Jesus in our everyday lives takes a while. Putting to death our former self is STRAIGHT UP HARD.

Even if you're a "good person" who has been "nice" and followed the "rules" your whole life, control is a hard thing to relinquish. Being a follower of Christ is a day-to-day exercise in patience, faithfulness, and endurance. Pastor and author Eugene Peterson calls it "a long obedience in the same direction."

One of the main areas in which we have to submit to the transformation process is our mind. Not surprisingly, this is probably the place where we are our truest selves: we think and house opinions here that we would never say out loud or act upon. Sometimes these thoughts become part of who we are, even if no one else knows it.

Romans 12:2 says this:

**“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”**



Read that verse one more time. What Paul is doing here is encouraging believers not to conform, or assimilate, or be like the world. So here's a question for you: Why do you think Paul wants us to be different from the world?

When Paul says “be transformed,” he's using the Greek word, *metemorphothe*. This word is used only once in all of the Gospels. When Jesus was on the mountain of transfiguration (or transformation) in Matthew 17:2, Matthew wrote, “And He was transfigured before them, and His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as light.” That word “transfigured” comes from the word *metemorphothe*.

Knowing this, what clues does this passage of Scripture (Matthew 17:2) give to Romans 12:2?

How does it help us to understand the transformation that takes place in our minds?

When everything changes for us, the Holy Spirit begins a work in us. We can look like Christ only through the power of the Holy Spirit. Our minds can only be renewed through the power of the Holy Spirit. If we could do it ourselves, there would be nothing to be saved from. The Holy Spirit works inwardly and outwardly. And the cool thing is that you get to work with Him.

As you wrap up today's devotion, ask yourself this question: What are some ways you can partner with the Spirit to renew your mind?

# WEEK ONE

## DAY THREE

*Read the quote below and spend some time today thinking about it. Use the prompts on page 15 to help guide your thoughts.*

**“BE CAREFUL NOT  
TO REPLACE ONE  
IDOL WITH ANOTHER  
AND MISTAKE IT FOR  
REPENTANCE.”**

**JACKIE HILL PERRY**

*Use these questions to reflect on this quote.*

1. If Christ truly changes everything, that includes our sin. In forgiveness of sin, we are able to have a relationship with God. As we walk through the repentance process, we might be tempted to take one idol (whatever it is that is more important to us than God), and replace it with another. What's an idol in your own life?

2. What would an example be of taking one idol and replacing it with another?

3. How could you mistake that for repentance?

4. How would you avoid this process?

# WEEK ONE

## DAY FOUR

### THIS CHANGES WHO WE LOVE

*Dig into Scripture today to see how Jesus and the power of the Gospel changes who we love.*

When Christ comes in and changes everything, we as Believers get held to a higher standard almost immediately. We are now dead to sin and alive in Christ, and it is by His grace that we have been saved.

Take a moment and read Luke 6:27-35:

“But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the ungrateful and to the evil.”

There is a lot to unpack here, but fortunately for us, Scripture itself helps us.

In Luke 6:22, Jesus tells His disciples that they are blessed when people hate them, and that their response to this hatred should be to rejoice. In the verses we just read, He gives much more detailed information. Look at the next page and check out those verses.

*For the passages below, work to relate them back to Luke 6:27-35. Ask yourself this:*

**HOW DO THESE PASSAGES OF  
SCRIPTURE HELP YOU UNDERSTAND  
JESUS' WORDS IN LUKE BETTER?**

**FOR BLESSING THOSE WHO CURSE  
YOU, SEE 1 CORINTHIANS 4:12  
AND ROMANS 12:14.**

**FOR HOW TO PRAY FOR THOSE WHO  
ABUSE YOU, SEE ACTS 59-60.**

**FOR GIVING GENEROUSLY,  
SEE 1 JOHN 3:17.**

**FOR LOVING YOUR ENEMIES,  
SEE ROMANS 13:8-10.**





# WEEK ONE

## DAY FIVE

*Today you'll get the chance to consider how the Gospel has truly changed you and your life.*

### HOW I CHANGED

Have you ever had an experience that changed you completely? You saw something and it made you re-think how you live your life? Maybe it was a movie, a news report, or a personal experience. Take some time to think on that moment in your life. Write down your thoughts if you feel like it.

Our theme verse for this study is 2 Corinthians 5:17. You may recall that this verse says that anyone who has come to a saving relationship with Jesus becomes a completely new person. You are totally changed by Jesus. Write about the moment everything changed for you. What happened? Where were you? Write down everything you remember about it.

Why was this event impactful for you?

What was life like for you before?

How did you change?

Now consider your life before Christ. What was it like? How were you living?

What happened when Christ came into your life?

How did you change?

Take some time in today to pray to God. Consider thanking and praising God for how you've been changed by the Gospel and Christ. Consider writing your prayer below.

# WEEK ONE

## DAY SIX

### THIS CHANGES HOW WE WORSHIP

*Today is a time of worship. Use the prompts below to help you come to God in praise and worship.*

Take a moment and define the word worship. Write your definition in the space below.

Worship is the outward expression of us being changed by Christ. When we experience how Christ has changed everything, our natural inclination is to praise Him with every part of our lives. You've spent some time this week thinking about how Christ changes us from the inside. Now we're going to respond to what God's done with worship.

**FIRST**, get your mind and heart ready to worship God. If it helps you get into the right state of mind, play a song you like to worship to on your phone or radio.

**THEN**, take a moment and thank God for bringing life-saving change into your world. Write a few sentences below, focusing on your thankfulness.

We know that just because we become Believers does not mean that we automatically stop sinning. Take some time and confess your sins to God. Thank Him for His forgiveness and mercy.

Do you have friends or family that need God's change in their lives? Spend some time praying for them. Write your prayers below if you choose.



**DAY SEVEN**

# WEEK ONE

**TAKE TODAY OFF... YOU'VE EARNED IT.**

**IF YOU WANT, REFLECT ON SOME OF WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED. LOOK BACK AND IDENTIFY ONE DAY IN THE WEEK THAT REALLY STOOD OUT TO YOU.**

**WHAT WAS IT THAT WAS SO MEANINGFUL?**

**THINK ABOUT ALL THE WAYS THAT GOD HAS CHANGED YOU AND HOW MUCH MORE YOU WILL STILL BE CHANGED AS YOU GROW IN HIM. LISTEN AND LOOK FOR THE WAYS HE WANTS TO SPEAK TO YOU TODAY.**