

In search of...

Truth & Right

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Christian Renewal

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

To be in Christ is to be different from what we were before we were in Christ. What one was before being in Christ is "old" and what one is after being in Christ is "new." There is a change that must take place. What is this change and how does it happen? What is this renewal?

First, the Bible teaches that the sinner becomes new through the process of the new birth. Jesus said in John 3:3 "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He explains in John 3:5: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." In order to become new, one must be born of both the water and the Spirit. The apostle Peter expounds upon the

idea of the new birth in 1 Peter 1:22-23. He says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Peter gives us the following insight on the new birth.

1. The soul is purified by obeying the truth.
2. We are born again through the living word of God.

What is the Spirit's role in the new birth? The Spirit is the source of the living word of God, the truth. Hence when one obeys the truth one has been born of the Spirit. The individual who is baptized (born of water) and does so out of his desire to obey the word of God is a new

creation. How so? Because he has dedicated himself to following the Lord's will for his life.

Renewal, however, doesn't end there. The Christian is urged to continue renewing himself on a daily basis. Paul writes to the church at Rome, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2) Our minds are renewed by transforming or changing our lives to the will of God.

Paul speaks of the Christian's involvement in renewal in Ephesians 4:17 where he exhorts Christians not to walk as the Gentiles. Why? Because "you have not so learned Christ" (vs. 20). He instructs that if "you have heard him and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus" (vs. 21) that you put off the old man with his old lifestyle and "be renewed in the spirit of your mind and that you put on the new man" (vs. 22-24). Notice Paul's emphasis upon 1) learning Christ 2) hearing Christ, 3) being taught by Christ, and 4) the truth in Christ. Renewal occurs as a result of being taught, hearing, learning, and understanding the truth. Based upon these things, one must "put off the old man," "be renewed," and "put on the new man." How? Paul explains in Ephesians 4:25-32: don't lie, speak truth, control anger, don't give place to the devil, don't steal, hold down a good job, keep your speech pure, put away malice, be kind, and forgive.

This is the renewed life. It is based upon "learning Christ" and being "taught by him as the truth is in Jesus." It is a command that we "be renewed." It is something the Christian does by following the teaching of Christ and the apostles.

We learn more about renewal in Colossians 3 where Paul explains to Christians in Colossae what it means to live the resurrected life. It means putting to death sin in our life (Colossians 3:5-9) because the Christian has put off the old man of sin (Colossians 3:9) and has put on the new man (Colossians 3:10). This new man is the man who has been "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." The renewal of the new man is a renewal in knowledge based upon the model of Christ. Why is the knowledge important? Because that is what affects behavior and it is one's behavior that demonstrates his new life. This new life puts off fornication, sexual immoralities, covetousness, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, impure speech, lying and puts on mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing, forgiveness, and love (Colossians 3:5-14). This is the resurrected life; this is the renewed life. Renewal is not something that God does to us, rather it is something that man is commanded by God to do with his life.

Titus 3:5 summarizes this new life where Paul states that God saved us, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to

his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." At first glance, this appears to be just the opposite of what Paul taught in Ephesians and Colossians. However, when we consider that the instructions for living the renewed life came from God, we understand them to be part of His plan for our righteousness. Moreover, since these instructions were also revealed by the Holy Spirit to the apostles and prophets, we can understand that it is the renewal of the Holy Spirit; i.e. that renewal that comes from the Holy Spirit as its source. Moreover, this renewal isn't a one time event but an ongoing process. We are spiritually renewed every day, Paul tells us, in 2 Corinthians 4:16. There's nothing in the context of Titus 3:5 that indicates to us that this renewal is merely a one time event only that the Holy Spirit is ultimately responsible for it.

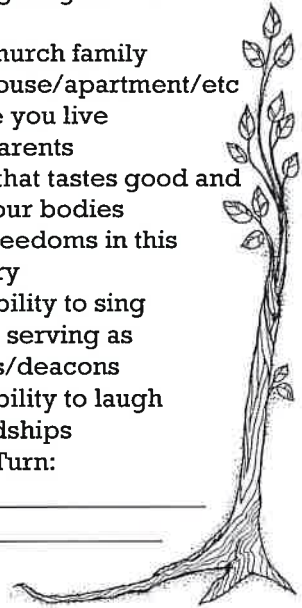
In this brief study we've looked at the New Testament's teaching regarding renewal. We've learned that 1) renewal is dependent upon our learning about Christ, 2) begins when we are baptized, 3) continues as we are obedient to the Lord's will in living the Christian life, and 4) the Holy Spirit is its ultimate source. Let's strive to live each day renewed in the knowledge of the image of Christ.

Kevin Cauley

Dear God,
thank you for being there
when nobody else was.

*Have you thanked God today
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- The house/apartment/etc where you live
- Our parents
- Food that tastes good and fuels our bodies
- Our freedoms in this country
- The ability to sing
- Those serving as elders/deacons
- The ability to laugh
- Friendships
- Your Turn:



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Fifth Sunday Photos

Every fifth Sunday of the month, we try to highlight some of great things happening around our congregation that were captured through photography. If you happen to get a good picture of a member doing work for the Lord, please feel free to post it on our Facebook page or tweet us @wellsburgchurch #fifthsundayphotos or e-mail us at minister@truthandright.org with a little description of what is happening in the picture.

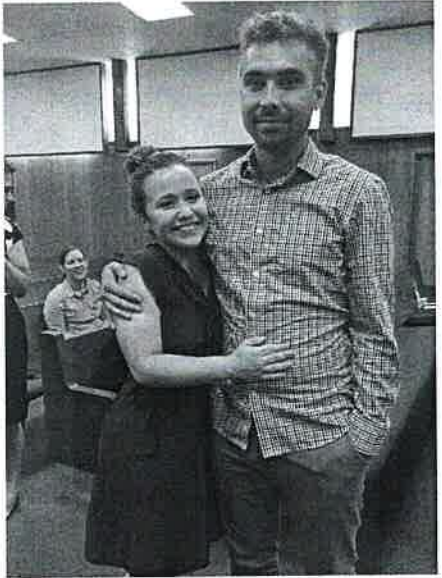


Shannon Reardon put on Christ in baptism on June 14! O happy day!

"since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;" – 1 Pet. 1:23

Dwight & Nicole Minor were happy to announce that they are expecting a baby! Please pray for health, safety, and rejoice with them!

"Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward." – Psalm 127:3



Lydia and Addison Prager enjoy holding Makena Shay. She's getting bigger and, perhaps, even cuter.

"May our sons in their youth be like plants full grown, our daughters like corner pillars cut for the structure of a palace;" – Psalm 144:12

