

The 1959 Chevy Corvette is a beautiful car. The '72 Corvette Stingray is bold yet sleekly styled, aesthetically pleasing. Then there's the '88 Corvette Stingray. I don't know what happened there. Rough decade for car design in general. Then, the 2024 Corvette Stingray got things back on track and looking like a super car. Each design change is aimed at refinement, making the old into the new and better version.

We are new creations, not just updated versions, but entirely new creations in Christ. If anyone is in Christ, then a new and pure creation is what that person is. How? Jesus died for all people! Didn't take a bunch of redos either, just one offering on the cross. Jesus' death for us means an exchange of hostilities for a harmonious relationship. That's what reconciliation is. God reconciled us to himself by removing all our sins and our sinfulness through the bloody sacrifice of his own Son. He has given us this message to share with each other and with those who don't know it yet. The message of reconciliation not only kicks out and exchanges hostilities between God and people, but also from one person to another.

Paul begins explaining these big and important things by saying this, *"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died."* **(II Cor. 5:14)** If you appreciate the love of Christ, you will be compelled by his love. Christ's love means being forgiven, being accepted right now exactly as you are, and having true belonging because Christ puts you in God's family now and into eternity! If that doesn't blow your mind and motivate your everything for everyone, why doesn't it? Maybe we haven't come to appreciate just how sinful we really are to then more deeply appreciate what Jesus has done in dying to save all of us. His saving love has to have an impact on us, right? It must! One of the reasons Jesus

died on the cross was so we'd no longer live for ourselves, but for him, the one who died for us. If you don't, list some good reasons why not. It'll be a short list.

We live for Jesus and, by the Holy Spirit, seek to live like him too! *“So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view.”* **(II Cor. 5:16)** We are made to think like Jesus toward others. We must regard all other people the way Jesus regards them; God presents no alternative to us. So we do this, regardless of who the person is or what our perception of them is. Why?? Because Christ's love for us compels us to! Jesus loves that person as much as he does you, enough to be crucified for them, in fact! When we do this, feelings of hate we have when we see someone who thinks, looks, or acts differently will die and be replaced by love. If someone belittles us, hates us, legitimately persecutes us, because of our faith, we still see them as Jesus. We don't hate them, we have compassion on them, and our hearts go out to them because they're like sheep without a shepherd. Consider people according to Christ and his Spirit, that is, through the lens of gentleness, respect, kindness, peace, and love having no room for judgmental, pharisaic thinking. You've done nothing to earn God's grace, but you have it because of his mercy. See others as objects of the same because they are.

Practically mission impossible, right? But you can and you do because you are who God made you to be, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”* **(II Cor. 5:17)** The person in Christ is a new creation, as simple as that. The old self is passed away, gone, the new is here. By faith, believers experience the spiritual, “out with the old, in with the new.” But what if I don't feel like that? What if, because of the sin I don't want to do but keep on doing, I don't feel new in Christ? What if being plagued by persistent guilt prevents me from feeling like a pure creation? Then, and I absolutely say this to myself, just be quite. Let God be God. The Almighty, who sent the Almighty into the world, has declared for

Jesus' sake that if I believe Jesus is my savior, I am an entirely new creation. **I John 3:19, 20**,
“This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.” Let God be God and his declarations of new, righteous creation be true for you. Why? BECAUSE GOD SAID SO!!! You are a miraculous creation of God's grace.

Your newness of being, of being right with God, the gospel compulsion to love and live for Jesus who died and rose for you, is God's gift to you, *“All of this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”* (**II Cor. 5:18**) God did this when we totally didn't deserve it! **Romans 5:8** says, *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* In Jesus' death on the cross, God removed the source of strife between him and us: our sin. We're saved! If this wasn't remarkable enough, God goes on to make us reconcilers on his behalf. The gospel of Christ crucified, the very thing that saves you, has been given to you complete with all the joyous imperatives it contains of seeking, finding, loving, and sharing. The work and service of carrying out the gospel's call has been given to you by God. Seems like a massive tactical error on God's part given our propensity to mess things up, but God knows what he's doing. God's placed his treasure in us, jars of clay. We're frail, we break, but the gospel doesn't. The gospel is unbreakable and the Spirit who works in it does the heavy lifting when you tell a fellow sinner about the forgiveness Jesus gives.

You don't have to make anything up – please don't! Say these excellent words, *“God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”* (**II Cor. 5:19**) This is what God wants us to share with people without the slightest restriction or hesitancy about with whom it's shared. You

have been made new in and by Christ's love for this exact purpose. Be who God made you to be, an ambassador for Jesus, just like Paul and the other apostles were, and beg people to be reconciled to God by believing in Jesus. God sure does! Think about that!! The holy and loving God, who's more than routinely mocked and insulted by people, implores the very same people to be right with him! What's it say about God's heart that he begs sinners to be right with him by believing in his Son, Jesus? It shows that God wants everyone to be saved. The big love Christ for us compels us to say so to all people.

Say this, too. What a verse this is! God's great exchange in a sentence! "*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*" (**II Cor. 5:21**) Doesn't God does a wonderful job of giving you the words to say? He does! The Son of Heaven, who never did a single sin, was made to become sin having taken yours and everyone else's in his own body to the cross to destroy them there! When he did that, he also gave you his own perfectly pleasing righteousness.

Do you believe in Jesus? You are his righteousness because he became your sin and God's begging you to believe it! You are a new creation because you are in Christ, the old is gone, taken away by Jesus. Live for Christ, his love compels you to! You are reconciled to God by Jesus who died and rose for you. You are right with God. Because you believe in Jesus, you are the righteousness of God. Amen.