



WOODLAND HEIGHTS

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Power to Change Part #1 – The Starting Point of Change

Small Group Discussion Guide on 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Woodland Heights Christian Church Core Value Connection

This sermon aligns with the core value of **Biblical Worldview** at Woodland Heights Christian Church. We believe that it is critical to develop a Biblical Worldview in life. A biblical worldview reminds Christians that real change starts with Christ's transforming work in the heart and moves outward into relationships, priorities, and mission, equipping disciples to live as ambassadors who make a lasting Kingdom impact.

The sermon calls us to real change that begins with surrendering to Christ, finding our new identity in Him, and living as His representatives in a confused world. This reflects a biblical worldview—seeing ourselves, others, and the world through Jesus' death and resurrection. The message challenges us to move beyond quiet or shallow faith and live out our church's mission to reach, teach, and serve others. It encourages us to step into God's work of redemption and boldly share His message of reconciliation at home, at work, and in our community so others can see the power of a life changed by Christ.

Section #1 – ENCOUNTER

"Observing God's Word"

Imagine a stormy night, a frightened colony, and a sixteen-year-old girl who quietly decides to ride into the darkness so others can rise and fight. In 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Paul invites every believer into a similar moment—a spiritual "stormy night" where God calls ordinary people to step out of comfort, receive a new identity, and live on assignment as ambassadors for Christ in a world desperate for hope.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 ESV as a group, family, or individual. Slowly walk through the passage, noting who is acting (God), who is being changed (those in Christ), and what mission is given (the ministry and message of reconciliation).

Core Questions

- What do you notice about the repeated words and ideas in this passage—"reconciled," "new creation," "ambassadors," "in Christ"? Why are these important for understanding true change?
- How does Paul describe God's role and our role in reconciliation? What does this reveal about the source and purpose of spiritual change?
- Which verse stands out to you most right now (vv.16-21)? What about your life or our culture makes that verse especially relevant?

Section #2 – EXPLORE

“Understanding the Passage and Sermon”

As we explore this text, we discover that change is not a self-help project; it is a Christ-centered transformation that gives us a new perspective, a new identity, and a new assignment in a culture where faith is losing priority. Use these truths and questions to dig deeper into the sermon’s message, “Three Decisions in the Starting Point of Change.”

Truth 1 – Choose the Source of Your Change

Paul declares that once we come to Christ, we no longer evaluate people “according to the flesh,” but see them through the eyes of redemption, and we ourselves become a new creation – the old has passed away, the new has come. In a culture where fewer adults identify as Christians and non-Christian worldviews are rapidly growing, believers desperately need to know their identity in Christ and see others through His eyes rather than through labels and appearances.

Discussion Questions

- Before Paul met Jesus, he misjudged Christ and Christians – how does his story help you examine the way you see people who disagree with you, disappoint you, or differ from you?
- Where do you still tend to see yourself through the “old” lens – past failures, shame, or worldly success – instead of as a new creation in Christ? How might Romans 12:2’s call to be transformed by renewing your mind speak into this struggle?

Truth 2 – Remember Who Started the Change

Paul reminds believers that all of this is from God, who took the initiative to reconcile us to through Christ and entrusted to us the message of reconciliation. Salvation is deeply personal but never private – God changes us so we will become agents of reconciliation in a culture where fewer adults say faith is “very important” and many no longer live what they claim to believe.

Discussion Questions

- How does realizing that God saved you not just for yourself, but to help others, change how you think about spiritual growth?
- Where do you see the trends described in the statistics – a decline in those who value faith and an increase in alternative beliefs – reflected in our world today?
- Which part of helping people be reconciled to God is hardest for you right now – seeing people differently, sharing the message clearly, or showing God’s love through forgiveness and healed relationships?

Truth 3 – Be a Catalyst for Christ-Centered Change

Paul declares that we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God Himself makes His appeal through us, urging people, “Be reconciled to God,” because Christ became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God. In a generation where practicing Christians have been nearly cut in half, God’s plan is still to work through everyday believers who carry His message into homes, neighborhoods, workplaces, and nations.

Discussion Questions

- What does it mean, practically, to live as an “ambassador for Christ” in your daily routine (at work, in your family, at school, online)? How might your words, priorities, and responses change if you embraced that identity fully?
- Why is Paul’s plea “Be reconciled to God” so urgent today, given the decline in practicing Christians and the growing spiritual confusion in our culture?

Section #3 – EMBRACE

“Applying God’s Word”

Go deeper into the Word of God by applying what you’ve learned to your life today. Reflect on these action steps and discuss how you can live out the truths from 2 Corinthians 5:16-21.

Identify Your “Starting Point of Change”

Prayerfully ask: Where is God calling me to “ride into the storm” instead of staying by the fire—an area of sin, complacency, fear, or passivity where change is overdue?

- Write down one specific decision you will make this week to surrender that area to Christ as the true source of your change.

Practice a New Perspective

Each day this week, choose one person you tend to see “according to the flesh” and ask God to help you see them through the eyes of Christ—as someone He can redeem and transform.

- Record in a journal how this shift in perspective changes your reactions, conversations, and prayers for that individual.

Live Out Your Ministry of Reconciliation

Choose one tangible way to show the Gospel and one way to share the Gospel: (1) Show: Forgive someone, pursue reconciliation, or serve someone who has nothing to offer in return. (2) Share: Clearly explain the hope of Christ to a friend, coworker, or family member this week.

- Discuss in your group how you can encourage one another to keep living as ambassadors and follow up next week on how God worked through these steps.

Memorize and Reflect

Commit 2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV to memory: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

Throughout the week, reflect on this verse each time you face discouragement or temptation to slip back into old patterns, thanking the Lord that real change is possible through Christ.

Closing Challenge

Close your time by praying for one another to: See people through Christ’s eyes. Remember that God is the One who started the change. Boldly live as ambassadors for Him.

Ask the Lord to raise up a generation of Christians that choose to be “ambassadors for Christ” who will quietly choose to ride into the cultural storm with the hope of the Gospel and make a lasting Kingdom impact.