

The New Man – Part 2

The advancement of technology in our world has opened the door to all kinds of new experiences in the modern world. One of the areas that has seen incredible advancements in technology is the study and understanding of DNA (put up DNA graphic). Because of DNA, there are actually people in the world who have found out that they have a sibling that they never knew existed! Can you imagine? It would be like me waking up this morning knowing I had three siblings, and then all of the sudden discovering that I have a new brother or sister that I never knew about!

Think about what they would change if that happened in your life.

I mean, all of the sudden, someone who was a complete stranger to you would become family. Someone you never would have cared for would now become someone you cared for deeply. Someone you never would have otherwise known would now become someone you wanted to develop a meaningful relationship with. You would still be the same person, and they would still be the same person. BUT, your understanding of their identity would change everything about your relationship with them. It would immediately create a bond that did not previously exist.

Identity is a POWERFUL part of the human experience. What you believe about your own identity changes the way you live. What you believe about the identity of others changes your relationship with them.

God is our Creator. He has designed us so that identity matters. No wonder God has decided that He would reveal Himself to us by giving us a new identity in Christ. We are in Ephesians 2. If you have your Bible, and I hope you do, open to Ephesians 2 with me. (PUT UP JOURNEY TRACKER)

As you open, repeat this with me: I AM THE NEW MAN.

Apart from Christ, I was the OLD MAN:

- Dead in my trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-3)
- An enemy of God (Col. 1:21, James 4:4, Rom. 5:10)
- Separated from Christ and His promises (Eph. 2:12)
- Hostile towards God and others (Eph. 2:16)
- A stranger and foreigner to God (Eph. 2:19)
- A child of wrath and of disobedience (Eph. 2:2-3)

When you were the old man, you were an enemy of God. There was hostility between you and God.

Colossians 1:21

21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,

James 4:4

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Romans 5:10

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10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

Two of the BEST WORDS in the whole Bible... **BUT GOD**. When we were enemies of God, God acted out of His glorious grace on our behalf. When we were spiritually dead, unable to resurrect ourselves or make ourselves right with God, God made us right with Him through Jesus. He washed away our sins, but He didn't stop there... He made us the NEW MAN... we were reborn spiritually as new creations.

In Jesus, God has given me a NEW IDENTITY:

- I am the new man (Eph. 4:24)
- I am alive in God (Eph. 2:5)
- I am a friend of God, He calls me His friend (John 15:15)
- I have a new life in Jesus (Rom. 6:4, 2 Cor. 5:17, Gal. 2:20, Col. 3:1-4)
- I have been born again of the Spirit of God (John 3)
- I am chosen and adopted by God (Eph. 1:5)
- I am a child of God, a member of His family (Eph. 1:5, 2:19)
- I have been made holy and blameless before God (Eph. 1:4)
- I have redemption from sin and forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus (Eph. 1:7)
- I have been united with God in Christ (Eph. 1:10)
- I have an eternal inheritance waiting for me, guaranteed by the Holy Spirit Himself (Eph. 1:11)
- I have been sealed with the promised Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13)
- I have been given power and authority in Christ (Eph. 1:19-23)
- I am a member of the body of Christ, His Church (Eph. 1:22-23)
- I have been raised from spiritual death to spiritual life (Eph. 2:4-9)
- I am seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6)
- I am a citizen of God's eternal Kingdom (Eph. 2:19)
- I am joined together with all the saints as a dwelling place for God's Spirit (Eph. 2:21-22)
- I have been set apart by God to do the good works He has predestined me to do (Eph. 2:10)

With this list, we are only scratching the surface! Ephesians 1 reminded us that He has BLESSED US, IN CHRIST, WITH **EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING!!** What we have as the new man is truly incalculable.

Do you see what God has done? He has ENDED the HOSTILITIES between us and Him!

Vertical and Horizontal: Ephesians 2

- Because we are the new man, God has made us right with HIM (Eph. 2:1-10)
- Because we are the new man, God has made us right with ONE ANOTHER (Eph. 2:11-22)

Ephesians 2:11-22

11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles **in the flesh**, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made **in the flesh** by hands— 12 remember that **you were at that time separated from Christ**, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has **made us both one** and has **broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility** 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself **one new man in place**

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of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby **killing the hostility**. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access **in one Spirit** to the Father. 19 So then you are **no longer strangers and aliens**, but you are **fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God**, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being **built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit**.

Here are the two big ideas of this passage:

1. Peace between people will NEVER be possible in the FLESH
2. Peace between people is ONLY possible in the SPIRIT

PEACE BETWEEN PEOPLE WILL NEVER BE POSSIBLE IN THE FLESH:

Ephesians 2:11-22

11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles **in the flesh**, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made **in the flesh** by hands— 12 remember that **you were at that time separated from Christ**, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

What are the hostilities of the flesh?

For Paul, in the context to his letter to the Ephesians, the hostilities of the flesh were the hostilities that existed between Jews and Gentiles.

- The Jews were called the circumcision
- The Gentiles were called the uncircumcision

Circumcision, the removing of the foreskin of Jewish males, was a sacred sign of the covenant of God that was established with the Jews through their father, Abraham. For the Jew, it was a necessary sign of their acceptance of the covenant with God. It was an indicator of the favor of God towards the Jew. To be uncircumcised was to be outside the sphere of God’s redemptive favor.

Jews were circumcised, but Gentiles (aka, all other people groups) were not. For the Jew, this created an “us and them” mentality. There were the circumcised in the flesh, and there were those who were not circumcised in the flesh. In the mind of the Jew, you were either ONE OF US, or you were ONE OF THEM. This created HOSTILITY in the flesh between Jews and Gentiles. Truthfully, there could never be unity and peace between Jews and Gentiles in the flesh. In the flesh, there would never be any hope of uniting Jews and Gentiles together.

The folly of the world is the belief that mankind can be reconciled together by means of the FLESH.

The world is holding out for hope that reconciliation between all people can happen in our flesh.

Paul listed several concerns of the flesh that will never unify mankind:

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Colossians 3:9-11

9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. 11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Galatians 3:27-28

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

What are the identities in our flesh that Paul said would not bring peace?

- **Race**

The world believes that unity in the flesh is possible by focusing on race as a primary issue. We know and agree that racism is wrong. The Bible would call racism the sin of partiality and of unrighteous judgements. To treat someone different because of their race is a sin. A call to end racism certainly echoes the call of Scripture. While we, as Christians, should strongly oppose racism at all levels, unity and oneness in the world will never be obtained by ending racism. Furthermore, racism cannot be eradicated from our world by the means of the flesh. In other words, because we live in a fallen world, because there is a devil speaking lies in this world, and because we live in bodies that are under the curse of sin, there is no hope of ending racism by focusing on the flesh. We cannot achieve peace in the flesh by the means of the flesh. Sin in the flesh guarantees that racism will always be part of this world because SIN will always be part of this world. Certainly, we desire to see sin and evil constrained on the world. Let's keep fighting for that! But may we never put our hope for peace in resolving racial tensions.

Racism in America has become a very complicated issue. Organizations like Black Lives Matter have decided to take on far more than just the issue of race in their stance against racism. Valuing black lives has been mixed with valuing Marxism, valuing homosexuality and other sexual perversions, valuing the destruction of the nuclear family, and erasing the history of our nation's godly heritage from the history books, to name a few. At the same time, black conservatives such as Candace Owen are speaking out against racism being tied to these other issues. She and others are challenging the idea that, to be black, means to share the same political and moral views. Don't miss the point here. I am not entering into political debate. HERE IS THE POINT: focusing on seeking peace and unity by means of the flesh is only creating more HOSTILITY, not unity! It is not possible to unify the world and destroy the hostilities between people that exist because of race by focusing on the color of a person's skin. If there is going to be peace between people of various races in the world, it is going to have to come by some means other than the flesh. Resolving the hostilities in the flesh between Jews and Gentiles would have never been possible in the flesh, and resolving the hostilities in the flesh between different color skinned Americans or peoples from various nationalities will never be possible in the flesh.

- **Nationalism, ethnicity, culture, socio-economic status**

National pride, pride in one's culture, and allegiance to one's country will never resolve the hostilities in the flesh that exist between people groups. Our nationality is not part of our new identity in Christ, it is part of our identity in the flesh. Nations divide us. Languages divided us. Ethnicity divides us. These things do not invite unity, they bring division.

When speaking of the signs of the end times, Jesus spoke these words:

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Matthew 24:7

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.

Obviously, Jesus was not placing His hope for unity in the world in the nations of this world. Now, to be sure, every nation and every culture adds value to our understanding of God. The church in Africa faces different issues than the church in America. The church in South America adds value and understanding to our view of God that is different from the value added by the church in Asia. The gospel is for all the peoples of all the nations. One day, every tribe, tongue, and nation will be represented before the throne of Jesus:

Revelation 7:9

9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands

The church will be made up of every tribe, tongue, and nation. It will include all peoples and languages. While the church is still on this earth, it is important for us to realize that we have so much to learn from one another. Because of the work of God in our spirits to make us the new man, there should be no group of people on the earth that breaks down the barriers of race and nationalism and learns from one another better than the church.

But our ability to be unified in the church across cultures is part of our SPIRITUAL identity, not our identity in the FLESH. We can relate to one another this way because of what God has done to make us a new creation in Christ. The world does not share that new identity in Christ. They do not have a basis on which nationalities, cultures, ethnicities, and tribes can come together and find unity. The differences of nationalities and ethnicities do not unite the world, they divide it. And they will continue to divide people and create hostilities between people until Jesus returns. Peace between people cannot be achieved by focusing on nationalities or globalism, because these things are made in the flesh, not in the spirit.

Peace in our own country cannot be achieved by national pride! Our country is strongly divided politically. Identities rooted in republican or democratic views are not part of our new identities in the spirit. In the Spirit, there are no Greeks or Jews. In the Spirit, there are no republicans or democrats.

Please do not misunderstand me! There are votes that agree with God far more than others. Our responsibility to vote and to encourage godliness in our country is so important! We should exercise our civil responsibility and vote. Why? Because our spiritual identity should inform the way we live out our lives in the flesh. But make no mistake: our votes should not be based on our allegiance to a political party or even to America! Our votes should be founded in who we are in Christ and should derive from our faith in God and in what matters most to Him.

- **Gender/Sex/Sexuality**

In America, the LGBTQ+ movement has embraced a partial truth. They constantly assert that the hostilities that exist between people are there because of biases that cause people to judge others, hate others, and oppress others. That is true! It is part of the fallen nature of mankind. However, they offer a solution that will never work. The LGBTQ+ movement insist that the solution is for everyone to agree with their view of gender, sex, and sexuality. If someone believes homosexuality to be wrong, a

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perversion of God's design and a distortion of His image that He granted us as image bearers, they are portrayed by the LGBTQ as intolerant bigots who are filled with hate. Our culture has shifted so hard that there are many who will not only agree with God by calling evil what he calls evil, but they have left God to the point where they now take what God calls evil, celebrate it, and call it good.

Unity will never come by means of the flesh. Seeking unity between all people cannot happen by seeking agreement in viewpoints regarding gender, sex, and sexuality. The world will continue to pervert God's design for gender and sex. There will always be those who agree with God, and there will always be those who do not agree with God.

Here is the irony. Even now, what I am sharing with you would be labeled by many as hate speech in our current culture. To disagree with someone's decision to pervert God's design for sex and sexuality is considered to be divisive and hateful. This is just a further example of the main point I am seeking to make: **PEACE AND RECONCILIATION BETWEEN PEOPLE CANNOT BE FOUND BY MEANS OF THE FLESH.** It is impossible. We will never agree in our flesh. There will never be peace in the flesh.

- **Religion**

Think of all the ways that religion has plagued our world. Wars have been waged and genocides carried out in the name of religion. There have been acts of terror and extreme violence in our country and in our world in the name of religion. Children have been sacrificed to false gods on alters. People have been martyred in front of their husbands, wives, and children in the name of religion. Entire groups of people have been led to believe lies that harden their hearts and keep them from receiving the gospel of Jesus Christ because of religion.

In America, religion has been made into something that is viewed by many as altogether evil. The Bible does not call religion evil, it calls people to pure and undefiled religion that is rooted in the Word of God. Because of the vilifying of religion in our nation, many people have been led to conclude that there is no god, or that if there is a god that he is distant and uninvolved. These lies are leading people to eternal separation from God.

In terms of the flesh, it is impossible to bring peace to people and destroy the hostilities between people in the flesh by focusing on religion. A focus on religion will only further increase the hostilities between people. This has even proven to be true in the church. Various denominations of Christianity have emerged as believers have become divided over issues that should not divide us. Most denominations have divided over non-essentials: issues that should never have become a condition for fellowship among the saints and partnership in the gospel. Even Christianity itself can become distorted by religion when our unity is based on where people are at in their thinking and beliefs instead of who they are as the new man in Christ.

Don't misunderstand me. Again, there is a kind of religion that is pleasing to God. As Christians, we should strongly desire to practice pure and undefiled religion before God. But the concepts of religion in the world stand opposed to God. They do not bring unity, they bring division. Images like this will never achieve their desired end:



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PEACE between people will NEVER be possible by means of the FLESH.

Identities in the Flesh: (Col. 3:9-11, Gal. 3:27-28)

- Race (Greek or Jew)
- Nationalism/Ethnicity/Culture (Greek or Jew)
- Gender/Sex/Sexuality (male or female)
- Religion (circumcision or uncircumcision)
- Socio-Economic Status (barbarian, Scythian, slave, or free)

The folly of the world is the belief that mankind can be reconciled together by means of the FLESH.

The world is holding out for hope that reconciliation between all people can happen in our flesh.

The first message of Ephesians 2:11-22 is:

PEACE between people will NEVER be possible in the FLESH.

The second message of Ephesians 2:11-22 is:

PEACE between people is ONLY possible in the SPIRIT.

This is the great wisdom of God! He has bypassed our fleshly identities and has made us one in Christ in SPIRIT. He has given us a new identity in Christ that unites us in Christ!

- It is like discovering that you have a new brother or sister through DNA testing.
- Our understanding of the NEW MAN should inform every relationship with have with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Ephesians 2:14-16

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has **broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility** 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, **that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,** 16 and might **reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.**

The hostility between every person who is the NEW MAN has been KILLED by JESUS.

Say it again: I AM THE NEW MAN.

Do you understand what this means? Not only has God killed the hostilities between you and Him, He has killed the hostilities between you and your brothers and sisters in Christ.

- If God is my Father, and God is your Father, that makes us brothers and sisters in Christ
- If God has made my spirit one with His Spirit, and God has made your spirit one with His Spirit, that means we share the same spirit!

What is Paul saying?

He is saying that the lives we live in the flesh should not be informed by our identities in the flesh, but they should be informed by our identities in the SPIRIT.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

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16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

We, as new creations in Christ, have the SOLUTION for every hostility that exists in the flesh!

What if you began to be lead first and foremost by a person's identity in the SPIRIT and not in their FLESH? Think about how that would change your relationships!

- Husbands, when you look at your wives
- Wives, when you look at your husbands
- Parents, when you look at your children
- Children, when you look at your parents
- Believers, when you encounter someone who is not like you
- Believers, when you look at less mature believers
- Believers, when you look at someone who is lost

Unity and peace between people are only possible as our faith increases, and we believe that WE ARE THE NEW MAN. Because I am the new man, God has ended hostilities between me and Him. Because I am the new man, God has ended hostilities between me and other people.

What does it look like, practically, to start living my life by faith that I am the new man?

- Stop regarding people according to their flesh. Look past their flesh and see their spirit.
- Do not judge someone according to their flesh.
- Do not seek to place someone else under judgement. We do a good enough job of that on our own. If someone is still under the wrath and judgement of God because of their sin, seek to help them get out from under judgement by leading them to Jesus through His gospel!
- See other believers as someone who is one with you and one with the Lord in Spirit. Treat them accordingly, as fellow heirs and saints in Christ – regardless of where they are at in their maturity.
- Stir up your faith that you are the new man EVERY DAY. Ask God what the good works are that He has prepared for you to do in advance... then WALK IN THEM.