

The welcome verse for this week is 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.”



### **The Call to Renewal**

Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:22-24;  
1 Timothy 4:8; 2 Peter 1:3-11

**The Bottom Line:** The scriptures describe the path to joy, freedom, and renewal in discipleship to Jesus-through intentional spiritual practices.

### **Introduction:**

The question at hand: How do people change?

Psychologists, sociologists, government leaders, and educational institutions have given their best aims at producing theories that work.

People long for real healing, real peace, real joy... and it seems to be that none of the theories are successful for lasting change.

This longing doesn't simply describe those outside of the church, but many from within the church.

### **Tension:**

Hundreds, if not thousands, of practicing Christians wrestle with all kinds of internal and external battles, leading them to ask questions like:

1. If Jesus gives peace, then why am I still so anxious and consumed by worry?
2. If Jesus gives freedom, then why do I still feel like a slave to old habits?
3. If Jesus gives healing, then why do I still have so much pain?
4. If Jesus gives joy, then why am I so overly sad and depressed?

All the while, these real Christians with real questions put on a smile, come to church, sing the songs, and put money in the plate every weekend. Then they get in the car and try to make sense of everything they just heard and sung about in light of their own realities.

This series acknowledges the people who love Jesus dearly, but long for *real* transformation, internally and externally. At the end of the day, the question is if those in Christ can actually become “new creations” or not.

### **Truth:**

Faith involves both belief and trust that Jesus is who he says he is and can do what he said he will do. If Jesus is truly able to change lives, then why am I not experiencing life change?

### **Read Romans 12:1-2 and Ephesians 4:22-24.**

Changed lives require a “renewal of the mind,” reforming the internal self.

How does this kind of change take place? Intentional Spiritual Formation.

Spiritual Formation is not a Christian process, but it’s a human process. You are being formed by something, somewhere, unintentionally or intentionally.

Four things that contribute to our spiritual formation:

1. The stories we believe
2. The people we’re surrounded by
3. The experiences we’ve lived through
4. The habits we form

Christian Spiritual Formation focuses, mostly, on intentional habits/practices in the way of Jesus with the goal of forming the inner self into the likeness of Christ, becoming partakers of the divine nature, and supplementing our faith with good works (rf. 1 Timothy 4:7-8; 2 Peter 1:3-11).

We call these practices, “the spiritual disciplines.”

These practices and the Christian life are less about what you are doing, and more about who you are becoming. We embody the lifestyle of Jesus so we might embody the life of Jesus.

The life of Jesus is a life of love, joy, peace, and perfect communion with the Father. That’s the life I want to live. That’s the life you want to live.

### **Application & Conclusion:**

You are being formed whether you like it or not. The way that you are formed will affect the way in which you live. The Holy Spirit has a desire to renew your inner

self and to bring within you and about you the very character of Jesus. Choose today to follow Jesus on the path to real transformation.

**Your Practice This Week** – Pray that God would reveal to you the inner and outer renewal, healing, and freedom that needs to take place.

**Next Steps:**

- Commit to the weekly practice given by Pastor Matt.
- Read *The Great Omission* by Dallas Willard.
- Pray for the direction and invitations of the Holy Spirit to become evident.

**Discussion questions for group this week:**

**1. What does this teach me about God?**

**2. What does this teach me about me?**

**3. How do I apply this to my life?**

**4. If I could ask a question about this it would be....**

