

2 Corinthians 5: Growth Group Guide

SCRIPTURE READING QUESTIONS

Before diving into the group discussion, consider these four questions as you read the text:

- **What does this passage say about God, who He is, and what He does (Father, Son, and Spirit)?**
- **What does this passage teach me about me?**
- **What comfort/challenge can I take away from this passage?**
- **How will I respond or live differently because of what I've read?**

PART 1: THE FOUNDATION

Loving God's People (The Community Lens) In 2 Corinthians 5, our "One New Family" identity is completely reoriented. Paul states that from now on, "we do not regard anyone from a worldly perspective" (2 Corinthians 5:16, CSB). Authentic community means seeing our brothers and sisters not through the lens of their past mistakes, social status, or worldly flaws, but as new creations in Christ.

- **Key Question:** "How are you pursuing authentic community with other believers right now?"
- **Key Question:** "What gets in the way of community with other believers?"

Looking to God's Word (The Truth Lens) This chapter contains one of the most profound declarations of our "Wealth in Christ" (Indicative facts/identity): "He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21, CSB). Our identity is no longer defined by our failures, but by the perfect righteousness of Christ credited to us.

- **Key Question:** "How is God's Word challenging you?"
- **Key Question:** "What can you do to prioritize God's Word?"

PART 2: THE WALK

Listening to God's Voice (The Prayer Lens) Paul reminds us that we walk by faith, not by sight, and that God has given us the Holy Spirit as a down payment (2 Corinthians 5:5, 7, CSB). Walking in the Spirit means tuning out the visible anxieties and pressures of this world to listen to the secure voice of the Spirit, who seals our eternal hope.

- **Key Question:** "How is God directing you?"
- **Key Question:** "What do you need to quiet in your life to hear God better?"

Living Sent (The Mission Lens) Our "sending capacity" is explicitly defined here: we have been given the "ministry of reconciliation" and are officially "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:18, 20, CSB). Compelled by Christ's love, we look for everyday opportunities to plead with the world to be reconciled to God.

- **Key Question:** "What everyday opportunity have you used to point someone to Jesus?"
- **Key Question:** "What opportunities did you miss to tell someone about Jesus?"

GROUP PRAYER & SUMMARY

- **Closing Thought:** 2 Corinthians 5 reveals that the gospel completely transforms us from the inside out—turning us into new creations, clothing us in Christ's righteousness, and commissioning us to step into the world as His official ambassadors of reconciliation.
- **Final Action:** This week, view yourself explicitly as an "ambassador" at your workplace, school, or neighborhood. Actively seek out one conversation where you can inject gospel peace or hope into a fractured situation.

PAGE 3: FACILITATOR CHEAT SHEET

The Structural Lens

Indicative vs. Imperative: The theological framework hinges on the massive cosmic **Indicative** of the Great Exchange: God made Christ to be sin so that we might become His righteousness (v. 21), and in Christ, the old is gone and the new has come (v. 17). The **Imperative** (the command) is the urgent call to action flowing from this identity: "We plead on Christ's behalf: 'Be reconciled to God'" (v. 20). Remind the group that our drive for mission does not stem from obligation, but from being fundamentally transformed into new creations.

Facilitation Tips

- **Balancing Fear and Love:** Members might struggle to reconcile verse 11 ("Knowing the fear of the Lord...") with verse 14 ("For the love of Christ compels us..."). Help them see that "fear" is a reverent awe of God's holy justice and the reality of His judgment seat (v. 10), which gives our mission urgency, while "love" is the motivating fuel that drives us out to reach people.
- **Worldly Perspectives:** If the group struggles with the concept of regarding people from a "worldly perspective" (v. 16), ask: "How does our culture define people's worth (e.g., wealth, politics, appearance), and how does the gospel completely reverse that?"

Leader Insights

- **Community:** Seeing one another as "new creations" (v. 17) is vital for the "One New Family". It commands us to stop defining our group members by their past sins or current struggles, treating them instead according to their true identity in Christ.
- **Truth:** Verse 21 is the ultimate "Truth Lens" anchor. It shatters any form of performance-based religion. We do not work *for* righteousness; we work *from* the fact that we *are* the righteousness of God in Christ.
- **Prayer:** Walking by faith and not by sight (v. 7) requires an active, dependent prayer life. Prayer is the tool that anchors our hearts to eternal realities when our physical eyes only see temporary trouble.
- **Mission:** An ambassador has no personal agenda; they only represent the country and ruler who sent them. This high-capacity missional view reminds us that our primary job in our everyday spaces is to represent King Jesus faithfully.