

BACKWARD THINKING, PART 5

From now on, then, we do not know anyone in a purely human way. Even if we have known Christ in a purely human way, yet now we no longer know Him in this way. (2 Corinthians 5:16, HCSB)

WHAT IF OUR DETERMINATION REALLY WORKED? What if every time we said to ourselves, “From now on...,” we actually kept to our commitment and never fell back into our old way of doing things? Well, I know this at least: my golf game would be a whole lot better than it is!

While I’m not so cynical as to write off such possibilities as fantasy, I’m certainly a realist, especially when it comes to my own resolutions and promises. My intentions are good and my heart may want what God wants, but if I have a chance to let myself off the hook of discipline, I’ll take that chance most every time.

That’s a confession. And with many of you, it may be a connection—for you may see the same tendencies in yourself.

Paul certainly identified with this problem. In his letter to the Romans, he spoke the words of a golfer, perhaps, but certainly of a man who couldn’t ever get it fully right: “For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am made out of flesh, sold into sin’s power. For I do not understand what I am doing, because I do not practice what I want to do, but I do what I hate” (Romans 7:14-15). *Made out of flesh.* Now there’s the rub!

Because we are trapped for this life in bodies “sold into sin’s power,” we don’t do things consistently correctly. More than that, because our minds and our eyes are part of that tainted body, we neither think of things nor see things correctly. Apart from Christ (and even as we progress with him in us), we see things as the world sees things. We think of things in a way that people of the world think of them. And thus we do things that make sense in this world.

But what Paul wanted the Corinthians to give attention to is another world entirely. Rather than thinking through matters in a “purely human way,” we are to think of things with Christ in view. “From now on”—that is, from the day of our newness in Christ forward—we are to take a different look at the world. In fact, we are to do this toward our past, our present, and our future. All gets reevaluated in light of the eternal One, and all is changed from that view.

Opening questions If you could make and keep a commitment about your golf game starting today, what would it be? How about in your home or work life?

READING 2 Corinthians 5:16-20; 1 Timothy 1:3-7 & 18-20; Hebrews 12:2

The new view (2 Corinthians 5)

Where does the new view of the world come from? What does this view produce in us? Name one or two ways in which you see the world differently because you are in Christ.

Sidetracked (1 Timothy 1)

What kinds of things can sidetrack us from what really matters in regards to faith in Jesus? What is the danger in being sidetracked?

An upward view (Hebrews 12)

How are the results of Jesus’ upward view described in this verse? How are glory and joy and hope integral to a Christ-centered view of the world?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2015 Links Players International. A 5-minute video accompanies today’s study at <https://youtu.be/KJHSnD-IbHg>