

TODAY'S BIBLE READING
COLOSSIANS 2:6–15

RECOMMENDED READING
JOHN 3:3–15; GALATIANS 3:1–14

A NEW CREATION

The first Christians insisted that when we become Christians, a profound change occurs in our fundamental identity. In who we are at the core of our being. In who we are first and foremost, before we are anything else. In our awareness of ourselves. The first Christians were convinced that in identifying with Jesus' death on the cross, something within us dies. They called this person who died the "old man" or the "old woman." The person we were before we had a spiritual birth . . .

So this old nature of mine—the one that was constantly pulling me down and causing me to live in ways I wasn't created to live—has died. And no matter how many times that old nature raises its ugly head and pretends to be alive, it is dead.

And not only did that old person die, but I have been given a new nature.

Again, Paul writes in Colossians, "You have been raised with Christ." I have this new life, this new identity that has been given to me. I have taken on the identity of Christ.

Paul continues, "You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived." These first Christians kept insisting that something so transformational was happening in the lives of followers of Jesus that they could refer to their old lives as "the life [we] once lived."

It is not that we are perfect now or that we will never have to struggle. Or that the old person won't come back from time to time. It's that this new way of life involves a constant, conscious decision to keeping dying to the old so that we can live in the new. Paul describes it as Christ being our lives.

Paul goes so far as to insist in another letter that if we are having this new kind of transforming experience with Christ in which we are taking on a new identity, we are literally now a "new creation" . . .

The issue then isn't my beating myself up over all of the things I am not doing or the things I am doing poorly; the issue is my learning who this person is who God keeps insisting I already am.

Notice these words from the letter to the Philippians: "Let us live up to what we have already attained."

There is this person who we already are in God's eyes. And we are learning to live like it is true.

—*Rob Bell*

TO TAKE AWAY

:: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOUR "OLD SELF" TO DIE?

:: WHY IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU BEGIN TO LIVE AS A "NEW CREATION"?

:: DOES YOUR LIFE REFLECT THAT YOU HAVE BEEN "BORN AGAIN"? HOW CAN YOU BEGIN TO WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE?