

## Stand Firm Series (1): New You!



*Praise be to God, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world . . . to be holy and blameless in his sight . . . when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, (Ephesians 1:3-5, 13 NIV).*

We live in a society that loves newness. Just look at our popular TV shows and products they advertise. We can relate to the new singing American Idol, the new Biggest Loser, the new home via an Extreme Makeover, or the new beautiful looks through "What Not to Wear." There are probably a hundred products alone promising better looking skin. Skin!

The apostle Paul wastes no time in the first few verses of his letter to the Ephesians to make the point that Jesus Christ brings lots of newness with his glorious gospel. The newness, however, is not in physical things like skin, but spiritual new things that will impact our physical world.

Notice that we are blessed in the heavenly realm with spiritual blessings. We receive salvation in Christ but with it comes the very presence of God through the Holy Spirit. If we have his Holy Spirit in us then we will no doubt understand the importance of being holy in our behavior. One of the very first "new me" things was my tongue. My need to act cool and tough by using foul language stopped—almost instantaneously.

These types of "new you" transformations will be different for everyone, but Paul's point remains true: we are impacted heavily by this new invasion of God's powerful presence. As he says, "we were marked with the Holy Spirit." So allow the Holy Spirit to form you into the follower of Christ that God wants you to be.

If you're in Christ, you may not lose 20 pounds, get baby-like new skin, or come home to newly remodeled digs; but you will be blessed spiritually with an astounding new purpose in life, love for people, and courage in the face of what once brought fear. Live *in* Christ and be the new you!