

RENEW: REAWAKEN

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2 Corinthians 6:11-13

“Dear, dear Corinthians, I can’t tell you how much I long for you to enter this wide-open, spacious life. We didn’t fence you in. The smallness you feel comes from within you. Your lives aren’t small, but you’re living them in a small way. I’m speaking as plainly as I can and with great affection. Open up your lives. Live openly and expansively!

(The Message Translation)

REFLECT & DISCUSS

Context

Paul is writing to a church in conflict: a church divided by disputes regarding worship, lawsuits, spiritual gifts, leadership, and more. Paul’s own leadership has been challenged and his credibility questioned. He feels injured by the divisions and brokenhearted by the fractured relationships.

Still, he retains deep affection for the Corinthian church. He reaches out not as one nursing a grudge, but as one holding firm to unconditional love--reflecting the love of Christ in which God, the injured party to human sin, reaches out to us.

Paul invites the church to experience the expansive and spacious life of love by re-opening their hearts to him and to the message of the gospel he proclaims.

Big Ideas

1. **Reawaken to the present** where love meets us.
2. **Reawaken to wonder** where love opens us to the world.
3. **Reawaken the conditions for love** by releasing our conditions on love.

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Reflect

1. Read the scripture passage carefully and slowly. What word or image stands out to you? Why?
2. What are some (self-imposed) ways we restrict our lives and hearts?
3. What does a “wide-open, spacious” life look like or mean to you? How or when have you experienced this kind of life?
4. How might becoming more fully present lead us to the kind of life Paul is encouraging?
5. What is wonder? What is the opposite of wonder?
6. How might approaching faith (God, the bible, creeds, worship, rituals, other people) with *wonder* make a difference?
7. Read the prayer and reflect. What stands out to you? In what way is God stirring you to embrace a more expansive, spacious life?

PRAY

May today there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.

It is there for each and every one of us.”

— *Teresa of Ávila*

QUOTES

“The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living. What we lack is not a will to believe but a will to wonder.”

— Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Who is Man?*

“The opposite of freedom is not determinism, but hardness of heart. Freedom presupposes openness of heart, of mind, of eye and ear.”

— Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets*

“The glory of God is humanity fully alive.”

— St. Irenaeus

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