



Did you know you were created by God to do good—even GREAT things? You have a purpose in life! Working toward that purpose is a big part of loving who you are—and being able to embrace and even welcome change so you can become the person God intended you to be. Look at what God’s word says:

*“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” —Ephesians 2:10 NLT*

*“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”  
—Philippians 1:6 NIV*

So far, we’ve established that God created you with “wonderful” in mind and that you have a God-given purpose. Here’s a question you might ask yourself:

- **What if I’m not so hot right now? What if I’m mean and grumpy and sometimes really hate who I am?**

Now it’s time to regain the picture of what God intends for your life. It’s okay to admit you’re hurting—but it’s not okay to be bitter and unforgiving. Read what God’s word says:

*“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”  
—Matthew 6:14, 15 NIV*

To really change and become the person God has called you to be, you’ll need to forgive those who have harmed you or dealt unjustly with you in any way.

Forgiveness is releasing that person out of your grip and into God’s hands. It must be done for you to have real peace and joy, despite the past.

*“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”  
—Ephesians 1:4 NIV*

*“Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother’s womb. I thank you, High God—you’re breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvelously made! I worship in adoration—what a creation!”  
—Psalms 139:13-14 MSG*

*“So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female.”  
—Genesis 1:27 NIV*

It takes courage and trust in God to forgive, but it’s well worth the risk. Can you sense a new freedom in your soul? This is what change is all about!

Dig down in the trenches of your heart and acknowledge the negative attitudes and behaviors you’ve accumulated from these past experiences.

- **Have you allowed your heart to become hard in self-defense or self-protection?**
- **Have your actions harmed others?**

You may have developed destructive thought patterns and outward habits out of that hardness that are far from the picture of “wonderful” that God created you to be. To fully embrace change, you need to recognize, acknowledge, and deal with them.

Anger, depression, bitterness—these emotions will become the driver, steering you down a broken path. They'll trip you up and slow you down—and you'll never really be able to love or be happy with yourself.

You may feel justified in these emotions, but you'll never connect with who God intended you to become while holding on to them. The Bible tells us to throw off those things!

*"And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." Mark 11:25 NIV*

*"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." Matthew 6:14-15 NIV*

*"Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy." —Ephesians 4:21-24 NLT*

Ask God to come in and forgive you for every area in your heart that is hardened. Then make a decision now— with God's help—to get these bad attitudes and behaviors out of your life.

*"Let us rid ourselves of everything that gets in the way, and of the sin which holds on to us so tightly, and let us run with determination the race that lies before us. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end. He did not give up because of the cross! On the contrary, because of the joy that was waiting for him, he thought nothing of the disgrace of dying on the cross, and he is now seated at the right side of God's throne." —Hebrews 12b:1-2 GNT*

*"Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation." —Luke 11:4 NIV*

It's time to exchange those old thoughts and behaviors for something new. You've thrown them off and now there's a pile of the old and dirty on the floor. You've got to reach into the closet and choose something new to wear!

Here's what the bible describes for what our lives should look like:

*"But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." —Galatians 5:22 NLT*

- **What exchanges do you need to make in your life?**
- **What "new clothes" do you need to put on? Hate for love? Meanness for kindness? Anger for trust? Anxiety for peace? Depression for joy?**
- **Do you believe God can help you make this holy exchange?**

It may take more courage than you've ever had before to walk this newness out, but you can do this. You can embrace change. You can be kind when you feel like being mean. You can have self-control when you feel like lashing out.

Your confidence comes from knowing that God created you to be pretty amazing and that he is there to help you become that each day. You'll soon realize that there are more and more things you love about yourself as you grow to be the wonderful "you" that God intended. You have been changed.

- **Say it: *The old is passed away and I am new in God.***
- **Do it: *Do something new! Fruit is meant to be shared. Go share patience or kindness or joy with someone today.***

*"Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully!"*