



## Week One: Be Renewed and Take HEART

Key Passage: 2 Corinthians 4:16

<sup>16</sup>Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

2 Corinthians 4:16 (NIV)

Here Paul is writing to the Corinthian Church, a church full of new believers in Christ, and he fully understands their predicament. He knows they are discouraged by their present circumstances. He doesn't diminish that reality, but he says to them, don't let your circumstances control your responses. In all things, your responses to your circumstances should be measured by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That Gospel is your measuring rod. The Gospel gives you guidance as to how to respond. Knowing that, Paul says, "do not lose heart."

What does Paul mean by *losing heart*? The idea is, in the light of the difficulties you're facing, don't act badly, don't give up, and don't grow weary. But how is it possible to not lose heart, act badly, or grow weary. When our situation is so heavy on our shoulders, acting badly seems to come too naturally. So how do we keep from losing heart? Know that through Christ, you are being *renewed* every single day. In the same way, for example, at the end of the day, your smartphone battery is so depleted, it might not even turn on. Yet, you plug it in, and shortly the renewal process begins, and before you know it its recharged, ready for another day. The Gospel does the same thing to our inward spirit. When we are depleted, ready to act badly or give up, we are renewed to be able to face another day.

We can apply these principles to the goal our church is pursuing through Be Renewed. We have been in a difficult time personally, as a church, and as a nation. But we are not losing heart. We are going to claim the promise of Paul as we are renewed in every aspect of our discipleship lives: prayer, Bible Study, service, and generosity. It's a blessed time for us to Be Renewed.

### Group Discussion

1. What does "losing heart" look like? How do we know it when we see it?
  2. What causes us to give up when we lose heart?
  3. Why does acting badly *seem* as a good response for losing heart?
  4. How is *being renewed daily* the antidote for losing heart?
  5. How can you Be Renewed in prayer, Bible Study, and especially generosity, during this season?
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### Personal Reflection

1. Think about times in your life that have caused you to lose heart? What feelings does that raise?
2. How do you prevent your circumstances from dictating your responses?
3. Is it okay for believers to lose heart and act badly? Think about this.
4. How has the Gospel renewed you today?
5. Read the Giving Discipleship Journey. Which of the givers identifies where you might be on the Giving Discipleship Journey?

### Getting Ready for the Week

1. Monday: Think about your day today and list the ways you can avoid losing heart.
  2. Tuesday: Did you find yourself acting badly at all yesterday? How can your renewed-self avoid that today?
  3. Wednesday: Now that you've identified where you are on the Giving Discipleship Journey, write down some ways that being that kind of giver keeps you from "losing heart."
  4. Thursday: Pray for your pastors and church leaders not to lose heart today.
  5. Friday: Pray for your pastors and church leaders to Be Renewed today.
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