



It is hard to turn on the TV without being bombarded by some really dramatic before and after portraits. Whether they are enticing us to sign up for the latest diet or to purchase an expensive piece of exercise equipment, the advertisers know we have just plowed through the holiday season with a little less self-discipline than we would have liked and are feeling a bit bloated and vulnerable.

I am sure we could all use a little more exercise and a few adjustments to our diet, but a far more dramatic transformation took place the moment we received Christ. In Colossians 1:21-23, the apostle Paul is deeply fascinated with what we once were and what we have become in Christ.

WE WERE ONCE ALIENATED (v. 21)

1. What normally comes to mind when you hear the word “alienation?”
2. How were we alienated from God?
3. What are some of the consequences of being alienated from God?
4. What role does our “mind” and “behavior” play in our “alienation?”
5. How do they play off each other driving us deeper into alienation?

BUT NOW ARE RECONCILED (v. 22)

1. What has God done in order to reconcile us to himself?
2. What are some of the results of being reconciled to God through Christ?
3. What role does our “mind” and “behavior” play in our “reconciliation?”
4. How do they play off each other driving us deeper into a life that is pleasing to God (transformation or sanctification)?

IF WE HOLD FIRM (v. 23)

1. What do you make of the fact that Paul attaches conditions to our ultimate standing before Christ?
2. What are the conditions?
3. How do you square the conditions Paul lays out in this verse with the unconditional nature of passages such as:
 - a. John 6:37-40
 - b. Romans 8:29-30
 - c. 1 John 2:19?
4. How should we respond to “warning passages in Scripture” in light of the gospel?
5. Where do we ultimately find our security?