

All Things New
STUDY QUESTIONS
May 2022 (1 May - 4 June)



God is in the business of making all things new...

Throughout the Bible, and across human history, and in this current age, God surprises us with new things. As Spring gathers pace, what are the new things that God is showing you in your life? In your community? In your corner of the Kingdom?

All this month we're thinking about newness with God. We will explore the tension of how an eternal unchanging God can at the same time being doing *new things*. We will be asking what is 'newness' anyway? What does it mean to *be new*? Or to be *made new*?

And how about that sometimes patronising phrase when we talk about someone being "a *new Christian*"? How can we cherish wisdom and experience without creating a status system where the insights of newcomers are diminished? And shouldn't we all try to be new Christians anyway, however long we've been at it? Ever new. Ever green. Ever open.

Because newness isn't the same as novelty. Newness doesn't have to mean a fad or a craze or a revolution, change for change's sake. A tree will likely spend its whole life in one small patch of forest, not moving or going anywhere but still forever new – growing, adapting, developing, listening to the world around it. A tree may be rooted to the same spot but it's always finding new ways to be. Even in decay a tree becomes something new for others, with fallen logs being an important part of the forest ecosystem. Embracing newness with God doesn't have to mean always chasing the latest trend. Newness with God is realising that openness to change and blossoming and refinement

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are part of being faithful. The ever-new is blessedly all around us, and we can be ever-new in our relationship with the world. Each year is new again. Each spring brings newness. And each present moment is always new, hand given to you.

God always gives us new opportunities. New ways to see, to understand. God's love is new for you each day, it doesn't go stale. It's alive. It's simultaneously ancient and new.

The Spirit is moving and all things are being made new. Even you.

So when we come to God with the things that are broken, God replies: It's not written off, discarded, thrown aside, irredeemable. It can be made new.

All things can be made new.

These discussion questions adapt our monthly themes for small Connect Groups or personal Bible study (look up the [All Things New Resource Pack](#) for more information on this month's theme). The questions are divided into 5 parts to correspond with the 5 weeks of the Daily Worship theme. They are offered as a guideline and there is no need to go through all the given questions in a single session, or in the following sequence. Feel free to pick and choose, or adapt to what interests you or your group.

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Part 1: New moves

Conversation starter

What's your first reaction when somebody tells you that something is 'new'? Wariness? Excitement? Reservation? Interest? Enthusiasm? Or are you noncommittal?

Read Psalm 30

What are the steps that take us from *mourning to dancing*? How do we find *new joy* when we are weighed down by *old grief*? And how can God help us learn the steps?

Read John 21: 1-6

The disciples out in the boat took the advice of a stranger (it says in verse 4 they didn't recognise Jesus) who was standing on dry land 'backseat fishing'. They had been out for ages, exhausted, with nothing to show for it and some dude is telling them how to fish in their own boat in their own patch. And yet they listen and then follow his advice.

Why?

Read John 21: 7-19

Every time we start another day and eat our first meal, we can breakfast with Jesus! We can remember this reunion on the beach and take the chance to start anew with Christ.

Tomorrow morning how can you 'have breakfast with Jesus'? As you eat and drink how can you take some time in the morning to start the day with Christ?

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Part 2: From little details to big canvases

Conversation starter

How are you when it comes to focusing on little details versus the big picture? When assessing a problem to solve or task to complete do you prefer to focus first on the little details or to stand back and take in the big picture?

Read Acts 9: 36-43

Let's tune into a little detail: the pile of clothes Tabitha had been making. The text says she was devoted to good works and charity. Who were these clothes for? What do you think happened to them next? Where would she have taken them in her new life with an amazing new story to tell?

Let's use our imagination to consider where Tabitha's life, and her handmade clothes, might have gone.

Read Isaiah 43: 14-21

Thinking of verse 19, how do we perceive when something new is springing forth? What can we be looking out for?

Read Psalm 8 (twice, repeating after looking at the prompt below)

This short psalm is packed full of information as it breathlessly considers the wonders of heaven, the earth, and the human heart.

Which verse leaps out to you? Is there a phrase or word you find yourself coming back to? Spend some time reflecting on that phrase/word/verse.

If you are in a group you could discuss which different bits drew you and why, or if you are on your own you could take time to reflect and pray in some quiet time with God.

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Part 3: New Heaven, New Earth, New Vision

Conversation starter

What's something new that's happening in your life right now?

Read Psalm 148

The natural world is both incredibly ancient and startlingly new.

Verses 3-10 are a vivid picture of the natural world being invited to praise God. Choose one of those verses and consider how you could make it part of your praying this week. How would reading that verse every day for the next week inform how you pray and what you pray about?

(If in a group you could each choose your own verse and discuss why you were drawn to them or you could decide to choose one verse as a group to unpack together, whatever suits you.)

Read Revelation 21: 1-6

What does the passage of time even mean to God — *Alpha and Omega*?

(This is an almighty head-scratcher so don't worry at all about nailing an answer — reflecting on your first impressions and reactions are absolutely fine!)

Read 2 Corinthians 5: 16-21

What does it mean — day by day, month by month, year by year — to be a new creation? To be an ambassador for Christ?!

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Part 4: Open to the new

Conversation starter

Is there a new project or task you have recently begun or are planning to undertake? It could be something big like moving house or small like crocheting a hat, or learning a recipe. In either case, how do you feel about starting this new thing?

Read Acts 16: 9-15

Lydia was open to learning something new from somebody new. Think of a time when a new person came into your life and helped you to see something or to understand something in a new way.

Who were they? Why did they leave such an impression on you?

Read Psalm 105: 1-4

Next Monday at 12pm where are you going to be? Think about how you can seek God's presence in that place/situation.

Read Mark 5: 24-34

What do you think took more courage for the woman in this reading: Reaching out for Jesus's cloak? Or stepping forward when Jesus asked who it was who had done so?

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Part 5: Ever new

Conversation starter

Are there new things you would love to do this year?

Read Acts 16: 16-34

What would this story be like from the perspective of the jailer's family being disturbed in the middle of the night? What would they have made of this totally unprecedented situation?

Read Psalm 97

Light dawns for the righteous! The life-giving light from the sky is ancient but new for us each day — and in a similar way the psalms are ancient and yet new to us every day. Each time we read the psalms something new can dawn.

What is your relationship like with the psalms in general? Do you have a favourite psalm? Is there a psalm or a phrase from a psalm that has travelled with you? And when it comes to Psalm 97 what is dawning for you as you read it today? Is there a verse or word that leaps out at you?

Read Samuel 16: 1-13

A truly pivotal moment of young David's life and where is he? Far away from the action.

Picture the scene: a young lad on a hillside chasing after sheep, skimming stones, and singing songs. In this reading God is doing something new and needs somebody new and that new person is not where Samuel expects him to be.

When we look to the future how can we nurture leaders who aren't queueing up for recognition but are already busy tending to the flock?