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| Site logo image | Martha Rodman posted: " Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV. Oh my friends, as we seem to be racing to 2024, I looked back at my thoughts, hopes and "goals" for 2023 and it seems like a blur." [**Faith Encounters**](http://faithencounters.impart.org)  |

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Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV.Oh my friends, as we seem to be racing to 2024, I looked back at my thoughts, hopes and "goals" for 2023 and it seems like a blur. I know this is Thanksgiving week in the U.S., but I want to encourage us, no matter our age in the natural or in the Lord we can change. I have the privilege to lead a Life Group in our church. We just finished an encouraging study on the book of Luke\*, with Lisa Harper as our teacher (info a the bottom). Every week we learned about God's compassionate heart toward outliers and outcasts. She is a very gifted and transparent teacher. But there was one session she called "A Tale of Two Rooms". In this session she compared the first Upper Room held during Passover, with the institution of the Lord's Supper and the second Upper Room experience Luke describes after Jesus' ascension. She pointed out the behavior of the disciples. Right after the partaking of the first Lord supper, Jesus shares But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man who will betray me. For it has been determined that the Son of Man must die. But what sorrow awaits the one who betrays him. The disciples began to ask each other which of them would ever do such a thing. Luke 22:21-23. This seems to be logical and understandable, and maybe a bit shocking to discover a betrayer among this close knit group, that they would take the time to wonder who it would be. But how that conversation moved into the next scripture is perplexing. Then they began to argue among themselves about who would be the greatest among them. Luke 22:24. As we read this scripture it struck me how immature these fellows were. All I could think about was children crying "what about me?". "What about me?". Then I realized my own tendency to go there too. We all want to be seen and heard. I don't know how Jesus felt, listening to their clamoring and bickering about such a small issue...but he goes on to say: In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called 'friends of the people'. But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. Luke 22:27.NLT. This is the last time Jesus has to really teach these men. I know his mind may have been on his coming crucifixion, but he took the time to try to help them get a different perspective.Turn to Acts 1, fifty days after the crucifixion and they watch his ascension into heaven. Then two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!" I can understand why they were staring into heaven, can't you? First, no one had ever seen someone ascend into heaven in that group. They just said a final goodbye to their leader and were left feeling alone and maybe afraid. Graciously, the Lord had given them directions to go back to Jerusalem and wait. Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, a distance of half a mile. When they arrived, they went to the upstairs room where they were staying. Here are the names of those who were present: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James, (son of Alphaeus), Simon (the Zealot), and Judas (son of James). They all met together and were constantly united in prayer, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus. Acts 1:12-14. These were the same fellows that had been arguing over their placement in the Kingdom, now they were united in obedience to the Lord's command. The KJV reads they were "united in one accord". They had grown up!What a change in these men. Dear friends, we can change also. Our divided hearts and selfish attitudes can change at the foot of the cross. We do not have to bicker with each other or within ourselves. I am so grateful for this teaching revelation. In all my reading of scripture, I had never put those two things together. But it gives me hope, not only for myself but for those around me. Jesus trusted His Kingdom work with these eleven men. Unity releases the Holy Spirit to move. These men came into one accord because they had an assignment to complete. If we keep our eyes on our assignment, it can help keep us away from selfish thoughts. Let us linger at the foot of the cross long enough to get our eyes off ourselves and on to His ways, and we will find ourselves changing.\*Luke, Gut Level Compassion Bible Study Guide, Streaming Video by Lisa Harper Published by Beautiful Word Bible Studies StudyGateway.comFather, I thank you for your grace and mercy in this area. Your body is struggling with quarrels and fighting with in and without. I am so grateful that you still choose men and women who are flawed to do your work. Please help us grow up.  |