

Your Mind – Be Transformed in It

Romans 12:2b (10/06/13)

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And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

One of the more family friendly channels on cable TV is HGTV. If the couple looking for that dream home is a married man and woman who aren't using God's name in vain, it is good. On some shows, a whole crew goes into a home and within a short time while the couple is out to dinner, they completely renovate the place. They don't just move furniture around. No, they knock out walls, install new bathrooms, demolish the kitchen area and build another, build new walls, and run new plumbing and wiring. All of this is done to the point where you can hardly recognize it as the same place in the before and after shots. And of course, the couple hides their eyes as they are brought in and if they are a decent couple they'll go, "Wow! Wow! This is beautiful."

What happened here? Renovation or re-novating. That word means re-newing. And that is exactly what God is in the process of doing in your life, especially in your mind, if you are a true believer with the Spirit of God and the Word of God active in your life. God is not just moving some furniture around, but completely renewing the way you think.

Turn to Romans 12:2 again this morning. Last week we looked at the first part of progressive sanctification, that process of growing and changing to become like Christ. As a believer you must take strong measures to refuse to be conformed to this world in its values and ways of thinking. Stop being conformed to this present evil age. Some people stop right there. "I don't do bad things. I don't smoke, chew, do weed, hang out with bad people. I'm good." No you're not. Jesus described the dangers of cleaning out the house without filling it with good things. That evil spirit goes out and rounds up a crew of even more wicked spirits and they came back and totally wreck the place. This is the problem with externalism or legalism, just not doing a list of bad things.

God isn't just calling us to change our behavior. He is calling us to be transformed, radically changed on the mind/heart level. This most important phrase, "But be transformed by the renewing of your mind," is between the put off of not conforming to the world and the put on of discerning God's will. This little phrase begins with that strong contrast word BUT, the Greek word "alla." Don't do this, BUT, do this. I don't know of a more important truth in God's Word for your spiritual growth.

First, it's all about your mind. YOUR MIND IS WHERE YOUR LIFE HAPPENS.

God is after your mind. Your mind and your heart are the same thing. It's the inner you, the center of your being, where you think, and interpret, and choose, and desire, and love and hate and talk to yourself. It's the seat of your conscious and memory. Your mind is the most important thing about you. Not your hair or bank account or car or wardrobe. Your mind is your control center. You don't enjoy stuff in your thumb, or your elbow. You enjoy stuff in your heart. It's where the image of God resides. It's really your worship center. This room isn't the worship center – your heart is, and you'll be worshipping something in your mind.

God is after your mind. So is the world. Every day the world is trying to persuade your thinking. Every news agency has an agenda it is trying to sell you. Our educational system is after the minds of our young people. We never heard about "saving the planet" back in the 50s and 60s. Now every child is concerned about that poor polar bear sitting on that melting piece of ice. So the battle is really over who's going to rule your mind, God or this world.

Look at Ephesians 4:23 for insight into your mind. Paul gives the same principle, "Put off the old man with its worldly ways of thinking," and then he says, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." The mind is more than just raw intellect. The mind has this motivating spirit; it's sort of the engine of your mind that

drives you. Before you became a believer, your mind was driven by your flesh. You were born that way. You may be brilliant. You may have been able to unravel a DNA strand. You may be a brilliant scientist.

A zoologist may be able to explain how a cuttlefish is able to surge with seductive lighting as she approaches her prey. <http://youtu.be/qjloPutUCeo> He may be a really nice person. He'd probably give you the tank off his back if you were in trouble, but the spirit of his mind has not been regenerated by the Spirit of God, his thinking has not been renewed by the Word of God, and so he sincerely begins to talk about the millions of years of evolution behind this amazing phenomenon and you realize he doesn't see sparks of God's glory in that cuttlefish.

Man's natural mind is naturally at enmity with God. 1 Corinthians 2:13 says man cannot grasp the things of God. He really doesn't know where we came from, why we're here, and where we're going! He may think he does, but pray for him, because he's deluded. The world's ways of thinking about the big issues of life are sadly so wrong.

If you are a true believer in Christ, the Spirit of God has re-generated your inner being and brought new life into your mind. Now the Spirit is at the driver's wheel of your life. Your flesh is still actively trying to yank the steering wheel and take control. That's your battle. That's why every day your mind needs renewing. You brought all kinds of fleshly mental baggage with you into your Christian life and now you need continual renovating, renewing.

There is nothing more important about you than your mind. When you get to know someone, you are getting to know their mind: how they think, what they value, what kind of character they have. An honest man is honest in his mind. A loving person is loving in his mind. Your pride or humility, your greed or giving spirit, your anger or kindness, your self-pity or joy, it all flows out of your mind where you make choices every day. And we're responsible for our minds. We're not robots. We're not instinctual dogs or pigeons. We're dog sitting right now. Rico's a good dog. He goes straight to his kennel when we say, "Kennel." He doesn't go, "Hmmm. I'm not sure I want to obey that command. I don't like the kennel. I think I'll put up a fuss."

Your mind is who you are. A young lady gets to know a young man as they talk and respond to life. She is getting to know his mind, his ways of thinking, his inner character, his heart. If he is selfish or angry or lustful, she needs to become alert to that. Young men, beware of a young lady who is prideful, self-focused, snippy, or dresses to get the guys to notice her. Dating or courting is really all about getting to know each other's thinking habits, convictions, what they really like, their desires. We are often blind to our own ways of thinking. We think we are making sense, but we're not. That's one good reason to get married, so your spouse can help you see your crazy ways of thinking.

Scripture targets your mind for genuine spiritual growth. God is after your mind. Your battle with the world and your flesh is in your mind. God has a plan to transform you life by renewing your mind.

Second, you need to be continually transformed at the deepest level of your being, in your mind.

This word "transformed" is metamorphosis. When Jesus was on the Mount of Metamorphosis (Transfiguration), He was metamorphosed. He was changed. As Warren Wiersbe put it, "The angels didn't shine spotlights on him. No, His inner quality, His glory emanated from Him to the point that his face shone light the sun."



Elizabeth Morales

This is inner spiritual change. Wiersbe also said you don't pin wings on worms to make them butterflies. No, they go through this process of meta, which means change, and morphosis, which means form. And that's what God is doing in your life every day! Look at 2 Corinthians 3:18 –

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

This is how you grow and change. Not by some mystical experience or ten steps to successful living. Transformation is all about inner character change by the power of the Spirit and the Word of God. God is changing you and me from one kind of person to another. This is the power of the gospel! And how does it take place? See that word "mirror"? God has given us the mirror of His Word for us to behold His glory. This is Psalm 1:2, "Your delight is in the Word of God." This is Joshua 1:8, "This book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night." The Word of God by the Spirit of God transforms your mind. As you feed your heart on the Word, the Spirit is driving godly convictions, like pilings, down deep into the depth of your mind. This is what is transforming your life. It's a process, not a once for all deal. Keep on being transformed in the spirit of your mind.

Third, your life is transformed as you daily renew your mind by God's Word and God's Spirit.

Renew means new ways of thinking and interpreting and desiring and wanting and loving and living. Who was at the center of your old way of thinking? You were! And really, in so much of our thinking, we are still at the center! When I get angry or jealous or critical or discontent or proud or greedy, I'm at the center. That's the old way of thinking; me at the center.

The spiritual battle is in our minds. And it's a daily battle. 2 Corinthians 4:16 says, "But though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day." Our old bodies are decomposing. Have you looked in a mirror lately? Like Tommy Nelson says, "That couple will never look better than on their wedding day, so enjoy it, because it's downhill after that." But our inner man, our mind, is being renewed every day. You should be newer today than you were yesterday. And yet we'll read something in the Word and get pumped spiritually, then go off to work and get ticked at the guy in front who waited too long to make that left turn, and now here you are, sitting through another 2 minute cycle of lights, and you forgot all about God. Where was God at that moment? This is precisely why we need the Word every day.

As you feed your heart on God's Word every day, as you apply what you hear, as you develop habits of godliness in your mind, God comes more and more into the center. This is growing spiritually, even when we blow it. We need to work at thinking biblically about everything. We need to marinate and soak our hearts in the great truth of God's sovereignty. When bad stuff happens, as some of us just saw in Kirk Cameron's movie *Unstoppable*, where's God in this? Renewed thinking is like Joseph, who saw God in his trials. It is like David when he stood before Goliath and saw God as infinitely greater than that Philistine. It is like Daniel who made up his mind not to defile himself. It is believing and knowing that God is in every occurrence of our lives. God is up to something. God is using this circumstance, this person, to help me see my sinfulness, my weakness, my need of His daily grace and trusting Him for it. But this only happens as we feed, meditate, talk about, keep our hearts under the truths of God's Word.

One of the scariest things in life is to think about how many people spend no time at all in God's Word. On what basis are they making decisions? What is driving their hearts? David says in Psalm 119:11, "Your Word I have treasured in my heart, that I might not sin against you." Treasuring not only means highly valuing it, but also storing it up so we can draw on it throughout our days.

Here's why we need Colossians 3:16, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly." Don't just talk to the Word at the front door or invite him in for a short visit. Let him live in every room. Like the aroma of bacon in the morning filling the house, let the Word of Christ influence every area of your mind, everything you think about, every habit you have, every choice you make.

Add to that Proverbs 4:23. In all your guarding, guard your heart, for out of your heart, your mind, your control center, where you really live, flow all the issues of your life. We guard so many things for our protection. We guard our houses with security systems, we wear seatbelts, we buy government approved child seats. What about guarding your heart? David prayed, "May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight." (Psalm 19:14)

There is simply no spiritual growth without renewing your mind by taking in the Word of God. Fill your mind with it, from beginning to end. You need Scripture to feed the roots of your heart so the fruit of your life will glorify God. Drive biblical truths deeply into your heart, like spiritual piles driven down into your

mental substructure, where your convictions are formed! But hearing and learning isn't enough. Renewing your mind must lead to changing your life. God didn't give us His Word to admire, but to live. So let's add one more point.

HOW DO I APPLY THIS?

James 1:22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

As we feed on the Word, we should ask, "How do I apply this? What difference will this truth make in my life? How will this help me in my walk with Christ?" Sometimes it is helpful even when we're not aware of it. Sometimes it will help us in areas we never thought it would. Certainly God's Word will help you live as a responsible citizen. It will motivate you to get out of debt as quickly as possible. It will help you be faithful to your wife and wise in pursuing a life partner. It will help you deal well with conflict. It will help you know how to respond to evil. It will give you strength through trials and will keep your eyes on God in the trial. It will give you the ammunition you need to fight the devil and all his doubts and lies that flood this world. It will give you the basis of figuring out which church to attend. It will certainly help you in your parenting, even in your golfing, in your water skiing, in your fixing the leaky faucet. How? It will help you be patient and bearing with one another and forbearing one another. It will help you as you face surgery, and of course, as you face your death and eternity. It will give you what you need to tell others about how to join you in heaven eventually. It will give you a sense of joy and confidence as He blesses you in the applying of His Word.

James 1:25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

God's Word, studied, loved, delighted in, and obeyed, will do marvels to cleanse the dirt out of your mind and bring God's new, fresh ways of thinking in. Are you in this transforming, renewing process by keeping your mind under the Word of God?