

Renewing the Mind

2 Cor 10:4-5

⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

I. What is renewal of the mind?

When a person surrenders their life to the Lord and becomes a believer they are totally and immediately transformed or regenerated in their spirit-man. The Holy Spirit takes up residence in the spirit of man and the person becomes a child of God.

Unfortunately, man's mind or thinking processes are not changed so immediately. In fact, when we become believers we are initiated into a process called "sanctification" that is directed by the Holy Spirit with the purpose that our soul-man (our mind, our will and our emotions) can experience the same transformation that are spirit-man has experienced.

The significant battlefield that all believers face is in the area of their minds and their thinking.

The Bible tells us that we are to be renewed in the spirit of our minds. The word in the Bible that is translated "renewed" means to "make new again." In order for a person to become all that God has designed for them to be his or her mind must be refashioned according to God's original design (Eph. 4:23-24; Rom. 12:2).

Ephesians 4:23-24

... and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Romans 12:2

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

We are not destroyed by our experiences but by the story we tell ourselves of our experience.

What's God's story about your current situation? Self perception and perception of God is crucial to the outcome of your life.

What guardian lies are empowering strongholds in your mind right now? Lies about self, others, how the world works and God. There is always a misbelief behind sinful behaviour.

II. Why is renewal of the mind so important?

- A. Renewal of the mind is important because our thinking to a large extent determines our behaviour

We view the world not as it is but as we are.

Prov 4:23

²³ Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it

Luke 6:45

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil ^[a]treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

- B. Renewal of the mind is important because thoughts affect our motives which will ultimately be judged by God (1 Chr. 28:9b).

... for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts.

- C. Renewal of the mind is important because sin stems from evil thinking (Mt. 15:18-19, NLT).

But evil words come from an evil heart and defile the person who says them. For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all other sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander.

This includes evil words we speak over ourselves. You have no right to do so, you are God's property.

Most of us would never talk to others the way we talk to ourselves. Kriss Vallotton

- D. Renewal of the mind is important because our thoughts are exposed by God's Word (Heb. 4:12, NLT).

For the Word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are.

III. What is the state of man's mind apart from Christ?

Our mind apart from Christ is in an unrenewed state.

- A. The unrenewed mind is defiled (Tit. 1:15).**

To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.

B. The unrenewed mind is blinded (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

When your mind is not renewed in specific areas, there is a blindness you walk in with regards to that area.

Jer 17:5 – 6

⁵ *“Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord. ⁶ That person will be like a bush in the wastelands; they will not see prosperity when it comes. They will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives.*

C. The unrenewed mind is alienated from and hostile to God (Col. 1:21).

And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled

There is a battle for your mind.

D. The unrenewed mind is futile (Ps. 94:11).

The LORD knows the thoughts of man, that they are futile.

The LORD knows people’s thoughts, that they are worthless! --NLT

E. The unrenewed mind is set on the things of the flesh (Rom. 8:5-7).

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Mind set = default direction. What is your factory default setting?

F. The unrenewed mind is focused on earthly or temporal things (Phil. 3:18-19).

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.

IV. What are some of the things that influence the way we think?

Why do I think the way I do?

Our thinking is influenced by:

- A. Our upbringing.
- B. Our past experiences both positive and negative.
- C. Our education and religious training.
- D. Our personal observations.
- E. Our fleshly interests.
- F. Our role-models, particularly those we respect.
- G. The media.

V. What is the goal of a renewed mind?

A. Our goal is to think like God thinks about everything (Is. 55:7-9).

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

Make a decision to walk in the mind of Christ. Your Spirit has a lot of potential, but is limited by the degree to which your mind thinks like Christ. Your spirit is not just limited by your body, it is also limited by the degree to which your mind is renewed.

B. Our goal is to have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).

For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Think of how Adam could name all the animals. His mind was sharp.

C. Our goal is to experience true knowledge from God's perspective (Col. 3:9-10).

Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him...

D. Our goal is to have a heart and mind that reflect God's standards and laws (Heb. 8:10).

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

VI. How can we experience a renewed mind?

A. We must have a desire or hunger for a renewed mind (Ps. 19:7-10).

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

B. We must approach the Word of God with a spirit of humility (Phil. 2:5-7).

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

C. We must yield to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives (Tit. 3:4-6).

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior...

Renewal is one of the functions of the Holy Spirit.

D. We must commit ourselves to the reading of and meditation on the word of God (Ps. 1:1-3).

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

1 Tim 1:18

Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well,

Practise affirming the Word: 1. Proclaim 2. Positive 3. Passionate 4. Present Tense
5. Visualised 6. Personalised.

E. We must set our minds on things above (Col. 3:1-3).

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

F. We must dwell on things that are true, right and pure (Phil. 4:8).

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.

Meditate on who you want to become.

G. We must maintain a daily or continual commitment to the process of renewal (2 Cor. 4:16).

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

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Reflection Questions

1. How do you have to renew your mind concerning....
 - Yourself
 - Others
 - God
 - Situations
 - Money
 - Work
 - Relationships
 - Purpose and destiny
2. What are some of the characteristics of a passive or idle mind?
3. Give some examples of futile or worthless thinking in your life. Why are these thoughts worthless?