Renewing Your Mind

What does spiritual growth and spiritual transformation have to do with a renewed mind? Everything, especially if our desire is to become more like Christ.

Before beginning a relationship with Jesus Christ, we have a natural mind. A natural mind is simply the mind we are born with. There's nothing wrong with a natural mind. It helps us to relate to our world through what we see, feel, taste, touch, and smell. But one of the limitations of a natural mind is that it cannot accept or understand the supernatural things of God.

A supernatural mind is our natural mind empowered by God's Holy Spirit. He teaches us and helps us understand the things of God. The major difference between the natural mind and the supernatural mind is that we are not born with God's Holy Spirit. Only when we accept Jesus Christ by faith into our hearts are we given the Holy Spirit. At that instance, we are born again supernaturally. God’s Holy Spirit leads and guides us in our relationship with God as we obey God’s Word.

The evidence of a renewed mind is no longer thinking or acting as I did before I began my relationship with Jesus Christ. Mentally, I am free from some old habits that enslaved me. As I continue to grow spiritually, I look forward to being released from other habits.

Are you being freed from some habits, addictions, or desires that hold you in mental bondage? If you have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, your mind will be renewed as you grow spiritually. When you choose to obey God’s Word, Scripture becomes alive in your heart and spirit and transformation begins. A renewed mind is evidence of spiritual growth and spiritual transformation.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:1-2

That word Transformed is used one time in all the gospels, namely, about Jesus on the mountain of transfiguration (the mountain of “transformation”—same word, metemorphôthē):
“And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light” Matthew 17:2, Mark 9:2

God desires all His Children not to conform to this World, or the World system. The Kingdom of God is diametrically apposed to this World system.

**World System says** .......................................................... **Kingdom of God says**

Hoard Money be Rich........................................Give and be Blessed

Exalt yourself to be great............................The Least is the greatest

Get Even get Revenge.................................Forgive and Love your enemy

Be Proud and Cocky........................................be Humble and self Judge

Money and Power..........................................Faith and Love

Godless and self serving..............................Serve God make Him #1

Do what is best for you.................................Serve others

**Transformation Is Not Just External**

The nonconformity to the world does not primarily mean the external avoidance of worldly behaviors. That’s included. But you can avoid all kinds of worldly behaviors and *not* be transformed. “His face shown like the sun, and his clothes became white as light”! Something like that happens to us spiritually and morally. Mentally, first on the inside, and then, later at the resurrection on the outside. So Jesus says of us, at the resurrection: “Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:43).

Transformation is not switching from the to-do list of the flesh to the to-do list of the law. When Paul replaces the list—the works—of the flesh, he does not replace it with the works of the law, but the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:19-22). The Christian alternative to immoral behaviors is not a new list of moral behaviors. It is *the triumphant power and transformation of the Holy*
Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ—our Savior, and Lord. God has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter of the Law but of the Spirit. **For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (2 Corinthians 3:6).** So transformation is a profound, blood-bought, Spirit-wrought change from the inside out.

This is why the Christian life—though it is utterly *submitted* (Romans 8:7; 10:3), even *enslaved* (Romans 6:18, 22), to the revealed will of God—is described in the New Testament as radically *free*.

“**Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom”** 2 Corinthians 3:17.

*For freedom Christ has set us free*

**Stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery**

Galatians 5:1

You are free in Christ, because when you do from the inside what you *love* to do, you are free, if what you *love* to do is what you *ought* to do. And that’s what transformation means: when you are transformed in Christ you *love* to do what you *ought* to do. That’s freedom.

In **Romans 12:2** Paul now focuses on one essential means of transformation—*“the renewal of your mind.”* “**Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.**” how crucial this is!

- If you want to break loose from conformity to the world.

- If you want to be transformed and new from the inside out

- If you want to be free from mere duty-driven Christianity and do what you love to do because what you love to do is what you ought to do

- If you desire to offer up your body as a living sacrifice so that your whole life becomes a spiritual act of worship and displays the worth of Christ above the worth of the world
Then give yourself with all your might to pursuing this—*the renewal of your mind*. Because the Bible says, this is *the key to transformation*. “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by *the renewal of your mind*.”

**What’s wrong with the human mind? Why does our mind need renewing?**

There are many who think that the only problem with the human mind is that it doesn’t have access to all the knowledge it needs. So education becomes the great instrument of redemption—personal and social. If people just got more education they would not use their minds to invent elaborate scams, and sophisticated terrorist plots, and complex schemes for embezzling, and fast-talking rudeness. If people just got more education!

The Bible has a far more profound analysis of the problem. In Ephesians 4:23 Paul uses a striking phrase to parallel Romans 12:2. He says, “*Be renewed in the spirit of your minds.*” What’s that mean? “*The spirit of your mind.*” It means this: the human mind is not a sophisticated computer managing data, which it then faithfully presents to the heart for appropriate emotional responses. The mind has a “spirit.” In other words, our mind has what we call a “mindset.” It doesn’t just have a view, it has a viewpoint. It doesn’t just have the power to perceive and detect; it also has a posture, a demeanor, a bearing, an attitude, a bent. “*Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.*”

The problem with our minds is not merely that we are finite, and don’t have all the information. The problem is that our minds are fallen. They have a spirit, a bent, a mindset that is hostile to the absolute supremacy of God. Our minds are bent on not seeing God as infinitely more worthy of praise than we are, or the things we make or achieve.

**The Un-Renewed Mind of Fallen Humanity**

25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.
28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. Romans 1:25-32

This is who we are by nature. We do not see God as worthy. Or knowing all things. We don't want to put God above all things. We know this is true about Humanity because of how little effort most people expend to know him, and because of how much effort it takes to make our Human mind spend any time getting to know God better.

Spending time with God can, at times, seem Boring, or feel like a lot of work. But once we get past the flesh and into the realm of the Spirit into the realm of Worship. Our time with God becomes very enjoyable and even something we look forward to doing daily. If we take one step in the flesh until we step into the Spirit we will meet God regularly. And in His presence we are transformed.

Consider two other biblical diagnoses of the problem. Consider the way Peter describes our mind-problem in 1 Peter 1:13-14,

“Prepare your minds for action. Do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance.”

There is an ignorance of God—a willful suppression of the truth of God (Romans 1:18)—that makes us slaves to many passions and desires that would lose their power if we knew God as we ought (1 Thess. 4:5).

“The passions of your former ignorance.” Paul calls these passions, “desires of deceit” (Eph. 4:22). They are life-ruining, worship-destroying desires, and they get their life and their power from the deceit of our minds. There is a kind of knowledge of God—a renewal of mind—that transforms us because it liberates us from the deceit and the power of alien passions.

The other biblical diagnosis is in Ephesians 4:17-18,

“You must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the
life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.”

Paul takes us deeper than Peter here. He penetrates beneath the “futile mind” and the “darkened understanding” and the willful “ignorance” and says that it is all rooted in “the hardness of their heart.” Here is the deepest disease, infecting everything else. Our mental suppression of liberating truth is rooted in our hardness of heart. Our hard hearts will not submit to the supremacy of Christ, and therefore our blind minds cannot see the supremacy of Christ (John 7:17).

The Holy Spirit Renews the Mind

Which brings us finally to the remedy and how we obey Romans 12:2, “Be transformed in the renewal of your mind.”

First, before we can do anything, a double action of the Holy Spirit is required. And then we join him in these two actions. The reason I say the Holy Spirit is required is because this word “renewal” in Romans 12:2 is only used one other place in all the Greek Bible.

Titus 3:5 which says:

“God saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.”

There’s the word “renewal” which we’ve seen is so necessary. And it is renewal “of the Holy Spirit.” The Spirit renews the mind. It is first and decisively his work. We are completely dependent on him. Our efforts follow his initiatives and enabling.

The Double Work of the Holy Spirit

Now what is the double work that he must do to renew our minds so that all of life becomes worship? 2 Corinthians 3:18 gives us the the answer:
“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

What does the Spirit do to “transform” us into the image of Jesus Christ? He enables us to “behold the glory of the Lord.” This is how the mind is renewed—by steadfastly gazing at the glories of Christ for what they really are. But to enable us to do that, the Spirit must do a double work. He must work in two directions: from the outside in and from the inside out. He must work from the outside in by exposing the mind to Christ-exalting truth. That is, he must lead us to hear the gospel, to read the Bible, to study Christ Himself, and to meditate on the perfections of Christ. This is exactly what the Devil does not want us to do according to 2 Corinthians 4:4,

“The god of this world [Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.”

Because to see that for what it really is, Paul says, will renew the mind and transform the life and produce unending worship.

And the Spirit must work from the inside out, breaking the hard heart that blinds and corrupts the mind. The Spirit must work from the outside in, through Christ-exalting truth, and from the inside out, through truth-embracing humility. If he only worked from the outside in, by presenting Christ-exalting truth to our minds but not breaking the hard heart and making humble, then the truth would be despised and rejected. And if he only humbled the hard heart, but put no Christ-exalting truth before the mind, there would be no Christ to embrace and no worship would happen.

What Then Shall We Do?

What then do we do in obedience to Romans 12:2,

“We join the Holy Spirit in his precious and all-important work. We pursue Christ-exalting truth and we pray for truth-embracing humility.

Listen to the “gospel of the glory of Christ.” Read your Bible from cover to cover always in search of the revelation of the glory of Christ. Read and ponder the Bible, Christ-exalting writings of great, spiritual men and women. And form the habit of meditating on the perfections of Christ. And in it all pray, that the Holy Spirit will renew your mind, that you may desire and
approve the will of God, so that all of life will become worship to the glory of Christ.

How To Spend Time With God

1. **SET a time & stick with it.** Statistics show that if you do something for 21 days it will become a habit. Do it in the morning or the evening, whatever works best for you. You’ll be sleepy, bored, tired, drained & you’ll find a million reasons not to do it. Just fight through it & TELL your flesh what to do.

2. **Find a place to have your quiet time every day.** Just find a place that is NOT distracting you from that time.

3. **Set the atmosphere.** I like to put worship music on when I first get started. When you’re pouring out your heart to God & worshiping Him--it’s nice to have beautiful music playing in the background. you’re taking the focus from YOU & your stuff to Jesus. cry out to Him, pray in the tongues & pray for others.

4. **Get quiet.** After I spend time with God I grab my journal & I start journaling to God. I just write whatever He puts on my heart. During these times, He begins to deal with me about what’s going on in my life, ministry, family, and in the world in general.

5. **Talk to God.** Don’t go to God all deep. TALK to Him the way you would talk to a very close friend. He’s not into formality, be real with Him.

6. **Pull out your bibles!** Grab your pen & paper. Look up scripture on any topic & meditate on it for a while. STARE at them, think about them, study them out, look up the definitions on each word. When you cross reference & pull out your bible dictionary The Holy Spirit is going to take you ALL over & give you so much “word behind the word.

7. **Then, be quiet.** After you study each scripture let God speak to you again. Remember he’s your FRIEND. (James 2:23) **make spending time with God fun!! commit to spending this time with God every day.**

Last point, **Do NOT make the above a law.** Salvation is through **faith now in Jesus Christ** & not according to any law. Spend time with GOD out of your Love for Him. Just like you would spend time with your spouse because you love them. Ask GOD to help you to desire spending time with Him. God will meet you wherever you are.
As you spend time with God every day you will find what works best for you. What really makes you get into it. Each person is different and we each need to seek God according to what is right for us. As we commit to that daily fellowship with God over time our minds will be renewed. We will begin to see the transformation in every area of our life. And God will bring us from Glory, to Glory, to Glory, until we reach the full maturation and stature and image of Jesus Christ.