

Renewing the Mind

by Richard Siple

The sermon emphasizes the critical need for Christians to renew their minds in order to experience true transformation and live in alignment with God's will.

Duration: 56:25

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 19:17, Romans 12:1-2

Topics: "Renewing The Mind"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of the mind and its impact on our lives. He shares how he can transport himself to different places in the world through his thoughts and prayers. The preacher also addresses the issue of deep thought patterns that hinder our ability to grow and change. He gives an example of a man who struggled academically but experienced transformation when he started memorizing and meditating on the Bible. The sermon concludes with the reminder that renewing our minds is essential for experiencing complete victory in our Christian lives.

Transcript

to help each other as Christians and it's my desire in this message tonight that it would be helpful That's what I want it to be. It's gonna be very practical and I want it to help God's people I've said many times I wish I had heard this sermon when I was 16, but I wasn't preaching it then And it would have helped me a great deal I didn't Come across these truths until I was in ministry many years later in God And if he hadn't brought them to me, I don't think I would be here tonight. They really rescued my life, and so I trust God may use it to help you.

Please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans chapter 12 and verse 2. We hear verse 1 quoted. Many of you here tonight memorized it long ago and could quote it, Romans 12, verse 1. You have no problem quoting it. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice.

Holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Many of you know that, so if I start quoting it, you could have finished it with me. Not so many know the next verse.

And the next verse is essential in order to bring about the first one. And I really doubt whether the first one can ever truly and fully happen in a life, unless the second one also happens. The second one says, And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove

what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Let us bow in prayer. Father, how precious it's been to be here tonight. What a blessing we've had from you and from our brothers and sisters in Christ.

And now we pray, recognizing our own weakness and inadequacy. Lord Jesus, without you we can do nothing. Lord, I cannot speak anything here tonight that will help anyone, unless you speak.

I pray that you will open our understanding, even as you did those early disciples, that we may understand the scriptures and open our hearts to receive your word. In Jesus' name, amen. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

The perfect will of God. In revival, it seems to me that God brings us to the place where we earnestly desire to live and walk in the perfect will of God. I say we come to the place that we desire it.

And the reason I said that is because I think, even though that's true, many of us find that we're not really attaining it. Why is that? Well there are a number of reasons, but I believe that one of the main causes is because we have not come to understand this matter of the renewing of the mind. And that's our subject tonight, the renewing of the mind.

There was a man who had been convicted of a serious crime and he was in prison for a number of years. In fact, he had been in prison for 40 years. Now the main part of his life was gone.

He was up in years, but still fairly healthy and still had some hope for the future. Came time for him to be paroled and he came out of those great front gates and heard them clang behind him and he was free. As he began to walk down the sidewalk beside the prison, there's a great wall around the enclosure, and as he was walking down the sidewalk, one of the guards that he had come to know over the years very well, saw him walking and realized that he was now free and called down to him and said, hey Jack, and he stopped and said, yes, Frank.

He said, Jack, tell me, what is it like to be free? Well, he stood there for a few moments and deep thought and finally looked up and he said, Frank, it's too soon, I don't know. I really can't tell you. He said, I'm going to think about that, though, and I'll get back to you and I'll tell you later.

And so he continued to walk toward the boarding house where a room had been arranged for him, a job had been arranged. He went down into the boarding house and he got to thinking more and more about that and he went down to the basement and started searching around and he thought, I know I'm going to try and experiment and I'm going to see what it's like to be free. He found a bottle, one of those big tall bottles that's narrow at the top and then comes down like that and goes down to the bottom, shaped sort of like that.

He thought, I'm going to try and experiment and he put that bottle up on a shelf and then every day as he went to work and came home, he looked for pieces of wire. Every time he'd find a piece of wire, he'd pick it up, put it in his pocket and take it home and he'd drop it down in the bottle. Now some of the wire was thick, some was thin, some was stiff, some was soft, some was springy, there's all kinds of wire.

And as he went into the bottle and started to fill up the bottle and finally came to the point where he had to push the wire down into the bottle, but he kept bringing it home, pushing it into the bottle, pushing it in,

pushing it in and finally he was just packing it in, packing it in every time and the bottle was just full so it didn't look like he could put one more piece in and he kept forcing it in and forcing it in until finally the day came when he couldn't get one more piece of wire in the bottle. Now many months had passed and he thought, now all of this wire has been imprisoned within this bottle and I'm going to set it free and I'm going to see what it's like to be free. And so he took the bottle and he laid it down on the cement floor in the bottom of the basement and he took a hammer and with one blow he shattered the glass and it flew in every direction and the wire was free.

It was very interesting what he saw. Some of the pieces of wire, of course, as soon as they were free sprang out from the mass and fell out on the floor exactly as they were before, completely free and restored. Some of the wire came halfway out but he found that the great mass of the wire, though free, had retained the shape of its imprisonment.

And he saw what he had suspected, that the long time imprisonment had shaped the wire so that even after it was free, much of it still retained the shape of its former bondage. Now many of the wires were deeply entangled and he found that most of the wire had to be disentangled strand by strand and pulled from the mass and straightened out and set free piece by piece and even though technically it was free, absolutely free, yet in fact in experience, it still retained much of its former shape of bondage. Now the mind is very much like that, for you see the mind has an ability to form patterns of thinking and over the years as you grow up your mind forms thought patterns, ways of thinking.

And many of you who lived a life of sin before you were saved found that your mind had formed many thought patterns of sin. And the day came when you came to Jesus and your mind had been dark and full of sin of all kinds and you came to Jesus Christ, convicted for your sin, seeing the Lord as your Savior, knowing that the blood of Jesus was shed for you, that Christ died for your sin. And you confessed your sins and repented of your sins and turned away from them and put your faith in Jesus Christ and invited him to come into your heart and life.

And he came in, and the word of God says that whomsoever the Son shall free, he shall be free indeed. And so when you received Jesus Christ your sins were forgiven and you were set free. But were you? Very interesting.

Of course actually you were free. In the sight of God you were free and as far as Christ was concerned you were free and all the power of God was there to make you free. But maybe you found, as many have found, that many of the patterns of thought that had been formed over many years still seem to retain their same shape of bondage.

And they have to be disentangled strand by strand and set free by God. Now actually you're free in the Lord, but in your experience you're finding that some of those thought patterns are not free. In fact I have to admit to you that I received Jesus Christ when I was seven years old.

Now you don't get much time to form many bad thought patterns by the time you're seven, though you can form some. But I was brought up in a very fine Christian home. My father was a pastor when I was born in his first church, and I always had the word of God, and by the time I was seven I hadn't gotten into much.

And the little few things I did get into, my father had means of straightening out, and he occasionally had board meetings in which he applied the board to my seat of understanding, and he could straighten me out very well. So when I came to Christ I have to admit that as far as my mind was concerned it was basically

filled with things of God and teachings I had in my home, and I did not have any great deep sinful thought pattern. But I have to admit to you tonight that over those years, even as a Christian, because I did not understand, I formed many deep, strong patterns of sinful thinking.

And by the time that I was into the ministry and married and trying to pastor a church and preach the gospel, I found that even though Christ was real to me and his call on my life was definite, and I wanted to do his will, I found that my Christian life was being greatly crippled because I had a mind that had formed many, many sinful patterns of thinking, and they were very strong and deep patterns. And even though I hated those things and I went to God under deep conviction and I confessed them as sin and I asked him to forgive me and I pled with him to set me free, I did not find immediate freedom. You know what I discovered? That my life could not be totally transformed unless my mind was renewed.

And then God took me to scripture and began to work in my life and he said, be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. And God began to get it through to me that I could never have a life totally changed and pleasing to God unless my mind was completely renewed. I have to confess to you that I liked to read.

There was nothing wrong with that, but there was a lot wrong with my reading. And in those early years, those teen years, I read everything that came to my hands. I have to confess that.

I read all kinds of literature, all kinds of books, all kinds of novels. I remember going to a junior high school. I came out of a little country place and I went there.

I couldn't believe it when I saw the library. I just started to wade through it almost right down the road. I just read everything.

You say, what's wrong with that? Plenty. And by the time I was up around 25, pastoring a church and wanting to serve God, I found my Christian life was crippled because I had a mind that had never been renewed. Well, you say, that seems very strange.

What do you mean? Now I'm going to show you what I mean. I want you to help me tonight. And first of all, we're going to take this word, transform, be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Many are talking about blowing their mind, but we have to do something different tonight. We want to renew our minds. So I want you to help me.

Will you? Will you do this now? Will you get ahold of the word transform by its two ends? Come on, get your hands up and get ahold of the word transform by its two ends. We're going to pull it apart. You say that's silly.

Come on. Now, pride is a sin. Get ahold of it.

It is silly, but help me. We're going to pull this word apart. Are you ready? Pull it.

There. Okay. Thank you.

You can put your hands down. I thought your word came apart right where mine did, right between the prefix trans and the suffix form. It came apart right there.

Transform. Now, trans means to be changed, and form means shape. So God says he wants you to be changed in shape.

Now in one church I was pastored, some of the ladies were attending a skinny class, but that's not what the Lord was talking about. That's all right too, but he wasn't talking about that. He was talking about the shape of our life.

And he says in Colossians chapter 3 and verse 10 that we are to be renewed in knowledge or in our mind after the image of him that created us. So when we become a Christian, God wants to reshape our life in the image of Jesus Christ. Amen? Do you want to be like Jesus? Oh, I do.

I want to so much. I want my life to be like him. I think I've wanted that ever since it came into my heart.

I've longed for that as long as I can remember it. I've wept over that. I've been totally discouraged over that because I was not like Jesus.

I want my life shaped like him, and that's what he wants. He wants a life transformed, reshaped, shaped in the image of Jesus Christ. But you know this reshaping of the life is impossible without the renewing of the mind.

Now you say to me tonight, well, why is the mind so important? And I'm going to give you four reasons very quickly why the mind is important and why that it's essential to this change. First of all, everyone thinks. Now you say, no, I know some people that don't think.

Well, you really don't. Even people in mental institutions think, you know. My wife and some other young people in the church where she grew up were going through a mental institution, and they had had a service there, and there was a very finely dressed man, nice, lovely business suit and shirt and tie, very neat, who was kind of showing them around the floor where they were and explaining to them different pieces of equipment and problems with different patients.

They thought he was one of the doctors and went all through. And finally one of the orderlies came to unlock the door and let them back out, and they were about to go, and they turned to thank this man, and he got up close to one of them and tapped him on the shoulder, and he said, say, would you have a poached egg, he said, I have a piece of toast and I want to sit on it. So, he wasn't one of the doctors.

I wasn't implying that he was. So, you see, everybody thinks, now people think differently, of course, but I hope no one here thinks like that, but everybody thinks. Another thing about people is that not only does everyone think, but people think all the time, all the time, even 24 hours a day.

You have dreams, I don't have many dreams anymore, I'm too tired, I go to bed and I just sleep. That's it, my poor mind doesn't have time to have dreams, but they tell me that it's functioning 24 hours a day, and people are thinking all the time, you say, oh no, they're not, something happened to me and I wasn't thinking. Yes, you were, only you were thinking about the wrong thing.

And there's a wonderful, most TV ads are sickening, aren't they? They're made for, I don't know who they're made for, but there's a few that are really cute, and there's one in the United States that I like, and it's an insurance ad, and it shows this man driving a car down the street and it says, Mr. Smith is driving toward the corner of 5th Avenue and 25th Street, and he is thinking about his business instead of his driving. And Mr. Jones is also driving toward the corner of 5th Avenue and 25th Street, and when they get

there, Mr. Smith is going to give Mr. Jones the business. You'll catch on to that one Sunday.

Oh, I like that one. So you see, people think all the time. Now, he wasn't thinking about his driving, but he was thinking, right? So you think all the time.

And the next thing I want to say is that what you think is almost unlimited, because you can do anything you want to in your mind. You can do a thousand things in your mind you could never do actually. You can do a thousand things in your mind that you don't think you would ever do actually.

Watch it. I wonder what would happen here tonight if I should say that I have a brand new, you know, they're making all these marvelous machines now, and if I should say that I have a brand new machine, it has a cone on it that I can point toward people, and we have the screen up here, and I'm going to set the machine up, and I'm just going to at random point the cone toward somebody in the audience, and it's going to play back everything they thought this week on the screen. This place will be empty in two minutes.

The reason you laugh is because you know it's true. You see, the mind is important, isn't it? You know, God has given me the privilege of being in many places in the world, and I can just stop for a moment, and I can immediately transport myself to Brazil, and I can see missionary family there. I can see churches there where I preach.

I can be transported to West Africa where we were a year ago summer, my wife and I, four countries of West Africa. I can see the work there. I can see the head of the national church in Gabon, fine-looking man.

I can see the president and vice president of the national church in Mali, and the dear man of God that sat and talked to me through an interpreter for an hour and a half, telling me with tears in his eyes about the national church and the great burden on his heart for Africa. Isn't that marvelous? I could be there in a second, lifting them up to God in prayer. The mind's a marvelous thing, but you know, you can also commit a thousand sins in your mind, right? Isn't that why Jesus said, you have heard that it has been said by them of old times, that thou shalt not commit adultery, but I say unto you, he that looketh on a woman to lust after her, that is, to have a determination in his heart to possess her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart, doesn't have to do it with his body, he can do it in his mind.

You see, the mind is important, isn't it? Because we think all the time and because we can go anywhere and do anything in our minds, good or bad. And lastly, because God says that what we think is what we become. Because the word of God says in Proverbs 23, 7, as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.

Oh, you say, no, that's not what I am. Oh, no, I'm not like that. No, no.

Dad tried to tell God that. I said, oh, Lord, I'm not like that. Sure, I've read all that stuff and I've thought all that stuff and I've developed all those simple patterns of thinking, but that's not what I am.

I'm a man of God. I love the Lord. I preach the gospel.

God says, oh, that's not what I say. I say that as you think, so you are. And the mind is so powerful the way God has made us that it actually shapes our life.

And that's why God said you can't be transformed or reshaped unless you have a renewed mind. That the mind has to be renewed in order for the life to be transformed because the mind shapes the life. And I can't have a mind like the devil and have a life like Jesus.

Amen? And the mind has to be renewed. It simply must be. Galatians 6, verses 7 and 8, you can remember these because it's 6, 7 and 8. You never forget it now.

6, 7 and 8. It's like that. 6, 7, 8. Galatians 6, 7, 8. What does it say? Be not deceived. God is not mocked.

For whatsoever a man soweth, what? That shall he also reap. He that soweth for the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. And he that soweth for the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

What you put in is what you get out. What you sow in your mind, you will reap in your life. And all I have to know tonight to know a great deal about you is to know what you're putting into your mind.

If you simply let me know what you're putting into your mind, I know the problems in your life. Sometimes I go to visit people in my church and I sit down in their living room and while they go to get me a cup of coffee or something, I just look at their bookcase or their magazine rack and I learn a great deal. I learn a great deal about their lives.

Because what you put in is what you're going to get out. The mind is very much like a vast computer. In fact, they'll never make a computer to match the mind, but it's very much like it.

And with a computer, if you put into the computer that two and two or five, then every time you give that computer a mathematical problem, you'll get a wrong answer. And if you keep putting things into your mind, whatever you put in your mind and feed into your mind and whatever you think constantly and fill your mind with, then you push the button and it will come back and it will shape your life. And the reason I preach this kind of a sermon is because I love my brothers in Christ and because I am so conscious that there are many people sitting here listening to me tonight that desperately need to hear what I'm saying in this service tonight.

And if you will listen to it, it will change your life because you have been a Christian for years and you have never had complete victory and you're never going to unless your mind is renewed. Nothing else will do it. You know, we must stop the blaming game.

You know where the blaming game started? In the Garden of Eden. And God said to Adam, what hast thou done? And he said, it was my wife's fault. It does.

You can read it. And not only that, he said it was the woman you gave me. So he not only blamed Eve, but he blamed God for giving her to him.

I don't doubt he had been asking for her for a long time. And you know, God turned to Eve and said, what about it, Eve? And she said, it wasn't my fault, it was the serpent. And the serpent didn't have anybody to blame but himself.

Or what? See, that's not new. That's old. And the whole attempt, and I want to say this again with great kindness, but the whole attempt of the behavioristic scientists to blame our behavior problems on other people is an irresponsible lie that began way back in the Garden of Eden.

And God said, no, I won't accept that. You're to blame for what you do. And you see, we say, well, it's not my fault that I'm like I am, it's my family.

Or it's my wife. You see, I can't have victory because of the wife I married. Or I can't have victory because of the husband I have.

Or I can't have victory because of my children who are away from God. Or I can't have victory because my parents aren't Christians. If you had to work for the man I have to work for, you wouldn't have victory either.

You see, it's somebody else. My grandfather mistreated me. There's somebody else to blame.

It's not me. Or it's God. He won't do it.

I've prayed and I've asked God to change me and make me holy. And God won't do it. And we charge God with being a liar.

The Scriptures say let God be true in every man alive. So we need to stop the blaming game and accept the fact that we are what we are because of what we have done. And the shape of our life may be determined by what we have put into our minds and it's up to us to come to God and get those minds renewed.

Whenever I think of this, I think of a little boy who was helping his mother and it's nice for little boys to help their mother and he was down in the basement sweeping the basement out for his mother and so as he was sweeping the basement as hard as he could go a mouse ran out from under the sofa. And boy, that was exciting. And he took after the mouse with a broom and he caught it somewhere in the middle of the room and he smacked it but he didn't kill it.

And it started running the other way and he took a swing at it and knocked it up against the steps and now it couldn't run anymore but it wasn't quite dead and so he knocked it out onto the floor and he beat on it and he beat on it until he really smashed it and it was really thoroughly dead. Probably about ten times dead. And then he was really proud of what he had done so he grabbed the mouse by the tail and it was a bloody mess.

All smashed and mangled. And the only problem is he didn't know the preacher had come to call on his mother. And so the preacher was sitting up in the living room talking to his mother and the preacher was sitting right around the corner from the door where he couldn't see him.

And he went running up the stairs and said, Mother, Mother, Mother, look what I've got! He went running through the house right out into the middle of the living room holding this awful mess and he said, Mother, Mother, I was down in the basement and I was sweeping it and this mouse ran off from under the couch and I hit him with a broom and he wasn't dead and I knocked him up against the steps and he still wasn't dead and then... and then he saw the preacher. And he did a double take and the wheels turned in his mind and he was horrified he said, and then and then and then the Lord called him home. Just the old blaming game.

It's God's fault. Not mine. You know the reason we all laugh so hard? Because you're filthy.

Right along with me. All the rest of us. But you know, God wants us to stop that, doesn't he? You see, I think many of us for many years have been glad that somebody was willing to help us blame our problems on someone else.

But in revival we have found God's finger pointing where? Right at us. I'll never forget the first night I sat in a meeting and Ralph said revival is God's finger pointing at you. And I said yes Lord, that's me.

God is pointing there. And I'm all alone and there's nobody else. You see, God wants us to take responsibility for this matter.

Now how are we going to do it? Let me give it to you quickly. God's word says first of all be not conformed to the world. Now I want you to help me one more time.

This is the last time you'll have to help me tonight. We're going to take the word conformed apart. So get it by the ends.

Come on. You did well with the word transform. You got it? Now pull it.

Good, thank you. You got it fine. It came apart right where I wanted it.

You have the prefix con and the suffix form. Now it's a little difficult this time because con means to be like. Now form still means to be shaped.

So it means to be shaped like. Like what? God says do not be shaped like the world but be reshaped by the renewing of your mind. Do not be shaped like the world.

Now how are we shaped like the world? Let me tell you. Our lives are shaped like the world by thinking the thoughts of the world after them. What we put in our minds will make all the difference.

There's a man in Akron. There's a great soul winner who was in the church I pastored there. He put it kind of bluntly.

He said garbage in, garbage out. What you put in is what you get out. The reason that so many of us have so much problem with the world and we find our lives shaped like the world and we cannot seem to get free from it and be like Jesus is because we are constantly filling our minds with the thoughts of the world.

We're constantly pouring into our minds the world's philosophies, the world's attitudes, the world's books, the world's TV programs, the world's music, the world's entertainment and we constantly constantly fill our minds with it and no one can do that and not be shaped like the world. Absolutely it will do it. I am convinced that were I forced to constantly listen and fill my mind with the thoughts of the world that it would affect me whether I wanted to or not.

You know some of us need a book burning. Oh you say come on now that's back in the time of witches and all that kind of thing. No it isn't.

Did you know there was a book burning in the Bible? No you say that's a joke. No it isn't. No.

Turn with me to Acts chapter 19. It was in a revival. A book burning in Acts chapter 19.

Paul was preaching in Ephesus and Acts chapter 19 verse 17 it says this verse 17 now Acts 19 beginning with verse 17 and this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus and fear fell on

them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified and many that believed came and confessed and showed their deeds. Somebody says I don't believe in these sharing sessions. Well Paul did.

Here it is. Many that believed came and confessed and showed their deeds many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together and burned them before all men and they counted the price of them and found it 50,000 pieces of silver and when they burned those books what happened? So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. Isn't that fantastic? That's in the Bible.

You say you really believe that? Yes I do. When God began to show me this truth I went through my library I went had a book burning. That's right.

Now it may not make against the law in your city so you may have to go and put it in garbage dump or something. But you see we need to get these things out of our lives. God's word is very explicit about this.

When I was bringing up my children in the United States do you know who told all of us how to bring up our children? Dr. Spock. And do you know what thousands of Christians did? They left their Bibles lay on the shelf and read Dr. Spock. And you know what happened? They ruined their children.

Do you know what God's word says? How many of you can quote at least the first few verses of the first psalm? Can somebody quote part of the first psalm? Yes. Uh huh, okay, you got it. Wait, I want to see how many, can some of you, now you know what it is.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the council of the ungodly. That's enough. Did you know that was in the Bible? Blessed is the man that walketh not in the council of the ungodly.

There are thousands of precious Christians that are going to the ungodly for counsel. May God help you. It's the wrong place to go.

I just heard today about a couple that went for marriage counseling to one of the worldly marriage counselors. He finally agreed with them that their marriage was hopeless and they ought to split up. They don't have God's standards.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the council of the ungodly. We must stop going to the ungodly for their philosophies and their thoughts and their ideas and their ways of living and filling our minds and our lives with what the ungodly believe and think. Some of you may have thought that Tom Allen was extreme when he talked to the young people about their music.

He was not. I want to say to you that it is absolutely impossible and I want to say this very strongly because I've been in the ministry for 35 years and I've been trying to salvage young lives that have been ruined for those many years and I weep many tears and have many heartaches trying to salvage young lives that are ruined for those many years and I want to say to you that it is absolutely weep tears trying to years and I many tears thankful tears for years and I and I and I nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night, and he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

O my friends, we need to fill our minds with the word of God. We need to read it, we need to study it, we need to meditate in it day and night, we need to memorize it, we need to fill our minds so full of it that our thought patterns are filled with the thoughts of Jesus Christ, with the thoughts of God. How many of you here have ever been to a Bill Gothard seminar? You ever been to a Bill Gothard seminar? Some of you have.

You know the story of Bill Gothard. Listen, Bill Gothard was a teenager, he was flunking the 8th grade just like he had flunked the 7th grade and the 6th grade and the 5th grade, and they had just passed him out because he couldn't do anything else with him. And he was not, he was not a troublesome young man, he was a Christian, he just couldn't do the work.

His mind was just too slow, he just couldn't learn, he couldn't remember, he couldn't retain it. And he was failing the 8th grade for the same reason, and he was desperate. One day a Christian worker was talking to him and said, Bill, I'm going to give you a solution to your problem.

I want you to start memorizing the Bible by chapters. Bill just laughed. You know, I can't even, I can't even memorize a few words for a school assignment.

He said, nevertheless, I want you to start memorizing the word of God by chapters. And he began with 1 Corinthians 13, the love chapter, and he was to memorize a verse and meditate on it and write down the application and apply it to his life and so forth. And if you've been there, you know how that works.

By the time Bill Gothard finished the 8th grade, he was an A student. I'm not exaggerating. And he graduated from high school an A student, he graduated from college an A student, today he probably has one of the sharpest minds in the world.

The word of God literally healed his mind. You see, it makes a lot of difference what you put into your mind. Today he can probably quote more scripture, he probably has more of it to memory than any living man, and he has it in 3 or 4 different translations.

I go to some of the seminars and just sit there and just stay there. But I want to say that when I begin to do this, God began to work in my life. Now, 2 or 3 things quickly in closing.

You say, Pastor, everything you said tonight has spoken to me, but you still haven't dealt with my main problem. Alright, I'm going to do it right now. Just like with the wire in the body, you may have formed, just like I have, very deep thought patterns that were sinful.

I couldn't preach, you see, no I really couldn't, you know, I don't think about it, I just use my hands. Have you ever watched a baby trying to learn to eat? And they set it up in its high chair, you know, and they put some of that gook in front of it, awful stuff, and I don't wonder they spit it out, and they give him a spoon and the baby's hungry so he sticks it down in this stuff and he makes a pass at his mouth and he dumps it in his hair. And so he starts to get frustrated and he sticks it in the stuff again, he makes another pass at his mouth, he dumps it down in front of him, and then he starts to fuss, and so his mother takes ahold of his hand and she sticks it in and guides it to his mouth and he gets half of it in his mouth.

But I'll bet none of you had that problem tonight. You sat down at the supper table, you never even thought of it once, did you? You just shoveled it in. No problem.

You see, that's because you've finally developed a habit of eating and getting that thing in your mouth. Just a habit, along with hundreds of thousands of habits you've developed. But because we're sinners, we develop sinful habits.

And we develop sinful habits of thinking, sinful patterns of thought that dominate our life. And then we become Christians, and we take those sinful thought patterns to God and we say, Lord, I hate that, it's filthy or it's wicked or it's unbelieving and I don't want it, I don't want it in my life, it's dominating my life, it's keeping me from victory, oh God, forgive me and cleanse me and take it out of my life, and we mean it, don't we? I meant it. I tell you, every time I prayed it, I meant it, but it didn't help.

And some of you are sitting here tonight, and the reason I'm preaching this sermon is because you had the same experience, and you're still having it, and you're thrilled I'm talking about it tonight. And you're just saying, I hope he's going to say something that will help me. And that's exactly what I'm going to do, because see, I know how it works, you've committed it to God and then you go about your business and you're going along in your Christian life and you're trying to live your life, and then something happens that triggers that thought pattern.

It's just like pushing a button on a computer, and something comes before your eyes or into your ears or something touches your life and it triggers one of those sinful thought patterns, and clickety-clack, your mind is way down the track before you can stop. And your mind just goes running right down that same old track, and you're way into that thought pattern before you hardly realize it, and all of a sudden a little voice says, uh-oh, you're doing it again. And you say, oh no.

And you've been way into that sinful pattern of thinking again. And then the devil jumps on your shoulder and he says, ah-ha, you miserable wretch, there you go again, you have failed God and you have sinned again. Now what I'm going to say in the next few sentences is so important that it's probably more important than anything else I've said tonight, so really listen.

If you have confessed that sinful thought pattern to God and asked His forgiveness and sincerely wanted to be rid of it, listen carefully, if you have done that and you're sincere, and then that thought pattern just automatically comes into your mind again just like it does, it's a habit, it's like putting your hand in front of your face, it's a reaction to a stimulus, and habitually you just start thinking you're way into it before you know it, listen, you have not sinned, you have only been tempted. Now listen to me carefully. If you have confessed it to God and you do not want it in your life, and you get in and that thought pattern automatically, without any choice of yours, and suddenly you're conscious of it, right up to the point where you're conscious of it, you have not sinned, you have only been tempted.

If you confess it as sin, you will never get free from it. That is the trick of the devil. If you confess that automatic habitual way of thinking as sin, that is if you've already confessed it as sin and put it out of your life as far as you're concerned, now it automatically happens to you, whether it's worry, or fear, or bitterness, or lust, or impurity, or whatever it is.

If it happens automatically without your choice, right up to the point where you're conscious of it, you have not sinned, you have only been tempted, and there's a vast difference between temptation and sin. At the point where you're conscious of it, you have a choice to make, are you listening? The best place to break a habit is in the middle. Now you have a choice to make.

You are conscious now of what you've been thinking, and you can stop right there and say, thank you Jesus for speaking to me, I refuse to think those thoughts, and turn your mind to the thoughts of God, and start to think on his word and the holy things of God, and praise God for the victory, or you can choose to go right on with that thought pattern. And if you choose to go on with a thought pattern, at that point you start sinning, and you need to confess it as sin, because you never sin without a choice of the will. And brother, I don't know what your theology is, but you better believe that or you're not going to get free.

Because I've been through this, personally, and I've been through it with thousands of people, and I've seen them set free, and I know what I'm saying. So I'm going to say it again, very carefully. If you have confessed those sinful thought patterns to God, and you do not want them, and you've asked God to forgive you and take them away, but you see they become very disrooted habits, and so something triggers that thought pattern again, and your mind is way into it before you are hardly conscious of it.

As soon as you're conscious of it, you have a choice to make. You can stop, you can thank God for speaking to you, and say thank you, Lord, for the victory. Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! Devil, you're not going to get me this time.

And you can turn your mind to the things of God, but if you go on into it, then you've made your choice, and you've started sinning. Are you listening? Now, if you do that, I'll tell you what will happen. The first time you try this, and you may have to try it before you get home tonight.

The first time you try it, you know, just like always, you'll be way into the thought pattern, like you always are, before you really wake up to what you're doing. But if you stop right there, and say, in Jesus' name, I refuse to think that, and you turn your mind to the Word of God and start thinking about the Lord Jesus, the next time that that thought pattern starts to function in you, you'll catch it sooner. And the next time, you'll catch it sooner.

And the next time, you'll catch it sooner, and sooner, and sooner, until it'll be gone. I tell you, eventually, it will be gone, and you'll be free from it, and it'll never bother you again. I know personally, and I've seen it in thousands of lives.

I counsel thousands of people. I want to say to you that the most difficult people, the people that have the most trouble in their minds in this world are homosexuals, people that practice homosexuality. They are not born with it.

It is a learned sinful pattern of life. And we have seen them completely delivered, and everywhere I have been for the last many years, and in the present church where I am, I have not only seen a man totally delivered from this, but I've seen two women delivered from it, and a man delivered from it, and I married him and a lovely girl, and they have a happy Christian home. I mean, he's totally delivered from it.

Amen? God can renew the mind. But they have the most difficult, but I have seen this method I'm preaching tonight completely cleanse their minds, totally, and change them. I had one young man say to me, who finally became an assistant pastor in a church, and this young man said to me, he said, Pastor, I'm so happy.

He said, I just can't believe what God's done for me. He said, sometimes when I look at another young man, and I remember how I used to think, it makes me sick to my stomach. How? He said, you shouldn't talk about those things in public.

Why not? The world does. I want to help people. And I know that this will help people and set them free.

Now, you say, but wait a minute, wait a minute. One more thing I have to say. You say, I have tried that.

When I've been conscious of the sinful thought pattern, I've tried to stop, and I've tried to turn my mind to something else, but it comes right back. And I've tried to turn away, and it comes right back. All right.

If you can't turn away from it, normally you can turn away from it immediately and turn your mind to the things of God. But if you can't turn away from it, if you say, no, I refuse to think that, and it comes right back, and you say, no, I won't think it, thank you, Lord, for the victory, and it comes right back, now you're not only dealing with a sinful thought pattern, you're dealing with the devil. You know why he's called Apollyon? It means Lord of the flies.

Huh. You know what a sticky fly is like? You know, it comes, and you go, get away. You know, and it comes right back, and you go, go away, you know, and it comes right back.

That's why the Lord called him that. Do you remember what happened to Jesus? In Matthew chapter 4, Jesus had been fasting 40 days and 40 nights, and afterwards he was a hundred, and the devil came up to him and said, If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread. And Jesus said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Then the devil took him up to the pinnacle of the temple and said, Cast thyself down, for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, and they shall barely open their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against the stone. And Jesus said, It is written again, Thou shalt not put the Lord thy God to the test. Then he taketh him up to an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world in the glory of them.

And he said, All of this is mine, and I give it to whomsoever I will. All shall be thine, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. You see, Jesus said, No, go away, and he came right back.

Jesus said, No, and he came right back, just like a sticky fly, just like he does with you. And finally, Jesus said the thing that the devil can't stand. He turned to him and said, Get thee hence Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

And the devil be with him. Now, when I first started preaching this, I said to my wife, I can't tell people to say, Get thee hence. You know, people wouldn't know what they're saying.

That's old English. I said, I should say, Be gone. She said, Honey, people don't say, Be gone.

I said, You're right. So finally, I ended up saying, Go away. Now, let me tell you what to do.

If you try to turn away from that sinful thought pattern, and it comes right back each time. Now you're dealing with the devil. Now you better write this down.

I'm taking it right out of the scriptures. You can't do it in your own authority like Jesus did. You have to do it in Jesus' name, because it's his authority you need.

So here's what you should say. Turn to the devil just as if he were standing right there and you could see him. You know.

Now, people around don't say it out loud. They'll call the wagon or something. Well, I tell you, you can say it silently.

I've done it many times. Probably thousands of times over these years. Turn on Satan as if you could see him and say, Satan, in Jesus' name, you go away.

Say it right then. Say, oh, I ask the Lord to take him away. No, no, no, no.

You do it. God says you resist the devil and he will flee from you. That's what it says.

James 4, 7 and 8. You resist the devil, he'll flee from you, says the Lord. So you say, Satan, in Jesus' name, you go away, for it is written. Now, you don't want to quote the verse Jesus quoted because Satan hasn't tempted you to be God in that sense.

He hasn't come to you and said, I'll give you all the kings of the world, I don't suppose. But he has bothered you with a different temptation. Let's say, for instance, that yours is impure thought.

That you've been troubled for many years with impure thought patterns. Well, Philippians 4, 8 is a good one for you. Philippians 4, 8 says, whatsoever things, among other things, it says, whatsoever things are pure, think on these things.

So, let me give it to you like it should be. Satan, in Jesus' name, go away, for it is written, whatsoever things are pure, think on these things. Therefore, Satan, in Jesus' name, you go away.

You say, well, that really works. Amen. That will absolutely work.

I tell you, I was getting ready, getting things together Monday in my office because I had to leave Tuesday morning to come out here. And my secretary had laid an encouragement card on my desk. We have encouragement cards in our church and people really need them.

And she just laid them there because she knew I'd want to see it before I left. It was one of the young men in the church. And I had been talking to him about this very thing.

We'd had lunch together. And he was having some real problems. And we'd gone over some of this frown with him.

And so, on the encouragement card, it said, Praise the Lord, Pastor, it does work. And he had underlined, does. It does work.

Listen. God said it and it's true. Amen.

Now, you may have to do it for every time. It might not give away easy, but you just hold your ground. You say, well, what if my thought isn't into your thoughts? What if my problem is worry? Well, there's another good one in Philippians 4. And you'll find that in 6 and 7. It says, Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Hallelujah. That's a good one.

And you can say, Satan, in Jesus' name, you go away. For it is written, Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God. And

the peace of God which passes all understanding shall build a garrison around your hearts and minds.

Minds in Christ Jesus. Hallelujah. Satan, in Jesus' name, you go away.

You know that will work? That will absolutely work. I have given this to thousands of people in the United States, in Canada, in other countries of the world. And I am constantly getting word that people are set free and their lives are healed.

And I pray, God, you will put this to work. And God will renew your mind as you stop the sinful input into your mind, as you begin to put the things of God into your mind, replacing the old sinful patterns with new thought patterns of God's Word and the things of God. And as you take a stand against the habits that have been formed in your thinking, in this manner that I have explained tonight, God will renew your mind and he will transform your life.

Let us bow in prayer. O Jesus, we do want to be like you, and so often we are not. O Lord, I am conscious there are many of my dear brothers and sisters in Christ sitting in this building tonight who have been struggling in some way with sinful thoughts, patterns, habits of thinking formed over the years.

They want to please you, they want victory, but they are defeated by these patterns of thinking. I pray that you will help them. O Lord, help them to accept this truth tonight and to begin to practice it in their life and to keep practicing it until they have victory.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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