

A Renewed Mind

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the necessity of a renewed mind for discerning God's will and living a life aligned with His purposes.

Scripture: Romans 8:29, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 2:16, Colossians 1:9, Hebrews 10:16

Topics: "Spiritual Transformation", "Mind Renewal"

Description

Zac Poonen preaches on the importance of not conforming to the world but being transformed by renewing our minds, allowing us to discern the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. Worldliness affects our thinking and decision-making, hindering us from aligning with God's purposes. The renewal of our minds enables us to think as the Lord thinks, view situations from His perspective, and discern His will easily. This transformation comes through daily fellowship with God, meditating on His Word, and being sensitive to His voice.

Transcript

"Do not be conformed to this world....But be transformed by the (entire) renewal of your mind - by its new ideals and its new attitude - so that you may prove (for yourselves) what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

Worldliness plugs our spirit's ears preventing us from hearing God's voice. Every person living in this world is affected by its spirit. No one has escaped its influence. From our childhood every one of us imbibes, day by day, either more or less of the spirit of this world into himself - by what we hear, see and read. This especially affects our minds and influences our thinking. The decisions we take then come primarily from worldly considerations. The Spirit of God Who comes to live in us, when we are "born again" is opposed to the spirit of this world and therefore desires to renew our thinking completely. God's ultimate purpose for us is that we might be conformed to the image of His Son. This is the primary part of His will for all of us. Everything else - whom we should marry, where we should live and work - is secondary. All of God's dealings with us are directed towards this end - that we might become like Jesus (see Romans 8:28 and 29). But this can be fulfilled in us only as we allow the Holy Spirit to renew our minds daily. The more our minds are thus renewed, the more accurately shall we be able to discern the will of God at life's crossroads.

Worldliness is not basically something external - such as attending cinemas, drinking, smoking, wearing expensive and fashionable clothes and ornaments, or living extravagantly. These may denote a worldly

person, but they are only outward expressions of his worldly thought-processes. Conformity to the world exists essentially in a person's mind and shows itself in various ways, especially in his decisions. For example, when considering a job or a career, a worldly person will be governed by factors such as salary, promotion-prospects, comfort, ease, convenience, etc. And when contemplating marriage, he will be influenced by points such as family-status, caste, dowry available, position in life, physical beauty, or wealth. A believer's decisions, on the other hand, should be governed primarily by spiritual factors, although other considerations should not be neglected. The glory of God's Name and the extension of His Kingdom should be our first concern. This is why the Lord taught us first to pray, "Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come", and only then, "Thy will be done". The process of discerning and eliminating worldly motives is vital if we are to know the will of God. To say, "God led me", when our motives were selfish, is blasphemy. Far better in such cases to say the decision was our own than to take God's Name in vain and give a cloak of spirituality to our worldliness. We gain nothing by merely convincing others (or even ourselves) that we are doing God's will. After all, God cannot be fooled. As the Bible says, "We can always prove that we are right, but is the Lord convinced?... We can justify our every deed but God looks at our motives" (Prov. 16:2; 21:2-TLB).

The renewal of our minds will result in our beginning to think as the Lord thinks and to view situations and people as He views them. Paul's mind was so renewed that he could dare to say that he had the mind of Christ and that he no longer looked at people from a merely human point of view (1 Cor. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:16). His prayer for the Colossian believers was that they too might be thus transformed - "We are asking God that you may see things, as it were, from His point of view by being given spiritual insight and understanding" (Col. 1:9 - JBP). Such a transformation of our minds will enable us to know what pleases God and what does not please Him, and thus we shall be able to discern His will easily in the different situations we face. God's promise to us in this New Testament age is, "This is the new agreement (testament)....I will write My laws in their minds so that they will know what I want them to do without My even telling them....I will write My laws into their minds so that they will always know My will" (Heb. 8:10; 10:16-TLB). Such a renewal will give us an understanding not only of God's will, but also of His method and of His purpose - we will know, not only what God wants us to do, but also how He wants us to do it, and why. Doing the will of God can be drudgery if we do not appreciate God's purposes. When we do appreciate them, the will of God becomes for us what it was to Jesus - a delight. It is because of our ignorance of God's nature that we fear His will. If we knew Him better, we would rejoice to do His every bidding.

How can our minds be renewed? A wife living close to her husband in heart-companionship comes to know more and more of his mind and of his ways as the years go by. The same applies to the believer and his God. The new birth is like a marriage with the Lord Jesus. We should go on from that point to walk in close fellowship with the Lord, conversing with Him day by day. We must also let Him speak to our hearts daily, both through His Word as well as through the discipline of trials that He sends into our lives. Thus we shall find ourselves growingly conformed to the image of our Lord (2 Cor. 3:18). If we neglect daily meditation on God's Word and prayer-fellowship with the Lord, we will find it extremely difficult to ascertain God's mind. Meditation on God's Word can straighten our warped and crooked ways of thinking and make us spiritually minded and sensitive to God's Voice. We can recognise the Lord's voice only by becoming accustomed to hearing it. A new convert once asked a mature servant of God why it was that though Christ had said, "My sheep know My voice", yet he could not hear the Lord's voice. The servant of God replied, "Yes, it is true that His sheep know His voice, but it is also true that the lambs have to learn it." A son identifies his father's voice easily only because he has heard it so often. Even so, it is only by

constantly listening to the voice of the Lord, that we will be able to distinguish it above the din and clamour of other voices that will ring in our minds when we seek God's will. If you are habituated to listening to the Lord's voice, then in times of emergency, His promise is, "Your ears shall hear a word behind you saying, This is the way, walk in it; when you turn to the right hand and when you turn to the left" (Isa. 30:21).

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