

(Basics) 12. God's Word Renews Our Mind

by Zac Poonen

God desires to renew our mind to think like He thinks, allowing us to know His will and be transformed into the likeness of Christ.

Duration: 13:24

Scripture: Genesis 1:26, Exodus 20:1-17, Matthew 6:33, John 1:1, Romans 12:2

Topics: "Spiritual Renewal", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses how the Word of God and the Holy Spirit can transform our chaotic and dark lives into something excellent and very good, just as God did with the earth in Genesis. The speaker emphasizes that Jesus coming in human form made it easier for us to understand and follow the Word of God. The key to experiencing this transformation is by allowing God to renew our way of thinking so that we can think and act like Him. By submitting to the Holy Spirit and studying the life of Jesus in the scriptures, our sinful nature gradually becomes more like Christ.

Transcript

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could understand God's mind concerning any problem or concerning the solution to a problem? We want to turn to the word of God in Romans chapter 12 and verse 2. Here it says, the Holy Spirit is speaking to our hearts and I want you to listen very carefully as God is trying to speak to your heart. Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. So we see here that God wants us to be transformed inwardly.

He is speaking here about the renewing of our mind. We considered in an earlier study how the word of God and the Holy Spirit moved upon the chaotic earth. We read that in Genesis chapter 1 and produced from that chaotic situation, order, form, beauty, light and every good thing.

Until at the end we read in Genesis 1.26 that God himself could say, this is excellent, this is very good. And do you know that's just a faint picture of what God wants to do in our life also. To take our chaotic, formless, dark life and allow the Holy Spirit to work upon us, let the word of God sink into us and change us inwardly so much that at the end he can look at our lives and say, excellent.

In other words, we who were such wretched, corrupt, sinful creatures full of bitterness and envy and evil in so many forms are so radically transformed by the word of God and the Holy Spirit that we begin to

manifest the nature of Christ himself. That's the meaning here of the renewing of our mind. And that means, if we were to put it in other words, that God wants our mind to begin to think the way he thinks.

That's what it means to have our mind renewed. When our mind is not renewed, even if we are born again and our sins are forgiven, we may still think the way worldly people think. And unfortunately this is true with a lot of believers because they don't grow.

Their mind thinks exactly like the people in the world concerning money, concerning pretty women, concerning property, concerning position, honor and the way they look at their enemies and everything else. But God views all these things in a different way. What does it mean to be transformed, to be changed into the likeness of Christ? Where does it take place? It doesn't take place in our physical appearance.

God is not in the business of physically making us look like Jesus. That would be no use. He is in the business of changing our inner character and life into the likeness of Christ.

And how does this happen? He does it through renewing our mind. That means our way of thinking. He makes us think the way he thinks.

Now how does that happen? Through the word of God. See, in the Bible we can say God's way of thinking. If you want to know what God thinks of sin, read the Bible.

If you want to know what God thinks of money, read the Bible. If you want to know what God thinks of adultery or theft or cheating others or jealousy or of selfishness or unselfishness or humility or pride. If you want to know what God thinks about any of these things, just read the Bible.

The answer is there. And Jesus, when he came to earth, was called the word of God. We are told the word became flesh.

Which means that if you want to know what God thinks about anything, about any subject, you've got to look at the life of Jesus and you have the answer. There, the word of God was not just in written form, but manifested in human form. See, this is the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In the Old Testament they had God's word in written form. There were the Ten Commandments written on two pieces of rock. And there was the law written on many scrolls of parchment.

But when Jesus came, there we had the word of God in human form. And it's much easier to read the word of God in human form than it is to read the word of God in a scroll of parchment or in a book. So today, God wants to make each of us demonstrations of the word of God written in human form.

And how does that happen? Through God renewing our way of thinking, so that we begin to think like He thinks. And when we begin to think like He thinks, we begin to act like He would act. Our whole inner life controls our external behavior.

And that's why it says here, don't be conformed to the world. Now, when we are born into the world, we can say a little baby has got no particular way of thinking, a newborn baby. A newborn baby is not worldly, because it doesn't have a worldly way of thinking.

It's just born. But as it grows up and its nature develops, that evil corrupt nature it's got from Adam, and it grows seeing the world around it and ways people live selfishly. And nowadays we have advertisements in

the newspapers telling us this is good and that is good.

And we are surrounded by people who tell lies. And as that baby develops, we can say its way of thinking is exactly like everybody else in the world. Selfish, seeking its own, proud, arrogant, jealous of others who are better.

So many things like this. And therefore it harms others, hurts others. But when Christ comes in, His desire is, the new birth means, it's like a baby being born all over again.

And now we should allow this new life to develop and take over our way of thinking. So that now we begin to think like God thinks. And so gradually as we allow our thinking, our patterns of thinking to change, we will find when we face life situations, we know God's answer to those problems.

Now when you come to a crisis in your life, and you say, Oh God, now what shall I do? I want to know your will. Here I have come to a crossroads in life and I have to take this decision or that decision. I don't know what to do.

Well, here it tells us in Romans 12 too, how we can know God's will in such a situation. If during the years preceding your coming to that crossroads or that crisis in your life, you had allowed the Holy Spirit through God's word to change your way of thinking, at that point in your life now, you will be able to prove, like it says in Romans 12 too, what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. But if you have been a careless Christian, and you have not cared to let the word of God change your way of thinking, you are going to come to that crisis in your life and not know what to do.

You are going to have to run to some older godly brother and ask him for advice, and maybe he can give you good advice. But do you know, that is an Old Testament way. In the Old Testament, the only man who knew God's will was a prophet.

If there was a true prophet, and they were very rare, and sometimes for centuries on end there would be no true prophet. But if there happened to be a true prophet around, you had to go to him and ask him what to do in a particular situation. Even the kings had to go to the prophets.

And then the prophet would find God's will and tell the king or you if you asked him. But in the New Testament, the Bible says in Hebrews in chapter 8 and verse 11, You don't have to teach everyone his fellow citizens, saying, Know the Lord, because all will know me personally, from the least to the greatest. So one of the privileges we have, because the Holy Spirit, God himself, has now come to dwell in our hearts, is that from within we can know the mind of God without going to a prophet.

You don't have to go to a prophet now, or a pastor, or an elder, to find the will of God. What does it say in Romans 12? If your mind is renewed, you can prove the will of God yourself. This is wonderful.

You can have a direct hotline with God. You can have a direct connection with God himself. But this is very important, that you don't wait until a crisis comes before you begin to seek God.

Some believers, they turn to God only when there's a crisis. And then, when things are going smoothly, they forget all about maintaining a close walk with God, and then the next crisis comes again, they turn to God. But such believers are not going to grow.

But if, whether there's a crisis or not, whether there are problems or not, we develop this habit of opening our mind to be influenced by the teaching of God's word in the New Testament particularly, and we begin to understand how God thinks, what is God's attitude towards different things. The Bible says we need to meditate on His word. And we look at the life of Jesus Christ, where that word of God was demonstrated in human form.

And we allow the Holy Spirit to show us the beauty and the glory of Jesus Christ, and the way He lived on earth through the scriptures. Then, you will have an understanding of what God is like. The Bible says one of the purposes with which Jesus came to earth, John chapter 1 and verse 18, was to explain the Father.

So when you look at the life of Jesus Christ, you know what God the Father is like. And when we read the scriptures, the Holy Spirit shows us how Jesus lived, how Jesus reacted to different situations, how Jesus behaved in different circumstances. And gradually we get that explanation in our own mind of what God is like.

And the Holy Spirit changes our way of thinking if we submit to Him. What happens? Gradually, the sinful person that you and I are, gradually gets changed into the likeness of Christ. And then one day, when we face a crisis, we come into a particular problem, we know almost immediately how Jesus would react here, how Jesus would behave, what decision Jesus would take.

And then we take the same decision. And it's going to be right. So I want to invite you, if you have never had this habit before, from today, develop the habit of opening your mind to read God's word and meditate on it, allowing the Holy Spirit to show you the glory of Jesus in the scriptures, so that you can see how He reacted to situations, how He behaved towards His enemies, how He behaved towards people, how He conducted Himself and say, Spirit of God, change me into that likeness.

And then see, you'll find the will of God in different situations without having to go to a prophet or a pastor. God bless you.

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