

MORE ABOUT REALITY AS IT TRULY IS

- A. Introduction: Rom 12:1,2 instructs Christians to undergo a transformation through renewing their mind. If we are going to demonstrate the will of God and walk in the peace, power, and provision that is ours because we are sons of God through faith in Christ we must renew our minds.
1. A renewed mind is a mind that sees reality as it truly is. Reality is everything as God sees it. God is omniscient or all knowing and has all the facts about everything. God has given us His book, the Bible, to help us see reality as it truly is.
 - a. Apart from God and the information He gives us in His word our perception of reality is limited to the information we can gather with our five physical senses (sense knowledge).
 - b. There is a whole realm beyond what we can contact with our physical senses -- the unseen, invisible, spiritual realm or dimension. I Tim 1:17; Col 1:16
 1. The unseen realm has the greater reality. It predates the seen realm and will outlast the seen. Heb 11:3; II Cor 4:18
 2. The physical realm is actually upheld by the spiritual. And the spiritual can change the physical. Mark 4:36-41; Heb 1:3; Col 1:17
 - c. Because our senses cannot directly access the unseen realm we don't have all the facts about reality. So, we perceive and assess God, ourselves, and our circumstances according to what we see and how we feel about what we see. That is a carnal mind. That is a skewed view of reality.
 2. Our thoughts, emotions, and actions are determined by our perception of reality. If our perception of reality is skewed our thoughts, emotions, and actions will also be skewed.
 - a. At the very least our misperceptions cut us off from the peace and joy of God. We are afraid when there is no reason to fear and we complain when we should be thankful. Matt 14:27; I Thess 5:18
 - b. At the worst, our misperception of reality can keep the will of God from coming to pass in our lives as it did with Israel at the edge of the Promised Land. Num 13:32,33; Heb 3:19
 1. Although it was God's will for them to enter and settle the land they did not do so because they did not see themselves or their circumstances as God saw them. They saw themselves as grasshoppers compared to their enemies. They saw the obstacles in the land as too much for them. They had no awareness that God was with them promising to fight for them.
 2. Only Joshua and Caleb went into the land. They saw reality as God saw it: They were well able to overcome. Because God was with them they were bigger than their enemies. Num 14:24--My servant Caleb was of another mind (Knox); has a different attitude (Berkeley).
 - c. We aren't talking about denying what you see and feel. We are talking about recognizing that there is a greater reality behind what you see that can affect what you see.
 1. For most of us, what we see and feel has a greater reality and the invisible is less real, vague and shadowy. Additionally, we are very affected by what we see. There is a whole physiology connected with that. Visual scenes make an actual imprint on our brain.
 2. If you never learn what the Bible says about the unseen realm and then consciously consider or think about it you have nothing to counter the constant input and inflow of information from your senses that often contradicts what God says about reality. Josh 1:8
 3. In the last lesson we began to talk about the fact that there is more to you than what you see and feel. There is more to the world than what you see and feel. There is more to the events of life than what you see and feel. We want to consider that discussion in this lesson.
- B. There is more to reality than what we see and feel. Consider another example from the Old Testament.
1. Abraham fathered Isaac who fathered Jacob. Neither Abraham nor Isaac wanted their sons to marry local women (a Canaanite) but rather a relative from their homeland in northern Mesopotamia.
 - a. Just as Abraham sent Isaac find a wife in the land of their origin so did Isaac for his son Jacob. Jacob traveled to Padam-Aram to find a wife. On the journey Jacob had a dream. Gen 28:10-15

1. In the dream Jacob saw a ladder that reached to Heaven with angels ascending and descending on it. He also saw the Lord. v13--And the Lord standing over him (Jerusalem) and beside him (Torah).
2. God spoke to Jacob and restated the promise to give him and his descendants the land of Canaan. God further stated that He would be with Jacob and protect him and eventually bring him back to the land. v15--I will be with you constantly until I have finished giving you everything I have promised. (NLT)
 - b. Let's forget the "Sunday School" aspect of Jacob's ladder and recognize what was happening here.
 1. In Jacob's dream the veil that separates the invisible from the visible was pulled back. All this "behind the scenes" activity (God, Heaven, and angels) did not suddenly come into existence when Jacob became aware of it through his dream. It was there all along.
 2. Jesus made a similar statement in John 1:51 when He told Nathanael that as a follower of His he would see angels going back and forth between the visible and invisible as they assisted Jesus. Matt 4:11 (attended to His wants); Luke 2:9,13 (announced His birth); Luke 22:43 (strengthened Him in spirit); Luke 24:4 (announced His resurrection); Acts 1:10 (announced His Second Coming).
 3. Jesus is God become a man without ceasing to be God. While on earth He put aside His rights and privileges as God and lived as a man with the limitations men have. He could not see into the invisible realm any more than any other man. Yet He was aware of, depended on, and interacted with the unseen realm. He is our example of how sons of God live. I John 2:6
 - c. Notice Jacob's comment when he awoke: v16--Surely the Lord was in this place and I wasn't even aware of it (NLT); I was not conscious of it (Basic).
 1. In Jacob's defense he had way less light than we do about the unseen realm and how God works. We have the full revelation of God given to us in Jesus. We have the written record of God's redemptive plan, the Bible. That information is recorded to help us live our lives. Rom 15:4; I Cor 10:6,11
 2. God helped Jacob anyway because he was directly connected to and involved in God's plan of redemption. But as we study his story we see that his inability to see reality as it truly is increased his pain during hard times of his life.
2. Consider one example: Many years after Jacob, his wives, and their children returned to Canaan a great famine struck the land. Jacob sent ten of his sons to Egypt for food. Unbeknownst to any of them, their long lost brother Joseph was second in command in Egypt in charge of distributing food.
 - a. Twenty years earlier, acting out of jealousy, the brothers had sold Joseph into slavery and told Jacob he was dead. Their wicked actions were the beginning of a series of events that brought Joseph to Egypt and the high position he now held.
 1. In Egypt Joseph recognized his brothers (they did not recognize him) and put them through a series of tests to see if their characters had changed since they had wronged him.
 2. Part of the testing included keeping brother Simeon in Egypt until the youngest brother Benjamin (still in Canaan) was brought to Egypt. When the brothers returned to Jacob and told him what had happened he proclaimed: Everything is against me. Gen 42:36
 - b. Based on what Jacob could see that was an accurate statement. But his perception of reality was skewed. In reality God was at work behind the scenes and everything was going right for him. Benjamin and Simeon would not be lost to him and he would soon be reunited with Joseph. Jacob's own unrenewed mind, his misperception of reality, added to his emotional distress.
3. Soon after that the whole family moved to Egypt where Jacob spent the final years of his life. At the end, as Jacob was dying, Joseph brought his sons Ephraim and Manasseh to Jacob to be blessed by him. In Jacob's words we see his assessment of God's care for him throughout his lifetime.
 - a. Gen 48:15,16--God (Himself) Who has [been my shepherd and has led and] fed me since I came into being until this day, The redeeming Angel — that is, the Angel the Redeemer [not a created

being, but the Lord Himself] — Who has redeemed me continually from every evil, bless the lads!
(Amp)

- b. In other words Jacob said: God never abandoned me. He took care of me. Everything worked out above and beyond what I expected. v11--I never thought I'd see you (Joseph) again and now I'm seeing your children!!
 - 1. What if Jacob had been able to look at every circumstance all the time from that perspective?
 - 2. What if he had been aware of the fact that God was right there with him helping him -- even when he couldn't see it or feel it.? That's how a renewed mind views reality.
 - 4. Many Christians live completely unaware of God's abiding presence. Because they cannot see or feel God they think that He is far away from them. He's way up there and we're way down here.
 - a. But in reality there is no place that God is not. We live, move, and have our being in the presence of God and His presence is salvation. Ps 139:7,8; Jer 23:23,24; Acts 17:28; Ps 46:1,2; Ps 42:5
 - b. Reality is that God is perfectly present with us, loving and reigning, and upholding all things by the word of His power. Part of the purpose of Jacob's dream was to show him that the unseen realm is right here and it affects the seen.
 - 5. Ps 23 likens the Lord's care of His people to that of a good shepherd. v6 says that because of the shepherd's care goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our lives.
 - a. To the unrenewed mind that doesn't seem like enough help. We don't need those things following us. We need them right here with us in the time of trouble.
 - b. But that's like Jacob saying in the moment: Everything is against me. However when he looked back over his life he could clearly see the results of God with him helping him.
 - 1. A renewed mind understands that goodness and mercy are with us even when it doesn't look or feel like it because, according to the word of God, the earth is full of the goodness of God (Ps 33:5) and the mercy of God (Ps 119:64).
 - 2. Ps 23:6--Goodness and mercy alone will accompany me through life. (Harrison)
 - 3. God's presence, help, and provision is with us. We just can't see it until we see visible results unless we learn to look past the visible to the invisible through the help of God's word.
- C. There is more to this world and to the events of life than what you see and feel. God is at work behind the scenes. If you are going to walk in victory and access the peace, power, and provision of the unseen kingdom of God that must become your view of reality.
- 1. Because God is omnipotent (all-powerful) and omniscient (all-knowing) He is able to take the circumstances of life and cause them to serve His purposes. We could do entire lessons on this point but consider several thoughts in connection with our present discussion.
 - a. God's ultimate purpose is to bring maximum glory to Himself and maximum good to as many people as possible as He carries out His plan of redemption -- His plan to deliver men from sin and its consequences and make into sons all who come to Him through faith in Christ.
 - b. God does many things behind the scenes in this world (whole other lessons) but consider one.
 - 1. Rom 8:28--God is able to bring genuine good out of genuine evil. That is a tremendous promise to people who live in a world that has been radically altered by sin (Gen 3:17-19; Rom 5:12,19; II Cor 4:4; Luke 4:6; etc.).
 - 2. God is so great that He is able to take events He does not cause and of which He does not approve and use them to accomplish His purposes. In doing so He brings maximum glory to Himself and maximum good to multitudes.
 - 2. A spectacular example of how God uses the events of life is the crucifixion of Jesus. According to the Bible it was a wicked act carried out by wicked men inspired by Satan. Luke 22:3; I Cor 2:8; Acts 2:23
 - a. God did not cause it. But in His omniscience He knew what would happen and He saw away to cause it to serve His purposes and bring great glory to Himself and great good to multitudes.
 - 1. God beat the devil at his own game. God put the sin of the world on Jesus at the Cross and

thereby brought about the greatest good ever -- the salvation of all who come to Him in faith.

2. If you had told the disciples as they stood at the foot of the Cross to thank God for it they would have been horrified. Why? All they knew was what they could see in that moment.

Yet we thank God for the Cross. Why? Because we know what God was able to do with it.

b. The Bible is filled with examples of God bringing genuine good out of real evil. That's what happened in Joseph's story. His brothers had murder in their heart when they sold him into slavery and then lied to their father about it. God didn't cause their actions but He used them. Gen 37-50

1. Their wicked actions were the beginning of a series of events that ultimately brought Joseph to a position of greatness in Egypt in charge of a food distribution program that saved the lives of multitudes of people -- including his own family, the line through which Jesus would come.

2. Because of Joseph's story multitudes of idol worshippers in Egypt and surrounding areas heard about the Only God Jehovah. Throughout Joseph's ordeal God was with him, preserved him, and even caused him to thrive.

3. At the end of it all Joseph was able to declare to his brothers: You meant this for evil but God meant it for good. Gen 50:20

3. Through His foreknowledge and wisdom God sees a way to cause everything to serve His purposes and bring genuine good out of genuine bad. That's reality as it truly is.

a. If you could learn to see every problem, every challenge life brings your way from that vantage point -- or get your mind renewed to reality as it truly is -- it would change the way you deal with life. It would be possible to respond rather than react to life's challenges.

1. I Thess 5:18 says it is God's will that we give thanks in everything. An unrenewed mind can't do that. You can't be thankful all the time unless you see reality as it truly is.

2. When your mind is renewed you know that you can thank God for the good that comes from Him and you can thank Him for the good He can make out of what doesn't come from Him.

b. John 6:11--Jesus thanked God for lack (five loaves and two fishes in the face of 5,000 hungry men plus women and children) because He knew what it could become in the hands of His Father -- more than enough. He saw reality as it truly is: The earth full of the riches of the Lord. Ps 104:24

D. Conclusion: We still have more to say about this but consider one final thought as we close. To renew your mind to reality as it truly is you are going to have to take time to think about the things we discuss in these lessons and let these truths change the way you view God, yourself, the world, and the events of life.

1. As you go about your daily life and deal with the challenges of life ask yourself: How do I know what I know in this situation. Is it because I see it? Is it because I feel it? Is it because God said it?

2. Am I basing what I believe about this situation on what I see, on what I feel, or on what God says in the Bible? Make a conscious decision to bring your thoughts and beliefs in line with God's written word.

That will help in the process of renewing your mind. More next week!!