

RENEWED BY THE SPIRIT

- A. Introduction: Rom 12:1,2--Christians are instructed to undergo a transformation by renewing our mind. We are discussing what that means, why it is important, and how it is accomplished.
1. Renewing the mind is not simply adding new information to what you already know to reprogram your mind. Renewing the mind involves a supernatural transformation of your view of reality so that you see things the way they really are according to God.
 - a. Paul spoke of renewing the mind in the context of God's ultimate purpose for man. God's plan is that men and women become His sons and daughters through faith in Christ and then be conformed to the image of Christ. Rom 8:29
 1. Conformed means jointly formed or having the same form as: Made like to the pattern of His Son (Conybeare). Jesus, in His humanity, is the pattern for God's family.
 2. To be conformed to His image means to be made like Jesus in character and power, holiness and love, to be made like Jesus in thought, word, and deed.
 3. You're still you. But you are the you that you were always meant to be, a son or daughter who is free from the effects of sin in every part of your being, fully glorifying to God. Eph 1:12
 - b. God's purpose in salvation is supernatural -- to transform unrighteous sinners into holy, righteous sons and daughters who express the glory of God to the world around them as Jesus did.
Renewing the mind is a key part of this transformational process.
 1. The process begins when a person puts faith in Christ and the Cross. Eternal life comes into his spirit through the new birth and transforms it or conforms it to the image of Christ.
 2. Our soul (mind and emotions) and body are not directly affected by this transformation. In order for our soul to be conformed to the image of Christ our minds must be renewed.
 2. Renewing of the mind is accomplished by the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Christ-likeness is built into our soul through the Word of God and the Spirit of God working in us. II Cor 3:18
 - a. God's Word (the Bible) shows us reality as it truly is, the way things really are, as God sees them.
 1. The Holy Spirit inspired the words written in scripture (II Tim 3:16). He is here to guide us into the Word of God and help us understand it (John 16:13; John 17:17). He is here to reveal what God has done for us through the Cross and the new birth (I Cor 2:12).
 2. The Word of God is the "blueprint" by which the Spirit of God works in us, the instrument by which He works to build Christ-likeness into us. Eph 6:17
 - b. In order to renew your mind you must become a Bible reader to give the Holy Spirit and the Word of God opportunity to work in you, change you, and build Christ-likeness into you.
 1. Develop the habit of regularly reading through the New Testament (start-to-finish, in order). Don't skip around. Don't worry about what you don't understand. Just read. Understanding comes with familiarity. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what you are reading.
 2. Develop an awareness of the fact that God is working in you by His Word and His Spirit by acknowledging and thanking Him for it. I Thess 2:13; Phil 2:13; Heb 13:20,21; James 1:21
 3. The renewing of our mind doesn't happen automatically. You must intelligently cooperate with God. In this lesson we want to talk more about how the Word of God and the Spirit of God work in us to transform us so that we can intelligently cooperate with God.
- B. A renewed mind sees reality as it truly is, sees things the way they really are. Reality is everything as God sees it. Jesus, the pattern for God's family in His humanity, saw reality as it truly is.
1. Certain factors keep us from seeing the way things really are according to God. All can be corrected by the Word of God and the Spirit of God working in us. Those things include:
 - a. Lack of knowledge. You can't see or perceive what you don't know. There is a whole realm beyond the perception of our five physical senses -- the unseen or invisible realm. God's Word gives us that information.

- b. Misinterpretation of knowledge. Because we have grown up in and been affected by a fallen world, all of us have flaws in our soul that cause us to misperceive reality -- attitudes, emotional hurts and damage, warped thinking, prejudices, etc.
1. Someone who has been wounded by life may misperceive every negative thing that happens to them as people being out to get them -- even when that is not the case.
 2. These flaws not only keep up from seeing reality as it truly is they can lead us to act in unChristlike ways and prevent the new life in our spirit from being accurately expressed in our lives. These must be exposed and dealt with.
 - A. The problem is that we are unaware of these flaws. We see the flaws of others much more readily than our own. We don't see the flaws in our soul because they are normal to us and we believe we have good reasons for what we think, how we feel, and how we act.
 - B. Some of these flaws are exposed to us through the mirror of the Word. But others we so are blinded to that we are unable to see them.
- c. But the Holy Spirit has come to help us with these issues. In the context of being conformed to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29) and renewing the mind (Rom 12:2) Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit will help us pray about these infirmities.
1. Rom 8:26,27--The Spirit of God not only maintains this hope within us, but helps us in our present limitations (Phillips), takes hold with us in our weakness (Montgomery), for we do not know what and how we ought to pray (Berkeley). But the Spirit intercedes for us with groaning that cannot be uttered in articulate speech (that's the thought in the Greek language). And God who searches our innermost being (NEB) knows what the Spirit's meaning is (20th Cent) because His intercessions for the saints are in harmony with God's will (Weymouth).
 2. God, in His sovereignty, has chosen to work through the cooperative prayers of men. But often we do not know what or how to pray so the Holy Spirit prays on our behalf (intercedes) and He is then able to work in us and expose and correct these issues. He does it through a prayer language that we do not understand -- paying in other tongues.
 2. There is much misinformation and lack of information about praying in tongues that has robbed people of this vital tool in renewing the mind. Consider these points.
 - a. When we read the accounts of the apostles in the Book of Acts as they began to preach the gospel and men and women responded see two distinct experiences taking place with the Holy Spirit.
 1. Men were born of the Spirit (new birth) and then baptized in the Holy Ghost. In each case the initial evidence that they had been baptized in the Holy Ghost was that they spoke in tongues.
John 20:22, Acts 2:1-11; Acts 8:12-19; Acts 10:44-48, 11:15-17; Acts 19:1-6
 2. Tongues is a language not know or understood by the one doing the speaking. The Holy Spirit provides the words and the recipient does the speaking.
 - b. There are several reasons or purposes for praying in other tongues but the primary one is help in prayer. When you pray in tongues your mind is bypassed. Paul said in I Cor 14:14--For if I pray in tongues, my spirit is praying, but I don't understand what I am saying (NLT).
 1. Your unrenewed mind wants to pray: Father please bring me a husband or give me a newcar. But God wants you to pray about your selfishness and pride -- which you don't even see.
 2. But the Holy Spirit sees it. So He bypasses your mind as you cooperate in prayer and gives you perfect prayers to pray as you speak it out in tongues (a language you don't understand): God forgive me of this selfishness and pride. Root it out of me. Make me Christlike.
 3. You may be wondering: Why doesn't the Holy Spirit give me words that I understand? If you understood the words, you might be hurt and embarrassed or argue and defend yourself as Peter did when Jesus revealed a character flaw to him to help him. Luke 22:31-34
 - c. When we pray in tongues we don't understand what we're saying but God does. We're speaking mysteries to God. I Cor 14:2--secret truths and hidden things [not obvious to the understanding] (Amp). A mystery is something in the plan and purpose of God that has not yet been revealed.

1. God's plan is that we be conformed to the image of Christ. When you pray in tongues you are praying about things necessary to the process of making you like Jesus in your soul.
 2. You can also pray in tongues about other things for which you do not have the words in your native language. That's another lesson for another day.
- d. Paul said in I Cor 14:4 that when you pray in tongues you edify yourself. The word means to build up (as in building a house). The same word is used in Matt 7:24
1. The Word of God and the Spirit of God work together to build Christ-likeness into our soul (mind and emotions). The Holy Spirit is given to help us pray about issues in that regard that our mind is unaware of and or that we don't know how to pray about.
 2. God's number one concern is that, once we are born again, we be conformed to or built up into the image of Christ. Eph 4:11-13
 - A. One of the responsibilities of the ministry gifts (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers) is to edify or build up the Body of Christ until we reach the standard of Christ.
 - B. They do it through proclaiming the Word of God. (Edify is same word as in I Cor 14:14.)
3. Praying in other tongues is vital to the process of renewing our mind. Through this kind of prayer the Holy Spirit can expose and help us deal with unChristlike attitudes in our soul. He can help break down the "filter" all of us have in our mind that causes us to misperceive reality as it truly is.
- C. We live two thousand years and hundreds of denominations after the writing of the New Testament so there are a lot of arguments about tongues. But for the first Christians, Christianity was supernatural and the baptism in the Holy Ghost meant speaking in tongues. Consider one example.
1. The church at Ephesus was established by Paul on his third missionary (Acts 19). It began with men being born of the Spirit and then baptized in the Spirit and speaking in tongues.
 - a. v2--Note Paul's question when he first encountered people at Ephesus: Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed. Paul knew that there are two experiences with the Holy Ghost and he knew how important it is to be filled with or baptized in the Holy Ghost.
 - b. v3-6--It turned out that these men were not yet believers in Jesus. They had heard only John the Baptist's preaching. So Paul preached Jesus to them. They believed and were water baptized. Then Paul laid his hands on them and they were baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues.
 - c. Paul's ministry at Ephesus was extremely successful. He stayed in the city for three years (Acts 20:31) and literally preached and taught daily for two years (Acts 19:10).
 2. While Paul was at Ephesus he received a visit from believers from Corinth, Greece just across the Aegean Sea. The church had been founded by Paul on his second missionary trip. The group brought a report of serious troubles in Corinth, one involving misuses of spiritual gifts including tongues.
 - a. Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians from Ephesus to deal with these issues. He devoted three chapters (12,13,14) to dealing with and correcting their misunderstanding and misuse of various gifts including tongues (whole lessons for other days).
 - b. Although this letter was not an exhaustive teaching on the subject of tongues we get insight into what Paul did teach about praying in tongues as he wrote to address issues in the church. I Cor 14
 - c. Paul was addressing the fact that the Corinthians were speaking to each other in tongues at their public assemblies. But no one was being edified or built up because no one understood what was being said. So he exhorted them:
 1. When you come together it is better to prophesy to each other (speak in a known language for the purpose of edification, exhortation, and comfort or encouragement) than to speak in tongues unless there is also an interpretation in the language of the listeners so all are edified.
 2. Paul said: I thank God that I speak in tongues more than any of you. But in church I would rather speak in a known tongue so that all are built up. Tongues is for speaking to God. Prophecy is for speaking to men. v1-5
 3. In public assemblies your goal should be to edify or build each other up into Christ-likeness

through sharing words that all understand. In private prayer one of your goals should be to edify or build yourself up into Christ-likeness by praying in tongues. I Cor 14:4,12,26

- d. It is fully reasonable to assume that Paul spoke about these issues to the church at Ephesus while he was ministering daily for two years because: It was on his mind. They also spoke in tongues. He didn't want them to make the same mistakes once he left.
 3. Paul eventually left Ephesus but later wrote an epistle to them. The context of the epistle would have been the time he spent with them and the things he had already taught them. There are many points we could make about being renewed in our mind by the Word and the Spirit of God but consider these.
 - a. Ephesians has the passage on the armor of God. God's armor is His Word (Ps 91:4). Each piece of armor represents a category of information. Together they can produce transformation in our soul by changing the way we view reality.
 - b. When we have God's armor on -- when we know the scripture and it has become part of our view of reality -- we are able to stand against the wiles of the devil, hold our ground, and overcome in the challenges of life. In other words, we can demonstrate the will of God. Eph 6:11-13
 - c. v17--Paul instructs them to take or put on the helmet of salvation (also referred to as the hope of salvation. I Thess 5:8). What is the hope of salvation and why do saved people need it?
 1. The ultimate goal of salvation is transformation resulting in full conformity to the image of Christ. The hope of salvation is full conformity to the image of Christ. Phil 1:6
 2. Why does this piece need to be on your head? Because your mind must be renewed to the point where your perception of reality comes in line with your ultimate destiny.
 - d. Note that Paul immediately mentions the two elements necessary for renewing your mind: the Word of God and the Spirit of God.
 1. v17--The Spirit of God works according to the Word of God to build Christ-likeness into us.
 2. v18--Pray at all times—on every occasion, in every season—in the Spirit, with all [manner] of prayer and entreaty. (Amp)
 - A. There are many different kinds of prayer and ways to pray in different circumstances. That's another lesson for another day.
 - B. What does it mean to pray in the Spirit? To the Ephesians it meant praying in tongues. That is how their teacher, Paul defined it in his teachings. I Cor 14:2,15; etc.
 - e. The Ephesians knew that the Word of God builds us up into Christ-likeness (Acts 20:32; Eph 4:12) and they knew that the Spirit of God helps us to pray about issues necessary to building Christ-likeness into our souls.
 4. Praying in tongues is not a badge of spiritual maturity for a select few. It is for all that the Lord God shall call (Acts 2:33,38,39) because all of us need to be conformed to the image of Christ.
- D. Conclusion: If you will develop the habit of reading the New Testament and praying in tongues daily (or as close to that as possible) you will be a different person a year from now. More next week!!