

## WHAT YOU REALLY ARE

- A. Introduction: Rom 12:1,2--We are discussing renewing the mind. To renew your mind means to change your perception of reality and bring your attitudes and ideals (your view point) in line with God.
1. Renewing the mind is not simply adding new information to what you already know. It involves a supernatural transformation of your view of reality so that you see things the way they truly are, the way they really are according to God who has all knowledge. Reality is everything as God sees it.
    - a. Renewing of the mind is accomplished by the Word of God and the Spirit of God working in us as we intelligently cooperate through reading the Bible and praying in the Spirit. II Cor 3:18
    - b. Our minds must be renewed so that we can demonstrate the will of God in our lives. God's will is first and foremost that we become his sons and daughters through faith in Christ and then be conformed to the image of Christ. Rom 8:29
      1. Jesus is the pattern for God's family. To be conformed to His image means to be made like Jesus in character, power, holiness and love, like Him in thought, word, and deed.
      2. You're still you. But you're the you that you were always meant to be -- a son or a daughter free from all the effects of sin in every part of your being, fully glorifying to God. Eph 1:12
  2. We want to continue our discussion in this lesson by talking about who and what we really are according to God. Our minds must be renewed to our true identity.
- B. God made men to become His literal, actual sons and daughters by becoming partakers of His life -- uncreated, eternal life. Eternal life does not refer to quantity or length of life. It is not "live forever" life. Eternal life is the life in God Himself.
1. Man has the capacity to receive God into His being -- to receive the life of God, the Spirit of God -- and then to express both the character and power of God and thereby bring glory to Him.
    - a. God made Adam and the human race in Adam in His image. God made man as much like Himself as a creature can be like his Creator. Gen 1:26,27
      1. God's intention was that Adam would receive His uncreated, eternal life by voluntarily eating from the tree of life in the midst of the Garden of Eden. Gen 2:9
      2. Instead, Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and united himself and the whole race in him with death. Gen 2:17; Rom 5:12; etc.
    - b. Jesus came to earth to abolish death and bring life to men in fulfillment of God's plan. The ultimate purpose of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus was and is to give eternal life to men -- the uncreated life of God, the uncreated life in God. II Tim 1:9,10; John 10:10
      1. Because of our sin, before we believed on Jesus, we were dead or lacking the life of God (Eph 2:1). When a person believes on Jesus he receives life. That's why conversion is referred to as a new birth (I John 5:1).
      2. In John 3:16 the phrase "believe in" has the idea of "believe into". When a person believes in or on Jesus, the Holy Spirit unites him to the life that is in Jesus. I John 5:11,12; II Tim 1:1
        - A. This union takes place in our spirit. Man is a three part being -- spirit, soul (mind and emotions), and body (I Thess 5:23). At the new birth, eternal life comes into our spirit and regenerates it or makes it alive with the life of God (Titus 3:5).
        - B. When the New Testament speaks of our relationship to Christ it uses word pictures which convey union and shared life: Vine and branch (John 15:5), Head and body (Eph 1:22,23; 5:23), Husband and wife (Eph 5:31,32).
    - c. Receiving eternal life in our spirit at the new birth is the beginning of a process of transformation that will ultimately conform us to the image of Christ in every part of our being.
  2. Rom 8:29 states our destiny -- to become sons of God and be conformed to the image of Christ. In the next verse (v30) Paul states the way that God accomplishes His plan: He calls us, justifies us, and glorifies us. We could do entire lessons on each point but briefly consider these thoughts.

- a. God has called or invited us to our destiny, showing us that it is a purposeful plan conceived in eternity past. He desires a family of sons and daughters with whom He can have relationship and through whom He can express His glory. God wants you in His family.
- b. Sin has disqualified everyone of us from sonship. But through the sacrifice of Christ at the Cross God has justified us. Justified means: As a matter of right or justice, to absolve, acquit, clear from any charge. It comes from a word meaning to render just or innocent (Strong's Concordance).
  1. When someone is forgiven, they did wrong, but the party who was wronged chooses not to pay them back. When someone is pardoned, they did wrong but are released from their just punishment. When someone is acquitted, all charges are dropped because there is no evidence that they did wrong. Through the Cross God has made possible the wiping out of all our sin.
  2. Col 2:14--Christ has utterly wiped out the damning evidence of broken laws and commandments which always hung over our heads and has completely annulled it by nailing it over his own head on the Cross. (Phillips)
- c. When we bow our knee to the Lord Jesus and believe in His sacrifice for us, our sins are legally wiped out. God can then treat us as though we never sinned. He can indwell us and make us into holy, righteous sons and daughters by giving us His life.
  1. Once we are justified God can then glorify us or make us alive with His uncreated, eternal life in every part of our being and conform us to the image of Christ -- spirit, soul, and body.
  2. Rom 8:30--And those whom He thus foreordained He also called; and those whom He called He also justified ### acquitted, made righteous, putting them into right standing with Himself. And those whom He justified He also glorified — raising them to a heavenly dignity and condition [state of being]. (Amp)
3. Full conformity to the image of Christ (or glorification) is a process. There are immediate as well as progressive aspects to being conformed to the image of Christ.
  - a. It begins at the new birth when our spirit is instantly conformed to the image of Christ. It will be completed when our body is instantly transformed and made like Jesus' resurrection body in connection with His second coming. I John 4:17; Phil 3:20,21
  - b. The transformation in our spirit does not directly affect our soul and body. But, as we cooperate with God's Word and His Spirit, our soul can become increasingly Christ-like or conformed to His image which will in turn affect our behavior and make it more Christ-like. II Cor 3:18
    1. Your soul (mind and emotions) and your body must be brought into conformity to the changes in your spirit so that this inward transformation can be accurately express.
    2. Renewing the mind (or transforming your view of reality) is key to this progressive, on-going aspect of conformity to the image of Christ (or glorification).
4. Notice that the word glorified in Rom 8:30 is in the past tense. Why is that when the process of complete glorification has not yet completed and will not be until Jesus returns?
  - a. Because He who has begun a good work in you will complete it (Phil 1:6). Col 1:27--Christ in you, (is) the promise of glorification (Goodspeed).
  - b. Because the condition of your spirit is the basis of your identity. It always has been.
    1. Before you were born again, the problem wasn't just what you did (committed sins) it was what you were (a sinner by first birth). Eph 2:3 refers to men before they were born again -- And by nature we were doomed to God's wrath like other men (Goodspeed).
    2. Now, you are born of God, you are of God, you are a son of God (I John 5:1). John 3:6--The one who is born of the Spirit or born again is spirit. I Cor 6:17--But the person who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him. (Amp)
  - c. You must learn to see yourself as you truly are -- your true identity -- instead of how you merely look and feel. You must learn to identify with the changed part of you, not the unchanged parts.
  - d. The changes in our spirit are the basis of our identity. They can and should affect our soul and body in this life. And they are the guarantee of full conformity to the image of Christ.

5. Paul wrote that we are no longer to see ourselves according to the flesh. Our flesh is made up of the parts of us not directly affected by the new birth (mind, emotions, and body).
    - a. II Cor 5:16--Therefore, for the future we know no one simply as a man (Weymouth); Once convinced of this, then, I estimate no one by what is external. (Moffatt); This means that our knowledge of men can no longer be based on their outward lives (Phillips).
    - b. The verses preceding and following Paul's statement give us the context. We must see ourselves according to what we are in our spirit, through the new birth and union with Christ.
      1. v15--Christ died for all of us, so that being alive should no longer mean living with our own life, but with his life who died for us and has risen again (Knox).
      2. v17--Therefore, if you are in Christ (in union with Christ--20<sup>th</sup> Cent) you are a new creature. A new creature is a human being with the life of God in his spirit. Old things -- spiritual death -- have passed always and all things are become new. v17--His old being has passed away, and behold, all has become new (Conybeare).
  6. The epistles have much to say about the changes in our spirit because of the new birth. We'll discuss this more fully in later lessons. But consider these points.
    - a. The life of God, eternal, uncreated life, is in you now. It's the same life that reanimated the dead body of Jesus Christ. Whatever is in that life is in you, in your spirit, because that life is in you.
    - b. In Eph 4:22-24, using different words than Rom 12:1,2, Paul instructs these people to present their bodies to God and be renewed by the Spirit in their minds so that they demonstrate Christ-likeness or the will of God. Note that he gives an important detail about the changes in us, in our spirit.
      1. This new man (the new creature), the regenerated (born again) human spirit is made of righteousness and holiness. v24--And put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God's image, (Godlike) in true righteousness and holiness. (Amp)
      2. This is how God makes us into holy, righteous sons and daughters. He shares His holiness and righteousness with us by giving us His life. Now, we must learn how to let these inward changes affect us outwardly. Renewing the mind (learning to see reality as it truly is) is key.
- C. We have trouble identifying with the changes in us due to the new birth because the unchanged parts of us seem so much bigger and so much more real than the changed part. But we are bigger inside than outside.
1. We need a clear understanding of what it means to be spirit, to be a spirit. Spirit doesn't mean ghost nor does it mean not real or less real. Spirit is more real. It is eternal. The physical is temporary.
    - a. The material, physical creation, including your body, is not unimportant, is not expendable. Our flesh was created to express the spiritual by showing forth the life and glory of God.
      1. But, the material or physical realm has been corrupted by sin. It must be (and will be) transformed at the second coming of Jesus in order to fully demonstrate the glory of God.
      2. And now, in this life, as we renew our minds, that life on the inside of us can be manifested or demonstrated in our soul and body in increasing degrees. II Cor 3:18
    - b. We think of our spirit as a little dot somewhere on the inside of us, in our chest or belly. But, we are spirit beings who are cloaked in a physical body. When we die we leave our body behind and we go into the manifest presence of the Lord. II Cor 5:1-8
      1. In Luke 16:19-31 we find out that people who leave their physical body at death still look like themselves. Why? Because you are a spirit. Your spirit fills your body, every cell in your body. If even one cell is not filled with your spirit that cell could not live. James 2:26
      2. Making the distinction between spirit, soul, and body is necessary for discussing the process of conformity to the image of Christ. But note that these people had emotion and mental functions and looked like themselves when they were out of their bodies.
    - c. Your recreated spirit is now alive with, filled with, the uncreated life of God. You, your spirit, has become one spirit with God (I Cor 6:17). You have God by His life in every part of your being.
      1. That life will completely transform your mortal body at the return of Jesus, but it can also

provide strength, healing, and health for your body until that ultimate transformation.

2. The uncreated life of God, the light of life (John 1:4) can dominate your soul (mind and emotions) right now through the Word of God. His words are spirit and life (John 6:63).
  2. If you don't see your true identity (the condition of your spirit) you won't understand how God works nor will you recognize where His strength and transforming power comes from.
    - a. God works from the inside out. Nowhere does the Bible say that God works on us. Rather it says He works in us by His Word and His Spirit. I Thess 2:13; Phil 2:13; Heb 13:20,21; etc.
      1. II Cor 4:16--The outward man does indeed suffer wear and tear, but every day the inward man receives fresh strength. (Phillips)
      2. If you think God works on you you'll constantly be looking at your environment to try to figure out what God is doing instead of looking in the Bible.
    - b. People misguidedly pray: God, give me patience, strength, joy, peace, patience, etc. But those things are in already in you. You are united to patience, strength, peace, and joy. They are the fruit of the recreated spirit (Gal 6:22,23). Consider how Paul prayed for Christians:
      1. Eph 3:16--May He grant you out of the rich treasury of His glory to be strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in the inner man by the (Holy) Spirit [Himself] — indwelling your innermost being and personality. (Amp)
      2. Eph 3:20--Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and able all that we [dare] ask or think — infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thought, hopes or dreams. (Amp)
    - c. The life of God can manifest in your flesh -- the unchanged parts of you -- and change them. But, that will never happen if you do not first know what eternal life has made and is making you, if that does not become the way you see reality.
- D. Conclusion: We have much more to say in upcoming lessons. But consider these thoughts as we close.
1. If you are going to demonstrate the will of God in your life you must stop assessing yourself according to the flesh and identifying with the unchanged part of your being..
    - a. You must take time to find out from the Bible what you are because of the new birth. Take time to think about these truths and let the Word of God and the Spirit of God transform your view of reality.
    - b. Begin to agree with your true identity. You are not what you do. You are not what you were. You are not how you look. You are a literal son or daughter of God, fully acceptable to God, capable of walking as Jesus walked by the power of the life of God in you.
  2. My purpose in these lessons is not to make you feel better in the moment. My goal is to change your view of reality through the Word of God so that you see things differently and then live out of that new perspective. More next week!!