

TRANSFORMED BY RENEWING

- A. Introduction: Rom 12:1,2--Christians are instructed to present our bodies to God and be transformed by the renewing of our mind so that we can demonstrate the will of God in our lives.
1. Man is a three-part being--spirit, soul (mind and emotions), and body. When a person puts faith in Christ his spirit is transformed by the new birth. His spirit is literally born of God and he becomes a partaker of the life of God in his spirit, making him holy and righteous by nature (II Cor 5:17,18; Eph 4:24; II Cor 5:21; I Cor 1:30; etc.) We'll discuss this in detail in upcoming lessons.
    - a. The transformation in our spirit does not directly affect our soul and body. And, although the transformation produced by the new birth is real and substantial, it has to be expressed through our soul and body to have a discernable impact on our present lives.
      1. An unrenewed mind and an uncontrolled body will keep that from happening and, although a person may truly be born again, he will look, talk, and act like an unchanged man.
      2. That is what Paul said of group of Christians in the city of Corinth, Greece. I Cor 3:3--For you are still (unspiritual, having the nature) of the flesh — under the control of ordinary impulses. For as long as [there are] envying and jealousy and wrangling and factions among you, are not unspiritual and of the flesh, behaving yourselves after a human standard and like mere (unchanged) men? (Amp)
    - b. Your mind and your body must be brought into conformity to the changes in your spirit so that this inward transformation can be accurately express. The mind and the body are connected in that how you think and feel affects how you act.
      1. Renewing your mind is not simply adding new information to what you already know to “reprogram” the mind.
        - a. It involves changing your perception of reality. It's learning to see things the way they really are according to God as revealed in His Book, the Bible.
        - b. It involves dealing with “junk” in your soul (attitudes, emotional hurts and scars, warped thinking, judgments etc.) we all have because we've grown up in this fallen world.
      2. Renewing comes from a word that means renovation, a qualitative renewal that makes a person different. Rom 12:2--But be ye transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind by the new ideals and new attitudes. (Amp)
  2. Last week we began working on gaining insight into what it means to renew our mind by considering the context in which Paul made that statement.
    - a. Rom 1-8 is a systematic presentation of God's plan of salvation by grace through faith. In Rom 9,10,11 Paul takes a side journey to discuss some things about Israel.
    - b. In chapter 12 he returns to his discussion of salvation. To get the context of Rom 12 we need to go back to Rom 8. We want to continue our discussion in this lesson.
- B. In Romans 8 Paul made a number of points (many of which we will address in upcoming lessons). In the last lesson we focused on the fact that Paul made the statement about renewing the mind in the context of our created purpose and destiny.
1. In Rom 8:28 he wrote that we are called according to God's purposes. In Rom 12:1,2 Paul wrote that we are to be transformed so that we can demonstrate God's will. What is His will, His purpose?
    - a. The ultimate goal of salvation (the subject of Paul's letter) is to make sinners into sons and daughters of God and then conform them to the image of Christ. Rom 8:29
      1. Conformed is the Greek word SUMMORPHO. It is made up of two words: together and form. It means jointly formed or having the same form as. Molded into the image of His Son (Amp); made like to the pattern of His son (Conybeare); to share the likeness of His Son (Weymouth).
      2. Jesus is God become a man without ceasing to be God. While on earth He did not live as

God. He lived as a man in dependence on His Father. He, in His humanity, is the pattern for God's sons and daughters.

- b. To be conformed to the image of Jesus means to be made like Him in character and power, holiness and love, to be made like Him in thought, word, and deed -- a perfect son.
  1. You are still you, but you are the you that you were always meant to be -- a son or daughter who is free from all the effects of sin in every part of your being and fully able to glorify God.
  - b. God's purpose in salvation is transformational -- to transform sinners into sons like Jesus, to turn unrighteous sinners into holy, righteous men and women who express the glory of God to the world around them as Jesus did.
- c. Renewing the mind is a key part of this transformational process. Rom 12:2 says to be transformed by the renewing of the mind. Transformed is METAMORPHOO in the Greek. It is made up of two words. META is change. MORPHOO is form. To change one's form.
  1. Titus 3:5--God saves us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Regeneration comes from two Greek words, PALIN (again) and GENESIS (birth). Renewing is the same word used in Rom 12:2, to renew qualitatively.
  2. By [the cleansing] both of the new birth (regeneration) (Amp) and by the renewing power of the Holy Spirit (Phillips)
2. Being conformed to the image of Christ is a supernatural process accomplished by the Spirit of God and the Word of God. It doesn't happen automatically. You must intelligently cooperate with God.
  - a. Paul was greatly concerned about the churches he had established in the province of Galatia. They were being adversely affected by false teachers who had persuaded many of them that they had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses to be saved.
    1. Gal 4:19--My little children from whom I am again suffering birth pangs until Christ is completely and permanently formed (molded) within you! (Amp); till a likeness of Christ shall have been formed in you (20<sup>th</sup> Cent); until you take the shape of Christ (NEB).
    2. The word formed is MORPHOO; to form, to fashion. Strong's Concordance says: the Christian is described as a little child who needs to mature until his character and conduct project the very image of Christ.
  - b. Paul's instruction to Christians was to take on outwardly the inward changes in their spirit.
    1. Eph 4:24--And put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God's image (Godlike) in true righteousness and holiness. (Amp)
    2. Col 3:10--And have clothed yourselves with the new [spiritual self] which is (even in the process of being renewed and remolded into (fuller and more perfect knowledge upon) knowledge after the image (the likeness) of Him Who created it (Amp).
  - c. This is reality: Your purpose is to become God's son or daughter through faith in Christ and then be conformed to the image of Christ -- share his likeness, be molded into that same image.
    1. If you don't understand that, even though you are sincere, you may be acting at cross purposes with God. God is much more interested in you learning to treat people in a Christ-like way than He is in whether or not you get a promotion at your job or drive a big new car.
      2. A renewed mind sees reality as Jesus in His humanity did when He was on this earth.
        - a. Phil 2:5--Let this same attitude and purpose and [humble] mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus (Amp); Think just as Christ Jesus thought (Beck).
        - b. Lots in this passage we aren't going to deal with right now. But note one major point: He humbled himself and obeyed His Father (v8). Jesus' attitude was: Not my will but Yours. That must become our attitude as well.
      3. Eph 1:12--So that we who first hoped in Christ — who first put our confidence in Him — [have been destined and appointed] to live for the praise of His glory! (Amp)
3. Full conformity to the image of Christ is a process. We'll discuss it more fully in later lessons, but consider these brief points for the moment.

- a. There is a past, present, and future aspect as well as immediate and progressive aspects to being conformed to the image of Christ.
    - 1. It begins at the new birth when our spirit is united to the life in Jesus as truly as a branch is joined to a vine and we are conformed to His image in our spirit. I John 4:17
    - 2. It will be completed when our body is transformed and conformed to His image at the second coming of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead. Phil 3:20,21
    - 3. There is a present, ongoing aspect. As we cooperate with God's Word and His Spirit our soul (mind and emotions) can become increasingly Christ-like or conformed to His image.
  - b. It is important to understand that God deals with you on the basis of the part that is finished.
    - 1. We are fully God's holy, righteous sons and daughters through the new birth, but we are not yet fully conformed to the image of Christ (Christ-like) in every part of our being. I John 3:2
    - 2. But He who has begun a good work in us will complete it. He now deals with us as sons who will one day be fully like His perfect Son. Phil 1:6
  - c. A renewed mind is key to the present part of the process of being conformed to the image of Jesus. If you don't renewed your mind, Christ-likeness or the image of Christ will not automatically be displayed in and through you.
- C. Renewing the mind is not simply a natural process of learning some new facts. It is a supernatural transformation accomplished through the Word of God and the Spirit of God. They work together.
- 1. Christ-likeness is built into our soul (mind and emotions) through the Word and the Spirit of God.
    - a. II Cor 3:18--And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit. (Amp); We are transfigured in ever-increasing splendor into his own image, and the transformation comes from the Lord who is the Spirit (Phillips)
    - b. The word changed in II Cor 3:18 is METAMORPHOO, the same word used for transformed in Rom 12:2. That same word is used of Jesus when He was transfigured before His disciples (Matt 17:2). Note: What was on the inside of Jesus showed up on the outside.
  - 2. The Word of God (the Bible) and the Holy Spirit are both needful in the process of renewing our mind.
    - a. The Word of God shows us reality as it truly is, the way things really are, as God sees them. The Holy Spirit helps us understand the scriptures.
      - 1. The Holy Spirit inspired the words written in scripture (II Tim 3:16). He is here to guide us into all Truth, the Word of God (John 16:13; John 17:17). He is here to reveal to us what God has done for us (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. Consider some statements about the supernatural, transformational working of God's Word and His Spirit in us.
      - 1. John 17:17--Sanctify them — purify, consecrate, separate them for Yourself, make them holy — by the Truth. Your Word is Truth. (Amp)
      - 2. I Thess 2:13--The Word of God which is effectually at work on you who believe -- exercising its [superhuman] power in those who adhere to and trust in and rely on it. (Amp)
      - 3. Phil 2:13--[Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you -- energizing and creating in you the power and desire -- both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight. (Amp)
      - 4. Heb 13:20,21--Now may the God of peace...Strengthen (complete, perfect) and make you what you ought to be, and equip you with everything good that you may carry out His will; [while He Himself] works in you and accomplishes that which is pleasing in His sight. (Amp)
      - 5. James 1:21--So get rid of all uncleanness and the rampant outgrowth of wickedness, and in a

humble (gentle, modest) spirit receive and welcome the Word which implanted and rooted [in your hearts] contains the power to save your souls. (Amp)

3. It is vital that we became Bible readers so that we can learn to see the way things really are (reality as it truly is) and to give the Holy Spirit and the Word of God opportunity to work in us, change us, and build Christ-likeness into us.

a. The Bible is not a collection of verses aimed at giving us a one sentence quick-fix for our most immediate crisis. It is meant to change us as we “eat” or “feed” on it.

a. If you are not a regular, systematic reader of the Bible (especially the New Testament) your mind will not be renewed.

D. Conclusion: We have more to say in upcoming lessons. But consider these thoughts as we close. Lessons like these don't necessarily seem practical. Is there any practical value to this high-minded talk of conformity to the image of Christ when all of us are facing real issues that require real help?

1. People want immediate solutions to their most pressing crisis. The Bible was not written for that purpose. That doesn't mean there is no help for you. There is. But the greatest help comes from learning to see things the way they really are, to see things the way Jesus in His humanity saw things.

a. What if you learned to see and deal with life as Jesus did? There would be no challenge in life in which you would not have victory.

b. We're like a person who can't read. We ask someone to teach us to read the words on a sign: No Thru Traffic. But when they try to teach us the alphabet, phonics, vowels, syllables, etc. we say: NO! Just teach me to read those words. We may be able to memorize those symbols and recognize them in the future but we missed out on an opportunity to learn a much bigger skill because we can't actually read. A renewed mind is a mind that “has learned to read”.

2. Jesus said we'll have trouble in this world but that we can overcome as He did (John 16:33). In Rom 8:31-39 (part of the context of renewing the mind) Paul said we're more than conquerors in life's trials.

a. To conquer means to prevail over or overcome. When you conquer or overcome the fear of something, the source of the fear doesn't necessarily go away. You simply learn to see things differently so that you are no longer afraid.

b. If you get your mind renewed and learn to see things as Jesus did you will overcome in life's challenges.

3. In the midst of life's hardships people are often further beat down because they doubt God's love and care for them. But if your mind has been renewed to reality as it truly is those issues won't come up.

a. You would see reality as it truly is. You would recognize that God's will for you is sonship and conformity to the image of Christ. His plan for you is an overwhelming demonstration of His love for you.

b. Instead of being moved by what you see or feel, you would be moved only by what God says.  
More next week!