

# Theology of Renewing the Mind

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## Chapter One: Introduction

When a person becomes a Christian some people believe that from that point forward the new believer should not have to deal with any of their old hang-ups and hiccups. Very often they quote the verse that assures us that we are new creatures." Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The conclusion then becomes for some that there should be no more problems with the person's old way of life and or thinking.

A closer look at that text helps us to understand that the clearer meaning is "becoming new", not an instant result. The Christian way of life is a transformational process and is not accomplished over night. Our position has become new because we are now seated in the heavenlies with Jesus at the right hand of the Father. Experientially we are still living in our bodies and have a sin nature and a new nature.

It then becomes important as a Christian to find out how we become as matter of experience different and distinguished from the world. This of course is not done in

our own strength or strategy, but can only be accomplished through the Son.

There is a clear indication that a matter of importance, when it comes to becoming more like Christ, in our daily walk is the process of renewing the mind. Roman's 12:2 has this to say about the subject: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

The desire of every believer should be to do the will of God in every area of their lives. Paul is telling us that as we renew our mind that in turn we will be able to accomplish God's will in our lives.

As a person becomes more like Him what begins to happen is that your mind aligns with the mind of God and His desires become your desires and His plan becomes your purpose.

In the next few pages we will look at a slice of theology that is important and at times invisible as a person works out their own salvation with fear and trembling. The important theology of renewing the mind can and will change your life.

## Chapter Two: As a Man Thinketh...

I am sure that you have heard the saying that as a man thinks so he is. Or the statement shows me the people that you associate with or the books that you read and I can tell you where you will be in five years.

There is a lot that can be determined based on the company we keep and what we focus our minds on. Proverbs 23:7 says: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart *is* not with thee."

As believers our focus and the direction of our heart should be to point our thoughts toward the Father and allow our mind to become the gallery of heaven.

Pastor Bill Johnson in his book "*The Supernatural Power of a Transformed Mind*" has this to say about a believer's ability:

Whatever we bind has already been bound. Our task is to see what is bound up there, and then bind it down here. Whatever is free in the heavenly realm to function needs to be released here.

(2005, Johnson, p.62)

It becomes clearer to see the importance of a believer's

mind and what they fix their mind on. When Jesus talked to the disciples about the most important elements of their walk it was the Greatest Commandment that was His declaration as the most important thing:

One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

<sup>29</sup>Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. <sup>30</sup>And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.'<sup>£</sup> <sup>31</sup>The second is equally important: neighbor as yourself.'<sup>£</sup> No other commandment is greater than these." (Mark 12:28-31)

When Jesus spoke about the importance of loving God He included the mind with all other parts of the person. It is easy to then conclude that putting an emphasis on the mind is not out of place.

The Bible has over 300 references to the mind and thinking, but they generally fall into several categories which, when taken together, provide us with a clear theology of the mind that can serve as a solid foundation for loving the Lord with all our minds. (2003, Krishman, p.64)

Some in the Church are hesitant at best and militant at worst when it comes to the mind and theology. It is important to see the emphasis that is evident in scripture before making a judgment about the importance of renewing the mind.

So many in Christendom throw the baby out with the bathwater when they distrust the mind. In reality the mind is a powerful tool that facilitates the Holy Spirit a perspective of the Kingdom of God. This can only be a reality through a renewed mind with any consistency. (2005, Johnson, p.43.)

As a person becomes aware of the importance of their minds then it becomes very clear that they are today what they have fixed their mind on in the past.

You are today the sum of all the thoughts you've

had over the past months and years. It can also be said that you will become the product of the thoughts that fill your heart and mind. (1998, Hodge, p.19.)

It is very sobering when you think of your life in those terms. When you place your trust in Jesus and turn from your sin you become a new person in Him, however what you fix your mind on is up to you.

Every single solitary thought that enters your mind has a source. The source is either the Father (truth) or from another source (lie.) There is no such thing as a neutral thought. "You can't decide what thought will come or what stimulus will be given you, but you can take an appropriate action in dealing with the thought when it arrives." (1998, Hodge, p.39.)

The Bible gives us clear instruction in dealing with this very issue. "We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:5)

As you realize this important truth then you can be free to respond to God's grace as you take each thought and

weigh it on the scale of God's purposes and plans for you.

Every action that we ever have performed is a manifestation of a belief structure in our lives. Somewhere in our minds we have established these structures throughout our life that guide and direct whether good or bad how we act and react. "Your response to life is directly linked to how you have programmed your mind." (1998, Hodge, p.106.)

This is why it important to continue to renew your mind to become more like Him. The more you can keep your mind fixed on him and His ways you will find that your life aligns with what is good more often than not.

God designed your mind to be one of the most supernaturally powerful tools in the universe, but it needs to be sanctified and yielded to the Holy Spirit so you can carry out His designs, creative ideas, and plans in your everyday life. (2005, Johnson, p.44)

The process of change is only possible as a believer renews their mind. In our attempt to activate change the only guaranteed place that we can go is to the Father.

But there is one place we can go to for help;

God, the one who created us and knows us best.  
God has revealed the solution to us in His word,  
and it is this; If we want to experience true and  
lasting change in our lives, we need to use our  
minds as God intended. In Romans 12:2, the Lord  
tells us that a transformed life comes from a  
renewed mind. (1998, Hodges, p.11)

What the word of God has to say about our minds can  
permanently change our thinking, living, and feeling as we  
allow the power of His word reside in our lives.

The question then becomes where do you start? We read  
that at the time that someone is saved they are given a new  
heart that is bent toward God. That is made possible as a  
person acknowledges that they are a sinner and that they need  
a savior. They in response to God's love repent of their  
sins and believe and put their faith and trust in the  
finished work of Jesus Christ.

At that point the person is now a new creation and  
that is just the beginning. When it comes to growing as a  
Christian we will look at the importance of repentance not  
as an act, but as a lifestyle.

### Chapter Three: Renewal Starts with Repentance

When you examine the meaning of the biblical word repent it means to change the way that you are thinking. It is safe to say that it is the abandoning of self-reliance and to be completely dependent on the Father the source and the sustainer of your life.

The true thrust of the word repent means to go back to a higher way of thinking and acting (God's eye view) from His perspective there is transformation, renovation, and reformation that affects our entire being.

It does not seem that to do this once brings a ready solution to our ongoing problems. One needs only to truly repent once and be cleansed from all of their sins and be made right with God. That would be sufficient if our sin nature was not a part of our lives even after salvation.

That is not the reality and as believer's if a person remains humbled and broken before God a lifestyle of repentance is not difficult and does not seem demanding.

It is only when a believer falls back into self-sufficiency that it becomes burdensome and somewhat difficult to repent and recognize that it is only by His grace that we are able to live and breathe.

In order to become effective in the Kingdom we must turn from our old way of thinking and surrender to his will. If a person desires to see the "more than you can ask or imagine" of the Father they must surrender the man-sized dreams that most often end dashed upon the rocks of this sea we call life.

The only way to consistently do Kingdom work is to view reality from God's perspective. That's what the Bible means when it talks about renewing our minds...it's not just that our thoughts are different, but that our way of thinking is transformed because we think from a different reality-from Heaven toward earth!

(Johnson, 2005, p.42)

That is why it is important to set our mind on the things of the Father and live as Jesus did while on earth. He was always doing the business of His Father and did not have time for anything that did not fit into that category. The mind of Jesus was constantly fixed on the Father and his plans for fragile humanity.

To repent clearly calls for a believer to change the way they think and to fix their focus on the Father.

## Chapter Four: A War is Won One Battle at a Time

In order to make this point we must come to a concrete understanding that there is a very real enemy that has one purpose to steal, kill, and destroy. His name is Satan and contrary to popular belief he does not run around in a red suit carrying a pitchfork.

The Bible says that he is like a roaring lion and he is seeking those that he may devour. It is also noted in scripture that he comes as an angel of light. This tells me that he might show up where you least expect him and you can never let your guard down.

This is not to say that we do not have the ability to resist him. In Christ he has already been defeated and we do have the ability to resist him if we are in Christ.

This does not erase the fact that he will still bring the battle to you and one battlefield for a believer is in the bunkers of your mind.

The primary target that satan aims for is our mind. His goal is to steal, kill, and destroy our knowledge of God and replace it with a mindset opposed to God and at best neutral to the enemy and at worse synced with satan and his sinister plans.

As with any black operation this is not done in the light it is usually done covertly in the cover of darkness where satan and his army traffic in trouble, temptation, and trickery.

His main battle plan in this war he wages against you is to confuse, cloud, and crush your concept of God. There are many people believer's included that have a warped view of God and it affects their ability to have a intimate and close relationship with the lover of their souls.

But wait, before we give the devil too much credit and wave the white flag of surrender it is important to note several items of intelligence about the enemy of your souls.

The devil is not omniscient, omnipresent, or all-powerful. The only power that he has is based on what God allows him to do and what we allow him to do. He cannot read your mind nor see all things as God does.

The devil is empowered by human agreement. From that mental attitude satan is free to steal, kill, and destroy. Anytime that I agree with satan I release power to him when I concur with a man-focused view or natural wisdom.

Basically when I agree with anything that does not come from the Father's perspective I have agreed with satan either actively or passively.

But the good news is that a believer does not have to allow that to happen. What they can do is to surrender to the work of God in their lives and allow Him to draw up the battle plans and to lead the charge into war with the enemy of our souls.

God has taken this darkened, futile, and ignorant mind, and through His Holy Spirit, mad it capable of being renewed in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness as the Law of God is progressively written on the mind...Not new, but capable of being renewed. (Krishman, 2003, p.65)

It is important to be reminded that in this particular war it is not enough to pick yourself up by your combat boot laces and do this in your own strength. You must rely on the active, and powerful work of God in your life through the Holy Spirit who is alive and well today.

I will say it again! Our human efforts will never enable us to change. It does not matter what prescription, program,

or procedure you try, if it is man-made, man-centered, and and man initiated it is guaranteed to fail. It is only when the Holy Spirit empowers you that the ongoing transformation process in your life can be successful.

You can be guaranteed that if something is man-made it must be man-fueled to continue. It was never the intention of the Father that we would fight this battle on our own. The battle for the mind is very real and very relevant to believers today.

But please remember that it is God renewing you as you set your mind on Him. This is how the enemy will be defeated and rendered non-operational in your life as you fix your eyes on the Father and not on your failures, foul-ups and faults.

If the enemy can keep you in a place of constantly questioning whether or not God really loves you and if He truly forgives you or not he has won. Not the war, but the battle. You are basically at best a walking wounded soldier that has no offensive ability until you stop standing in your own righteousness and stand in His.

When you do that and as you renew your mind becoming

convinced and committed to the fact that you are free from the power of sin, forgiven completely, and have the ability to live life to the full you now become satan's worst nightmare.

What is that? Satan's worst nightmare is a believer that knows who he or she is in God and also is learning their true identity as they renew their mind in the truth of the Word.

As we fight this battle if we are not careful we can become self-anointed, self-appointed, and self-reliant when it comes to fulfilling our plans. The problem remains that we cannot afford to do that. It has simply never been about what we can do for God, it has always been about what God desires to do through us. In order to see this happen we must allow Him to transform the way that we think.

## Chapter Five: From God's Perspective

As we continue to allow god to renew our mind what begins to happen is that we begin to see things as He sees them and not necessarily how we use to see things.

This is mainly accomplished as we study the revelation of God that is given to us through the infallible and inherent word of God the Bible. As we study the word the Holy Spirit then communicates the truth to us and it becomes living, active, and transforming when applied to our lives.

The Holy Spirit releases into our life knowledge of who the Father really is and what He is like. As you encounter His true nature and character it will begin to shape and form the world around you, but it will also shape the world through you as you live as an accurate representation and representative of Him. This is why it is important to receive revelation to renew our minds, so that we are able to communicate the love of the Father. This includes His plans, purposes, and His personality.

It cannot be stressed how important the word of God is in the process of renewing the mind. For many years I

viewed reading my Bible as a stringent requirement for salvation (staying saved) now I see it as not a requirement, but a source of life and nourishment that I need on a regular basis. I do not read the Bible to be accepted by the Father, I read the Bible because I am accepted and I do have a relationship with the Father.

God's Word is the indispensable ingredient in renewing our mind and transforming your life...we must draw upon God's boundless store of grace each and every day as we need it. We cannot just take a breath; we must keep on breathing. In the same way we need God's word to sustain us on a daily basis. (Hodge, 1998,p.70)

The ongoing process of renewing the mind is not just reading the Bible and having a momentary a-ha moment! This can and does happen, however what solidifies revelation is what you do with it at that point.

The next step is experience. In order to completely renew our mind we must move from thinking differently to living (flowing) differently as we are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The problem is that in the Christian culture when you begin to talk about experience people run for the hills. They have no problem experiencing experience in every aspect of their lives except for the times when God is experienced.

In our culture, we define understanding as nothing more than cognitive reasoning, coming to conclusions, fully comprehending. But in Eastern culture, which is the culture of scripture, understanding is *experience*. It means engaging in activities that involve our five senses.

(Johnson, 2005, p.82)

When you take the revelation that you have received and choose to walk it out, then what used to be deemed the impossible becomes the probable, your faith in that area will enlarge. The revelation carries you into the experience and empowers you to produce (Him through you) Kingdom works.

No Limits is the message of a Kingdom mindset. It means that at anytime and anyplace God can and will invade our space.

## Chapter Six: Think on These Things

As a believer begins to put into practice the continual renewing of the mind and a fixed focus on the Father our understanding begins to change.

As our understanding is renewed then our confidence in our identity is concretely fixed to the foundation of the Father's love. There is no limit to His love and nothing can break that fellowship with the Father. Our access to Heaven and the Heavenly realm is secure based on this relationship. We have the same authority as Jesus did as He walked on this earth and still has today as He is seated at the right hand of the Father.

As we fix our mind on these things and walk in them we become a conduit of His mercy, grace, love, and supernatural life. The normal response to His love is that love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control should flow from our lives.

As was mentioned before it is important to close the door on guilt, shame, and condemnation. If we fail to do so and give in to the destructive thoughts that question our identity and the character of God we become trapped. This

is the subject of a majority of the counseling today.

We either believe that His provision was adequate or we don't. Unfortunately, many believers constantly battle a phantom self-image from the past with no assurance of their present identity in Christ. Forgiveness seems like a theory of impractical truth. Yet it is the most practical truth there is. (Johnson,2005,p.109)

The reality remains that:

The death of Christ [and his subsequent resurrection] wiped out our sin record. Most people don't live with the realization that they are totally forgiven. They can quote the passage, but they don't live under the influence of its truth...once the blood of Jesus has wiped out sin you can't get any clearer. That doesn't mean we can avoid the hurdles and the issues that come with changing your life and renewing your mind...if we don't think of ourselves as truly forgiven, and if we hang onto a false view of our identity it effectively cancels out most of our potential

ministry...either the blood of Jesus is completely effective, or its not effective at all. And it does not just wipe away the punishment so that when you die you don't go to hell; rather the blood of Jesus has the power to completely transform us into a new creation in Christ.

(Johnson, 2005, pp.110-111)

As we walk in the light of His love and continue to renew our minds the blood of Jesus continuously flows in and over our lives and cleanses us. Then and only then are we able to experience the power of a renewed mind.

A renewed mind sees the way God sees. It receives His impressions and becomes a creative force to release His expression of dominion on planet earth. A renewed mind destroys the works of the devil so that the earthly reality matches heavenly reality. It proves the will of God not just in word but in deed. It heals the sick, frees those enslaved to sin, brings joy where there was sadness, strength where there was weakness, explosive creativity and world-changing

ideas and inventions where there was lack of invention. It causes the Kingdom of God to be expressed "on earth as it is in heaven" that's normal Christian living. (Johnson,2005,pp.50-51)

We will end with that picture and the goal of a renewed mind. As you fix your focus on the Father and continuously renew your mind on the truth then you are able to live forgiven, free, and life to the full.

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