Level 2 Lesson 3

RENEWING THE MIND
By Don Krow

Today we want to talk about renewing the mind. I'd like to read two passages. The first one is out of Philippians 4:8. It says, *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."* The Apostle Paul is obviously telling us that there are things we should think on. In other words, we can choose our thoughts. Now I know that we all have thoughts that are sometimes contrary to the Word of God, according to Romans, chapter 7, verses 22 and 23. The Law of sin that wars in us attacks our minds. But the Bible tells us out of Philippians that we don't have to sit there and let our thoughts build a nest, that we can choose what we think on. The Bible also tells us that as a man thinks in his heart, so is he (Prov. 23:7). So it's really important what we think on.

In Romans 12:1 and 2, the Bible says, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."* The Bible says we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Did you know that when the Apollo spacecraft went up into space, they had to make a course correction every ten minutes? They went to the moon in kind of like a zigzag. And when they eventually landed, they had a 500-mile designated landing zone, and they just barely made it within that zone by a few feet. Yet the whole flight was successful. We need to set a course and make a total commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ by being a living sacrifice. The problem with a living sacrifice is that sometimes it wants to crawl off the altar, so we have to make course corrections in our thoughts. We have to have a heart that says, "God, I want You and I want Your way."

Not only do we need to make a total commitment, but part of having a victorious Christian life requires that we take the next step and be transformed by the renewing of our minds. We can't think like the world, if we don't want the world's results. As we read in Philippians 4:8, we can choose what to think on. Whatsoever is lovely, just, of good report, think on these things. What they would do in the Old Testament is take the Word of God and put it on their doorposts and on their garments. It was constantly in front of them. God instructed that they were to talk about the Word of God night and day that they might observe to do what it said. And they were also to tell all these things to their children. It's very important what we think on. It's very important that we keep the Word of God in front of us all the time in order to really have a life of victory. The opposite of thinking on what's lovely, just, and of good report is to not think on the things of God and the things of the Spirit. Romans 8:6 says *"To be carnally minded is death,"* but the next part of that verse says, *"To be spiritually minded is life and peace."* It is life and it is peace to think on the things of the Spirit of God. But if we start thinking about adultery, the things of the world, money, covetousness, and so forth, do you know what will

happen in our lives? As a man thinks in his heart, so is he. We'll begin to act on those things. We'll begin to play those things out in our lives, and it will destroy our lives. You see, the real spiritual warfare for the believer is really not resisting or rebuking the devil all the time, although there are times that we need to do that. But spiritual warfare has to do with what we're thinking on and what we're dwelling on.

You see, the Bible says in Isaiah 26:3 that God will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon Him. There are times during the day that we all need to make course adjustments, just like it says in Romans 12. We need to say, "God, those are wrong thoughts. I need to turn around and renew my mind and start thinking about the things that are lovely, just, and of good report."

So if you've got a stronghold, if you're in bondage, if you find yourself thinking things that you shouldn't be thinking, you need to catch yourself immediately. The Bible says, If we will draw near to God, He will draw near to us. If we resist the enemy, he will flee from us. There are times in my life when I've let things slip and let depression rise up. At those times, it's hard to pick up the Bible and sit down and take a passage and say, "God, this is what You say about me. This is who You say that I am. You are my strength." Did you know that your victory is just that simple? You need to say, "I'm going to resist what I'm letting the enemy do to me right now. I'm going to sit down and open the Bible, and I'm not going to just read some words on these pages, but I'm going to connect with the God behind these words. I'm going to let my mind be stayed upon Him. And, Lord, this is what You say about me. You say that I'm forgiven. You say that I'm cleansed. You say that nothing can separate me from Your love." When you sit there and just think about all of the good things that God has done for you, in just a few moments, you're going to forget about those other things.

Let me use an illustration. I heard a man one time say, "Now, I'm just admonishing you to not think about pink elephants for the next ten minutes." Do you know what happened? For the next ten minutes, all we did was think about pink elephants. Then he asked, "What color is the Statue of Liberty?" Somebody said green. And he said, "Well, which arm is the Statue of Liberty holding up?" And somebody said it was the right arm. Then he asked, "What does the Statue of Liberty have in her hand." And someone said it was a torch. Then the man said, "What happened to your thoughts about pink elephants?" They were gone. You see, it's not a matter of saying, "Now, don't you think these thoughts," because you know you'll think those thoughts. The Scripture is really telling us that we need to replace those thoughts with God's thoughts, and when we see these things coming against us and we're thinking something we shouldn't think, we need to immediately call to mind our new identity. We need to immediately turn to the Lord, connect with Him, not just with words on a page, but with the God behind those words. And the Bible tells us in Romans 8:6 that as we do, we will see the transformation the life and peace of God gives, as our minds are stayed upon Him and the things of the Spirit. Think on these things, my brethren, and walk this day in the liberty and freedom that Christ has purchased for you.

Discipleship Questions

1. Read Romans 12:1. What are we to do with our bodies?

_____

2. Read Romans 12:2. This scripture is telling us that we should be different than _____.

3. Read Acts 17:11. We must make our thinking line up with? _____

4. Read Romans 8:5-6. To be spiritually minded is _____.

5. Read Romans 12:1-2. What two things do we need to do, according to these verses?

_____

6. Read Isaiah 26:3. How do we stay in perfect peace?

_____

7. Read Isaiah 26:3. What are some ways we can keep our minds on the Lord?

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Scriptures to Use with Questions

Romans 12:1 – *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."*

Romans 12:2 – *"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."*

Acts 17:11 – *"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."*

Romans 8:5-6 – "[5] *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.* [6] *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."*

Romans 12:1-2 – "[1] *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.* [2] *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."*

Isaiah 26:3 – *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."*

Isaiah 26:4 – *"Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."*

Answer Key

1. Read Romans 12:1. What are we to do with our bodies? **Present, or offer, them to God.**

2. Read Romans 12:2. This scripture is telling us that we should be different than **the world, or unbelievers**.

3. Read Acts 17:11. We must make our thinking line up with? **The Scriptures, God's Word.**

4. Read Romans 8:5-6. To be spiritually minded is **life and peace**.

5. Read Romans 12:1-2. What two things do we need to do, according to these verses? **Commit ourselves to God as a living sacrifice and begin to renew our minds.**

6. Read Isaiah 26:3. How do we stay in perfect peace? **By keeping our minds on the Lord.**

7. Read Isaiah 26:3-4. What are some ways we can keep our minds on the Lord? **Prayer, praise, meditation on the Word, giving thanks, etc.**

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