

BIBLICAL TRANSFORMATION

The Renewed Mind

Overview

"Renewal of the mind is the Great Physician's prescription for the troubled soul."
(Theren E. Wedmind)

Many Christians feel stuck in life, as though they were going through the motions, spinning their wheels, but accomplishing nothing. Others feel controlled by their pasts or in bondage to their own emotional baggage. God does not intend for our lives to be like this, that is, life was not meant to be a roller coaster ride (which takes us up, down, and twists us around) and our only option is to sit there with no control. God clearly teaches that He wants to take us out of the condition in which He saved us. The Lord wants to deliver us from our own dysfunctional and misguided minds by renewing them, and in the process our lives will be transformed. Then we will be able to think and act as the new person we are in Christ; life will have purpose and control will flow from within us.

After we believe in Jesus Christ for salvation, Romans 12:1-2 teaches the need to become a transformed person through the renewal of the mind. It may be surprising, but the transformation process will reveal answers to some of life's most important questions, e.g., "What is God's will for my life? How can I live a godly life?" This study is designed to help each person gain insight into God's answers for such questions. Yes, you can know God's will for your life, and it is learned on a journey with our Lord as He renews your mind.

Transformation is the metamorphoses of our minds (a change in form). It changes the expressions of the old life and nature for the new nature each believer has. Indeed, it is a whole new manner of life. Being renewed in the spirit of our minds is the only way to put off the biblical old man and to put on the new man. In the Age of Grace (today), the Holy Spirit first creates heavenly desires in our minds then empowers our

lives to realize those desires. This requires adjustment on our parts to the indwelling presence of the Spirit and then maintaining attitudes of cooperation and dependence upon Him. The degree to which we are transformed is the degree to which we are conformed to Christ; and the degree to which we avoid being conformed to the world.

This study will delve into intimacy with Christ and how we can pour our hearts out to Him, revealing our deepest, darkest thoughts and desires (even those we cannot share with another human) without fear of rejection. Intimacy also means He can pour-out His heart into us, and in the process we begin to see ourselves for whom we really are. Thus, intimacy creates an awareness of ourselves, and that awareness recognizes an imperative need--the need to be transformed.

Who we really are deep inside, is defined by entities such as character, attitude, conscience, values, etc. These reside in the deeper recesses of the soul, in the central core of our being. They can be deeply scarred by the events of life, sin, self, false concepts..., and these scars are often created early in life. Thus, our scarred souls (minds) carry the baggage of our pasts, the emotional pain of our lives, and the thinking characteristic of the non-regenerated mind. Our dilemma is: we are powerless to do anything about these scars (which are like scratches on a CD/DVD) and we can't function correctly with them. Resolving this dilemma is the Lord's work, and that is what mind renewal accomplishes. This is why the Holy Spirit works in the deepest parts of our minds, that is, to reach the inner, core issues of life. Renewal of the mind is the Great Physician's prescription for the troubled soul. This is where miracles are performed in our lives.

For many people, salvation and transformation are considered essentially the same thing. For many others (this may be the conventional view), transformation is something that takes place in a believer's life automatically, much like the spiritual blessings we receive the moment we are saved. This study will help clarify misunderstandings on what transformation is and how it takes place. It may be a shock to some, but transformation is not part of our salvation, nor is it something that automatically takes place because we are saved.

The creation account in Genesis helps us understand that each person is composed of three parts: body, soul, and spirit. God has a plan for each of these parts, and that plan existed even before creation began. In the Age of Grace, His eternal plan is: salvation for our spirits, transformation for our souls (minds), and glorification for our bodies--in that order. Once we are saved, we are a new creation in Christ with a restored spiritual relationship with God (we are reconciled to Him). However, we still

have our old minds, with all the false concepts, twisted values, and deranged attitudes. How can we function properly as a Christian if we still are controlled by our old minds? We need renewed minds that are conformable to that of Christ; then we can think, behave, and exhibit values in accordance with God's will. Of course, we will receive our glorified bodies later when we are taken to Heaven.

The good news is that the Holy Spirit does the actual transformation; it is a process that takes place during the entire course of our lives. Upon faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit enters our lives, and searches out the deepest recesses of our minds. He takes residence in the core of our being, and then begins to work in our lives. As the Spirit works, He changes us, starting from those deepest recesses and working outward. As previously mentioned, what resides in that core area are a person's: conscience, character, attitude, values, will, desires, emotions, etc. As the Spirit works in these areas, our minds are renewed and we are transformed in the process. The gunk of our past, the emotional baggage, the pride and self righteousness, the toxic memories, the negative thoughts that control our lives..., are all transformed through His power. In their place the Spirit produces His fruit, which is exactly what we need (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...). Transformation is the process by which we acquire godly fruit in our lives, and a mind that conforms to that of Christ.

The thing that is critically important to know is that we do not get a renewed mind just by praying, asking, or believing. It is not something that takes place automatically nor is it given upon request. Thus we are commanded to be transformed, meaning we have a role in it. It is our choice if we want to be transformed or live with our old minds. Our roles in the transformation process are what this study guide primarily discusses. While God (in the form of the Holy Spirit) does the actual renewal, the degree we consistently cooperate with Him (our role) is the degree to which renewal takes place. However, cooperation is more than saying, "Go ahead Lord, change me." Cooperation requires we pray, plan ahead, study the Word, yield, take positive steps, walk in obedience.... As we begin the transformation journey, there are many things that will surely occur. We need to know how to prepare for them so that the transformation process is more effective and rewarding; also, we will not be surprised by things that would otherwise sidetrack us.

The main feature of this study guide is working through several examples of common transformational issues. Examples are given on how to address being overweight, fear, negative thoughts, and depression. This study will show how to develop transformational plans (simple plans to assure that we do our parts). A transformational plan has to

consider how we get from the thought of doing something, to making it a true desire in our hearts, then to making preparations to accomplish what we desire, and finally to putting it all into action with the intent of accomplishing it with a passion. To accomplish our desires it is necessary to know our weapons/tools in this battle with Satan and our old minds (which do not want to be changed). The reader will learn how to address common issues in life, learn his/her role, and come to understand what the Spirit will do.

We Christians realize there are many factors in life which influence our mental and physical health, those factors can be dramatically impacted by transformation. Stress, emotional bondage, and negative thinking are prime factors related to our physical and mental health. As the Lord renews our minds, He eliminates (or diminishes) the scars of our emotional past, and helps us overcome negative thinking. Stress can be brought under control by getting our thoughts and emotions under the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. There are toxic emotions and health destroying attitudes that have to be recognized and addressed in the Christian life. The good news is we are not left powerless, those health destroying things can be replaced and changed. The fruit that the Spirit produces within us are healing for both the mind and body. However, transformation is not necessarily easy, in fact it is generally a struggle, just as a chrysalis struggles to become a butterfly. But, the results speak for themselves.

Harmful thoughts and emotions are discussed in this study so that the reader can know what they are and the harm they cause. There is only one solution, and that is provided by renewal of our minds. It is of utmost importance to know the Spirit's work promotes overall health by quelling the release of harmful stress hormones and creating internal peace.

A critical part of this study is understanding the Judgment Seat of Christ. The rewards a Christian receives at that Judgment are often confused and not well understood, so this topic is discussed in a way to assure understanding. Our rewards may not be what we have been led to believe. It is not what we have not done that is important (touch not, taste not, do not do that) but what we have accomplished with our renewed minds. It is the renewed mind that creates the works and mental qualities that will be praised by the Lord and result in a reward.

The liberty and freedom we have in Christ are fascinating; this study reveals what liberty and freedom are, and how we can lose them. Our freedom/liberty is assured to us by Christ and the empowering Holy Spirit; but we can lose them when we lose connection with our Head (Christ). Invariably, loss of connection will cause us to slip

into bondage to laws and regulations of human origin. When we lose connection, we are no longer in touch with the source of our freedom and we fail to thrive in the Christian life. Not only is there a loss of liberty/freedom, but there is an inexorable turn-around in our transformation. The Spirit's accomplishments will experience a transformation reversal, in which a person reverts to things seemingly right and good from the perspective of a non-transformed mind. Thus, the fruit in us (produced by the Holy Spirit) is replaced by emotional feelings, and when they fail to have the desired effect there may be further regression, to the point of seeking carnal pleasure. Keeping our connection with our Head is critical if we are to live a God-honoring life. We learn transformation is not an option, it is required to prove to ourselves and others God's good and perfect will.