

Spiritual Disciplines - Mind

Rom 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.”

Today’s Christian Mind

We are probably at an all time low with the Christian mind. There are many Christians that go to Church like Christians, pray like Christians, talk about being Christians, but do not think like Christians. To think like a Christian is to think from God’s perspective with the mind of Christ. *1 Corinthians 2:16* declares, “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.” The world can’t know God’s thoughts, but we have the mind of Christ. Why don’t we use it?

G.I.G.O. (Garbage In, Garbage Out)

When dealing with computer programming in college, one of the first principles I learned was G.I.G.O. Simply put, garbage in, garbage out. If I put bad programming into my computer, it would give me bad results. This principle applies to more than computers!

Read *Matthew 15:10-20*. What is the principle that Jesus is teaching us about in this passage?

The things that come out of our mouth is what makes us defiled (unclean) before God. It isn’t the food that we take into our bodies.

According to Jesus, what part of us initiates this sin? What does that mean?

It is our heart. The heart is the seat of our emotions, our will, intellect and intent. It is who we really are!

Proverbs 23:7 – “For as he thinketh in his heart, so [is] he...”

If the heart is the key to our behavior as a Christian, then it is important to understand how our heart can be transformed so that our thinking and actions can then be transformed. Our hearts are transformed at salvation. We become a new creature in Christ (*2 Corinthians 5:17*) and are regenerated (born again). That gives us a new heart that is sensitive to sin and receptive to God’s Spirit. We then face a choice. What food will we give to our hearts for spiritual nourishment? God considers this to be very important!

Proverbs 4:23 – “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it [are] the issues of life.”

What are the issues of life?

The way we react to situations comes from the bent of our heart. Our response isn’t only determined by what we do in the heat of the moment, but by everything we do before that moment, in preparation.

What does it mean to have diligence in keeping our hearts?

This is calling for spiritual discipline – the very thing we are studying. We are to work at controlling our inputs!

Controlling our Inputs

The central passage on this subject is *Romans 12:2*. Read this passage and answer the questions below.

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.”

What does it mean to “prove the good, acceptable and perfect, will of God”?

It means to discern what God’s will truly is – what does He really think about this specific situation?

What are the two steps this passage states are needed to accomplish this feat?

We must not be conformed to the world and we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds

Why must our minds be transformed to be able to prove the will of God? See also *1 Corinthians 2:14*.

God’s ways cannot be understood by men, but we need His Spirit and spiritual minds to grasp them.

Case Study: The Apostle Peter

During Jesus’ ministry, Peter rebuked the Lord for proclaiming He would die on the cross. Jesus’ response in *Matthew 16:23* states, “...Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not (don’t set your mind on) the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” Peter was allowing worldly influences to affect how he perceived Jesus’ message. His influences affected his thoughts, which affected his actions. It would take a change of mind for Peter to become the leader that Jesus predicted he would be. Jesus later tells Peter in *Luke 22:32*, “But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” Peter’s conversion was not salvation, but changing the way he thought and consequently acted.

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Be Not Conformed to this World (Out with the Bad)

The word, “conformed” in *Romans 12:2* means to masquerade, or pretend to be something on the outside that we are not on the inside. Remember, that Christians are new creatures in Christ Jesus. We are not truly of this world anymore. Read the passages below and define the things that they say will steal our hearts! Apply them to temptations that exist today

Luke 21:34 – “Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap;”

Hosea 4:11 – “Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart.”

1 Corinthians 15:33 – “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.”

Dissipation – seeking pleasure to the point that it tempts us to sin

Drunkenness / Wine / New Wine – allowing our minds, and therefore our actions to be altered

Whoredom – having immoral desires toward women, pornography

Worries of Life – getting caught up in the 3 P’s: Possessions, Position & Power

Evil Communications – Allowing yourself to be influenced by wickedness via friendships, media, etc...

But be ye Transformed by the Renewing of your Minds (In with the Good)

The word, “transformed” in *Romans 12:2* comes from the Greek word, “metamorphia”, from which we get the word, metamorphosis. It means a total transformation. We are told to totally transform our thinking as Christians. This is accomplished by establishing new inputs. *Philippians 4:8* is the key passage on this subject. Read the passage and define the qualities mentioned.

True – God’s Word is ultimately the standard of truth

Honest – Honorable, worthy adoration

Just - Right

Pure – Holy, morally clean

Lovely – Sweet, gracious

Good Report – What is highly regarded or well thought of

Virtue - Excellence

Worthy of Praise – Worthy of exaltation, to be talked about

The best way to learn to think like God is to know what God thinks. That translates to immersing yourself in God’s Word. Transforming our mind is the result of consuming God’s Word and letting it saturate the way we think about things. Through the Spirit of God, the Word renews our minds! Read *Ephesians 5:25-27* and *Psalms 119:97-100* and discuss how God’s Word has in some way transformed you.

What are practical steps that you can take to further yourself in this discipline?