
THE MIND OF THE SPIRIT

Session VII: A Renewed Mind

- I. God's Mercy
 - A. Romans 12 is not an isolated chapter on renewed thinking and Christian behavior.
 - B. Paul's arguments in chapter 12 flow right out of his previous arguments about our relationship to God in light of this newfound unity between Jewish and non-Jewish people in Christ.
 - C. We offer ourselves to God because that is the natural reaction to God's great mercy.
 - 1. Romans 11 shows that God desires the salvation of the Jews and that he has grafted non-Jews into God's family.
 - 2. Non-Jews now share in the promises of God to Abraham.
 - 3. We all have the opportunity to be declared in right relationship with God because of Jesus.
 - D. Paul urges them to adopt a new way of thinking.
 - 1. The word "urge" (parakalw:) carries the idea of "bringing someone alongside."
 - 2. The word often carries the idea a caring, loving, and encouraging feeling.
- II. Living Sacrifices
 - A. In the Old Testament a sacrifice was something set apart for God.
 - 1. Sin offerings
 - 2. Fellowship offerings
 - 3. Thank offerings
 - B. Christians
 - 1. Our purpose is to serve Christ and his will. What Jesus desires must always overshadow our personal wants.
 - 2. Christians live in the world but are set apart for God's plan.
 - 3. Our sacrifice is an act of devotion because God has already acted on our behalf.
- III. True and Proper Worship
 - A. Romans 12:1 (NIV) *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."*
 - B. The word translated "true and proper" (logikovv) was often used in the ancient world for "reason." (The KJV also translates it as "reasonable")
 - C. Our sacrifice is a rational act. It is based on reason. To present yourself to God as a sacrifice in light of everything he has done is a reasonable act.
 - D. Our minds lead us to give our whole selves, our whole being, to God.
 - E. Worship begins with our mindset and flows out through our daily life.
- IV. Transformed vs. Conformed

- A. Romans 12:2 (NRSV) *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.”*
 - B. What is translated at “this world” is better thought of as “this age.” Paul is making a distinction between this age and the new age that Jesus began with his death and resurrection.
 - C. Think of being conformed as being squeezed into a pattern or mold that is shaped like the non-Jesus age. (Play-dough analogy)
 - D. The verb “transformed” (metamorphousqe) is in the passive tense.
 - 1. Transformation is not the result of our effort.
 - 2. Transformation is the result of God's power at work in us.
 - E. This process of not conforming and being transformed are everyday activities.
- V. Renewing the Mind
- A. Paul doesn't state how the mind is renewed, but it is clear from the context of Romans that this renewal happens through fellowship with the Holy Spirit.
 - B. Our old sinful ways are giving way to a new mindset that comes from the Spirit.
 - C. The renewed mind is of a totally different character than the corrupted mind of Romans 1.

Romans 1:18-32	Romans 12:1-3
Humanity failed to thank God (1:21) and worshipped idols (1:23)	Believers worship God, dedicating themselves as sacrifices (12:1)
They corrupted their bodies (1:24)	They offer their bodies (12:1) to serve Christ's body (12:4-8)
They belong to the present age (1:18-32)	Not conforming to this age, their minds are made new (12:2)
They did not approve knowledge of God, so God allowed their minds to be corrupted (1:28)	God renews their minds so they may approve his will (12:2)
Their corrupted minds yielded selfish vices (1:28-31)	The renewed mind yields acts of service to Christ's body (12:1-8)
<i>The Mind of the Spirit by Craig S. Keener (p. 155)</i>	

- VI. The Benefits of a Renewed Mind
- A. Romans 12:2 (NIV) *“Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is —his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*
 - B. A renewed mind is capable of knowing God's will.

1. This allows us to shape our thinking around what God desires.
 2. Our minds are not forced to grope around in the darkness. We have light in our minds.
 3. We can pick out God's will because God is the one who has transformed our minds. As we grow in Christ, we reflect God's image more and more in our thoughts and subsequent actions.
- C. A renewed mind is able to discern and evaluate God's will.
1. We are able to evaluate or reflect on the outstanding worth of God's will for our lives and his church.
 2. We are able to decide between what is evil and what is God (God's will) which allows us to make good choices in our daily life.
- D. A renewed mind blesses the entire Christian community.
1. Romans was written to the house churches in Rome who were experience disunity between Jewish and non-Jewish Christians.
 2. The Church as a whole can together test and approve God's will. We build each other up, add new perspectives, and live in community.
 3. Romans 12-15 demonstrates how a community of renewed minds behaves in relation to each other and the world around them.
 4. Thinking properly helps us use our gifts in a way that blesses the other members of the church (Christ's body).
- E. A renewed mind helps us to see the present world, its thoughts, values, and opinions in light of the Kingdom of God (the age to come).
- VII. Application
- A. A renewed mind is the product of the Holy Spirit's transforming word in our lives.
 - B. Our relationship with the Lord grows as we daily offer ourselves to him in worship.
 - C. Worship flows from a recognition of all that God has done for us.
 - D. Our transformed thinking builds unity among Christians and helps us to put the present world in its proper place.