

# **Five Steps to Renewing Your Mind**

## **Step 1: Ask the Lord to guard and direct your mind.**

My mind is the place of my intellect, reasoning, and intentions; my behavior begins in my mind, and my mind is where spiritual transformation happens (Romans 12:2). The object of my regular thinking will determine how my days, years, and ultimately my life plays out. Everything starts in the mind. Too often, I simply don't bother to ask for the Lord's protection, direction, and oversight of my mind. From now on, I will do my best to start my day with a simple prayer: *Jesus, by your Holy Spirit, keep my mind firmly set where you want it to be focused today.*

## **Step 2: Recognize the source of self-focused and self-defeating thoughts.**

Given that my behavior begins in my mind, and my mind is where spiritual transformation happens, is it any surprise that the adversary wants to mess with my thinking? It must be his favorite first attempt to distract and disarm Christians, and it usually works. I have experienced periods of mental oppression that seem almost physical. A feeling of heaviness accompanies my self-defeating thoughts. Most of the time, I realize that I am engaged in a spiritual battle of some sort, but I cannot immediately free myself of it. I pray. I confess. I read God's Word. I pray some more. Recognize the enemy, and fight him with God's power and with Scriptural truth.

## **Step 3: Replace self-focused thinking with a God-focused mindset.**

After praying for the Lord to protect my mind and recognizing the enemy, I have a choice. Will I train my brain to concentrate on the things of God, or will I let it be consumed by the things of this world? To focus my mind on God requires some work. If I don't take purposeful action to set my mind on Jesus Christ, then I'm allowing my mind to go anywhere it wants to go. I know where it will go, and it's nowhere good. I know myself. So, even when I am fully confident of God's love and care, I still must decide what I will and will not think about. The following verses help

me to set my mind on things above, and not on earthly things: *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:1-2) For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. (Romans 8:5) Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (Philippians 4:8)*

#### **Step 4: Rest in the truth that you are accepted in Jesus Christ.**

I'll pray for the Lord to protect my mind, help me recognize the enemy, and work to keep my mind focused on God. Sometimes I will be successful, and sometimes I will not be. Over time, it will be more often the former. There are days when all I can do is rest in the truth that I am at peace with God, that I am free from accusation, and that I am God's child. **Through faith in Jesus Christ, we are at peace with God.** "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). **In Christ, we are free from accusation.** "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). **In Christ, we are children of God and heirs along with Jesus.** "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ..." (Romans 8:16-17). My identity in Jesus Christ is *the* central fact that influences my present circumstances and determines my eternal future, and it is available by faith alone. Don't doubt; don't wonder; don't question it. Accept God's gracious gift, and *rest* in it.

#### **Step 5: Repeat steps 1-4 daily.**

Ultimately, God wants me to be transformed to be like his Son, Jesus. Jesus did not engage in the type of mental machinations that I've described—he was totally focused on the will of the Father. Because that was true of him, it will increasingly be true of me...and someday, that work in me will be complete.