



The passage that seems to be the anchor point for this topic of “renewing the mind” is Romans 12:2:

Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

This verse in particular has some key terms that we will look at shortly. For now, the key word we need to be clear about is this term “renew”. Unfortunately, again, our English use of the term is not much help. We renew library books or car registrations when they are about to expire. The term is used to refer to “renovation” ... complete change by taking away the old and putting in the new. Friberg says its : “the action by which a person becomes spiritually new and different”. Strong’s says it’s a “renovation” or a “complete change”. This is critical to realize as we come into this topic. think so many see “renewal” as some kind of spiritual “battery re-charge” or some kind of “account re-up”. But renewing the mind is referring to a complete gutting and rebuilding of how we think and what we believe in order to be biblical in all we do.

Renewing the mind does NOT mean ...

1. SIMPLY reading the Bible
2. SIMPLY memorizing Verses
3. SIMPLY going to church / listening to truth / listening to praise music
4. SIMPLY meditating on Scripture / repeating scripture in the mind
5. SIMPLY quoting Scripture in your head
6. SIMPLY trying to NOT THINK about wrong things
7. SIMPLY thinking positively

Guarding your thinking is VERY important

Prov. 4: 23 - Keep your heart with all diligence; **for out of it are the issues of life**

- **Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do.**
- **Proverbs 4:23 Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.**

Rom 8:5 Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit **think about things that please the Spirit.**

It is critical to remember that the use of “heart” in the OT especially was not the same idea as it is in English. The “bowels” were the seat of emotions in the OT and the heart referred to the inner man or the mind.

We are told to guard our hearts / minds with ALL DILIGENCE. How do you do that? Explain how that looks in your everyday life?

Then the verse teaches why ... because it affects all aspects of life. Why do you think this is true? Can you explain how your thinking affects all of your life?

God expects for us to have “renewed” minds

^{ESV} **Romans 12:1** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be **conformed** to this world, but be **transformed** by the **renewal** of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

When we are told to present our bodies to God as our act of worship he addresses primarily the MIND as the place where we are CHANGED. What is the difference between the world’s thinking and God’s thinking? Be specific ...

OK ... buckle up for just a little bit of Greek in the next few questions. We are commanded to not “be conformed (συσχηματίζω suschematizo) to the world”, or more accurately “not allow the world to press you into its mold. This is a “passive verb”. Its actions done TO you. The world is not to blame ... we are. We ALLOW the world to affect our thinking. THINK VERY CAREFULLY ... what are the influences that the world has on your thinking every day (e.g. media, co-workers, etc.)?

Next, we are told, as opposed to letting the World press us into its mold, we are to “be transformed” (μεταμορφώω metamorphoo). Do you see anything familiar in that Greek word? It’s the same root we get the term “metamorphosis”. Friberg defines it as “an inward change of nature”. This is not a change of action, but a change of total person. God does not want us to look like or act like Christians, He desires us to be totally transformed into his image (Rom 8:29). In what ways does your life not look like Christ? In what ways are you not submitting to God so he can change you?

So, this brings in our last term. We are told to BE changed totally BY renewing (ἀνακαίνωσις anakainosis) our minds. The message of this verse is this ... “DO NOT let the world press you into it’s mold ... but ... rather ... ALLOW yourself to be totally transformed into something totally different ... BY completely RENOVATING your mind and your thinking.” SO, this brings us to the key question. HOW do you “rip out” the old rotting mold covered THINKING your mind has adapted over the years ... and then clean up and rebuild with new fresh thinking that will be biblical, God fearing, and worshipful?

1. How will you rip out the old rotten thinking from the mind?

2. How will you build in new fresh biblical thinking?

Why do you think “conforming to the world” and “renewing the mind” are contrasted here?

How do we “improve” on thinking God’s way and not the world’s way in our daily habits?

God sees the heart the SOURCE of our actions

^{ESV} **Matthew 15:18** But what comes out of the mouth **proceeds from the heart**, and this defiles a person.
¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

^{ESV} **Matthew 12:34** You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

These passages help to point out how the inner man shows outwardly often. The question to consider is this: if others were to judge your inner condition based on your words what would they think your heart’s condition to be spiritually speaking?

How we think is JUST as critical in God’s eyes as how we act

- HATE = Murder ^{ESV} **1 John 3:15** Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.
- LUST = Immorality ^{ESV} **Matthew 5:27** "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'²⁸ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

God doesn't leave this up to our assumptions or guessing. Not only do our ACTIONS and CHARACTER come from our thinking, but even our thinking (though we “self control” our actions) matter the same to God. Though those around us pretty much only care about what we do ... why is God so concerned about how we think?

SOME POTENTIAL ANSWERS:

- Thinking reveals character
- Thinking reveals what we really want
- Thinking shows what matters most to us and who rules us

If our thinking is this important to God, what should we do when our thinking is heading down the path of sinful thinking?

SOME POTENTIAL ANSWERS:

- Recognize the importance God places on it
- Replace our thinking with TRUTH that convicts us of our sinfulness

How do we guard and renew our minds?

1. Be submissive to the ONE who can and will change you through truth

It's important to know that the key is NOT simply to “avoid bad thoughts” or to “get your mind off” bad thinking. Those are both important parts of fighting the battle. However, Scripture is clear that TRUE CHANGE in our hearts, minds, and living comes as we are “RENEWED” in our thinking

^{ESV} **Romans 12:1** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, **to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.** ² Do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewal of your mind**, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

^{NKJ} **Ephesians 4:22** that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and **be renewed** in the spirit of your mind ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

These are “passive verbs” ... It is something that is done TO us as we fill our minds with truth and submit to the Spirit as he gives us new desires and convicts us through the truth. This is why passages like Phil. 2:13 says that He GIVES us the desire to do His will.

In every day language, you might say that “renewing the mind” is basically “preaching truth accurately and biblically to your mind until you BELIEVE it and live it and are CHANGED by it.” Why do you think submission to the Spirit is a key to this process? How do you understand “renewing your mind” in your words based on these verses?

2. Be willing to make any sacrifice to protect it (DEFENSE)

Psm. 101:3 - I will set no wicked thing before my eyes;

Romans 12:2 - Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed

Titus 2:11 - For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Colossians 3:5 - Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry

Protecting our thinking is NOT an easy road. Why is it so hard to keep our minds on truth and not on our hurt, circumstances, disappointments, battles, etc.?

What are some practical ways you can guard your mind against thinking unbiblically and in areas that will lead to godliness and contentment?

3. Be willing to make any sacrifice to renew it (OFFENSE)

^{NIV} **Colossians 3:1** - Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set (command) your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds (command) on things above, not on earthly things.

SEEK - **zhte,w** zeteo - aim at, **strive after**; to crave Present - Active - Imperative
SET YOUR AFFECTIONS frone,w - have one's mind controlled by; / be concerned about

Psm 119:48 ... I will meditate on your statutes.,78,148; 145:5) ...

Psalm 119:148 - My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises..

What we DO NOT see in these passages is that it is done for us. Yes, it only happens as we submit to the Spirit (as we discussed above) but we are not robots or computers. God expects us to work DILIGENTLY to protect ... AND RENEW our thinking. Describe the process you should take when wrong thinking creeps in. What should you do and how should you do it? Be specific.

4. Immerse your mind in truth

^{NKJ} **John 17:17** - "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

^{NLT} **Philippians 4:8** - And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. **Fix your thoughts on what is true**, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

"The battle is intense and it cannot be fought with LITTLE thoughts in a daily devotional or PETTY ideas from a preacher on Sunday. It certainly can't be fought with minds numbed by the constant drivel of entertainment on television, DVDs, video games, and the internet. We desperately NEED minds saturated with the Word of God" - David Platt

^{ESV} **2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture is

- breathed out by God
- and profitable**
 - o for teaching, (doctrine – teach you what is true) what is right
 - o for reproof, (make us realize what's wrong in our lives) what is not right
 - o for correction, (corrects us when we're wrong) how to get right
 - o and for training in righteousness, (teaches us to do what is right) how to stay right
- ¹⁷ that the man of God
 - o may be complete,
 - o equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is

- living and**
- active,**

- **sharper** than any two-edged sword,
 - piercing to the division
 - of soul and of spirit,
 - of joints and of marrow,
- and discerning (exposes)
 - the thoughts and
 - intentions of the heart.
- **living** - ζάω zao {dzah'-o} having vital power in itself and exerting the same upon the soul 5) metaph. to be in full vigor 5a) to be fresh, strong, efficient, 5b) as adj. active, powerful, efficacious
- **active** - ἐνεργής, ἔς effective, active, powerful Philemon 6
- **discerning** - κριτικός, ἢ, ὄν able to discern or judge

We all know that church and Bible study and Bible memorization are “staples” of the Christian’s diet on the Word of God. However, we also know that this seems to fall short many times in the storms of life. Why? ... Whose fault is it? How do we fix this? How do we make sure God’s Word is effective in our lives in the hardest of times?

Mark (circle) all the terms that connect to the mind and thinking

- ^{NAS} **Ephesians 4:17** This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord,
that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk,
- in the futility of their mind,
 - ¹⁸ being darkened in their understanding,
excluded from the life of God,
 - because of the ignorance that is in them,
 - because of the hardness of their heart;
 - ¹⁹ and they, having become callous,
 - have given themselves over to sensuality,
 - for the practice of every kind of impurity
 - with greediness.
- ²² **that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self,**
- which is being corrupted
 - in accordance with the lusts of deceit,
- ²³ **and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,** ²⁴
- which in *the likeness of* God has been created
 - in righteousness and
 - holiness of the truth.

There are many things about the mind of the unbeliever in this passage. Explain how the unbeliever thinks using a few of the terms above.

Now, switch this around ... how is the believer to think based on the OPPOSITES of those examples above?

Renewing includes:

- Fear of God
- Increasing in my value of God
- Seeking satisfaction in Christ alone
- TRUSTING God
- Running to God
- Running to truth
- Listening to truth
- Working hard to understand that truth
- Working hard to teach that truth VERY specifically to your heart – PREACH at yourself
- Working hard to BELIEVE the truths
- Making CLEAR APPLICATION of how those truths should affect your thinking and living and believing
- REGULARLY fighting the sin of NOT renewing our thinking

DEFENSIVELY

- Guarding heart
- Shutting down and preaching against wrong thinking
- Killing sin
- Resistance and reception over time (Piper)

QUESTIONS

- What do I really want
- What do I really love