

Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV) 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, [which is] your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what [is] that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Chapters 12-16 in the book of Romans takes on a much more practical tone.

Paul is saying in the light of all that God has done and provided for us, how should we respond, what should be our response? The answer is quite easy to understand as well as practical, to apply.

In the Old Testament, the worshiper brought the sacrifice to God and placed it before Him. Paul takes this same language and says: “Present your bodies as a living sacrifice.” The New Testament worshiper doesn’t simply bring an animal, an offering, or a song. We bring ourselves which is what God has ultimately desired.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind!

Conformity often happens unconsciously. Mind Renewal begins with awareness, intentionality, and purpose.

- The **actual word for “world” is age.** There are two Greek words. World is cosmos, age is ion.
- Age is a time concept. We’re living in a certain age, a period of time. But Paul says don’t be conformed to this age/time period. Don’t live like the people in this time period live. Because Galatians 1:4 (NKJV) who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,
- Do not let this present evil age shape your thinking, renew your mind in the word of God and by the power of His Spirit. We’re not to live like people who belong in time. We belong to eternity.

The mind is the key to the Christian life. The gospel is a call for the unbeliever to repent of his sin and embrace Christ by faith.

- Our thinking must be changed (transformed) from old, ungodly ways of thinking into new, godly ways of thinking.
- *The only way to replace the error of the world’s way of thinking is to replace it with God’s truth, and the only infallible source of God’s truth is His revealed Word, the Bible.* Transformation through renewed minds comes as believers expose themselves to God’s Word and are willing to repent and be transformed!

When we say yes to God, when Jesus Christ becomes our Lord and Savior and we put our faith in Him, we are born again, our spirit is recreated.

2 Cor 5:17-calls us a new creation, 1Cor 2:16-we have the mind of Christ

God takes out our old spirit and He puts in a brand new one. This is what Jesus called in John 3:3 being “born again.” Or “born from above” we are a new creature; the old things are passed away.” You’re not the same person that you were before you were saved. *You used to be led by the desires of the flesh but now you are led by His spirit and our flesh doesn’t lead it follows, spirit, soul then flesh.*

The difference between your spirit and your soul is that your soul contains your mind, emotions, memory, personality.

God does not delete your soul, He wants to sanctify it! He instructs us to renew our soul, to change the way we think, to have our soul transformed by the Word of God, this is the renewing of our mind and how the mind of Christ becomes our own.

Transformation is an act of the will, we willingly put ourselves into the hands of our loving Father and He transforms us. It is a willing sacrifice and is an act of worship.

When you get born again, you feel like, “Man, I’m so forgiven.” You feel a weight has lifted off of you. But sometimes you go back to doing some of the same things you used to do and you wonder, “Did I really get born again?” Yes, your spirit got born again, but your soul has to go through a process of change through the washing that comes through the Word of God and the transforming power of His Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) For the word of God [is] living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

God is re-training how we think, see, feel, experience into His image. The salvation that Jesus has for you was meant to bring healing, deliverance and freedom.

A stronghold is a faulty thinking pattern based on lies and deception. Deception is one of the primary weapons of the devil, because it is the building blocks for a stronghold. What strongholds do is cause us to think in ways which block us from God's best. If strongholds are allowed to remain they are detrimental to the life Jesus has for us.

- The process of transforming a mind that has been deeply shaped by Satan’s influence and self-centered thinking requires significant transformation. *Part of this process involves identifying and destroying strongholds that have been established in the mind. if it is in opposition to what God has said in His word it must be dealt with.*

- **Some strongholds are dealt with through a decisive, once-and-for-all breakthrough.** *In other areas, healing and restoration may unfold over time as we continually bring our thoughts, beliefs, and patterns of thinking into alignment with the truth of God's Word and allowing the Holy Spirit to reshape the way we think.*
- When God does a work in us we hold our healing and deliverance by keeping in step with Holy Spirit and not re-opening the door to the temptations of the enemy.
- If sin remains in the believers life and all agreements with the enemy are not broken a stronghold remains and is a legal access point for the enemy.
- It is possible we have carried something for so long that it has become a major part of our identity and has become so familiar we can't even dream of what life would be like without it. Good news is, God is willing and able to set you free from that old lie if you are willing to repent and be transformed.

Enter into the word of God with a repentant and yielded heart

The old covenant/Old Testament, Hebrew understanding of repentance literally meant to turn back, to return. It was action related and was an outward expression.

- The new covenant/New Testament, Greek understanding has one definite meaning and that is to change one's mind.
- If you put both of these definitions together you get a full expression of what repentance is. However, We must emphasize the correct order. New covenant understanding must precedes the old covenant action. Your mind must be changed, born again and renewed into the very mind of Christ.
- When your mind, heart is changed your body will in turn follow.

We must turn away from the dead works of our sinful nature that are not based upon repentance and faith and do an about face towards God and His word!

Jesus invites us to take His yoke (Matthew 11:28) but we must allow Him to change our mind, that His way is superior and His yoke (ways, teachings) alone will release the grace needed to endure and be victorious. We need constant revelation of the Word so we know how to think differently.

- I. **Confession** — Naming the Sin and going to the root. The goal is to be fully exposed before Jesus and willing to repent in areas we fall short of His glory.

1 John 1:9 (NKJV) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- Agree with God about the sin acknowledging your lack and His perfect righteousness
- True repentance seeks to: Restore what was broken, Make amends when possible

Matthew 3:8 Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.” It becomes a lifestyle, not a one-time event.

I. Receiving Forgiveness

Repentance is incomplete without receiving grace. Judas felt remorse., Peter wept — but returned to Christ. True repentance ends not in despair, but in victory.

It is not just turning from sin —It is turning toward a Person. Repentance is a Lifelong Posture

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NKJV)³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

God ha given all of His children weapons with divine power to demolish strongholds. We use these spiritual weapon-to cast down Arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

- The battle is in the mind, our thought life Transformation comes as our minds are renewed God want to change the way we think, which is why the word of God is essential.
- We tear down the wall of human reasoning, the wisdom of man and we grab hold of the wisdom of God.
- **We tear down every high thing**, Paul possibly referencing the high places in the Old Testament. High places, were places of idolatry and compromise throughout the Old Testament often associated with the worship of false gods that God’s people were told to destroy. (Hezekiah and Josiah)
- In 1 and 2 Kings we see the recurring statement “but the high places were not removed” or “nevertheless the high places were not taken away”

Allowing the high places to exist caused continual problems for God’s chosen. High places begin to infiltrate your thinking and they are a fortress for the enemy to remain. High places are

entry points for strong holds and can become very familiar. What we allow to coexist in our lives that is not of God will influence us. Ask God to open your eyes to high places in you and around you and pursue His best. Compromise is the enemy. Perhaps it's not willingly choosing sin but letting something remain that should be cast down.

Think about the high places, incorrect ways of thinking that we have accepted within the church. Whenever we have to adjust the truth of God's word to line up with current cultural norms we have permitted a high place to remain in tact. We will only go as high as the high places we allow to remain in our lives.

Take every thought captive and make it submit to Jesus. Make no alliances, allow no compromise to the enemy. It is a lie to believe you can be a whole hearted lover of Jesus and let the high places remain.

Home group questions

1. Discuss what it looks like to offer your body as a living sacrifice. Share from personal revelation.
2. Discuss-**Conformity often happens unconsciously. Mind Renewal begins with awareness, intentionality, and purpose.**
3. How are you being intentional about renewing your mind on a regular basis? Are there any areas that you have to be extra sensitive so that you don't conform to culture etc?
4. How would you know if you had a stronghold? Who is keeping you accountable? Are you living repentant and broken before the Lord?