

# The Revelation Of Jesus Christ

## Preparing Your Heart and Thoughts for a Deeper Faith

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The way you think is very important to God. The way you think is very important to God, and to take things, but God's word is utmost serious, because by doing so, your minds are transformed, and by its results, your life is transformed. Now, God invites us to get to know him more and more and more. He invites us to know his character. He invites us to know his promises. He invites us to know his commands, his precepts, to understand his will and his purpose, and he wants to close that gap. The more and more we get to know him, and it is through the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is all important to the Christian, to have this ready mind, to be ready to listen, to pay attention to his word, to want to get to know the deeper things of God. This is our God. He invites us to a deeper experience with him through the Lord Jesus Christ. We should be compelled, then. We should be ready. We should be alert. What is it that you want me to do, Lord? What is it that you want me to know, Lord? And by doing so, what would you want me so that I can glorify your name and give you all the praise and the honor? This is our God that we have this relationship with him.

So, God does not want you to have low levels of hope. He does not want you to live with trivial thoughts or shallow experiences. Peter, inspired by the Spirit of God, wants us to experience higher levels of hope, live with more seriousness and greater joy, and experience again the deep things of God. So, with that, would you please open your Bible and turn with me to verse 13 of First Peter, verse 13 in First Peter, continuing with my series in First Peter. So, if you will follow along with me as I read verse 13: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

I want to take the phrase "gird up the loins of your mind." This is a picture in the eastern culture where men would wear robes, and by not allowing hindrances as a person swiftly is walking about, by the way, not flat terrain, mostly in mountains and deserts where the pavement was not smooth at all, and so from hindering this being, you know, quick to fall or trip, and to walk with strenuous activity without missing a beat, you would, the man would gird up his loins, gird up his loins, literally put on a belt, wrap the long flowing robe so everything is tight, everything is gear-ready, as it were, to do whatever task that person would be embarking on, so it would not interfere in the person's movement. Another way, expression that we put it, is rolling up your sleeves to be ready, right? For what? For action. For action. This is what Paul is wanting us to understand by this phrase, gird up your minds, gird up the loins of your minds.

So, by doing so, it's by gather, it's to gather yourselves together and tighten up the disciplines of your mind. And what are those disciplines? Well, it's the word of God. So, this verse in 13, where he starts off with "wherefore," it's basically saying everything that I have so spoken of, beginning with verse one all the way to verse 12, discipline your mind with these truths. Be ready to act upon it, because they're not just truths for the mind in and of itself. They are to produce action. And so, this verse is to produce action in what you believe to the word of God.

So, in contrast, during this time, the religious activity was so bad that people went into thinking, not thinking, actually not wanting to think, not think, wanting to think, because things were just so bad, things were just falling apart, right? Has that happened to you in the glimpse of your flesh, where when everything's falling apart, I don't want to think about it? Well, that was on repeat during this time Peter writes. And so, he's saying, don't do that. No, no, no, I want you to gird up your mind. I want you to think about these things while you're experiencing hardship, and to do that, you have to think about these words that I'm writing to you, because when you do so, God does amazing things in your life. God responds to how you think about his word.

There are so many verses I can reference to: Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:17, Ephesians 4:23 talks about renewing your mind. And what is renewing your mind? It's changing your thoughts to God's thoughts. It's changing your beliefs to his beliefs. It's changing the attitude of your attitude and aligning it to his perspective, God's perspective. That is the focus of growth in your life. There will be no other opportunity for growth unless it starts with the way you think about his word. It all starts with that.

So, gird up the loins, by the way, it's illustrated in Exodus, as you recall, during the Passover, on the night of the Passover, people had to eat their Passover meal with their loins girded. That's found in Exodus 12:11. Why? Because they didn't have time to prepare their meal. They had to be on the march. God said, "Get your food, let's go." Perhaps that is what Peter is thinking about with us as believers in the New Testament. We are called to leave the world and to travel towards our inheritance, which is incorruptible, amen, undefiled, full of glory.

So, in the light of this wonderful message that has come to them and now comes to us, we experience it through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. His people, our people, us here, are tightened up by the discipline of our minds, our wills fixed by allowing the Spirit of God and to yield to him. By doing that, we fix on his goal and what lies ahead for us in the future. So, as a result, we get to receive the full benefits of God's gracious and undeserved favor, Ephesians 2:7. We get to experience the riches of his grace, the riches of his grace, which are to be brought to us by who? Jesus Christ, who is going to be manifested in his second coming, in his second coming. That is the revelation of Jesus Christ. I'm, we're going to get there, but it's our preparation for his second coming.

So, let me go a little bit more into why it's so important to discipline our mind, and why it's important to Peter to put this down here. You see, the sphere of the Christian's life, it's all about obedience. We become a child of God, and therefore, we can be obedient

to God's word. That's one of the greatest assurances that your life has been regenerated, you have experienced a new birth, because you're now able to obey his words, and it's not you, it's the Spirit of God working in you to do his good pleasure. Isn't that what we want to do as children of our biological parents? We want to please our father, don't we? It's the same idea when it comes to God. He wants us to please him, and he wants us to pay attention to some things about him, namely his character, namely the habits of God, and the relationships he has with his people.

Relationships is so important. It can never be something that we just dismiss, because God wants to deepen the relationship that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, we have to experience what's our culture, not the sense of the outside culture, but your heart's culture, your mind's culture. What is going on in your mind? What's going on in your heart? This is all important to God, and how you think and how you behave. So, the development of one's mind is very important. That's what discipline is, isn't it? Matthew 5:13 says this, "Ye are the salt of the earth." Philippians 2:15-16 says, "Among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." So, truth is all important, and then how we live our lives on this earth is all important. You see that?

So, Peter has in mind not only the obedience of disciplining our minds, but the security that lies in it, because if we slip in our minds, and we just don't think about things, what ends up happening? Sin just takes over by default. It just takes over your life. And he wants us to remember or remind us that it starts with the mind. You have to cultivate your mind. You have to think about the words, you have to think about what I'm talking about, because that's how you're going to be secure in him. See, when you start slipping in your security, it's because you're not securing yourself in his word. You're not renewing your mind in his word. And so, this is all important. This is what I mean by this culture in your mind and your heart. You have control over that. God has given you the ability to control your mind, and it's by controlling your mind through his word.

So, be diligent, attentive upon the spiritual things. That's how you guard yourself, because God will work in you and then out of you. He wants you to cultivate the inward work more important, because God takes care of the circumstances, the external. That's the reality that God wants us to know, because a safety is in the Lord, amen. Safety is in the Lord. Evil can be assaulting at you day and night, but what you have is safety in the Lord, in your mind, in your heart. See, the devil cannot work and try to take out the things of God's word, but what he can do is make you sleepy. He can make you not think about his word. The word's there, it's implanted in your heart. The Holy Spirit has sealed the word of God, but the assaults of the evil one is to make you not think about it, not think about what God is cultivating in your life through his word.

So, staying engaged, staying interested, wanting, knowing, wanting to know the deeper things of God, despite of whatever is happening around you, don't focus on the outward, don't focus on the outward, because discipline doesn't work on the outside, it works on the inside. And so, as a Christian, losing the pleasures of the world is part of the involvement. One of the greatest things that can affect a Christian's life is being swallowed up in the shallow things of life, which is the pleasures of this world. Pleasures

is not deep. It's good when it comes to the things of the glory of God, nature, and all those things, but I'm talking about the culture of the world, and just allowing the culture of the world to enter your mind without really thinking about it, not really processing what is going into your mind. So, remember, discipline is all important to a godly man and a godly woman, according to God.

So, self-discipline, another word that you can think about, is bracing yourself. Luke 12:35 puts it like this. The Lord Jesus told his disciples, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning." Burning, the figure is a familiar one, and it has association with the idea of Elijah. Elijah was said to have girded up his loins when he ran before the chariot of Ahab from Carmel to Jezreel. That's in First Kings 18:46. The idea is, you're bracing yourself, and getting yourself ready to go on a response, a response from the external. Another way of putting it is in Job 38. The Lord required Job to gird up his loins like a man to listen to his exalted response. So, the idea is, okay, this internal cultivation, and then bracing yourself for what's coming externally.

So, in modern athletics, one way is, before you exert yourself bodily, is to deal with the difficulties and think about what the difficulties you're going to face, right? What lies before you? So, you put everything together. You visualize the lay of the land, and you put everything together. Okay, I got to deal with this difficulty, with that difficulty, with this difficulty, that difficulty, and then you enable yourself to present yourself strong against your rivals in a run. And then you endure to involve any serious strain that you have in this run, because you're going to be dealing with things that are going to challenge you at a physical level, right? Mentally, all these things. God wants you to prepare for those things.

So, how does he do that? Psalm 57 says this, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed on you." Psalm 17:3 says, "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress." So, one way to do it, okay, is your mind, but then bracing yourself in your heart for the physical challenges, the mental challenges, the emotional challenges. Another way of putting it is a soldier in an enemy's country, where there's a dangerous expedition ahead, and day and night, what do they do? They're geared up, they're armed. Why? Because in the night, that's when, typically, the attacks happen more intensely. And so, get ready besides your other brothers in arms, and you spring for action.

And so, this is the resolve and the purpose that God wants for your heart, is that you're not relaxed when it comes to the things of God. You never read the word of God with a relaxed mind and heart. The idea is that you're ready to hear, you're ready to pay attention, you're quick to hear, right? That's the idea, and also slow to speak. Let the word of God penetrate deeply before you share your concerns with the Lord. We need more of that, and that takes the heart to not just rush and rush and rush, but allow the word of God to penetrate deeply to where you're at, where you're calm, right? When children, when they're not behaving, they don't listen, right? That's a picture of sinners. How many times do we disobey our Father, and we don't actually listen to him, because we're so wrapped up in our emotions? So, God says, "Fix your heart on me, fix your

heart on me, because you're going to be challenged. You're going to be challenged with all types of temptations."

Now, I want us to change up the word gird, and now introduce you to what happens if you ungird your minds, what if you ungird your thoughts? How does that happen? How does that work out in your life? Well, I mentioned it briefly, but I'm bringing it up again. It's seeking pleasure for the end goal. That's your end goal, it's just pleasure. And we know that that's not how we're supposed to live, but how many times has our flesh gave into pleasure? It still does. We still have this sinful body. And so, those thoughts, if we just, if we don't let those thoughts be on check, we just allow pleasure to take its course. And how much, how much of that has happened in our culture today, where people are just scrolling on their phones, watching endless amount of Netflix? The world has set it up for us, and we, we must protect our minds. But no, no, no, I'm going to limit what I allow in my mind, because if you don't, we can go on with so much pleasure today. That's the society we live in today.

So, we have to, with our mind, don't allow us to be loosed, free to just accept everything the world has to offer in its pleasure. Recreation is important, absolutely. I'm not negating that at all. God doesn't say that you don't, you shouldn't enjoy in his pleasure. But I'm talking about limiting to the world's pleasures, and the way that the culture is fed through all sorts of entertainment. We need to constantly watch that. What about aimless and thoughtless reading? Again, I was talking about earlier, about in First Peter, people are just so hurt that they just didn't, they had no aim anymore, just had thoughtless ramblings in their minds when it comes to reading things. That's another danger. That's another danger that we need to realize that we're susceptible to.

What about bad associations? I'm not talking about inviting the lost to church, or inviting the lost to welcome them into their home. I'm talking about bad association where, like in Psalm 1, where it says, you are now agreeing with them. You're just, you're listening to them, you're walking with them, and then it says, you sit with them. You see, if you just allow your mind to just go on, that can happen very quickly. So, thinking about our associations, thinking about our associations. Another one, very primary one, is neglecting the word of God, and neglecting secret times of prayer. That can easily loosen up your thoughts, because, as it says, idleness, right? Idleness leads to all sorts of sin. So, the word of God is all important. Prayer is all important to the Christian.

What about carelessness of attendance on services? Oh, it's just another service, it's just another service. No. God works in mysterious ways. I can recall many times when my flesh said, I don't want to go to another service. That's when God spoke to me. And that happened over and over again, where I was like, okay, that thought is gone. That's what needs to be cultivated, and not allowing those kind of thoughts to enter in. And, of course, lastly, reading, consuming all the time, secular news. What I mean by secular is just nothing spiritual, nothing spiritual, just everything in the world consuming you. We have to watch for those things.

Now, so, I talked about some of those things that can cultivate loose thoughts. What about more on girding yourself, preparing yourself for the challenges of life, the

difficulties of life that enter in, starting with your thoughts? One thing is to see highly and value highly the things of God. When it comes to God, there's no question, it must be valued highly, and you must be determined to see his purposes in all of the challenges that you're facing. You don't let any challenge go where, oh, I'm just going to dismiss this. No, when every challenge comes to you, or a trial, you think about it. Why is this happening? There must be a reason, because there is a reason. God is allowing this to happen. I must know, I must know. So, then you make quick decisions. As soon as you have those thoughts, be quick to have right thinking about what he's doing in your life, and then look at his word. Be quick to look at his word when you're facing challenges and difficulties, because he's given you a love for his word, amen. He's given you a new desire, where you can think about his thoughts, and you can understand it by his Spirit.

And so, we must always be quick to go to his word, and to depend upon his Spirit to understand his will and his purpose, because the deepest relationship that you can have with his word is having a passion for his word. God can see our hearts. He knows if we're truly passionate about the things of God, and to be determined to know the Lord Jesus Christ more deeply through his word. And when you do that, challenges and trials diminish, and you begin to see something that's happening inwardly, where there's a growth process, and your growth triumphs over your challenges. What happens in the inverse? If the challenges feel too much, that you can't do it, there's something wrong with your relationship with the Lord, because when your relationship with the Lord is good and strong, no amount of challenges, trials, will be too difficult. It will always be underneath the arms of the Lord, the safety in him.

Let's go into the next phrase now, be sober. Be sober. This word suggests an idea of lacking nothing, that you are complete. You don't need anything from the outside. You have everything you need here before you in his word. So, you can just go right to him. You can understand him. You have everything that's complete here. And so, you go in, your eyes fixed on the go, to understand his word more, to set your hope and your desires more on the things of God than on the things of this world, because, as it says in 2 Corinthians 4:18, the temporal things are temporal. The temporal things are worldly, it's temporal. But the far more abundant things are seen in the eternal.

So, another way of putting it is, nothing in this world is more important than the things of eternal things. Nothing. Nothing is more important. And so, go in with that sobriety, that soberness. Be sober into the things of eternal things. Don't be swallowed up by the things of this world. Continue with being sober in all things when it comes to God, because one of the weaknesses in our lives is the excess of anything, is the excess of everything. Have you heard this word, rebound? It means to not fully process previous actions. You see, God wants us to understand our actions, and how it plays out in our lives, because it's the danger of not learning from our previous actions. It tends to repeat itself, right? It tends to repeat itself. And so, he's saying, be sober. That's how you stop things from falling apart in your life. This loss, the loss of self-control, is what is weak in our flesh, but again, the Spirit of God gives us self-control, amen. He's the one that gives us self-control. He helps us to not be in excess things of this world. He is the

one that allows us to be sober, to be vigilant, and it's an essential character of a godly man and a godly woman.

So, he calls us to be sober. This is how we triumph, and this is how we can carry our lives through, where the things of this life no longer rule us, but the things of God does. Think about, I'm going to end here. I've only been able to touch on two phrases. 1 John 2:16 says this, a couple of things to note. Lust of the flesh are those physical desires in excess. That's what that is, excess of sinful desires that leads to impurity. The lust of the eyes is material possessions, leading to covetousness and greed, which is what? In excess. What about the pride of life? It's arrogance to the max, when it's left to itself. And what is it, ultimately, is look at who I am, and never mention God. And he says here, it is not of the Father, but is of the world.

So, how important it is to not neglect the development of your mind, and the cultivation of your heart, to stay fixed on the Lord. God has given you these abilities. Keep on, keep on, be determined, value him at his word, and God would do amazing things in your life, where this internal work becomes an outward form into your life, where now you are being greater witness to the Lord Jesus Christ, to where people are attracted to Christ, where they start mentioning about Christ. Isn't that what you want in your life? With your kids, if you have kids, with your spouse, if you have a spouse, if you have your family members who are lost, who are your co-workers, they start seeing more and more of Christ in you. This is how it's done. Peter shows us how to go about doing this.

And if you're not a believer, all of this, you cannot experience, because it starts, first and foremost, with knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as your savior, from your sins, protecting you from the wrath of God, being alienated from him, to having a right relationship with him, by trusting him, the Lord Jesus Christ, the finished work on the cross. It starts with finished. It doesn't start with, I got to do this, I got to do that. No, no, it's finished. Just yield, yield to what I have done, and watch what God does in your life. That's what I'm praying for. That's what we long for in this church.

Let us pray. Father, thank you so much for tonight. God, I didn't have time to even go to the text. God, you want, it's on my heart, Father, that I want my brothers and sisters to cultivate more of the love of you through your word, to drink deeply from your word, to experience greater hope, greater relationship, a deeper love, and to be greater witnesses for Christ. Father, I pray that this will continue to happen in this church, God, where there just, there would be excitement about sharing the word of God with each other, and then sharing it with those that are lost. And God, I cannot stop without praying for the lost in our church. God, they need to know thy son, Jesus Christ, because that is what real reality is. They won't understand, Father, the reality of life without first knowing thy son, Jesus Christ, because he is the creator of this world. He is the one that made all things for his purposes. And, Father, I pray that if they have not known thy son Jesus up to this moment, that you would convince them that the only way to the truth is through thy son, Jesus Christ, who is the truth, who is the life, and the way. Father, draw them to yourself through him. We'll thank you, and we'll praise you, give you all the glory, in Jesus' name, amen.

