

January 15th, 2023

Replacement Principle

- Do you know what “*Stockholm Syndrome*” is?
- **Colossians 2:8 (CSB)** – *Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elemental forces of the world, and not based on Christ.*
- **2 Timothy 2:25-26 (CSB)**
- The renewing of the mind has been described in the New Testament for over 2,000 years, yet modern Neuroscience has discovered suddenly that “*Neuroplasticity exists even into old age.*”

Neuroplasticity: Psychology Today

- Historically, scientists believed that the brain stopped growing after childhood. But current research shows that the brain is able to continue growing and changing throughout the lifespan, refining its architecture, or shifting functions to different regions of the brain. The importance of neuroplasticity can't be overstated: *It means that it is possible to change dysfunctional patterns of thinking and behaving and to develop new mindsets, new memories, new skills, and new abilities.*
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/neuroplasticity>

Replacing Mental Ruts with Trenches of Truth

Our Scripture Study today is from Acts 9:1-21

As followers of Jesus, we should strive to replace flawed and marred thoughts with God's truth because of these two arguments from Scripture:

It is a battlefield of ideas:

Argument #1 - Because our enemy's lies pervade our culture seeking to capture us and thwart God's perfect plan for who He created you to be.

- **Ephesians 6:12 (CSB)** – *For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.*
- **2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (CSB)** – *We demolish arguments and every high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to obey Christ.*

Argument #2 - As a follower of Jesus, you have the promise of being a new creation. Many of the thoughts that you inherited from your past do not lead you to live out your true identity in Christ.

- **2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:9-10 (CSB)**

Paul was originally an enemy of Jesus. Here is a process that he must have learned as Paul himself was becoming a disciple of Jesus and living out his new and restored life.

- **Ephesians 4:20-24 (CSB)**

Next Steps:

1. Simple, but not easy, steps.
2. It takes practice, but the results make it more natural.
3. It requires individual effort, and the support of other followers of Jesus, to succeed.
4. **1 Timothy 4:7-10 (CSB)**

Small Group Discussion:

Scriptures to consider:

- **Colossians 3:9-10; Romans 8:5-6; Titus 2:11-12.**

Last week we talked about how easy it is to get stuck in flawed thinking. To stop the lies and replace them with truth, we need to look to God's word.

1. In assessing if our thoughts are true or not, have you been surprised by anything you discovered in your thought life?
2. How do you know if something is true? How do you filter false information?
3. Read **Psalms 119:1-16**. How does hiding God's word in your heart help strengthen your ability to resist flawed or incorrect thinking?
4. What truth from God's word would you like to preach to yourself more?
5. Truth and grace go hand in hand. Read **John 1:14-18**. Where does grace and truth come from?
6. Is it easier for you to receive grace or extend grace? Or neither? Why do you think this is true of you?
7. Do you believe there are limits to God's grace? If so, where does He draw the line?
8. How does your confidence in God's grace change how you think about yourself?

Homework

- Read **Philippians 3**.