**Renewing the Christian Mind – Part 4**

***REPLACE***

***Focusing Our Attention on the Spirit of Our Minds***

**Romans 12**

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1. **Introduction (Romans 12:2)**
   1. **This morning I want to complete our study on RENEWING our minds**
   2. **It is the key to a sane, stable, restful, transformed Christian life**
2. **So Far, We Have Learned…**
   1. **Your Mind is Amazing**
   2. **Your Mind is MORE than grey MUSH**
   3. **You are living how your mind thinks**
   4. **Your Mind is Probably NOT in Good Shape**
      1. Weird, angry thinking
      2. Battling with constant discouragement and depression
      3. Unable to really sleep or rest
      4. Constant waves of sad memories
      5. Cold towards people in general – never really getting close anymore
      6. Hey! If you don’t like what goes on inside your head, then this message is for YOU!
   5. **You are either being Conformed or Transformed on the inside**
      1. Conformed means, Shaped by outside pressure:  
         Experiences, Loneliness, Troubles, temptations
      2. So, God calls for ALL Christians (young and old) to be constantly TRANSFORMED
      3. Transformed is being shaped by a pressure that God puts IN the believer
   6. **Renewing the Mind is Key to Changing for the Better – being Transformed!**
      1. Transformed – metamorphosis
         1. Changed like an ugly caterpillar into a butterfly
         2. Dramatic change – not just growth. A caterpillar can grow, and still be a caterpillar
         3. Going from STRESSED to REST
         4. Transformation is NOT a once off event like salvation is
            1. Salvation is God forgiving you once and for all – in an instant
            2. Transformation is God changing you to be like His Son – sometimes a lifetime
            3. Philp 1:6
         5. But it can be SPED-UP by the renewing of our mind!
      2. Renewing Your Mind:
         1. EX: You renew your car every time you fill it up at the Petrol station - Otherwise it is useless. You renew your strength every time you rest and eat a healthy meal. You renew your phone when you plug it in and let it recharge. You renew your mind in the same way
         2. It means **Repairing** what is broken in your mind
            1. All the hurts and abuses
            2. All the fears
            3. All can be repaired and rebuilt at least in your mind
         3. It means **Restoring** your mind to how it was when it was made new at salvation!
3. **The Preliminaries**
   1. **Make Sure You Have a New Mind to Work With**
      1. Truth is: You need a whole new mind put in you. In the empty part of every human being that Paul calls, “*the spirit of your mind*” (Eph 4:22,23)
      2. It only happens when you are born of the Spirit of God! When God puts a new mind in your SPIRIT (Rom 8:6-10)
      3. If you DON’T have a new mind, a right mind, you can get it TODAY! Just believe the Gospel!
   2. **Focus on Renewing your Mind, not on Changing your Life**
      1. Problems with your mouth can’t actually be fixed with duct-tape!
      2. Problems with your eyes can’t actually be fixed with a blindfold!
      3. Problem with worry can’t actually be fixed with loads of money!
      4. It all starts in changing how you think!
      5. You see… Change comes easy when our way of thinking has changed
   3. **Put Most of your Efforts into Working on the SPIRIT of your Mind – *be renewed in the spirit of your mind* (Eph 4:22,23)**
      1. Not your ability to think great thoughts, and understand great mysteries, and work through massive problems…
         1. It is GREAT to eat well, and get enough sleep so your physical mind can think clearly – junk food is making EVERYONE thin skinned and agitated and shallow in their thinking across the board!
         2. It is very important to have supporting friends, and a family atmosphere
         3. But it is MOST important to have the spiritual dimension of your mind strongest
      2. So:
         1. Become **slow to speak** – THINK a lot before you say a word “*Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath*” (James 1:19)
         2. Take Second Place - Humble yourself. God gives great GRACE to those who take second place!
         3. Desperately want a new mind, like the man in Mark 5! Until you are desperate, you won’t take it even if it was handed to you on a silver platter
   4. **Four Steps to renewing, regenerating, restoring, and recovering your mind…**
      1. READING
      2. RELEASING
      3. REPLACING
      4. Taking RESPONSIBILITY
4. **SO FAR – How to Renew Your Mind**
   1. **Step 1: READ Loads of the Bible (Joshua 1:8)** 
      1. That means read THIS Book – the Book you hold in your hand!
      2. To get the mind of Christ into YOUR mind starts with READING that Book!
      3. So, Saturate your thinking, your understanding, your conclusions with the word of God (Joshua 1:8)
         1. That’s how great leaders are made! Like Moses, and Joshua, and Paul
         2. And THAT’S how great peace is found (Psalm 119:165) “*Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them*.”
      4. Letting it FASHION your mind
      5. ARMING yourselves with the very same mind that Christ had (1Peter 4:1,2)
      6. As you read and read and read, AND believe this Bible, you will get a renewed mind – that’s how it works on you – there is no other way!
   2. **Step 2: RELEASE**
      1. After saturating your mind with the mind of God contained in that Book, there are going to be a lot of things you are going to have to just **let go of** for your mind to actually begin to heal!
         1. And it may be the hardest thing you have ever done
         2. But once done, the bonds of all our hurts and offenses will be broken, and the chains in your mind WILL fall away! Guaranteed!
         3. I have found that MOST mental and emotional bondage that Christians are in, is related to the amount of sins that we allow to build up in our minds and hearts, and the amount of forgiveness that we withhold others!
         4. You will have to… RELEASE Everything You Struggle With, and Start Over by faith
         5. You cannot just keep ADDING “stuff” into your head and expect it all to just “get along” – like putting more and more CATS into a locked room!!!
         6. **You will have to… RELEASE Every Offense You Struggle With, so that you can then Start Over with people, all the time!**
      2. **By FORGIVING**
         1. Like some very hurt people have done
            1. Joseph did - forgave his evil, uncaring brothers
            2. Jesus did - forgave ALL those who had just beat Him and whipped Him, and nailed Him to the cross and left Him there to die!
            3. Stephen did - (Acts 7:59) forgave those who were stoning him!
            4. All of these were intensely hurt and offended and abused, and great injustices were done against them! And yet they forgave without hesitation! Even though their enemies first asking to be forgiven!
         2. I showed you EIGHT Truths About Forgiveness from Matthew 18:21-35
            1. It is IMPOSSIBLE to Forgive like we should (Mt 18:21-22) 490 time a person!
            2. It is Mandatory of a Christian to Forgive – commanded (Mt 18:21-22), NOT SUGGESTED like a counsellor might say to you
            3. Forgiveness is a Gift that Costs the Forgiver, but NOT the offender (Mt 18:23-27)
            4. It Must be Total, or it is NOT Forgiveness (Mt 18:27; Ps 103:3,11,12; 85:2)
            5. It ALWAYS Changes the Forgiver, but Only Sometimes the Forgiven
            6. It Frees the Forgiver AND Offender (Mt 18:27) AND THAT IS WHAT YOU NEED

This is healing!

There is a power given TO THE FORGIVER that is greater than being the judge (Psalm 130:4; Pr 19:11)

Only when you have forgiven the person who has hurt you are you able to be in their presence and not fear them – not be in bondage to them

If your memory is ONLY sharp about the evils of your life and you have no memories of the goodnesses of God, then you are WAY out of balance, and clogged up, and you need to start forgiving every time you remember a hurt or a grief or a pain!

* + - * 1. It Will Usually be Totally Abused and Underappreciated (Mt 18:28-30)
        2. Unforgiving-ness is a WICKED SIN (Mt 18:31-35) to get out of your heart!

The Christian who cannot forgive, is claiming a power greater than God, who cannot withhold forgiveness! There is NO ONE alive that God has not already personally paid all the sins of!

The person who won’t forgive will be tormented more than the person who hurt them… while the person who hurt them will usually live quite free! Mt 18:34,35

Beware! Unforgiveness is a deadly sin that must be overcome! Mat 18:35 “*If ye from your hearts forgive not EVERY one his brother their trespasses*”

You cannot just be the recipient of forgiveness and not extend it – that will destroy you! (Mt 18:32-35)

* + 1. **By FORBEARING Justice! (Eph 4:2; 6:9; Col 3:13)**
       1. Whoever hurt you, did wrong.
       2. To forbear means to hold off getting even – they WILL be judged – just not by YOU!
       3. God forbears/puts up with US - is longsuffering towards us (Rom 2:4; 3:25)!
       4. If He has been slow to act against YOU, then, YOU must become SLOW to act against those who have hurt you as well! VERY SLOW (James 1:9)!
    2. **And By Allowing Yourself to Finally FORGET some things**
       1. Holding onto every memory of every hurt, and every reason why someone cannot be trusted, and every reason why someone ought to be punished, will kill the spirit of your mind! It will burn you out; twist your thinking; drain your spirit and your joy
       2. You were not made to carry all those memories and hurts (1Peter 5:7)
       3. So, Forget some things quite on purpose (Philp 3:12-14)
          1. ALL your past failures
          2. And ALL the Hurts – how? By forgiving them all!
          3. All the Disasters that seemed to ruin your life – trusting that GOD was actually in control and making everything work together for good – like Joseph
          4. All the Failed parenting, relationships, marriages, decisions and debts!
  1. **Final Two Points**
     1. **REPLACE**
     2. **And Take RESPONSIBILITY**

**We will take a good look at REPLACING some things today, and finish with Taking Responsibility next week.**

1. **Main Message -   
   REPLACE all the Rubbish that used to fill your head, with Better Things! (Heb 10:9)**
   1. **You don’t believe it is possible!**
      1. Renewing your mind is like renewing an old house
         1. Take out all the rubbish, broken things
         2. Fix up the walls, the roof, the windows
         3. Paint everything beautiful
         4. And then **fill it** with everything that will make it a HOME where people WANT to be
         5. Replace all the rubbish that USED to be in those walls with better things now!
      2. According to Hebrews 10:9, the Lord Jesus did NOT keep the Old Testament law and add Salvation to it – He actually TOOK IT AWAY, nailing it to the cross, and replaced God’s Law with Himself! Wow!
      3. So, there are Three things for you and I to do:
         1. Identify the Rubbish that is IN there – in your mind, in your memories, in your past…
         2. Tear Down the Strongholds – no matter how big
         3. Replace them with “Better Things” (Heb 12:24)
   2. **#1 IDENTIFY** the ‘Rubbish’ in your mind
      1. Can’t throw out everything
         1. Not everything in your head is wrong
         2. Not everything in your past was wrong, or disastrous
         3. And not everything going around and around in your head and heart are wrong!
         4. Don’t just start trashing everyone and everything as wrong – that will only make things worse
      2. There are some things that happened to you that were good, and right and of God – that should not be trashed
         1. Like the times you were corrected and chastened by your parents
         2. Like the times you were grounded from bad friends
         3. Like the times you were bored
         4. Like all the years you have waited on God
         5. THOSE things are not necessarily bad at all!
      3. There are some good thoughts that roll around in you
         1. Like your love for God
         2. Like your concern about your soul
         3. Like your desire to be at church and be more like Jesus
         4. Like your love for your family, and desire to be a better Daddy or Mom
      4. What qualifies as Rubbish?
         1. Things that are / were SELF focused – all about YOU!
         2. Things that are dead
         3. Things that are holding you back from being an all out Christian
         4. Could be: Sports, Career, even FAMILY!
         5. But especially ANYTHING that the Lord God calls an abomination
            1. Like lustful thinking
            2. Like PRIDE (Prov 6:16,17)
            3. Like lying (Prov 6:17)
            4. Like ABORTION - Hands that shed innocent blood (Prov 6:17)
            5. Complaining about everyone and everything (Prov 6:19)
            6. Toying with demonic powers and games (i.e., sorcery, palm reading, horoscopes)
            7. Wearing clothes of the opposite sex (Dt. 22:5)
            8. Like homosexual attraction (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Dt. 23:18)
            9. Breaking promises (Ezek. 18:6-13)
            10. Especially any idol – anything more important than GOD in your life (1Pet 4:3)
   3. **#2 TEAR DOWN** the Strongholds
      1. They will not move easily!
         1. It’s easy to throw something out that is not anchored down and that you are not attached to
         2. But, MOST things in your heart and mind/thinking, have been there for much of your life
         3. That’s what a stronghold is – something in your way of thinking, a way you constantly FEEL, that just won’t change
         4. It is very powerful, and very unmoving
         5. And worst of all – it has an iron-fisted hold on you!
      2. But they CAN be torn down (2Cor 10:4,5; Mark 13:1,2)
         1. 2Co 10:4,5  “*(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*.”
         2. Even when thy look so permanent!   
            Mark 13:1,2 “*And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down*.”
      3. You are in a WAR!
         1. Maybe you have been in church for a while, singing hymns, paying attention to God's word from the pastor…
         2. And yet, in your mind, a movie of sinful thoughts begins to play. “Where did this come from?” you wonder. Or maybe you face this battle as you try to go to sleep at night.
         3. When you try to focus your mind on God's truth, and the evil movie continues to play in your mind, THAT is when you need to go into BATTLE.
         4. God offers a strategy we can use for these kinds of battles in the mind. (2 Cor 10:5)
            1. God tells us to have the determination of a battle-seasoned soldier fighting his enemy
            2. These evil thoughts are not conquered by ignoring them, any more than a soldier wins by ignoring his enemy. The soldier faces his enemy, and fights him and he is defeated!
            3. Satan is our enemy, committed to destroying us.
         5. We must face evil thoughts and sinful thoughts until we have beaten them.
         6. And the only way to do that is to use the God-given strategies of a soldier in a war!
      4. To cast down, tear down means:
         1. To oust, supplant, displace, knock down, break down, defeat, take back control
         2. To STOP dwelling on the enemy’s victories and powers over you
         3. The opposite is: To hold onto, to keep, to leave alone, to remain in bondage to something
         4. Examples
            1. Jesus cast down Satan many times (Luke 10:17,18; John 12:31; Rev 12:9,10)
            2. Jacob dethroned his older brother, Esau (Gen 37:26)
            3. The Roman General Titus made sure every stone of the Temple was cast down
      5. When we were teenagers, our generation DUPED into exchanging…
         1. Our purity, our VIRGINITY, our innocence for what we THOUGHT was only fun – and we ended up with failed relationships, mental illnesses like no one wants to admit, STD’s, broken homes, suicides rates off the charts
            1. There are almost no virgins left by the time people get married!
            2. Traded their most prize possession for some cheap nights
         2. People were duped into thinking smoking was COOL
            1. Traded their health and strong, pink lungs
            2. For some coolness that now almost EVERYBODY wishes they hadn’t started
         3. Duped into thinking rebellion was right – because their parents were stupid, or the Garda are oppressive, and the teachers are harsh, etc!
         4. Into thinking Catholic priests could forgive sins – so no one had to get right with God anymore, just with their church!
         5. That darkness was exciting
         6. That anger and hatred was powerful
         7. That children need to be SOCIALIZED and not really educated anymore!
         8. That children need iPads and Tablets instead of BOOKS!
         9. That God was dead
      6. Well, it is time we switched things BACK!
      7. Nailing every thing in your past that hurt you, that broke you, that beat you, that defeated you, that tricked you, that dominated you… to the cross! Col 2:14 “*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it [ALL] out of the way, nailing it to his cross*”
   4. **#3 REPLACE** EVERYTHING (Heb 10:9; 7:18,19)
      1. Heb 10:9 “*Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second*.”
      2. Heb 7:18,19 “*For there is verily a* ***disannulling*** *of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God*.”
      3. Do you even Remember the way your life was at the time of you salvation (2Cor 5:17)?
         1. It was new – BRAND NEW!
         2. It was unbeatable – you were ready to take on HELL with a water pistol!
         3. It was exciting – everything you did was cool!
         4. It was fresh
         5. It was clean
      4. Well… Keep your mind that way!
         1. That’s why we get together as a church! So I can remind you just how good God is, and how soon Jesus is coming back, and how worthwhile a life lived for Christ will be!
         2. My biggest task is to get every one of you to **passionately walk with God** and **keep your way of thinking sweet, and soft, and gentle**, and like Christ (Philp 2:14,15)!
      5. By this time, You should have taken away/cast out the RUBBISH… so, now establish something better!
         1. Replace all the sinful habits, and thoughts that you DUMPED under Christ’s blood, with the presence of the HOLY Spirit – like getting married to a real, godly woman – who seeks to fill your life! **Let her fill it! (Eph 5:18)**
         2. **Replace** all the worry and anxiousness…  
            with Worship (Mark 5,6) - with the trust in God’s care and abilities (Isa 26:3)
         3. Replace all the bad memories, ALL of the hurt in them…  
            with some Good memories ON PURPOSE
            1. Replace Old, Painful Memories, with NEW, Precious Memories
            2. Make some good memories, as you serve the Lord and others! **Pay attention!**
            3. Focus your efforts and attention on what is true and good and right (Philp 4:8) – notice how the media and our culture throws everything at us to overwhelm us so we don’t know what to think! It makes GRUMPS out of all of us!
         4. Replace FEARS… with a FAITH in a great God who will NOT let you down
         5. Replace LONELINESS… with WORSHIP
         6. Replace SINGLENESS… with MARRIAGE (Pr 18:22)
         7. Replace all the focus on SELF… with CHILDREN (Ps 127)
         8. Replace your Selfish Wills and WANTS… with the perfect Will of God
         9. Replace your old friends… with GODLY friends, WISE friends
         10. Replace boredom… with a HOBBY and with a JOB
         11. Replace Hurts… with Forgiveness
         12. Replace Demonic Music… with Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs (Col 3:16)
         13. Replace LAZY Sundays… with CHURCH (Acts 2:47)
         14. Replace HATRED towards someone… with GRACE towards them
         15. Replace Voices in your head… with the very words of Christ (Col 3:16)
      6. God has something BETTER than what you are putting up with right now
         1. EX: One day my Dad asked me what was in my pockets. I pulled out some rocks, and a worm, and an old key – he told me if I took all that out to the bin, he would give me a whole Dollar coin! I believe I still have that coin! It is worth a lot now!
         2. I know any and ALL of that will be super difficult, and you have probably tried so many times before, and FAILED
         3. But this time, you now know that you have to be doing somethings BEFORE you try and replace the rubbish
            1. You HAVE to READ and Read and Read this Book! Saturate yourself in it
            2. You HAVE to RELEASE all the people and situations that have hurt you in the past – you HAVE to forgive EVERYONE for EVERYTHING!
            3. And only THEN will you finally be able to move some NEW furniture into what used to be the mess of your mind and heart!
      7. “*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*.” (Philippians 4:13)
2. **NEXT WEEK! TAKE RESPONSIBILITY (1Cor 13:11)** For what you think about
3. **Conclusion**
   1. **If you are born again, you already have a new mind, but it needs to regularly be RENEWED! Restored to its right way of thinking, and feeling and loving!**
   2. **A “renewed mind” is the key to a transformed life!**
   3. **How to Renew YOUR mind?**
   4. **Four Steps**
      1. **It STARTS with READING that BOOK in your hands! Cover to cover, and again and again!**
      2. **Then, RELEASE Every Offense You Struggle With, and then *Start Over* with people, all the time!**
         1. **By FORGIVING every offense, past and present**
         2. **By FORBEARING Justice! Put off getting even – leave that to God**
         3. **And then Allow Yourself to Finally FORGET some things**
         4. **Remember that ALL of the above was done FOR YOU by God**
      3. **REPLACE all the Rubbish that use to fill it with Better Things!**
      4. **Take RESPONSIBILITY (1Cor 13:11)** Take responsibility for what you think about
      5. **And your thinking will change from conformed to TRANSFORMED!**
   5. **Are you saved? Born again? Do you even realise how important it is?**
      1. If you DON’T have a new mind, a right mind, you can get it TODAY! Just believe the good news of the Gospel!
      2. That Christ DIED for sinners like you and me
      3. And that He was buried
      4. And that He rose again three days later, triumphant over sin, death and hell
      5. All he waits for is for you to truly believe the whole package was and is for the likes of YOU!