

Renewing The Mind

In reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self...be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self... Ephesians 4:22-24

If we are a new creation in Christ, why do we still struggle with the same old behavior problems? Perhaps we have come to know Christ, have learned of our new identity in Him, have tried to obey Him but have had little victory. Perhaps we ask ourselves, “*Why, if I’ve heard all these truths do I have so little change in my behavior -- why do I struggle so with sin?*” and finally cry out, “***How can I change?!***”

We seem to have the idea that if we read (or hear) the Bible and pray, something magical happens in our behavior. However, there is truth in this because behavior follows belief and so the Bible gives us further instruction regarding transformation. The Biblical principle called “renewing the mind” indicates that what we believe determines what we do. Therefore, if we can change what we **believe**, we can then choose to change how we **behave**. For instance, if a man comes to **believe** that Jesus Christ is the one and only way of salvation, he will **behave** by putting his faith in Christ.

Scripture tells us that “*renewing the mind*” is the way to change a person’s belief and, therefore, their behavior. The word “*renew*” means to make new again; a renovation which makes a person different than how he was in the past.

What? Why? and How?

- ~~ What is to be renewed?
- ~~ Why is it to be renewed?
- ~~ How is it to be renewed.

What?

~The Mind is to be Renewed

The mind's function is mental perception and apprehension; the faculty of thought. According to Matthew Henry, "The mind is the acting ruling part of us; so that the renewing of the mind is the renewing of the whole man, for out of it are the issues of life." (Proverbs 4: 23)

As our belief systems are formed, they can be corrupted. These corrupted belief systems are called "*strongholds*" or "*fortresses*". These fortresses (corrupted beliefs) prevent us from having an accurate picture of God, others, ourselves, and circumstances. The building blocks of these fortresses are "thoughts".

*For though we walk in the flesh we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of **fortresses**, we are destroying **speculations**, and every **lofty thing raised up against the knowledge** of God, and we are taking every **thought** captive to the obedience of Christ.*

2 Corinthians 10:3-5a

Our thoughts need to be captured and renewed because they keep us from knowing God (in a practical and personal way) and from living in obedience to Him.

Why?

~God's Command

God's purpose is that we be set apart from the world, that we not be squeezed into the world's mold, and therefore reflect the father of this world rather than the glory of God.

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:1 & 2

~So Our Thinking and Behavior Reflect the Truth of Our New Nature

The mind is not completely renewed at conversion. This is not an automatic process; it takes time and action. New thinking is a part of the process of experientially moving from our old identity to our new identity; becoming in our thoughts, beliefs, and eventually behavior what we **already are** in the inner man. Renewing our minds and walking in our new identity is a description of the normal Christian life. We must willfully choose to participate in a new way of thinking, taking "everything thought captive to the obedience of Christ"; "destroying every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God."

How?

~By Removing the False and Putting On the Truth

Before we can renew our minds we must realize the source for change is in the person of the Holy Spirit. The indwelling Spirit will show us what needs to be renewed, when it is to be renewed as well as provide the power to do so. The renewing process, on our part, requires faith in God's Word and willful participation.

Set your minds on the things above.

Colossians 3:1

Remove the false ways from me.

Psalms 119: 28-29

...take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

2 Corinthians 10: 3-5

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Romans 12: 2

Lay aside the old self...and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self.

Ephesians 4: 22-24

The Process Of Renewing The Mind

Step 1:

Identify any behaviors, thoughts or actions that do not line up with God’s Word.
Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you through this process.

Step 2:

Identify the **belief** that is behind the behavior. Ask yourself, “What does this behavior reveal about what I truly believe?” This will probably take the help of a brother or sister in Christ.

Step 3:

Put off the lie and **put on** the truth.

Putting Off: Honestly admitting to and bringing the lie to the light by confessing it to someone trustworthy. (Ephesians 5, and Proverbs 18: 24)

LIE	LAY ASIDE
“My Father, through past experiences and feelings I have given ground to believe:	

I acknowledge this as a lie and choose to lay aside this lie.	

Putting On: Professing the Truth of God’s Word and “setting our minds” on this.

TRUTH	PUT ON
“My Father, Your Word is true and says:	

and I choose to believe and act according to Your truth.	

Verse	

As we read God’s Word, think and meditate on it, the Holy Spirit will “make fresh” our minds.

Step 4

Activate our will in accordance with the true belief just put on. We want to be very careful to avoid “self-effort Christianity” in this and in every area of our walk, knowing that self-effort dooms us to failure. (Philippians 4:13, Colossians 2:23)

“Saying ‘no’ is not sufficient by itself. We also need to provide a new course for our thinking. We should not just suppress thoughts; we should redirect them. We should change negative thought patterns into positive thought patterns.

We find a good illustration of this in Paul’s word:

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

Ephesians 4: 28

How does a thief stop being a thief? Is it just by not stealing anymore? Not quite. Certainly that is part of it. That’s saying ‘no’ to a negative, destructive habit. But it’s not enough. In order to change, the thief is told to get a job and earn money honestly. Then he is to give to others in need so that perhaps they won’t be tempted to steal. Now the process is complete. The negative habit has been dealt with by an act of the will which chooses to stop it.”

George Sanchez

Out Of The Miry Clay

He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay; and He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm. Psalm 40: 2

As we examine our unbiblical behaviors, we will be discovering false beliefs we hold about ourselves, but more importantly, false beliefs we hold about God. What we believe about God is of utmost importance. It is not enough to gain a new perspective of our selves. It is imperative that we gain a new and accurate picture of our Father God. Ultimately, change will only happen when we move from “wrong beliefs about God” to “right beliefs about God.”

(The following has been adapted from the “Funnel Chart” developed by S.C.O.P.E Ministries of Oklahoma City.)

Putting Off and Putting On

PUTTING OFF

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you through this process. Complete the left side of the chart in regard to feelings and actions in your life that do not align with who you are in Christ. It is easiest to begin with recent events. Record how you felt and behaved in this situation.

Living Being ~~ Our Actions and Feelings

Thinking Being ~~ Our Thoughts

Record the thoughts that were going through your mind at the time of the event.

Believing Being ~~ Our Beliefs About Self, Others and Life

Record what you were believing about yourself during this time. It might help to use the phrase,

“I am _____.”

Worshipping Being ~~ Our beliefs about God

Record what the above reveals about what you really believe about God. You might use the phrase,

“God is _____ or God is not _____.”

Pour all of the above out to your Heavenly Father.

PUTTING OFF

Living Being

*our actions
and feelings*

Examples (down left side)

“I feel anxious / depressed / sad / angry / fearful.”
Actions: irritation with people / workaholism/
outbursts of anger towards others /
disorganization / withdrawal / chemical abuse

Thinking Being

our thoughts

“I don’t have time to do everything! If I don’t do it, it will never get done right! My spouse doesn’t appreciate me. God has asked too much of me.”

Believing Being

*our beliefs about self,
others, and life*

“I’m a failure / incompetent / alone / not good enough / unacceptable / unworthy / unlovable / I have to prove my worth / earn love. My identity equals my performance.”

Worshipping Being

our beliefs about God

“God is distant / uninvolved (has more important things, people to worry about than me). God is harsh / demanding / mean / angry with me. God accepts only those who perform well, and His love is conditional. No wonder He loves ___ more than me. God can’t be trusted to provide for me and mine.”

PUTTING ON

On the right side of the chart record what is true. Use your “Sword”. (Ephesians 6:17)

Worshipping Being

truth about God

Begin by renewing your belief about God, replacing the lie with a truth from Scripture. Write out the scripture, meditate on it and thank God for Who He really is. (God is always with you. “*He abides with you, and will be in you, I will not leave you as orphans.*” John 14: 17 & 18)

Believing Being

*truth about self, others,
and life*

Record what is true about you and others in light of God’s word. Focus on what God says and thank Him for making it so. (God has made you “adequate”, perfectly suited”. 2 Corinthians 3: 5 & 6)

Thinking Being

new thoughts

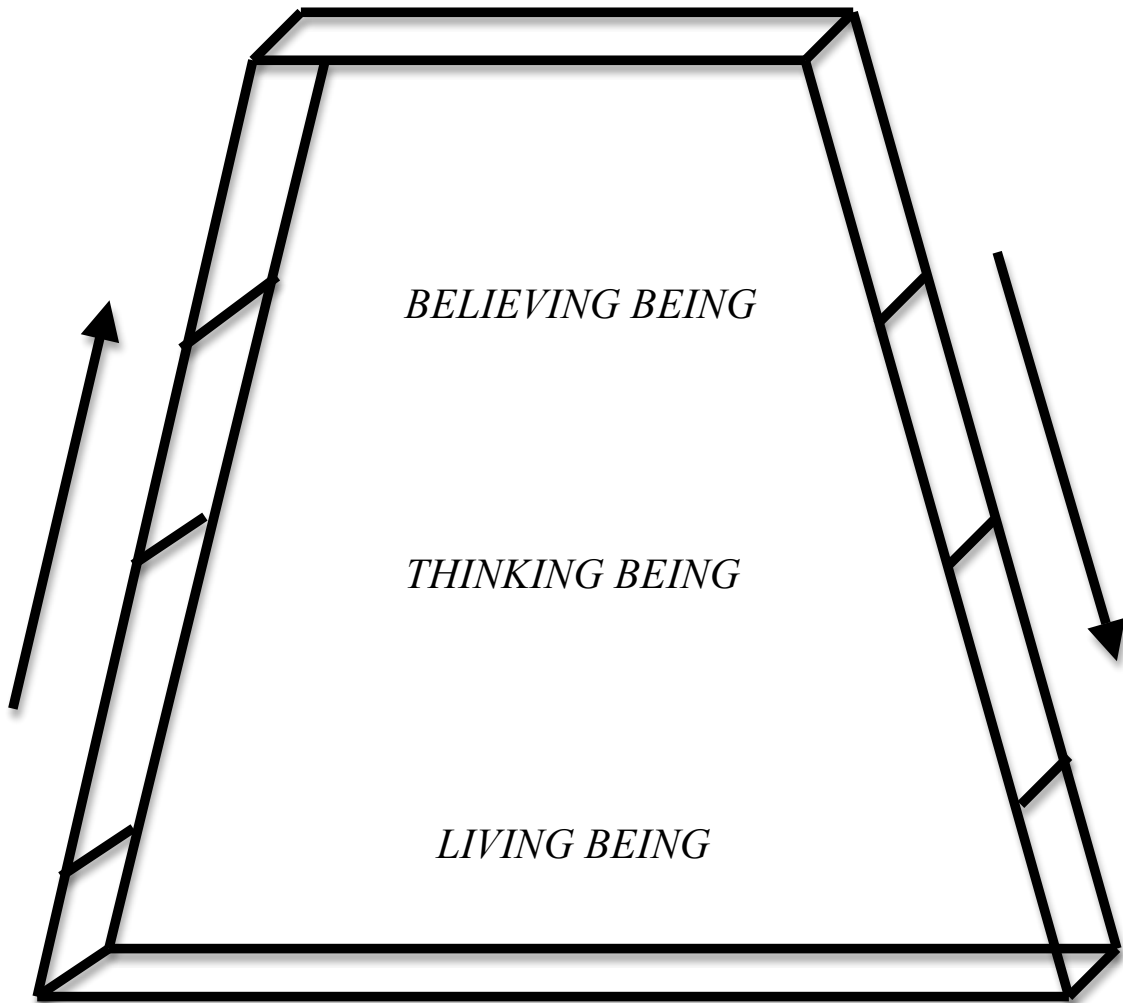
Write out how your thoughts would change if they matched your new beliefs about God and self. (I have time for everything and anything God has given me to do.. “*God has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness*” 2 Peter 1:3.)

Living Being

new actions

In the power of the Holy Spirit, activate your will to walk in accordance with the truth. (I choose to “*enter His rest*” Hebrews 4:11, and “*love*” I John 4.)

WORSHIPPING BEING



“Lord Jesus, all power is given to you in heaven and earth; transform our understandings and our wills; cleanse our hearts; send your Holy Spirit into our souls; subdue us to yourself, so that our flesh may be brought into subjection to the Spirit, and our affections made obedient to your pure and holy law, to the praise and glory of your sovereign grace.”

Juan Luis Vives (1492 - 1540)