

Glen Park Gospel Church
Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

Rev Chris Trinham

Studies in Romans Series 6

No 26

Transformed by a Renewed Mind

Scripture Reading: Romans 12:1-8

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will Romans 12:1&2 NIV.

These verses have a fourfold application. They stand alone as a call to dedication. They conclude the great doctrinal teaching of chapters 1-8 They conclude Paul's explanation of God's place for the Jew, in chapters 9-11, for throughout the letter he constantly addresses the questions of his Jewish readers; Now they serve to introduce Paul's instruction to the Roman Christians, both Jew and Gentile, on living the life to which they have been called in Christ Jesus.

First, the Broad Principle v1&2

Therefore I urge you v1 The word 'therefore' is translated from a small Greek word meaning 'then' as in Matthew 27:22 or Luke 11:13. It is a continuation or result from an action, rather than a necessary step in logic. Having understood God's gracious provision for the redemption of mankind, the next step is to *test and approve* the goodness of God's will in ordinary living.

You can see for yourself through your own experience just how good God's will is when you have built your life around it. This passion drives Paul in the good advice he offers the Roman Christians in the passages to follow and it will serve us well to keep his objective uppermost in our mind as we study. There are two steps:

1. Renewal. *Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

This is negative in that it is a turning away from the distortion created by the pressures of the world. It is accomplished by a renewal of the mind. Paul had at his disposal three similar words for renewal. To help us understand what Paul is telling us, think

about how they differ:

1. To make new again, like waking in the morning to a new day with renewed energy. 2 Corinthians 4:16. The negative form is in Hebrews 6:6.
2. To make young again, to start again having once failed, as in Ephesians 4:23 referring to the powers of the mind.
3. In our text and also Titus 3:5 which speaks of an adjustment in an ongoing process. It is an education, a journey, a development.

This desired transformation does not take place in a moment at conversion or when we dedicate of our bodies to God's service, but as day by day, year by year we discover in daily life and experience, the principles of spiritual living and put them into effect. When in an instant we turned to Jesus Christ and were justified before God, the Holy Spirit came into our hearts and Christ was formed in us. Thus:

My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, Galatians 4:19.

We are now to build up our spiritual knowledge and awareness as we develop and expand our relationship with the Lord. We are to expect many small miracles in our lives.

The danger is of course that we might not let this process take place, because of ignorance, or the love of this world, fear of opposition, or simple

laziness we may become spiritually malformed. There are many such malformed Christians in this world today. What a tragedy!

2. The Mind. *Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

Paul continues and illustrates his words for us in verse Romans 12:3. There is a play on words which does not quite come out in the English translations. Thinking of our living together in the body of Christ, he says, as translated by Alford, the individual is "not to be high-minded above that which he ought to be minded, but to be so minded as to be sober-minded." Mind in v2 is 'nous', not the brain box, but the faculty of thought, the nous. In v3 it is a word meaning the thought processes. See Colossians 3:2. for a similar use of this word.

Paul uses this same word in other parts of Romans. Scholars do not always translate it as 'mind'. The different translations and various forms can make it difficult for the English reader to identify the repeated use of a word.

Romans 12:16 tells us:

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position.

The word is not here translated mind. A more strict reading: '... being one minded toward one-another, not high minded.' When this starts to happen it is the transformed mind taking effect in daily living. Here we are urged to put the common good above our own.

In Romans 14:6 there is a similar construction using this word mind:

He who *regards* one day as special, *does so to*

the Lord.

is literally, 'he who *minds* the day *minds* the Lord.' Whether the keeping of a holy day is a correct spiritual exercise or not is not the issue, Paul's point is that a brother in Christ is mindful of the Lord. His thinking has changed.

In Romans 15:5&6 we have:

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a *spirit of unity* among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The words *spirit of unity* is more correctly *the same mind* and thereby it is with one heart and voice we glorify God, because we are tuned to the same key.

How this works:

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their *minds* set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. Romans 8:5

The word 'mind' in this verse is not 'nous', the faculty of thinking, but the content of the mind, the thoughts. God has renewed our mind to seek His will and way and it is now our part to fill it with thoughts that are honouring to Him. Read Philippians 2:12 and 4:8. When the Holy Spirit comes into our heart, He becomes in us our new nature. As the new Christian practices turning to and listening to his new nature, the Spirit of the living God, he more and more develops an automatic response in accord with the holy nature of the Holy Spirit. The process of transformation is taking place. The believer is transformed more and more into the image of his Lord.

Bible quotations in this study are from the NIV, unless otherwise acknowledged.

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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