

## Renewing Your Mind

Today, I want to talk about something that affects each of us every single day - our minds. J.B. Phillips translated Romans 12:1-2, which is an outstanding one; “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God re-mold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the Plan of God for you is good, meets all His demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.”

These words were revolutionary when Paul wrote them, and they remain just as powerful today and for our spiritual life very crucial. The first part of v. 2 says “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold.” The way the world shapes us is just like a Jello mold shapes gelatin. When Jello is poured into a mold, it will solidify to appear just like the mold that surrounds it. We are living in the world, where our lives are fed and shaped by the information that come from the world.

Our minds are the battleground where worldly influences and God's truth compete for dominance. Every day, we face a critical choice: Will we allow the world to shape our thinking, or will we actively pursue the renewal that God offers? This isn't just spiritual talk - modern neuroscience confirms that what we repeatedly think about literally shapes our brain's neural pathways. Today, we'll explore how culture molds our thinking, what science reveals about our thought patterns, and most importantly, how God's word provides the ultimate path to mental transformation.

In our daily lives, our minds are constantly bombarded with messages that shape how we think, often without our awareness. Consider these specific examples. Social media algorithms are designed to keep us engaged by showing us content that confirms what we already believe, creating echo chambers that reinforce our existing prejudices rather than challenging them. Have you noticed how your feeds seem to know exactly what will capture your attention? This algorithmic feeds creates polarization, division, and conflict. And train our minds to see others as opponents rather than fellow image-bearers of God. The constant exposure to divisive rhetoric rewires our brains to expect and even seek out conflict. The spirit of the world shapes us.

Another example? Advertisement. Advertising doesn't just sell products; it sells lifestyles and values that often contradict biblical principles. These messages tell us that happiness comes through consumption, status, and appearance. They are the opposite of the teachings of Jesus. These inputs are literally rewiring our neural pathways if you do not reject intentionally. There are many more examples we cannot discuss write now.

Our thought patterns physically reshape our brains. When we repeatedly think certain thoughts, we strengthen those neural pathways, making those thought patterns more automatic. **Every time you think the same kind of thought, you are widening the thought path like a**

**highway. We call that a mindset.** It becomes not just what I think now. It is the way I think. This is neural high way. You and I created a neural highway. If it is not aligned with the word of God, it is by the spirit of the world.

**Thalamus is the central brain structure of the neural highway.** Thalamus is your reality filter. It determines what your brain listens to and what you believe to be true, what you value, and the experiences you welcome. In that determination of the thalamus, you pay attention to only a small portion of the information presented to you, and you throw most of it away. For example, if your mind wants to pick up the color red, then if you walk through the street, you will pick up only the color red. You throw away all other colors in the street. This process is known as selective filtering, and we do it all the time. This is only a part of how minds are working.

What are we doing when we are renewing our mind? **In order to think differently, I have to proactively tell my mind, I won't be thinking about that, I will be thinking about this.** We are actually renewing our thalamus. **We are telling our thalamus, give me the way of God, remember, be careful!** You are training your brain what to see and how to listen. You are training your brain! **This is a simple explanation of what it means to actually renew your mind.** This way of brain training changes the brain's physical size and structure. MRI studies have demonstrated that godly meditation and uplifting content increases **special** brain regions associated with compassion, self-awareness, and attention.

This explains why breaking negative thought patterns is so challenging. Our brains have literally been shaped by years of cultural infuse and life experiences. Prejudices, fears, materialistic values, and self-centeredness aren't just bad habits. They are strongholds of the evil spirits, influenced and strengthened over time by the spirit of the world.

When Paul talks about the 'renewal of your mind,' he's describing a process. It means intentional effort to change thalamus aligned with the truth of God. It is the reason why simply attending church won't transform you at all. Real change requires intentional, consistent effort to redirect our thoughts. A study says it usually takes 40 days to break the old thalamus's habit, and to incorporate new habit into you. You might have heard many 40 days series in Christian education. Depending on people it could take longer or short time. It means you need to be intentionally filling your brain with the Word of God for 40 days.

What should we do?

First, we must seriously transform our daily environment into a state of **abiding in Jesus**. I believe that everyone here regularly dedicates time to daily devotion. Is that correct? It involves setting aside your best time to be in the presence of God, spending time with Jesus, reading and meditating on the word of God, and engaging in conversations with Jesus. Imagine the King, Jesus, physically present in your room; you would be unable to act freely as you want. Would you be careful?

Second, **change all the negativities to the antidote of Jesus Christ.** Let's take an example. Fear is triggered in your brain. Think what are antidotes of fear? What is it? Love of God! Meditate the word about God's love. You are the beloved of God. You are created to be loved. God gave you already all you need. You are protected and loved. Turn your focus to Love of God, not on the situation you are in. Let the Holy Spirit embrace you with heavenly power. God can make a way out of nowhere. God is a way-maker. You listen to love and power of God continuously. Write the word of God's faithful care and love "I will never leave you nor forsake you! My eyes are on you! I will never fail you!" On a note card, and put everywhere your eyes touch, on the refrigerator, car dashboard, on the desk, on the wall.

Does Anxiety take you? Meditate peace of Jesus! Peace is just next to you! Breathe in Jesus, who is peace. And be embraced by Jesus' peace. Practice peace. Learn to be peaceful by focusing on and looking to Jesus with all your heart. Write the word of life on a note card and put the word everywhere. Exchange the negativity into the antidote of Jesus.

Thirdly, it is undoubtedly crucial to practice contemplating your thoughts. As stated in 2 Corinthians 10:5, **'take every thought captive to obey Christ.'** When you identify negative thought patterns, such as prejudice, materialism, and self-centeredness, you can consciously replace them with biblical truths. Write these truths on a note card and place them in all locations your eyes touch. These practices disrupt the neural pathway and initiate the formation of a new one.

Fourth, the renewal of our minds isn't merely about filtering out negative influences; it's about intentionally **filling our minds with God's truth.** Paul enumerates these qualities: truth, nobility, righteousness, purity, loveliness, admirability, excellence, and praiseworthiness! (Philippians 4:8) When we fill our minds with these qualities instead, our lives naturally change, and we begin to perceive the world differently.

Fifth, I strongly encourage you to find a church friend or family member to check in with weekly. Share how the renewing thalamus is progressing and how God is working in your life. This is called accountability, and it's especially important during this challenging process. Right now, think about someone and talk to them after the service. Then, call or meet regularly, once a week, every other week, or at least once a month.

I want to suggest one thing this week. Please be aware of what's shaping your thinking. Identify one negative thought pattern and actively work to replace it with biblical truth. If your mind changes, your life changes. **Right now, please send me a text. ( 608-633-8613 ) What is your representative negative thought pattern?**

To help your journey, I will send daily words of God's love by recording my voice and music accompanied for 40 days when I am ready soon. So that you might listen to the love of God again and again at any time you want.