

Download the WORD

Romans 12:2

October 31st, 2010

I want you to picture something that most of us have seen many times. It is a picture that as soon as I mention it, you will see it in all of its detail. It is the picture of a rod that a man has driven into the ground (sometimes in the pavement) with a sledgehammer. There is a chain connected to that rod, and on the end of the chain there is a huge ankle bracelet, which is connected to a six and one half ton (twelve thousand pound) mature, adult elephant. Now, we know there is no way in the world that a rod about one inch in radius could hold a six and one half ton elephant. We know that if that elephant used even half of his strength, he would be gone. You know that and I know that, so what holds the elephant to that rod? What keeps him from being a threat to the circus and the audience around him? It is because we know something that he doesn't. He doesn't know he can break free. You see, no one tried to hold that adult elephant with a chain to a rod in the ground, actually the bracelet was put on his ankle when he was captured as a baby. As a baby elephant, not once or twice, but many times, he tried to free himself and couldn't. He stayed chained to that rod for months or years. In his mind, the rod and chain never changed. Because it didn't change, he never realized that he was changing. Now, as an adult, he spends his life chained to a rod that was driven by someone when he was a baby. If he only knew what we know, he would be free. In the same way, many of us have mental stakes driven in our minds by someone else. As a grown, adult Christian, we are still held bondage to what someone else said, or did, or believes to be true. We should know better.

Scripture

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Renewing Your Mind

The mind is the command and control center of the body. Your mind is very, very valuable. There is a battle that has been going on ever since you have been born into this world. It is a battle, which at the root level, is for control of your mind. Once the world can control your mind, it can control your behavior, and you live out what you believe to be true. Long before the scientific study of psychology, Paul penned these words in this verse. He exhorts you to not let the world squeeze you into its way of thinking, but experience an outer change that expresses your true innerness. How? He said, "...by the renewal of your mind." The word, "renewal," doesn't mean here to be new, as in existence. It means 'to be new, as in quality.' The key to the transformed life, your metamorphosis, or being transformed from the image of Adam into the image of Christ, is in our mind; a reprogramming of our mind, if you will.

I read that there are two laws that are considered important in the study of psychology:

- 1. Law of Concentration**
- 2. Law of Substitution**

The Law of Concentration says that as we dwell on our life experiences, they grow larger, and actually become a part of us. The Law of Substitution says that a human being can only concentrate on one thing at a time, but it is possible to change what you concentrate on. It is actually possible to change one thought which may be negative into another thought which is positive. This is what Paul is getting at here. Even though we are believers and have given ourselves to God as a sacrifice and desire to be holy and acceptable, if we continue to concentrate on the world in which we lived as a non-Christian, it will continue to have a hold on us. It

will continue to squeeze us into its way of thinking, even though we are now a believer.

The Mind of Christ

But the good news is that we can change. We don't have to keep looking into the mirror knowing that our outside isn't reflecting what we believe by faith, which is that we are different on the inside. We can actually experience a transformation that reveals to the world, and ourselves, who our inner man is. And that change comes by us changing our minds. A godly mind has the capability of producing godly thoughts. Godly thoughts have the capability of producing godly beliefs. Godly beliefs have the capability of producing godly behavior. You must believe that! We have to believe that as a believer in Christ, we have a godly mind.

Let me remind you of what Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, and remember, the church at Corinth was wicked; they had a problem. I get tickled at people who want to be a New Testament church. I always ask them, "Which one do you want to be?" I haven't seen any of those New Testament churches that Paul wrote to that I want our church to be like! They struggled just like we struggle. In the midst of all of their sin and self-centeredness, he said in I Corinthians 2:16, "You have the mind of Christ." The context was Paul explaining that they had a secret and hidden wisdom from God that the world didn't know. He said that if the world had known this, they would never have killed Jesus. Then he gives that famous quote, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him." This verse isn't a funeral verse. It isn't talking about seeing all God has in store for you when you die. It is talking about right now. It is teaching that you can know right now what God has prepared for you. But you don't attain that through human wisdom, you get it from the wisdom God imparts to believers. Paul goes on to explain that Christians are different from non-Christians because we have the Spirit of God within us. There are certain things that can only be discerned by the Spirit of God, so if you are a natural man, you can never discern them; they will be foolishness to you. But to a Christian who has the Spirit of God within, the Spirit reveals the things of God. There is nothing about God that the Spirit of God doesn't know.

- **Capability to think like Christ**

I want you to catch what Paul is trying to teach because we don't really believe this, but it's the Bible. He is teaching that I have the very capability that Christ had; I have the mind that He had! Do you really believe that to be true? In this passage, Paul doesn't say to desire the mind of Christ, or to seek the mind of Christ. He doesn't say hang in there, one day you'll get it; he said you have it. What does this mean? It means that you have the ability to think like Christ. We are dealing with ability here. To use computer terminology, you have the hardware. Now you are thinking, *I don't think like Christ!* How do you know you don't think like Christ? It's because you don't act like Christ, and you realize that thinking influences your acting. Therefore, if you don't behave correctly, you aren't thinking correctly. If you have blown it for the past seven days and didn't act like Christ, then you didn't think like Christ in those situations. But that doesn't change the fact that in every one of those situations, we had the ability, the very mind that Christ had, according to the book of Corinthians...wow.

When computers were being designed, I wasn't part of that. I just work computers, but in my research I discovered a little code word that computer programmers invented called *GIGO*. It means garbage in, garbage out. Man invented computers and thought it would solve all of man's problems. I thought it would solve mine as a pastor. I got a Commodore years ago. On that computer, you would type and all of a sudden the words disappeared. The screen wouldn't hold the whole page, so it was divided in half and it would switch and you would get a new blank page. I wondered where the other page went, and I froze and called my secretary. I asked her where it went, and she said it's there just keep typing. I kept typing and then all of a sudden, the words disappeared and what I had started with came back! I will never forget thinking my sermons were really going to get good with that computer. But I discovered that they never got any better. That computer didn't help me a bit. It didn't help me because if you put garbage in, you get garbage out. If you put a bad sermon in a computer, you'll get a bad sermon back out! There is a direct correlation between what you put in and what you get out. What you

get out of a computer is no reflection on the computer. There isn't a problem with the hardware of the computer; the problem is the software.

- **Program Your Mind**

The Bible says in Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Now hold it Paul, you told Corinthian church that we have the mind of Christ, and now you are telling the Philippian church to let this mind be in you. This difference is that in Corinthians he said we have the capability of thinking like Christ in every situation because we have the Spirit of God. But in Philippians he is saying that this mind we have must be programmed with Christ-like thinking.

One of our members told me years ago that when you think a thought an electrical impulse races across your brain. If you continue to think that thought, that electrical impulse will eventually start cutting a track across your brain. If you think that thought long enough, that impulse becomes a rut. Some of us have ruts in our brain. You've been taught something that has been ingrained in your brain, and now you are trying to get yourself out of the rut, so you are changing the way you think.

Sometimes, when you get in certain situations, you automatically default because it is easier for you just to get in that rut and carry that message. Have you ever had your car in a rut and then try to get it out? Sometimes it is just easier to ride the rut! That is what some of us are doing with our thinking. But we have been called by God to reprogram ourselves to think like Christ. There will never be a transformation where your outer-ness will truly convey your innerness unless you change your mind. It doesn't happen instantaneously; it is a process.

Download God's Word

Now that illustration of GIGO is kind of outdated, so let me bring it up to date. I have the iPhone 4, primarily for its voicemail capability. With the one I had before, I would have to listen to all the calls I got before I could get to the important calls. I never knew which calls were important, so I didn't check my voicemail very much. I would have to use a pen and paper to write the phone numbers down to call someone back. Then the iPhone

came out and it shows me the names of who has called, so I can skip down to the call I want to respond to. It's really cool! One of my friends has been wanting help putting up deer stands, so I called my son to help me so that we could get it done quicker since I had some other things that I needed to do. We begin to put up the stands and talk, and my son pulls out his iPhone and shows us a Bible study program where you can look up Greek words. He showed my friend the word we have been studying, 'metamorphoo,' and its meaning. He just pulled that up on his iPhone and I thought that was so neat! Later, as we are putting up the last stand, I said, "When are we going to know when to hunt this stand?" My friend whipped out his iPhone and punched a little button and up came WeatherBug. He pointed to the phone and said, "When the weather is here, we are going to hunt this stand." He said, "Don't you have WeatherBug?" I said, "No, but I have the Yellow Pages." I mean, I thought this was a phone! I thought I was doing good...I mean, I have a phone, but the only app I have downloaded is the Yellow Pages, and I thought that was cool! I am carrying a phone book around with me and I have the ability to call you back when you leave a voicemail. But my son is carrying around a personal assistant who helps him with Greek, and my friend is carrying around a personal assistant who is cluing him in on the weather! They showed me where to find the app store, and when you touch it, it says, "Loading." It takes you to the app store, and you can download games, entertainment, social network, music, business, navigation, weather, and on, and on, and on. I punched on weather until I found WeatherBug. I punched it and it then it said, "Waiting." Then it went from "waiting" to "loading." A little icon popped up and a little line started going across the screen, and when it got to the end, 'boom,' it downloaded on my phone! Now I can punch that icon and immediately know if it is raining in Dexter, KY next Friday. My phone has suddenly become a personal assistant! But none of it works unless you download it. I had the same phone as my son and my friend, but I was only using it for a phone, while they were using it as a personal assistant. It is changing the way they live, and all I was doing was making and answering calls.

Isn't that what some of you are doing? Are you really using the Word of God as your personal assistant? The Word of God is the app store, and it

has every application you need in life. But to most of us, it is just like the internet. It's out there somewhere, but we don't have a clue where it is. Some of us can't even find our Bible. Some of us don't know what we last read in it. You pack it around, but you don't use it the way God intended. You open it up and nothing ever happens. The reason is because you haven't downloaded anything. When is the last time you downloaded an application from the Word of God? Are you connected to the Word? Are you like dialup, and by the time you get connected, you get disconnected?

Make a commitment to believe that renewing your mind is the key to your outer-ness reflecting your innerness. Be willing to change the programming that is going in so that you can pull up those mental rods, driven in by the world, which holds you in bondage and keeps you looking like Adam instead of Jesus. We must download the apps that are available to us so that we can live life prepared, and discern what God's will is for us.