

Renewing the Mind

LECTURE 4

You are what your clearest mental picture of yourself is – not just to do with the power of positive thinking – but to do with imagination and God-given images

Session Topics:

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Outcomes:

After completing this session you should be able to -

Expound Biblical teaching about the necessity of renewed minds for all believers, and progressively take steps to renew your own mind.

Objectives:

- **Train believers to become adults**
Focusing on solid Biblical material. Eliminating mental assent.
- **Renew minds**
Beginning with your own. Moving on to other believers.
- **Win the major battlefield**
Frustrating the enemy. Freeing the minds of Believers. Ensuring your own freedom.

Ephesians 4:22-24 *That you put off concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and **be renewed in the spirit of your mind** and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness.*

Romans 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by **the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

The basic principle behind **renewing your mind** as the best way to produce **maturity** and **growth** is ...

Proverbs 23:7 *For as he thinks in his heart so is he ...*

We are not talking about mental knowledge, but about mental **imagination** and God-given **images**. If you see yourself as **poor** and **struggling** then you probably are poor and struggling. If you see yourself as **successful** and **prosperous** then you will probably be able to accept God's **success** and **prosperity**.

Your mental image of yourself has direct bearing on the way you act and present yourself to the world. A murderer is a murderer long before he commits the act.

Immature Christians remain immature because they see themselves immature. You are not a successful achiever because you cannot see yourself as a successful achiever. You will only achieve what you can see yourself achieve, and that in Christ.

A business or an organisation or even a ministry will only grow as big as its corporate image of itself. If there is going to be any growth then the image of growth will have to be painted on the minds of those responsible.

Isaiah 54:2, 3 ***Enlarge the place of your tent**, and let them stretch out the curtains of your habitations: do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes. For you shall expand to the right and to the left.*

You are what
your clearest
mental picture
of yourself is

We enact
our mental
images

Renewal
of the mind
is directly
related to
spiritual
growth

1. Developing your Christian Character

God is interested in the growth and development of the whole man – spirit, soul and body.

Hebrews 5:12-14 *For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the **first principles** of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the **word of righteousness for he is a babe**. But solid food belongs to those who **are of full age**, that is, those who by reason of use have their **senses trained to discern both good and evil**.*

Here we see an analogy between the physical and spiritual growth of man.

- ◆ Babies drink milk
- ◆ Adults eat solid food

How do you apply this to the SPIRITUAL GROWTH of Christians?

All truth is
parallel

1.1 The Milk of the Word

Hebrews 5:12 *You have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the Word of righteousness.*

When we become **new born babies in christ** we have just left the dominion of darkness and crossed over into the Kingdom of Light.



Because of this, every idea, concept and thought in the Kingdom of God is **awesome, mind boggling** and **strange** to a new born baby in Christ.

The milk of the Word is presenting to the Christian baby the basic concepts of God's Word so that they just get the **idea** without them really understanding the **full implications of it**. Even the basics are hard to receive to a newly born believer – they can choke on them and die.

Babies find **water baptism by full immersion** mind boggling, never mind the **baptism of the Holy Spirit** and **speaking in other tongues**. Even laying on of hands is strange – everything is strange to a baby.

The dominion of darkness is diametrically opposed to the Kingdom of God in thought, word and deed

God's Word – its thoughts, words and deeds are too much for a Christian baby to swallow

1.2 The Weaning Process

This is the process of getting a baby used to **solid foods** to the point where they can **feed themselves** without help. Every believer must go through this process at some stage.

It is where a Christian baby gets used to the **concepts** of the Word to the point where they can **receive them, swallow them** and **work them** into their lives to the point where they can live out the Word of God. They will bawl and squall, resist and argue and spit it out.

But eventually they will **get used to the idea** and **develop a taste** for the concepts of the Word – but persistence is required. Eventually they will get baptised in water and in the Holy Spirit and speak in other tongues. At this stage they are beginning to eat solids and are on their way to maturity.

1.3 The Solid Food Stage

John 4:34 Jesus said to them: My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

This **weaning onto solid food** process is what we will go through all our Christian life here on earth. Often, no sooner have we arrived at a place where we are **doers of a word** when we find something in the Word that we can hardly swallow.

Using the digestive process as an analogy – it is the place where the food has entered the body, has been chewed and swallowed, has passed into the blood stream and has provided **nutrients, energy** and **strength** to keep the body in action.

The solid food stage is when we have come to the point of habitually doing the Word – where we do it without thinking

1.4 The Digestive Process

The solid food of the Word of God must go into the person through the **senses of sight or hearing** and pass into the MIND. If the mind rejects it then the believer is a babe in Christ and the Word is solid food.

■ Chew the Food

A baby must be taught to chew and break up the Word into portions which can be absorbed. It requires a lot of thought and meditation to take the Word and analyse it portion by portion to get an understanding of what it is saying.

■ Swallow the Food

As soon as the Word is understood and grasped, **it will be swallowed** – that

is, **it will be received**. This is the stage when you can at least **see yourself doing it** in His strength. This is where (by faith in His ability in me) it begins to **look easy** – the idea is not strange anymore.

■ Digest the Food

We now arrive at the phase where we are actually **physically practising** the Word of God. This is where the Word is actually **manifest** in the physical world in which we live.

Now you are
an adult in
the Word of
God

2. Renewing the Mind

The Spirit is reborn and becomes a new creature, the **workmanship** of God created in Christ unto good works. We become new born babies in Christ, in the spirit.

The Soul is to be **renewed** or **renovated**, **refurbished** and **restored**. We must **put on** the new man by the **renewal** of the mind.

2.1 Take off the Old

The mind still has its habitual thought patterns which must be **removed** like you remove an old garment.

Romans 8:6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

The mind can be focused on the carnal or on the spirit.

It is essential for the **mind to be focused** and centred on **things of the Spirit for spiritual growth to take place**. This is the way in which we are to clothe the spirit man with the new mature Christlike man.

The mind
must switch
its focus



2.2 Put on the New

*Ephesians 4:13-15 ... till we all come into the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a **perfect man**, to the measure of the stature of the **fullness of Christ**; that we should no longer be children ... **but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ.***

Man is what
he thinks

■ Jesus Christ the Lord

Jesus Christ must be the **hub of the wheel**. If the wheel is our mind, then Jesus must be the centre of our thoughts, dreams and imaginations. See **Colossians 3:2**.

Christ centred thoughts produce a Christ like person.

■ The Word became flesh

Jesus Christ is the Word of God; the Word of God is Jesus Christ. The Word of God paints the picture of Jesus Christ. If we give the Word our undivided attention and centre our minds on the Word of God, we will **see, picture** and **imagine the Lord Jesus** and **so become like Him**.

We will **act** like Him! We will **talk** like Him! We will **BE** like Him! We will have **put on the new man through renewal of the mind**.

3. The Meaning of Mental Assent

James 2:19 You must believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe and tremble.

James 1:22 But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

These two verses define wonderfully the meaning of **mental assent**. It is not good enough to fill the mind and brain with facts that are found in the Word, or to know all about every truth in the Bible.

There is a Difference Between ...

- ◆ Knowing about the Truth and
- ◆ Knowing the Truth by experience

James 2:14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him.

James 2:17-20 Faith by itself, if it does not have works is dead ... I will show you my faith by my works!

Mental assent is faith without works

3.1 The Meaning of Believe

The word "believe" comes from the old English word – '**belive**'. It means to '**live for, to live in the object of your faith and trust.**'

3.2 Self-deception

Mental assent is that **dangerous area of life** where you convince yourself that you have a lifestyle of faith when in actual fact you wonder why it does not actually work in your life.

You know the Word so well, but you live in the miserable state of not actually experiencing its reality in your life. It seems so elusive, so unreal, so **just-out-of-reach** and **untouchable**. You run to and fro looking for help from Bible experts almost in vain because you know so well what counsel they will give you.

■ Your common appeal

Mental assenters cry out ...

Roman 7:18 ... for to will is present with me. **but how to perform what is good I do not know.**

3.3 Breaking Mental Assent

Mental assenters will spend months and even years meditating on the Scripture, wondering why that Scripture is so elusive. They will weep and cry, begging God to do something about them – but nothing ever seems to change. This pattern must be broken.

4. The Way to Renew the Mind

Deuteronomy

30:9-14 For the Lord will again rejoice over you as He did over your fathers. He will rejoice if you but obey the commandments ... and if you turn to the Lord your God with **all your hearts and souls. obeying His commandments** is not something beyond your strength and reach; for these laws are not in the far heavens, so distant that you can't hear and obey them, and with no one to bring them down to you; nor are they beyond the ocean, so far that no one can bring you their message; but they are very close at hand – **in your hearts and on your lips - so that you can obey them.**

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall **meditate in it day and night**, that you may observe **to do according all that is written in it.**

4.1 The Meaning of Meditation

Both these Scriptures that we are looking at give the **two fold meaning of meditation**.

Meditation is the way to the renewal of the mind

■ In your heart

Faith filled **imagining** and **picturing** is the first way of putting God's thought patterns found in His Word into your heart.

◆ Faith Filled or Doubt Filled Thoughts

There is a way of reading the Scripture and having a doubt filled imagination. When people imagine what they are reading and **exclude themselves** they are filled with doubt. In other words they do not see themselves as **receiving** or **doing the word**.

■ On your Lips

Psalm 45:1 My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

Implied in the word, **meditate**, is the idea of **muttering** – in fact the root word was originally used for the **cooling of a dove**. Our meditation must reach the point where we cannot but talk about them – until that is all that comes out of our mouths.

Matthew 12:34 From the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.

In fact, our **words** are an indication of what we have filled our MINDS with. When we have reached this point where our words are filled with **God's Word** then we can say that **our minds are almost renewed**.

Words verbalized indelibly inscribe what we have in our minds onto our hearts

4.2 The Resultant Action

■ The Steps to Action

- ◆ Learn the Scripture
- ◆ Imagine the Scripture
- ◆ Confess the Scripture
- ◆ Act on the Scripture

Set your mind on the word 'which is spiritual' and you will act on it

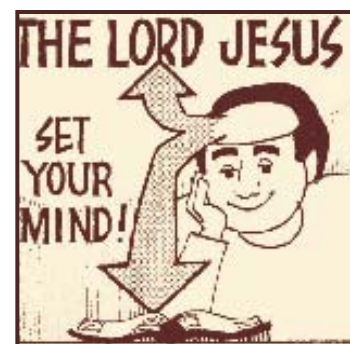
Colossians 3:2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Romans 8:6 To be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Every time you learn a **new truth apply it to yourself personally**. It is easy to follow a mathematical problem on the blackboard, but you only know it when you can do it yourself.

■ Fruit and Gifts

The quality of the fruit in a Christian's life determines maturity, not the spiritual gifts.



Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth

It is the application of the Word that is effective

5. The Battlefield is in the Mind

This is where we win or lose!

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*

Whatever captures your imagination has captured your worship

If you were to study the word **imagination** in the Bible you find that one of the reasons for the judgement of God on mankind – Sodom and Gomorrah, the Flood, etc. – was that the imagination of the heart was **evil continually**.

The devil's mission is to captivate man's **imagination** with evil or unrealistic and deceptive fantasies. **Materialism television, games and toys** are all geared to capture the imagination and drive it away from God and His Word.



5.1 Take no Anxious Thought

Philippians 4:6-8 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.*

Be on your guard

5.2 Watch your Treasury

Matthew 12:33-37 *Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognised by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have **to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken**. For by your **words** you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.*

NOTES