

THE RENEWAL OF YOUR MIND

TIME TO CHANGE

“The Renewal of Your Mind”

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 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.”

(Romans 12:1-2)

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About The Author...

Stephen Galvano is the founder and senior pastor of Rochester Christian Church Ministries (RCCM). He has raised up and sent out many in the work in the ministry with plantings in Canada, Argentina, China, Zambia, India, Italy, and the United States. He founded *RBC School of Theology, Rochester Christian Academy, The Transformation Center*, and, as a man of prayer, established the *Garden of Prayer* which is open to the public 24 hours a day and has greatly enhanced unity among leaders in the Rochester area.

Presently Pastor Galvano is developing *Bethany Village*, a senior housing complex; and the *Arthouse*, a 100,000 square foot arts facility that will house two performing arts stages, audio, video and film studios, an art gallery, a screening room and a café.

Being an established apostle of God, Pastor Galvano continues to travel around the world speaking to pastors and leaders preparing them for the great revival to come.

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I. What Does It Mean to Renew Your Mind...

Before you can have a renewing of your mind, you need to understand the necessity and the importance of renewing your mind. Anyone who wants to make it in life and change certain behavior patterns will do whatever it takes to renew their mind. If you will renew your mind, you can actually be “transformed.” The word “transformed” comes from the Greek word from which we get the term, “metamorphosis.” It is used in Scripture when Jesus was transfigured on the Mount as He spoke with Moses and Elijah. It is also used in II Corinthians.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.”

(II Corinthians 3:18)

As you spend time renewing your mind, your outer being will be transformed in much the same way a caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly. You will go from glory to glory and from strength to strength.

You must understand God wants you to have everything the Bible says you can have, such as:

- SALVATION
- HEALING
- PROSPERITY
- DELIVERANCE
- PEACE
- RESTORATION, etc.

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The fact of the matter is that you can be “a born-again Christian” and still live in “hell” while you are here on earth...no one wants that. When you are born again, you want certain things to change. You have the right as a born-again Christian to have some “heaven” while you are here on earth, and not just have the title of being “born again” with no change in the situations or circumstances of your life.

The Amplified version of Romans 12:1-2 reads as follows:

“I appeal to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].”

And the Message Bible reads:

“So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for Him. Don’t

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become so well adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what He wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you."

"Be not conformed to this world." "Do not be fashioned or adapted by this world." "Don't become so well adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking." You see, we were born into this world, and we have spent lots of time being "trained" by the world. We have adapted to the world's:

- Way of thinking,
- Attitudes,
- Ideas.

We have been shaped and molded to be "worldly."

Then one day you make a decision to make Jesus the Savior of your soul and Lord of your life. For many Christians it stops right there. They are born again, but there is no change in the things that they have been conformed to, such as the world's way of thinking, attitudes and ideas, its lifestyles and music. They are still doing the same old things, the same old way, with the same old attitudes. They are shaped by self-will.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Are you still depressed?
- Are you still controlled by life's circumstances?
- Do you still walk in fear?

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- Do you still treat your spouse badly?
- Are you short tempered with your children?
- Do you still struggle with poverty?
- Do you still struggle with sexual immorality?
- Are you still caught up in pornography?
- Are you still mad at the world or at God?

If you answer “yes” to any of these questions, you are still conformed to this world, still controlled by the world’s fashion. The answer is to be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

What actually happens when you are born again? You make a decision to ask Jesus to be your Lord and Savior. Jesus enters in and changes your spirit. Your spirit man dies and the spirit of the living God enters in. Inside, you’re perfect – born again in the image of Jesus Himself.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”
(II Corinthians 5:17)

But outwardly, you fall frustratingly short of perfection. Your soul (which is comprised of your mind, will and emotions) remains the same, which means your body is doing the same old things as well. You can be a born-again Christian, but still have the same ideas, the same attitudes and the same vocabulary. Being born again saves you from eternal damnation. You have the “title” of Christian. However, to experience a life change you have to become a “disciple” of Christ. That means renewing your mind.

Most people who become Christians are fashioned and adapted to this world. They will still have the same

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conflicts, problems, and fleshly desires until they renew their minds. Some people believe being born again gets them out of their problems. But being born again doesn't get you out of your problems unless you renew your mind. Renewing your mind provides the power to change your life.

To be "transformed" actually means to change. How do you change? By renewing your mind. Renewing your mind and change go hand in hand, like a hand in a glove. You cannot say your mind is renewed if there is no evidence of a changed lifestyle. There must be a "line-up" of the Word of God and your thinking. You must yield your mind, your thinking to the Word of God.

It is possible for God to re-create your spirit on the inside, but your soul (your mind, will and emotions) and your body stay the same. If you don't change the way you think or do things, all you will have had is a religious experience, and religious experiences do not produce change unless a renewing of your mind follows. When a person has a renewed mind, everything changes; your fellowship, your priorities, your values, your giving and receiving and how you spend your time.

Jesus said,

"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)

You cannot have an abundant life if you are still missing the mark (or sinning). If there is no change of mind, the same problems you had before being born again will follow you after being born again. You cannot fool the

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devil. The answer is to stop playing games with the world and start thinking the way God thinks through His Word.

“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
(I John 1:5-9)

You must look to the way out of sin. You cannot go ahead sinning because you know He will forgive you. God will not be mocked.

“If we claim that we experience a shared life with him and continue to stumble around in the dark, we’re obviously lying through our teeth—we’re not living what we claim. But if we walk in the light, God himself being the light, we also experience a shared life with one another, as the sacrificed blood of Jesus, God’s Son, purges all our sin.”
(I John 1:5-7 Amp.)

“But when God, our kind and loving Savior God, stepped in, he saved us from all that (sin). It was all his doing; we had nothing to do with it. He gave us a good bath, and we came out of it new people, washed inside and out by the Holy Spirit.”
(Titus 3:4-5 Message)

We all need to take a bath, not just now and then, but daily and faithfully. Soap takes away odor. Sin has an

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odor. But thank God for the Blood of Jesus that cleanses us from all of our sins.

Many Christians get born again, but they fail to use the Blood. If the Blood is not applied to your life, you live in deception. There is no joy in your salvation.

Read I John 1:9 again...***“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*** This verse should make you shout. But notice verse 10... ***“If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”*** Let us understand that it one thing to be forgiven for sin...but it is another thing to overcome failures. “I don’t want to continue in sin, especially if I know (in my mind) that it is sin.” If you failed yesterday, that doesn’t mean you have to fail today. Continuing in sin will open you up to more demonic oppression.

As a Christian, you should be making progress. You should be stronger, more committed today than you were yesterday. There should be increase in your life, growing toward the better. The objective of every Christian should be to stop sinning, especially when you know that Jesus loves you.

The following Scripture could be applied to those who do not have a renewal of the mind. The same problems you had before being born again will follow you after being born again. **YOU CANNOT FOOL THE DEVIL!**

“...those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority...are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak

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evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord. But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. They have forsaken the right way and have gone astray, following the way of Balaam and son of Beor, who loved the way of righteousness; but he was rebuked for his iniquity; a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.

These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true

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proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.'

(II Peter 2:10-22)

II. Mind Cleansing...

The renewed mind is one that has been dipped (washed) by the Blood of Jesus. We are justified not by the Word, but by the Blood. An illustration of this is if you quote Scriptures to the devil, he will laugh at you. If you quote Scriptures to yourself, it doesn't change a thing. If you quote Scriptures to others, they might become hardened. But when you apply the Blood to the Word, the devil responds to it. With the Blood we break demonic powers and strongholds. Only the Blood can wash away.

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments (vain imaginations) and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled." **(II Corinthians 10:4-6)**

Note that there are 290 references in the Bible to the love of God, but there are 1,300 references to the Blood.

The Blood of Jesus:

- JUSTIFIES

"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him."

(Romans 5:9)

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- REDEEMS *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”*
(Ephesians 1:7)
- OVERCOMES *“And they overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony...”*
(Revelation 12:11)
- POWER TO FORGIVE *“And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.”*
(Hebrews 9:22)

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- HAS AUTHORITY *“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil.”*
(Hebrews 10:19)
- THE ONLY EXCHANGE FOR MY SOUL *“...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*
(I Peter 1:18-19)
- CHOSEN TO BE FAMILY *“And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For you were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood...’”*
(Revelation 5:9)
- COVENANTS ARE MADE BY AND THROUGH THE BLOOD *“But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption...And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death...”* (Hebrews 9:11-12, 15)

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The devil recognizes the Blood. When Jesus died on Calvary and shed His blood, He paid the price. It's possible the devils came out of everybody so they could gather around the cross of Calvary and wring their hands and say, "We have Him now."

But they didn't have Him! Jesus died on the cross, defeating sin and Satan. No one could destroy the kingdom of the devil except Jesus!

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death."
(Revelation 1:18)

"There is a legend of Martin Luther, that during a serious illness the evil one entered his sick room, and looking at him with a triumphant smile, unrolled a big scroll that he carried in his arms. As the fiend threw one end of it on the floor, it unwound by itself. Luther's eyes read the long fearful record of his own sins, one by one. That stout heart quailed before the ghastly roll. Suddenly it flashed into Luther's mind that there was one thing not written there. He cried aloud: "One thing you have forgotten. The rest is all true, but one thing you have forgotten: 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' And as he said this, the Accuser of the Brethren and his heavy roll disappeared."*

"A preacher was speaking from the text, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' Suddenly he was interrupted by an atheist who asked, 'How can

* Reference: "Sunday School Times"

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blood cleanse sin?’ For a moment the preacher was silent; then he countered, ‘How can water quench thirst?’ ‘I do not know,’ replied the infidel, ‘but I know that it does.’ ‘Neither do I know how the blood of Jesus cleanses sin,’ answered the preacher, ‘but I know that it does.’ ”*

III. The Process of Change...

There is no question that we all need to change. The word “change” might appear to be a small word or a simple word, but it could become very big when you start to initiate the process of change. We need practical understanding on how to change. If we are to maximize the gifts God has given us and thus fulfill God’s destiny for our lives, then we need to do everything possible to change those areas of our lives that hold us back. We will never be able to offer any evidence that God’s Word is true if we don’t renew our minds. Through a renewed mind we can prove “...*what is that good, perfect and acceptable Will of God.*” (Romans 12:2)

The renewing of our mind is more than just a collection of new ideas and new attitudes. That is only a part of it. Romans 12:1-2 in the Amplified Bible reads: “*Do not be conformed to this world, this system, this age, do not be fashioned after and adapted to its external superficial customs, but be ye transformed (changed)*” How do we change? “...*by the entire renewal of your mind.*” If you are going to deal with every area of your life, then you need to have your entire mind renewed. So we can see that in addition to gaining new ideas and new attitudes, the evidence of a renewed mind is **CHANGE!**

* Reference: “*Sunday School Times*”

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Understand also that learning about a renewed mind is not enough. You must “do” what you have learned.

“But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only...”
(James 1:22)

You must implement what you have received through the Word until it manifests as change in your life. If you have not renewed your mind, if you are still engaged in the same ungodly activities that you were engaged in before becoming born again, then there will be no evidence of change. Change is very important in our lives, and renewing our minds is not a one-time event. It is a **PROCESS**, a **LIFESTYLE**, and it will continue until we pass from mortality to immortality, from corruption to incorruption!

Now is the time to initiate the process of change. An interesting illustration – A caterpillar is called a caterpillar until it changes. Then it is called a butterfly. God allows us to be called Christians right now, even though we are in the process of change. We must not wear the title of “Christian” and ignore the process of change. Change should always be a part of our Christian existence.

The process of change comes about through **HEARING THE WORD, READING THE WORD, MEDITATING ON THE WORD, and then DOING THE WORD!**

“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, And a light unto my path!”
(Psalm 119:105)

IV. Taking off The Old, Putting on The New...

The Word of God tells us that we are to PUT OFF the old and PUT ON the new.

“But now yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him... (Colossians 3:3-10)

For example:

PUT OFF

Sin
Hatred
Cursing
Old worldly friends
Trust in yourself
Pessimism
Rejection
Negative attitudes
Fear
Excessive TV
Sunday sleeping

PUT ON

Righteousness
Love
Blessing
New Christian friends
Trust in God
Optimism
Acceptance in Christ
Bible-based positive attitudes
Trust in God
Time in the Word of God
Attendance in Church, etc.

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“...just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
(Romans 6:4)

We cannot put on the new man if we neglect to renew our mind.

“...and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”
(Ephesians 4:23-24)

It is the goodness of God that leads us to repent, to be born again, and to desire the process of change.

“Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”
(Romans 2:4)

If you become a born-again Christian and do not desire to change, then you have no fear of the Lord. You have no respect for the Lord.

“...Because they do not change, therefore they do not fear God.”
(Psalm 55:19)

Take a look at your life right now. Are you born again, but not:

- Attending Church faithfully (not just now and then)?
- Praying and reading the Word daily?

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- Involved in ministry in your local church?

Then these are areas where you need to renew your mind and change.

V. 12 Biblical Steps in The Process of Change...

We are all familiar with the 12-step programs available to help individuals overcome drug and alcohol addictions, gambling addictions, overeating, etc. We will present to you in the following pages 12 Biblical steps outlining what you can do to change from your present state of mind to the mind of Christ.

As you read the 12 Biblical steps in the process of change, you will be placed in a most dangerous position. The reason is this – it is one thing to remain as you are. However if you learn how to renew your mind and bring about change in your life, and choose to remain the same, you will be held accountable to God.

“My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; For they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh.”

(Proverbs 4:20-22)

“Thy Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.”

(Psalm 119:11)

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- **Step 1: Make a Decision to Change**

Many people are where they are right now because they have never made a decision to change. They have never decided to improve or grow. In other words, until you make a decision to change, nothing is going to happen.

“...I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life...”

(Deuteronomy 30:19)

God in His great love for us always gives us the freedom to choose. In other words, until you make a decision to change, nothing is going to happen. You have to decide you are going to prosper. You have to decide you are going to be out of debt. You have to decide you are going to receive your healing. You have to decide you are going to lose that extra weight. You have to decide you are going to overcome your problems and addictions.

“And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

(Joshua 24:15)

One day you have to make a decision; am I going to serve God or serve the devil? Am I going to heaven or am I going to hell? (If you have not already made this decision, now is a good time to do so! Pray and ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins and to come into your heart.) Once you have made a quality decision to serve God, please understand that no devil can stop the manifestation of that decision. The reason is that decision is an open door

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to reality. You will never enter reality until you make the decision. The reality is this:

“For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

“For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13)

An example of someone who made a quality decision was the woman with the issue of blood:

“Now a certain woman had an issue of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was not better, but rather grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, “If only I may touch the hem of His garment, I shall be made whole.”
(Mark 5:25-28)

This woman had a blood infirmity. According to the culture of that day, it was illegal for her to come out in public with that disease and especially illegal to appear before a priest. She could have been legally stoned to death. But she made a decision: “If only I could touch the hem of His garment, I know I will be made whole.” She made a decision that changed her entire life from that time on for all eternity. She was willing to put her life on the line for that decision.

Decision is the open door to reality. Until you “decide” you will never see the reality of its fulfillment. You cannot sit and think about it. You cannot wait for

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someone else's opinion. You cannot wait for someone else's approval. There must be a point when you decide. There must be a point when the door opens, when the invisible becomes visible, and the intangible becomes tangible and real.

If you make a quality decision about anything (smoking, anger, prosperity, weight loss, etc.), you will find yourself with more courage and strength. You will have determination and boldness. You will experience assurance and confidence because all of heaven will back you up. Angels will back you up. The Holy Spirit will back you up.

“But thanks be to God, who (always) give us the victory through our Lord Christ Jesus!”

(I Corinthians 15:57)

- **Step 2. Turn Over Your Will to God Totally and Completely**

A man's will is a powerful thing. We spend most of our lives doing what we will instead of doing the Father's Will. Now in the process of change, you have to let your will die, so that God's Will may live.

“He must increase, but I must decrease.”

(John 3:30)

This must be our attitude. God cannot increase as long as your will is in the way. What is it that you are willing to do? Will you continue the same as yesterday? Will continue to sin? Will you continue to smoke or drink

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or be involved in immorality? What is your will? You must turn your will over to God totally and completely.

The blessing of it is this:

“If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.” (Isaiah 1:19)

If we are to eat the good of the land, we must align our wills to His will. Most of us do what we do because we will to do it.

Most of us participate in doing what we do not even wish to do because we will to do it. For example, most people know someone who says they do not want to smoke. They hate smoking, but continue to smoke. However, when we make up our minds that it is not going to be “my will”, then things will start to change. When you come to this point, you willingly are submitting to God’s will. To do this successfully, you must first KNOW what God’s Will is. God’s Will is His Word. You must feed on God’s Will (His Word) daily. You must attend church services, Sunday school classes, prayer meetings, Bible studies, whatever you can to learn God’s Will. This is taking care of the “intangibles” or the “invisible” first. Nothing takes place on the OUTSIDE until it first takes place on the INSIDE. Most often it takes longer to work on the inside before it manifests on the outside. Do not expect outward manifestations of change until you have worked on the inside.

There is a story in the Book of Acts that illustrates someone who wanted the manifestation of God’s Will on the outside, but who had not turned his will over to God:

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“Then they (Peter and John) laid hands on them (the Samaritans), and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon (the sorcerer) saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’ But Peter said to him, ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and iniquity.’ ” (Acts 8:17-23)

Simon (the sorcerer) wanted the power and authority that the apostles had without changing what was on the inside or what was in his heart. God will not be mocked. We will reap only what we sow both spiritually and naturally.

To do what needs to be done on the inside is tougher and more important than receiving the outward manifestations. For example, wealth is not a result of just gathering money and material possessions. Before you can receive wealth, you must see true treasures developed on the inside. In order to receive your healing, you must first see yourself healed on the inside. You must see your deliverance taking place on the inside before it can be seen on the outside. Because of all this, the Bible says:

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil...” (Luke 6:45)

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“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” (Proverbs 4:23)

Life itself comes from the ground of your heart. Whatever your life is right now, it comes out of the ground of your heart. It is an internal issue before it becomes an external issue.

An illustration of this can be found in many married couples. If they are having problems, it most generally is because of problems that existed in each individual on the inside before they were married. The bottom line is this: if we can get change to take place internally, then we can see change externally. We cannot neglect the internal intangibles if we are to see good things on the outside.

“Something on the inside, working on the outside. Oh what a change in my life!”

- **Step 3. You Must Possess a Strong Desire to Change**

Desire is the motivation of life.

“One thing I have desired of the Lord, that I seek; That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life...” (Psalm 27:4)

“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My

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glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” (John 17:24)

“But earnestly desire the best gifts.”
(I Corinthians 12:31)

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.” (Romans 10:1)

All these Scriptures represent heart motivation. David desired intimacy with the Lord. Jesus prayed to the Father that we might be with Him. Paul encouraged believers to desire God’s best gifts. He also expressed his desire for the salvation of Israel.

In order for you to successfully change, you must desire that change. Change will never come because someone else desires for you to change. You must desire. An example of this is a wife who desires for her husband to change. She prays that God will change Him. Her husband will not change based on her desire. He must desire the change. (Most times, changes in your spouse will occur when you change yourself first!)

After you make a decision to change and turn over your will completely to God, then you must build boundaries around your decision. You build a “fence” around your decision. For example: “I am not going to smoke anymore.” “I am not going to purchase those cigarettes anymore.” “I will not read those immoral magazines or watch immoral TV or movies anymore.” “I will not sleep on Sunday morning when I should be in church.”

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Many people struggle with bad habits. They want to do what is right, but they end up doing what is wrong. Paul experienced the same problem:

“For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do...For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.”

(Romans 7:15, 19)

In order to desire change, you must first understand where desire comes from. Desire comes from what you give your attention to. If you attend to the Word of God, this is what you will desire. If you attend to certain businesses, this is what you will desire. If you attend to pornography, this is what you will desire.

There is an interesting aspect to desire. You can have an initial desire for something, but if you don't give attention to it you will lose that desire. Whatever your desire:

- Attend to it;
- Cultivate it; and
- Work at it.

If you don't attend to your desire, you will lose the motivation that led you to the process of change. Desires are created and must be followed by appropriate action.

For example, do you want your children to grow up with Biblical values, or the values of the world? It is not right for your children to be babysat by the television. It is not right to allow your children to be fed the seeds of this

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sinful world. Whatever you allow your children to attend to, this is what they will desire.

The same principle applies to your friendships. Do you men hang around other men who only talk about sex? This is what you will desire. Women, do you hang around other women who only want to gossip? This is what you will desire.

It is important that we find out what God's desire is for our lives. This can only be found by giving attention to His Word.

“Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4)

If you delight in the Lord, give attention to His Word and worship Him, He will place His desires in your heart and they will become your desires.

***“Behold,
You desire truth in the inward parts,
And in the hidden part,
You will make me to know
wisdom.”***

(Psalm 51:6)

- **Step 4. Deepen Your Knowledge Base**

Your knowledge base must increase if your life's experience is to increase. You will never increase or change more than what you know. For example, do you want promotion on your job? Then you must increase your knowledge base in that job. You cannot be promoted any further than what you already know. You will not be able to do more than what you know. Your knowledge base is the foundation upon which you are building.

The people of Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years because they did not understand God's purposes and plans for their future. If they had, it would have taken them only six months to reach the Promised Land. They wasted 39 ½ years of their lives. Spending years in one place does not make you better. It can make you harder. There are many Christians who have been "in the way of the Lord" for many years but have not grown beyond their original salvation experience, primarily because they have not taken the time to broaden their knowledge of the Lord through the Word.

What are you doing to increase your knowledge base, for example, in your marriage? If you don't expand your knowledge about your marriage and your mate, you will have the same problems, the same arguments, the same frustrations, and the same unfulfilled dreams. Nothing can change if you don't learn about the marriage relationship, communication, intimacy, finances, children, and family, etc. You will carry on whatever family dysfunction your parents may have had. Consequently, if a marriage does not work, we throw it out as if the marriage covenant had no value. We then try another marriage with another

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person not realizing that we only take the same problems from the first marriage into the second.

The way to change from that miserable existence to a better marriage is to deepen your knowledge about marriage, your mate and what the Word of God has to say about marriage. It is not good enough to say: “We just don’t get along,” “We just don’t understand each other,” or “We just don’t agree or like the same things.” Divorce is not the answer. The answer is: “How can I change?”

If you refuse to deepen your knowledge base, you are not going to change. When you refuse to change in a relationship, your attitude will worsen and verbal abuse will start. This often is followed by non-verbal expression and then physical violence and possibly worse.

How can I deepen my knowledge base? There are many ways:

1. Attend Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening services faithfully!
2. Read your Bible daily!
3. Watch teaching videos.
4. Listen to teaching tapes.
5. Take Bible correspondence courses.
6. Read Bible-based books.
7. Go online. Many ministries are putting their teachings on computer.
8. Get Biblical counseling if you need it.

You will not change if you are a lazy Christian. It takes WORK to change. One of the most depressing things in the world is to see someone you know who has been a Christian for many years and has not changed. They are

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still struggling with the same sins, the same weaknesses, the same shortcomings and lack in their lives. How this must hurt the heart of God who has provided us with everything we need to grow. Paul prayed for the church in Colosse that they would:

“...be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”
(Colossians 1:9-10)

“Wise people store up knowledge...”
(Proverbs 10:14)

“...the excellence of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to those who have it.”
(Ecclesiastes 7:12)

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”
(Hosea 4:6)

- **Step 5. Look Into the Word of God as Your Mirror to Change.**

Consider the following illustration. You get up in the morning. Hopefully, you look into your mirror. The mirror shows the image of your present condition. It will also assist you in achieving the condition you would like to be in before you leave the house.

The Word of God should do the same thing. We should look into the “image” of the Word of God, and allow the reflection from the Word to be made a part of our

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lives so that our change will be a change in line with the mirror of God's Word. We need to change according to the Word, not according to tradition, or the times we live in, or even church teaching.

You must know what you look like. I don't want to look like the Koran (Islam), the Veda (Hindu), the Watchtower (Jehovah Witness), or the Mormon Bible. There is only one living book in this world. It is the BIBLE, the WORD OF GOD. I want to look like the WORD OF GOD!

Anyone who has truly changed has looked into the Word of God and actually reflects the Word of God. There must more than words or talk. There must be evidence of the good and perfect Will of God. Unless it is the Word of the living God, it will not produce righteous, holy and permanent change.

“But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

(James 2:18)

Do not tell me how much faith you have. Show me your faith by what you are doing. Your life will reflect evidence of the Word of God if you have gone:

- From darkness to light;
- From poverty to prosperity;
- From sickness to divine health;
- From bondage to deliverance;
- From unrighteousness to righteousness.

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You cannot argue with evidence. You need to change what you watch, what you read and what you practice. Allow your life to be a mirror image of the Word of God. Don't change the wrong way such as through new philosophies, new trends, or current codes of ethics. Unless you change by the Word of God, you will never have lasting change for the better.

*“But as for you, brethren,
do not grow weary in doing good.”*
(II Thessalonians 3:13)

- **Step 6. Diligently Apply the Truths You Have Learned.**

Here is the key – diligently apply the truths you have learned! This diligent application must be consistent, day-by-day. If you have learned something today from the Word of God, it will do you no good until you apply it. You watch videos, listen to tapes, or read good Bible-based books, but it will not profit you if you do not apply the truths you have learned. A person with a renewed mind is a person whose life reflects the truths he has learned.

Information without application is useless. For example, a drug addict can go to a drug recovery program and learn all kinds of ways to recover. However, unless he consistently applies what he has learned, he will not change. He will not overcome his addiction. He will stay the same. Many people do not “make it” because they are not consistent.

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A good practice to follow is this: **Whatever you start, always finish it.**

The spirit of your mind is changed or renewed by “diligence,” not by “every now and then.” You cannot pray every now and then. You cannot tithe every now and then. You cannot refrain from cursing, or drinking, or committing adultery every now and then. Failure oftentimes is the result of lack of diligence or consistency.

Consistency is the key to breakthrough! This consistency will require discipline. However, if you want change, then you must be consistent to diligently apply the truths that you have learned.

***“He who has a slack hand becomes poor,
But the hand of the diligent makes rich.”***
(Proverbs 10:4)

- **Step 7. Guard the Entrances to Your Heart.**

“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”
(Proverbs 4:23)

What are your life’s issues? The issues of your life grow out of your heart. Whatever problems, addictions, or sin you are in is the result of neglecting to guard your heart. The entrance to a man’s heart is through his mind. As you are working to produce change in your life, Satan is working on you to keep you from changing into the person God desires you to be.

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“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy....” (John 10:10)

There are three “gates” through which Satan can gain entrance to the mind:

- 1) The “**mouth-gate**” – ***“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth...”*** (Ephesians 4:29)
- 2) The “**eye-gate**” – ***“And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you...”*** (Matthew 18:9)
- 3) The “**ear-gate**” – ***“Apply your heart to instruction, and your ears to works of knowledge.”*** (Proverbs 23:12)

You have to take responsibility for what you say, for what you feast your eyes upon and for what you allow your ears to hear. If you are attempting to change, but continue to speak evil, watch violence, read pornographic literature or listen worldly music, you will fail.

“...whatsoever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.” (Galatians 6:8)

Satan is looking for any way to gain entrance to your heart. Most often it is through compromise. If we say, “That movie is not so bad,” or “I can look at those pornographic pictures and it will be okay because I’m not going to do anything about it,” or “It’s just a harmless joke,” then we have compromised the Word of God and

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given Satan permission to gain entrance. Whatever we give attention to will ultimately produce similar results, if not immediately, sometime in the future. There is a saying that came as a result of the development of the computer that says: “Garbage in, garbage out.” This saying also applies to us. If you are not seeing the changes in your life that you would like, it may be because you have not changed what you give attention to.

Guarding the entrances to your heart takes commitment and discipline, especially in today’s world where the media is an important part of our lives. As parents and grandparents, your responsibility is even greater today to protect your children from the evil that is prevalent on the TV and Internet. Satan is out to get your children!

In the process of renewing your mind and changing, it is important to set up boundaries for yourself in order to guard the entrances of your heart. Know what you can look at with your eyes. Learn to turn the TV off! Know what you should allow yourself to hear. Walk away from bad jokes or foul language. Stop listening to worldly music. Be careful how you speak. Drop the negativism and the gossip! Stop buying those cigarettes. Don’t hang around people that are still practicing bad habits and evil deeds. If you change your conduct, you will stop falling back into the old habits. Guard the entrances of your heart!

***“With my whole heart I have sought You;
Oh let me not wander from Your
commandments! Your word I have hidden in my
heart, That I might not sin against you.”***
(Psalm 119:10-11)

- **Step 8. Defend Your Mind Against the Old Thoughts.**

This step demands that you come to the defense of your mind. After you were born again, did you have to still deal with all the old thoughts? This step talks about you coming to the defense of your mind. One of the most powerful weapons that Satan and his demons use against you is the power of suggestion. If he has used something against you in times past that worked, you can be sure that he will use the same suggestion again unless you have learned to take authority over it. He will come against you with the same old thoughts. The Bible tells us how we can defend our mind against old thoughts.

“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...” (II Corinthians 10:3-5)

Many people believe that they have no power over their thoughts. They believe that they are subject to their thoughts and have no control over them. They believe that cannot help the way they think and can do nothing about it. But the Word of God says differently. You must take your thoughts captive. The devil will come at you with negative thoughts such as: “You’re no good,” or “This sickness is going to kill you,” or “There is no way you will ever be able to quit smoking or drinking.” When that happens, you must take that thought, reject it, cast it down and refuse to entertain it. You must apply the Word of God to your

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thoughts. What does the Word of God say about your situation?

God has given you the authority and the power to capture every thought that argues or goes against the Word of God. We have authority to bring down every argument that contradicts the Word of God. For example, the Bible speaks about your “body” being the “temple of the Holy Ghost.” Then you have another thought that says, “There is nothing wrong with having sex outside of marriage as long as I use protection.” Who will protect you from God? Paul the Apostle tells us in II Corinthians 10:3-5 to take that thought that goes against the Word of God, arrest it and put it into prison! How do you do that?

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”
(Philippians 4:8)

Another key tool that you have at your disposal is to SPEAK the Word of God. You cannot think one thing and speak another at the same time. As an illustration, count from one to ten in your mind. While you are counting, speak your name out loud. What happened to your counting? When an evil thought comes to your mind, speak out the Word of God. That will capture the evil thought and bring it into submission to the Word of God. So when a thought contrary to the Word of God comes into your mind, open your mouth and declare His Word and His Will. The mind is a battlefield. You can help control your mind with your mouth. Don't wage a silent battle in your

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mind. Speaking interrupts your thought processes. Use confession to help keep your mind where it needs to be.

When the devil says, “You’re going to die from this sickness,” you say, “By the stripes of Jesus, I am healed. With a long life will God satisfy me. So devil you be quiet. I cast you down, I arrest you in the name of Jesus!”

Remember your authority as a child of God.

“I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means shall hurt you.”

(Luke 10:19)

When you use the tools that God has given you, you are defending your mind against the development of any thought patterns that go against His Word. Open your mouth and speak God’s truth:

- “I have been redeemed from destruction.”
- “I have abundant life.”
- “I am healed and prosperous.”
- “I am more than a conqueror through Christ who strengthens me.”
- “I belong to Christ, and He belongs to me!”

Don’t let evil thoughts attach themselves to you. If you do, more evil thoughts will come in and will develop into a pattern of thinking. Before you know it, you will have a stronghold in your mind preventing you from doing God’s will. Defend your mind against your old thoughts. Pull that evil thought down – you are no longer that old person anymore. You are a new creation!

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.”

(II Corinthians 5:17)

- **Step 9. Think Success, Talk Success, and Walk Success.**

In spite of all your past failures, you can think success, talk success and walk success.

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

(Philippians 4:13)

The Bible speaks of having faith like the size of a mustard seed. Anything small that is cultivated in good soil will become huge.

Nehemiah was a man of prayer who wept when he heard about the broken walls of Jerusalem. In studying the book of Nehemiah you will discover 7 factors that caused Nehemiah to do what others thought, said and predicted he wasn't able to do. These same seven factors will cause you to prosper if you apply them to your life.

1. **DREAM** – When Nehemiah learned of the broken walls of Jerusalem, he had a dream of doing something about it. This dream caused him to spend many days fasting and praying to God, crying out on behalf of the people in repentance for their wicked ways and asking God for mercy.

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“So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. And I said: ‘I pray, Lord God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, please let your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You...grant him mercy in the sight of this man.’”
(Nehemiah 1:4-6, 11)

If you want to succeed in anything in life, you must have a dream.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish...”
(Proverbs 29:18)

A dream must be cultivated. It must be lived. It must be believed. It doesn't just happen. For example, when I started out in ministry, one of the dreams I had for the ministry was to have a Christian school. For a short while, it seemed that it would never materialize. However, while studying the Word of God, I learned that I could only receive when I believed.

“For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘be thou removed and be cast into the sea,’ and believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.”
(Mark 11:23)

So I wrote the vision down on paper and started confessing: “I am going to have a school. I am going

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to have a school.” Everywhere I went I said, “I am starting a Christian school.” Every time I prayed I said: “Thank you, Lord, for the Christian school.” After a while, I knew I would have a Christian school, even though nothing yet had materialized in the natural. A dream must first be birthed in the spirit, before it can become a natural reality. Nobody has ever done anything big for God or for man unless they have been consumed by a dream. My dream for a Christian school did materialize and was very successful.

As a word of caution, be careful whom you share your dream with. Avoid negative people who will not or cannot believe with you. These are people who are “wet blankets” who will attempt to put out the fire of your belief or dream. It is important also that your dream is of God and not something borne out of selfish motives.

2. **DESIRE** – Nehemiah’s dream had so consumed him that it became his desire. This desire was expressed in his request to the king:

“If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.”
(Nehemiah 2:4)

Nehemiah’s desire was to be used of God to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. When you dream long enough, that dream becomes an overwhelming desire. When you have a desire and that desire is of God, you will do everything in your power to make it come to pass.

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“Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4)

As you delight in the Lord he puts His desires for you into your heart. In the earlier years of my ministry, I desired to start a Bible college. I had a dream for a Bible college for such a long time that it became an overwhelming desire. I had to do something about it. Even though there were many challenges along the way, I was determined to fulfill that desire. I pursued the desire in every way I could until it came to fruition in September of 1979. To be a success, it is important to pursue your desires, believing God to guide you and provide for you along the way, never giving up!

3. **DECISION** – Nehemiah made a decision to do something about the walls of Jerusalem. He could have just wept and prayed that something be done about the walls of Jerusalem. Instead, he made a decision to do something. He took action and went the king with his request.

“And I said to the king, ‘ If it please the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the provinces beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king’s forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress which is by the temple, for the wall of the city, and for the house to which I will go.’ And the king granted them to me because the good hand of my God was on me.” (Nehemiah 2:7-8)

I admire people who say, “I have decided to do this or do that,” and then go ahead and do it. It’s a sign

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of character and integrity. If God has called you to do something, then you need to take whatever steps necessary to do it. If you do what you know to do, God will give you the provision and ability. For example, has God called you to the ministry? Then go ahead and enroll in Bible college, or take some correspondence courses, etc. Prepare yourself. Sitting and waiting is a waste of precious time.

If you don't have a dream, ask God to give you one. Let that dream become a consuming desire and then make a decision to do something about it. Develop a plan; set goals for yourself. The Amplified Bible says:

“A man’s mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps and makes them sure.”

(Proverbs 16:9)

4. **DARE** – Do something you have never done before. Dare means to be courageous enough to try something new or different. Don't be afraid to take a risk or to “dare” God for something that seems impossible.

Nehemiah “dared” to do something seemingly impossible. Chapter 2: 11-16 of Nehemiah speaks of his going out in the night by himself, having told no one what God had put in his heart, to view the destruction of the walls of Jerusalem. It must have been overwhelming to him, and it probably appeared to be an impossible task. However, he had the courage to go to the Jews, the priests, the nobles and officials with the challenge.

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“Then I said to them, ‘You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach.’”

(Nehemiah 2:17)

Strive on becoming a person who is not afraid to “dare” God. He looks for people with faith, who have courage and never give up. Anybody can quit. When things get tough, you fight harder. There’s a saying, “*When the going gets tough, the tough get going!*” I don’t believe in quitting, and I don’t believe in compromising. I believe that if the true church of God would rise up and have the courage to do what seems impossible, we would see a greater manifestation of the Kingdom of God on this earth. We would see the harvest come in. And we would see the return of Jesus!

I dare you to do what you can’t do. I dare you to have the largest Sunday school. I dare you to have the largest bus ministry. I dare you to promote and evangelize your city for God. Let me challenge you to DARE to do what God has put in your heart. With God all things are possible!

5. **DEDICATION** – Once you have decided to do something for God that you have never done before and are willing to have the courage to go forth, then you must be dedicated to your dream. Dedication means to commit yourself to a certain course or action. Without dedication, nothing can be accomplished.

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do with all your might...”

(Ecclesiastes 9:10)

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This Scripture should be lived by every Christian from the day he or she receives Christ. Only if we really mean it, and are willing to dedicate ourselves to it, will we change our cities, our nation and the world for God.

Nehemiah was dedicated to his dream of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem.

“So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a mind to work.” (Nehemiah 4:6)

You might ask, “So what happens if I fail?” If you worry about failing, you already have. Make no provision for failure. Instead, make provision for growth. It is regrettable that today’s world capitalizes on failure. All you need to do is watch the daily newscasts. Whatever evil is done, whatever harm comes to someone, whoever in the public eye gets a divorce or commits adultery, that’s what you see in the news. Do something good and worthwhile, and it’s not newsworthy. We need to be success conscious, not failure conscious. Someone once said to me, “You strike me as being a poor loser.” Look at what is happening today. Churches are losing families; families are losing children; children are losing their dignity through drugs, alcohol and illicit sex. Yes, I would say I am a poor loser! Proper dedication will ensure that you will be successful in whatever your dream is. We at RCCM are dedicated to be winners!

- 6. DIRECTION** – It is important to continue in the direction that the Lord gives you. Stay focused on that dream. Nehemiah had to contend with distraction and

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opposition while the wall was being rebuilt. Chapter 6 of Nehemiah describes the conspiracy that came against him by his enemies. But he refused to become disheartened or distracted from the direction that the Lord had given him.

“Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, ‘Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plan of Ono.’ But they sought to do me harm.

So I sent messengers to them, saying, ‘I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?’” (Nehemiah 6:1-3)

The opposition against Nehemiah became great, but he refused to abandon the direction God had given him.

How many preachers today get distracted from the call of God on their lives, namely the Great Commission, the salvation of mankind. So many have become so involved in social, environmental and political issues, that they forget the heartbeat of God, which is the salvation of souls. Those issues may not be wrong, but they must not become priority or get us off course if we are to fulfill what God has commanded us to do. We must stay in the right direction. We must preach the Gospel and disciple God’s people. We must keep our focus on the direction God has given us in His Word.

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“For God will bring every work into judgment including every secret thing, whether good or evil.”

(Ecclesiastes 12:14)

7. **DEVOTION** – To be devoted means give or apply your time and attention to the task at hand. It requires a sense of loyalty. In reading the story of Nehemiah, you will note that he was completely devoted to rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. He let nothing deter him or prevent him from what God had given him to do.

“So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days. And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.”

(Nehemiah 6:15-16)

I want you to know that I am not a genius. I don't have the eloquence of some great orator. I don't have the brilliant mind that some others do. In the natural sense, I am not greatly gifted. But what I can do is DREAM BIG and as big as any who are geniuses or highly talented. I can desire, I can decide and I can dare. I can receive direction from the Lord. And I can be dedicated and devoted to the work at hand.

It does not require talent to be devoted to God's purposes and plans. What it does require is WORK. Success is not wrapped up in being brilliant or eloquent. Success is rolling up your sleeves and getting busy for God. Follow His footsteps and don't let anyone change your thinking or your dreams. Only have a renewed mind according to His Word. Hard work and devotion are the key to success in Christian growth.

“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” (Colossians 3:17)

- **STEP 10. Be Selective About What You Expose Yourself To.**

When you are going through changes, you must be selective.

- **Be Selective About Whom You Associate With.**

You cannot associate with anyone and everyone.

“Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’ Awake to righteousness, and do not sin...”
(I Corinthians 15:33)

In other words, awake or have your mind come to a new understanding about whom you hang around with. For example, if you were formerly a drug addict, you cannot afford to hang around with people to use drugs. You must be selective. Your former drug friends may not understand. But it is better to lose some “friends” rather than be drawn back into that sinful lifestyle. Remember that misery loves company, and if you try to retain those friendships that brought you down in the first place, you will only be brought down again.

You are in the process of change, and your flesh is weak. You will undoubtedly fall if you don’t use wisdom about your associations. If you were an alcoholic, don’t

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hang around those who drink. If your weakness was immorality, don't associate with men or women who have no scruples about that lifestyle. Also, do not hang around with carnal Christians who have no desire to grow or change, who have no vision, no destiny or no excitement about the things of God. You need to be in fellowship with other Christians who are serious about their walk with God.

- **Be Selective About The Places You Go.**

You just cannot go anywhere you wish. You are trying to change. You cannot walk into some club and say, "Oh well, the Lord led me here to witness to some people." That's just an excuse for not wanting to change your ways. Some people are seen at places that are questionable, where they know they shouldn't be seen. And when they are "caught" there, both parties suffer embarrassment as a result. Another excuse is, "Well I need to go there because I know people there and it makes me feel important to be known." Your worth is not measured by who knows you. When you became a child of God, you were already important in His eyes. After all, He sent His son to die for you.

You also need to be selective about what church you go to. Every church is not the same. You need to be sure you attend a church that preaches the uncompromised Word of God and not some "watered-down" gospel.

"Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons..."

(I Timothy 4:1)

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It is sad to say that there are many churches that are preaching a “social gospel.” They are given to pleasing men rather than pleasing God. They preach and teach only what the people want to hear, giving no heed to the Word of God. As a result, lives are not changed. There is no spiritual maturity.

There is also a great danger in listening to every preacher on radio or TV. There are many false doctrines and incorrect teachings being broadcast, and they can cause great confusion. Just because someone is called Reverend, or Pastor, or Bishop, doesn't mean they know what they are talking about.

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.”
(Matthew 7:15)

It's important to be careful which “word” you hear. Just because a man or woman appears to have great knowledge and speak with great eloquence or clarity, does not mean they know the Word of God. Know the credentials and observe the fruit of those you listen to. Is the person who is trying to teach you prosperity constantly broke and having financial problems? Is the one who is teaching healing constantly sick? Be careful of who you listen to. Almost everyone has challenges in the area of finances and health from time to time. What we are referring to here are those who have not learned God's principles and how to apply them to their own lives. Many people know how to “talk the talk”, but have not learned to “walk the walk.”

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- **Be Selective About Whom You Spend Your Time With.**

Are you believing God for a mate? Then be selective about whom you spend your time with. If someone wants to spend time with you, ask some pertinent questions; i.e., “Are you born again? Are you involved in a local church body? Are you actively in the process of renewing your mind? How have you changed as a result of renewing your mind? Or have you changed at all?” Many a woman has found herself in great trouble because she married a man who claimed to be born again and then found out that man had no interest in serving the Lord. You have to ask, “What kind of “born again” are you? What kind of Christian do you profess to be?”

- Christian No. 1: There are those that are “born again” in title only, but have no interest in serving the Lord or renewing their mind with the Word of God.
- Christian No. 2: There are those that are “born again”, who show up in church on Sunday, but still have no interest in serving the Lord or renewing their mind with the Word of God.
- Christian No. 3: Then there are those who are “born again” and are willing to serve the Lord. They are actively and consistently renewing their mind and are willing to change according to the principles of God’s Word.

Before accepting a date, it’s a good idea to ask: “Are you Christian No.1, Christian No 2, or Christian No. 3?” If you are wise, you will only spend time with a

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Christian No. 3! This is a serious thing. You are allowing someone into your life, your heart and your future. If that person is not renewing their mind and is unwilling to grow and change through the Word, whatever struggles they have will become your struggles. And if you struggle with the same issues, you both get bigger problems.

I believe one of the greatest tricks of the devil in these times is to deceive people into choosing the wrong mate. If he is able to do so, that poor individual will never realize their full potential of what God has called them to be or do. Don't be afraid of hurting someone's feelings by being selective. Also, don't fall into the trap of "missionary dating": "It's okay if I go out with that person. I can change him or her. I can lead him or her to the Lord." Or worse, "I know he or she has a problem with sexual sin, or alcohol, or drugs. Since I had that problem before I was saved, I can understand and provide help." That is wrong thinking and will get you into big trouble. Don't hang around with people that have the same sin or addictions that you did. The temptation to fall back into that sin will be too great. (This does not refer to belonging to "support groups" where people of like weaknesses gather together who are committed to changing and helping each other to change.)

Better to be SELECTIVE NOW than SORRY LATER.

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?”

(II Corinthians 6:14-15)

- **STEP 11. Disassociate From the Past.**

If you are going to change and grow, it is very important that you disassociate from the past.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.”
(II Corinthians 5:17)

“...knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.”
(Romans 6:6)

Disassociating with the past is not something that happens easily. You must set your mind to do it. It is human nature to try to hang on to what is familiar. But it can be disastrous if you are trying to change. You might feel “comfortable” with some of the old ties, but you will never get to the place where God wants to take you. It would be wonderful if all your old friends became born-again Christians with the same direction and goals. There is the temptation to continue to spend time with those you enjoy, but if they are not willing to follow Christ, they will ultimately drag you back into the old lifestyle. They will continue to influence you in the “old ways.”

Look at what Paul had to say in the Word of God:

“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead.”
(Philippians 3:13)

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He said he had not apprehended or captured anything, except for one thing. And that was to forget those things that were behind and to reach for those things that were ahead. Consider Paul's past. He was a highly educated man, well versed in Scripture and a Pharisee. He also was a persecutor and a murderer of Christians. After his life was transformed, he himself was persecuted and suffered beatings, shipwrecks, and torments. But he also did great exploits for the cause of Christ. Yet he did not consider any of it. He continued to look only to what was ahead. He did not look at his successes or failures, but only looked ahead.

You might have had a past steeped in sin. You may have been abused as a child. Or you may have been very successful in business or a great athlete. We are talking about not only what was bad, but also what you thought was good. Now you are a "new creation." You must learn to look ahead in all areas of your life. Start fresh; give yourself a new beginning. Forget yesterday and reach to a new day. Make a clean cut from the past and change your ways.

The Bible tells the story of the children of Israel who continuously rebelled and complained against God. As a result, they were not permitted to enter into the Promised Land.

“And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness,

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all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above.”

(Numbers 14:26-29)

The root of rebellion had to be cut off; otherwise that same rebellious spirit would have entered into the Promised Land and infected the next generation. This is an example of how destructive the past can be. If the root of sin, or bitterness, or abusiveness remains, we cannot come to maturity in Christ. The Word of God tells us we are to “put off the old self.”

“But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.”

(Colossians 3:8)

For some of us it's graduation time! There is something better ahead than what you are accustomed to. Paul said, “I have this one thing to do: I must forget about the past and reach for the things that are ahead of me.” If you are honest with yourself, the so-called “good old days” weren't so good after all. If they were so good, God would have kept them around. You cannot “correct” the past, but you can let go of it. You also need to let go of the crutches such as; “if only I had a good father,” or “if only I hadn't been abused,” or “if only I had a better education,” or “if only I had married someone else.” This type of thinking must be done away with. Today is a new day, and God is here to help you move on to a brighter future.

Oftentimes, it is also necessary to disassociate from friends of the past if you really want to change. If they were a negative influence in the past, they will continue to be a negative influence unless they too get saved, baptized

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in the Holy Ghost, and make a decision to renew their minds.

You also must abandon your old way of doing things. After the death of Jesus, Peter attempted to return to his “old” profession of fishing. And he caught nothing.

“Simon Peter said to them, ‘I am going fishing.’ They said to him, ‘We are going with you also.’ They went out and immediately got in the boat, and that night they caught nothing.” (John 21:3)

The story goes on to say that Jesus came along and told them to go out again and cast out their nets. They caught more fish than their nets could hold. Then Jesus gave Peter his “new profession.”

“...Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.’ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.” (John 21: 17-18)

This is certainly not to say that everyone who is born again must change his or her professions. But rather you must be willing to let go of certain things and follow God’s direction for your life. This is the only way to find fulfillment, satisfaction and blessings for your life.

The Bible is very specific about not looking back or longing to go back.

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“Say not thou, ‘What is the cause that the former days were better than these?’ For thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.” (Ecclesiastes 7:10)

There is nothing from the past that is greater than the redemption our Lord has already provided for us, or the future, which holds a destiny beyond our imaginations!

“I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus!”
(Philippians 3:14)

- **STEP 12. Be Open to Correction and Be Teachable.**

In order to be changed or have your mind renewed, you must be open to correction and be teachable.

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him, for who the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.” (Hebrews 12:5-6)

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor detest His correction; For whom the Lord loves, he corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.” (Proverbs 3:11-12)

A man or a woman who makes excuses about not changing or receiving correction is unteachable. If every time somebody tries to correct you and you make excuses,

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you are unteachable. If every time the Word of God tries to correct you and you make excuses, you are unteachable. If every time the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin and you make excuses, you are unteachable.

How many times have you read the Word of God and it “hits you right between the eyes?” Are you willing to receive its instruction? It is sad to say that many people receive instruction from the Word on a Sunday morning, and by the time they get to the parking lot after the service is over, they’ve forgotten it. The devil immediately comes to steal that word from their heart. The word that is received on Sunday morning needs to take hold in your heart. That is why it is important not to leave the service early, but rather wait until the pastor has made declaration and prayed the benediction thereby sealing that information in your heart. There is a blessing attached to the benediction at the end of the service, and only those present for it will receive the blessing.

It is also important not to leave the service early because of the distraction it causes to others. A person sitting close to you may be on the edge of making a decision for Christ, and then be distracted from it by your leaving the church early. There is a divine order in a church service, and we must submit to that order and to the authority of the pastor. It is disrespectful to the Holy Spirit and to the pastor to disrupt a service by leaving early, unless of course, there is an emergency.

In regards to receiving correction, God often uses spouses to bring correction.

“As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” (Proverbs 27:17)

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How many men are willing to receive correction from their wives? Many times God will give them wisdom for you and you need to be willing to receive it. We need to be willing to receive correction. At the same time, we need to be cautious about running around and correcting everybody we see. We must refrain from becoming judgmental; rather we must judge ourselves first.

I have a serious problem when people tell me they love me, and then when they see I'm doing something wrong, won't speak to me about it.

“Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed.”
(Proverbs 27:5)

It must be pointed out, however, that it is not up to the “sheep” to correct the “shepherd.” If you see your pastor or elder in error, it is not up to you to do the correcting.

“...Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm.”
(Psalm 105:15)

Rather, you should speak quietly about the matter to another pastor or elder of the church, and then leave the matter with that person. It is your responsibility to pray for your pastor that the Lord would change what needs to be changed. As a pastor, I am submitted to other pastors. They have corrected me when I've needed it. It certainly doesn't feel good when it happens, but if I humbly receive it and act upon it, it will produce a change in me that will allow me to grow.

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“If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of Spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

(Hebrews 12:7-11)

As part of your process of change, you must learn to depend upon God and other members of the Body of Christ for support. You cannot change yourself by yourself. If you try to change by yourself, you will end up in deception. Realize that God is your source, and surround yourself with mature believers. Build yourself a support base. You need to be disciplined. For example, if you have a problem with drugs, be disciplined by someone who has been delivered, healed and totally set free from drugs. That person will understand where you are at and what you need to do to be set free.

Get a support system going. You cannot look to the eldership or pastor to receive all you need. Let others feed you, especially those who have an understanding of your situation. It is very dangerous to isolate yourself. That is a tool of the enemy to lead you into deception. You cannot say, “Well there’s no one to help me.” Be loyal to the person who led you to the Lord and look for someone who has already been where you are to help you.

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While it is true that God is your source, He uses His people. The Body of Christ is God's hands extended. We need to get over the fear of discipling people. As part of the Great Commission, the Lord instructed us to make disciples.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19)

While it is true that a healthy church gets its vision and direction from leadership, every member should be involved in feeding each other or involved in discipleship. For example, a Sunday school superintendent should be feeding the Sunday school teachers; department heads should feed each other and their staff, etc. People need to have a heart for growth and be willing to be part of a “whole,” and not be an entity unto themselves. There is one body and we are all members.

“...so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them...” (Romans 12:5-6)

We need to get into discipleship. You should not say, “I am going to be my own person;” or “I don't need anybody;” or “I prefer to be independent.” As a Christian, that really means you are committing to a life of bondage, loneliness and isolation. We need God and we need each other. God designed it that way. If you think you just need the Lord without the discipleship, it's like going through a revolving door – you go through the door of salvation, but you come back out into your former world without a

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renewed mind or changed life. We need to spend time being discipled so that we can grow and then disciple others. By doing so you will grow to a greater dimension. As we give to others what we have learned, we will grow into maturity in the Lord.

“...but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.”

(II Peter 3:18)

VI. The Control Center of Your Life...

- **What is it?**

The control center of your life is your mind. If you can control your mind, you can control your life. You can control your destiny. You only get out of life what you think and say about yourself.

“...What comes out of a man, that defiles a man.”
(Mark 7:20)

Many people don't understand why we want to live right, and it's because they don't understand the future. If they were to understand the future glories and rewards and the eternal glories, they too would want live holy and righteous.

“For now we are looking in a mirror that gives only a dim (blurred) reflection [of reality as in a riddle or

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enigma], but then [when perfection comes] we shall see in reality and face to face!" (I Corinthians 13:12 Amp.)

Although we don't see clearly now, when the Righteous One comes, we will understand such Scriptures as Romans 8:28, ("*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose*"); and Genesis 50:20, ("*But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good...*").

To clearly comprehend the need to renew our minds, we must have a revelation of what it is that controls our lives.

"Were there is no vision [no redemptive revelation of God], the people perish..." (Proverbs 29:18 Amp.)

We all need a "redemptive revelation of God" with regard to our thinking process. We all need to see things as God sees them. We all need transformation and change in our lives.

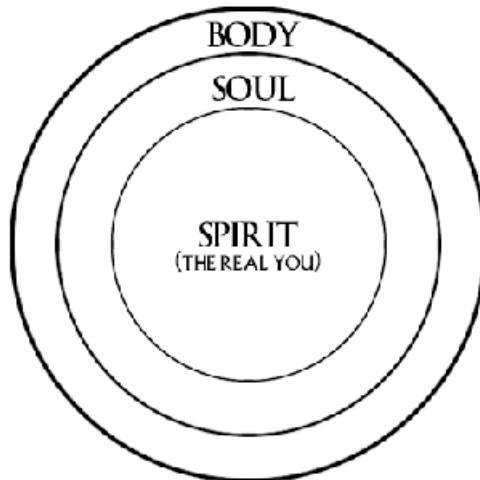
"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Thessalonians 5:23)

This Scripture says, "the God of peace." What then does "peace" mean? It means much more than lack of conflict or war. It means wholeness, nothing missing and nothing broken. The Word says that God wants nothing in our spirit, soul or body to be broken in any way. He wants every part of our being to be in "one piece."

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This Scripture also teaches us that we are a tri-part being. Just as God is a tri-part being (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit), we also are made up of three components.

1. We are a Spirit. This is how we are born. We are born out of the Spirit of God. As God is a Spirit, we also are spirits made in God's image. "*Let Us (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) made man in Our image, according to Our likeness.*" (Genesis 1:26)
2. We possess a Soul. This is comprised of our mind, will and emotions. The mind is where your thought process is. Your will is where you make your choices in life. Your emotions contain your feelings.
3. We live in a Body.



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The soul is made up of the “thinker,” the “chooser” and the “feeler”. But they exist in the physical body. The body and the soul make up the “flesh.” When you become born again, it is the spirit that is saved. Your spirit man dies, and the Spirit of the Living God comes to dwell in you. But the flesh (the body and the soul) is unsaved. This is what the Bible refers to when it says we are to work out our salvation.

“...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...” (Philippians 2:12)

It is the mind that must be renewed so that the body can be brought into subjection to the Will of God. It is the mind that is the control center of your life.

The day you were saved, the Holy Spirit came into your life and now indwells your spirit. Being a spirit, the Holy Spirit cannot communicate with your soul or your body. Therefore, he communicates directly with your spirit. Now that you have the Holy Spirit, He wants to guide you and lead you into all truth. Your spirit man has been recreated and is now perfect. It is flawless. But this union did not affect your soul or your body.

The Bible says that our whole spirit, soul and body are to be preserved blameless. The problem with your spirit man was resolved when you became born again. It is not your spirit that needs to be renewed. It is your mind.

“Therefore, we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.” (II Corinthians 4:16)

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Our bodies are getting older and older every day. But our inward man is being renewed day by day. Our bodies as we know them will die. But the spirit and soul will live forever. And as your spirit man has already been recreated, it's the mind that needs the work.

“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”

(Proverbs 23:7)

There is a connection between the “thinker” and the spirit man. Many assume that the spirit man all by himself makes up the “heart.” But that is not exactly true. The heart of man is made up of both his spirit and his soul. It is the spirit man part of the heart that is saved, but the soul part must be renewed. According to the Scripture, man thinks in his heart. However, it is not the spirit man part of the heart that thinks, but rather the soul (mind) part.

“Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’

(Matthew 22:37)

The Holy Spirit comes in to make man's spirit perfect. Now the challenge is to get the soul and the body to line up with the recreated spirit man. For example, the recreated spirit man says, “I'm going to pray for one hour.” The body says, “I want to sleep for an extra hour.” Who is responsible for making the decision? It's the mind part of the soul that makes that decision. Now if the mind has not been renewed with the Word of God, it is not going to make the right decision.

We need to learn to follow our recreated spirit. However, we will continue to allow our mind to control us unless we renew it with the Word of God. The spirit says,

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“We refuse to live in sin. We are going to walk in holiness and abstain from sexual lust.” The body says, “Love them and leave them. What will it hurt?” But the decision will come through the mind. What will it choose? If it has been renewed with the Word, it will follow the spirit. If not, it will follow the body. If you properly renew your mind with the Word of God you will make the right decisions and your body will have to follow. And it will be a witness to your spirit that you have done the right thing.

Your soul is the bridge between the spiritual or supernatural realm and the physical realm.

“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.” (III John 2)

God created you so that you can contact the spiritual realm through your spirit, and the physical realm through your soul. In order for God to give you what He wants to give you (i.e., prosperity and health), He has to go through the “bridge” of your soul. The key to prosperity lies in the control center, which is your mind. In other words, it is up to you to determine whether you are prosperous or healthy. It is the Will of God for you to prosper and be in good health even as your soul prospers. But it doesn’t happen automatically. What is a prosperous soul? It is one that has been renewed by the Word of God. Without that renewal, you cannot have true prosperity or divine health.

An unrenewed mind will always follow the desires of the flesh. The reason why God wants us to have renewed minds is so that you will have a prosperous soul that will follow the spirit, and follow God’s perfect will for your life. This is where true peace is; nothing missing,

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nothing broken. When your mind is renewed, you will put down the flesh. Your mind will follow the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will lead you and guide you into all truth. Other's opinions, or popularity, or majority thinking will not lead you. There will be no confusion, no deception, no depression, and no half-truths.

The key to wholeness (nothing missing, nothing broken) lies in the compartment of your soul. A prosperous soul is a soul that will make decisions according to the recreated spirit man versus the natural man or the flesh. When your soul lines up with your spirit man, then it is prosperous. If your soul is not prospering, you will not be prosperous or healthy. You will not have peace because something will be missing or broken.

As an illustration, let's look at the computer. A computer may be perfectly made. But if it does not have the proper software programmed into it, it will not operate perfectly. There is a saying, "Garbage in, garbage out." The same holds true for the control center of our life. If we "program" our minds with negativity, or pornography, or any kind of perversion, that is what will come out. If you "program" your mind with the Word of God, prosperity and good success will be produced.

"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Romans 8:5)

It is God's desire for us to have our spirit, soul and body line up with the Word of God. It is only then will we be able to live in true prosperity. Although our present

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body is getting older and will eventually die (that is, of course, if Jesus doesn't come back beforehand), it will be resurrected when Jesus comes. We will have new bodies that are incorruptible. We will be made, not of flesh and blood, but of flesh and bones. Our bodies will be glorified. Our lives will no longer be in the blood, but in God's glory. You will no longer be subject to this physical, natural world because you will be in a glorified state.

The more you renew your mind, the more your body will come into submission. When that submission takes place, you'll notice an alignment with the Word that will cause you to be prosperous in your soul and healthy in your body. Here is the key: Only the Word of God can renew your soul man. It will renew the way you think, the way you choose and the way you feel. Without the Word, you will continue to live the same life you had before you were saved. You will continue to have ups and downs, depression, rebellion, confusion, turmoil, etc. When you renew your mind with the Word, your spirit will speak to the soul and the soul will speak to your body. You will have complete transformation in your life. You will think as the Holy Spirit thinks. You will speak as He speaks. And you will act as He acts.

- **What is a “carnal” mind?**

The word carnal means “from the flesh.” To be carnally minded means to be governed by human nature. It means to follow the “flesh man.” When you are carnal, you are governed by fleshly desires that are born out of the unrenewed mind with no thought of God, His Holy Spirit or of any eternal values.

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“...the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

(Romans 8: 7-8)

An unrenewed mind is always in conflict. It is interesting to note that Golgotha, the place where Jesus was crucified, actually means “place of the skull.” The first place of conflict is always in the mind. It is a battlefield. An uncrucified thought life is Satan’s playground. Satan dwells wherever there is spiritual darkness. To defeat the devil, we must be renewed in the spirit of our minds. We must crucify our carnality.

How can we determine if we have a carnal mind? The following Scripture illustrates what is carnal.

“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able, for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?” (I Corinthians 3:1-3)

The Bible further lists for us the works of the carnal mind (or flesh).

“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness (licentiousness), idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like, just as I also told you in time past,

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that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:19-21)

The following defines those works in more detail.

- **Adultery** - Sex with someone outside your marriage covenant.
- **Fornication** - Sex before marriage.
- **Uncleanness** - Impure, vile or obscene thoughts or practices.
- **Licentiousness** - (Lewdness) Morally unrestrained.
- **Idolatry** - Excessive devotion to some person or thing anything that comes before God.)
- **Sorcery** - Magic, witchcraft, rebellion.
- **Hatred** - Strong dislike or ill will towards someone.
- **Contentions** - Verbal strife, disputes, discord, argumentative, controversial.
- **Jealousies** - (Plural) Resentful, envious, “I have rights!”
- **Outbursts of Wrath** - Uncontrollable anger caused from within.
- **Selfish Ambitions** - Striving for development for selfish reasons or selfish gains. Compelling desire to surpass others.
- **Dissensions** - Inclined to argue, difference of opinion, disagreement.

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- **Heresies** - Any belief contrary to established Scriptural truth.
- **Envy** - Resentful, dislike of another who has something desirable.
- **Murders** - (plural) To kill someone unlawfully and maliciously in word or deed.
- **Drunkenness** - A selfish habit of being continually drunk.
- **Revelries** - Noise making, wild parties, always wanting to have fun.

...AND THE LIKE

Many Christians continue to be led by their flesh. They are unwilling to discipline themselves to renewing their minds by the Word of God. They blame their situations, circumstances, spouses or financial condition for their behavior. Or with statements such as “The devil made me do it.” They also use Scripture to justify their actions.

“For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate that I do...For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.” (Romans 7:15, 18-19)

Too many Christians choose to remain sin conscious, rather than make the effort to renew their minds. They “set their minds on the things of the flesh” (Romans

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8:5) rather than on the things of the Spirit. In other words, they make excuses for themselves. They prefer to gratify themselves by pursuing the things that are pleasing to their carnal nature. Those who set their minds on the things of the Spirit are seeking those things that gratify the Holy Spirit. Paul tells us in Romans that whatever you “set your mind” on is what is going to control you.

What kind of life you live is up to you. Will it be a spiritual life, which will bring prosperity and health, or will it be a carnal life, which will bring death to your soul and body? The Holy Spirit is not responsible to set your mind. Your prayer life won't set your mind. You have a free will. You must decide to set your mind on the things of the Spirit.

As an illustration, you decide to set your clock to wake you at a certain time each morning. Now if you don't want to get up at that same time tomorrow, you have the responsibility to change the clock. If you don't change the setting to a new time, you will still wake up at the old time.

The same holds true for the mind. If you don't decide to change what you set your mind to, the same old carnal thinking and habits will govern you. You will do the same things today as you did yesterday. You will do the same things tomorrow as you did today. The only way to change what you set your mind to is to renew it with the Word of God.

Your mind won't change by coming to church or paying your tithe. Your mind won't change by listening to sermon after sermon, no matter how good they are. You must set your mind on doing the Word of God in order to change your carnal mind.

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

Death is defined as separation. There are several kinds of death:

1. Physical Death – Separation of the physical body from the spirit or heart of man. The physical body dies and is buried.
2. Spiritual Death – Separation from God for eternity. This means you (your spirit and soul) are going to hell. Until you are born again, you are spiritually dead. If you die physically without being born again, you are going to hell. (Please realize that God did not create hell for man. It was created for Satan and his demons. God does not send anyone to hell. We have the free will to choose whether we spend eternity with God or in hell with Satan.)

There is also another “death” that we aren’t always aware of that is just as real as physical and spiritual death. This death is described in the story of the prodigal son in the 15th chapter of the book of Luke. The prodigal son asked his father for his inheritance and then proceeded to “take leave of his senses” and give in to his carnal flesh. He wasted his possessions in riotous living. The Bible describes him as being “dead” (“...*for this my son was dead...*” verse 24). It was a death that came about when he took himself out from under the protection and provision and blessings of his life with his father.

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“But when he spent all, (his inheritance) there arose a severe famine in that land and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father...’”

(Luke 15:14-17)

So likewise, when you choose to remove yourself from the spiritual umbrella of the Father’s mandates (the Word of God) and live a life of carnality, you are like lost sheep. You are choosing death: death to God’s provision; death to God’s protection; and death to God’s blessings. The Lord Jesus Christ, through His redemptive work of the cross, has provided you with healing, deliverance, prosperity, restoration, provision and protection. You have a legal right to these things as born-again believers. But if you choose to live a carnal life, one more interested in the things of the flesh than of the Spirit, you will not receive what you have a right to. You will continue to live a life of failure and defeat. If you choose to operate in envy, strife and division, you separate yourself from God, thereby creating a blockage to receiving God’s gifts.

For example, you desire to have a new home. You pray for God to provide you with that home. In the meantime, God provides a beautiful new home to your friend. Instead of rejoicing with that person, you say, “God, why him and not me?” Because you have not received your new home right away, doesn’t mean God won’t provide it. He has a perfect time for you.

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You cannot pray for God's provision and then be jealous of a brother or sister that has been blessed by God. You need to rejoice with those who are blessed. When you are jealous, you bring death or separation from God's blessings.

The Bible tells us that pride goes before destruction. If you choose to continue in your own carnal thinking, not willing to submit yourself to God, you will end up in destruction; destruction in your health, finances, protection and family. But God desires to bless you and lift you up.

Humility is the stronghold of the godly. Humility involves surrendering your soul or mind to God. Whatever you surrender to God makes the devil tremble; because the very areas he once had access to now belongs to the Lord. Satan is terrified of Jesus, because Jesus defeated Him at the cross and took from him the keys to death.

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (I Peter 5:6)

Are you willing to humble yourself? Are you willing to “come to your senses” as the prodigal son did? Or do you want to continue in death? To rid yourself of that carnal thinking, you need to “reprogram” yourself with the Word of God. If you want something worthwhile, it will cost you something. It will cost you discipline, commitment and time well spent. If you want eternal dividends and blessings, you must commit yourself daily to spending time in the Word. Daily commitment to the Word will change the way you think and act, thereby positioning yourself to receiving God's best for your life. It is ultimately up to you.

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- **Setting your mind on God.**

God wants you to live your life with nothing missing, nothing broken, complete, whole and prosperous. That is true peace.

“Thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusts in Thee.”

(Isaiah 26:3)

You need to set your mind on the things of God. Too many Christians are still seeking after the things of the world to bring them peace and contentment. They seek after entertainment and relationships. They continue to be “glued” to the television. Many people are now hooked on the Internet and video games instead of giving time to God and His Word. If you want prosperity in your life, you need to focus your thoughts on prosperity. You need to read about prosperity in God’s Word. You need to associate with prosperous people. You need to be tenacious about receiving from God, never giving up, never letting go of the truth.

It’s time to get “fed up” with where you are at and go after the things of God. He wants you to move up in Him. He wants to give you all of His gifts. He wants to give you a greater revelation of who He is and how much He loves you. He wants you to have a better life, full of meaning and purpose. God said He would keep you in perfect wholeness, completeness, prosperity, nothing missing, nothing broken, if you would just keep your mind on Him.

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People often say, “Well, God will work it all out. God will take care of everything.” But what they don’t realize is that there is a “God-part” and there is a “man-part.” God has provided everything we need through His Son, Jesus. But we have to do our part. We have to take responsibility for our own peace. God said, “I will keep him in perfect peace.” But man must do his part by “keeping his mind stayed” on God. The Bible also tells us that the Word is God. The Word and God are one and the same.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (I John 1:1)

How do you keep your mind stayed on God? You keep your mind on the Word of God. God and His Word are one. If you determine to keep the Word of God in your mind and in your mouth, you will have perfect peace.

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” (Joshua 1:8)

- **Two ways of life contrasted.**

You can be saved and live with an unrenewed mind, or you can be saved and choose to renew your mind. Most people are deceived, not because they do not know the Word, because they don’t want to do the Word.

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” (James 2:26)

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If you ask the average person what was preached in church last Sunday, the majority will have forgotten. They may have heard the Word preached, but they did not receive it into their spirits. They may sing, or run around the church, or have an emotional experience, but then when it comes to the preaching of the Word, they fall asleep. It's no wonder there is no understanding about the anointing, about God's power, about the benefits of the Word. If you don't receive the Word, you will not act upon it. Your mind will remain unrenewed.

When you leave a service, you should ask yourself, "What have I learned? How can I benefit from the Word that was preached? Am I being built up to maturity? Do I have a greater understanding of the purpose for my life? What is my responsibility?"

To have a renewed mind means to be accountable to receiving the Word and acting on it. If you continue to remain sick, broke, depressed and living in defeat as a Christian, it is because you have not received and acted on the Word that has been given to you. If you want to receive that healing or financial blessing that you have been looking for, or if you want to learn about hearing from God and receiving fresh revelation for your life, you must receive and act on the Word that has already been given to you.

The Bible is full of illustrations of people who lived extraordinarily successful lives for God. Look at the life of David. Read the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego in the fiery furnace. Learn about the prayers that Daniel prayed and the words he proclaimed. Study about the life of faith of Abraham and about the obedience of

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Moses. God put these examples in the Word so that we could learn from them.

“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition...”
(I Corinthians 10:11)

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
(II Timothy 3:16)

If you need to learn how to walk by faith, how to pray, how to line your life up with the Word of God, how to sow seed, then you must fill your heart with the Word of God and act upon it. There is no other way. Make up your mind that you are not only going to hear what sounds good, but that you will receive that Word that will help you get to the place where you can receive the promises of God.

- **Control your mind – Control your destiny.**

The two walk hand in hand. You cannot control your destiny until you first learn how to control your mind.

“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 (vain imaginations) and every high things that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ...”
(II Corinthians 10:3-5)

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Regardless of what God says about you, or what people think and say about you, you will only get out of life what you believe and practice. The Bible says we are to cast down everything that goes against the knowledge of God. We are to bring our thoughts in line with the Word of God. We are to pull down the strongholds in our mind and any fixed ideas that we have that don't agree with the Word. Every thought that contradicts the Word is to be pulled down. You must say, "I don't think this way anymore. My mind has been renewed by the Word of God. My spirit has been reborn. I am a brand new person. I choose to think the way God thinks; to act the way God acts, because I have the "mind of Christ."

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God..." (Philippians 2:5-6)

Jesus taught us in the Gospel of Mark that every evil thing that comes out of you defiles you.

"And He said, What comes out of a man is what makes a man unclean and renders [him] unhallowed. For from within, [that is] out of the hearts of men, come base and wicked thoughts, sexual immorality, stealing, murder, adultery, coveting (a greedy desire to have more wealth), dangerous and destructive wickedness, deceit; unrestrained (indecent) conduct; an evil eye (envy), slander (evil speaking, malicious misrepresentation, abusiveness), pride (the sin of an uplifted heart against God and man), foolishness (folly, lack of sense, recklessness, thoughtlessness). All these evil [purposes and desires] come from within, and they make the man unclean and render him unhallowed."

(Mark 7:20-23Amp.)

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The uncleanness, defilement or pollution comes from within. But when we change our thinking through the process of renewing our mind with the Word, we will see a transformation in our thoughts, in what comes out of our mouths, and ultimately our actions.

What is the key to pulling down strongholds, pulling down polluted thoughts? The key is in the Book of Joshua.

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” (Joshua 1:8)

When you start to meditate on the Word, you push out the old thoughts and put in the new. To meditate is more than just contemplating what you are reading. It actually means to “mutter.”

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it eat the fruit thereof.” (Proverbs 18:21)

Not only do we need to think about the Word, we need to make sure that the Word comes out of our mouth. As you meditate on the Word, your behavior patterns will change and you will become prosperous and have good success.

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- **Feed your mind.**

We live in a day and age where many of us have unlimited resources to help us learn and grow. There are many ways we can feed on the Word of God.

1. READ – the Bible (every day) and good books based on Scripture.
2. LISTEN – to good teaching tapes and videos by respected Bible teachers who know how to rightly divide the Word of truth.
3. STUDY – using not only the Bible, but also good resources such as a Concordance and Bible dictionary. If you have a computer, there are many excellent Bible software programs that contain several translations of the Bible.
4. USE YOUR IMAGINATION to picture yourself as God sees you. Think about the desires God has placed in your heart. Do you desire to evangelize and win the lost to Christ? Do you see yourself teaching children, or ministering to the lonely? Imagine yourself serving God under the anointing. Imagine yourself operating in the gifts. Imagine winning souls. Imagine being prosperous and giving great amounts of finances for the Kingdom. The Bible tells us that as a man thinks so is he.

If you start to do these things and learn to be diligent in them, soon you will not even recognize yourself. Your vocabulary will be different. Your behavior and actions will be different. Your decisions will be different. You will become honest and open. You will become stable

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in all your ways. You will become a person of integrity. You will become a man of dominion or a woman of excellence.

God wants to move you from:

Barely **Surviving**

to:

Divine **Stability**

to:

Godly **Success**

to:

A Lifestyle of

Significance!

Prayer of Commitment...

“Heavenly Father,

I make a decision to commit my life to you. I decide to present my body as a living sacrifice to you, holy and acceptable to You. I choose not to be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of my mind, that I may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

I choose to cast down all evil thoughts and vain imaginations that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God. I choose to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and His Word. I choose to let no unwholesome or corrupt word proceed out of my mouth, but only what is good, not only for myself, but for all who hear.

I choose to meditate on Your Book of the Law day and night so that I may do what it says to do. I will hide Your Word in my heart so that I will not sin against you.

I ask You, Father, to fill me with the knowledge of Your will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that I may walk worthy of You, pleasing you in every respect, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of You.

I give you thanks, Father, for calling me out of darkness and into Your marvelous light so that I may proclaim your praises. In Jesus' Name. Amen *

* Romans 12:1-2; II Corinthians 10:5; Ephesians 4:29; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:11; Colossians 1:9-10; I Peter 2:9

Life Changing Declaration...

Step #1: For thirty days first thing in the morning, last thing at night, by yourself, in front of a mirror, stand up straight, square your shoulders, look yourself in the eye, and quietly, firmly say in the first person, present tense:

“I, _____, am an honest, intelligent, goal-directed, responsible individual with integrity, and am sensitive to the needs of others. I am an enthusiastic, decisive, self-starter with a positive mental attitude and am focused on the task at hand. I am a disciplined, persistent, caring, energetic, experienced, competent team player with the courage to take action and do what is right. I am a dependable, motivated, hardworking extra-miler.

“I am a humble, kind, personable, attentive, considerate, resourceful person who takes pride in my appearance and in what I do. I have a good sense of humor and a healthy self-image. I am a fair, patient, consistent, respectful encourager and student. I am a confident, optimistic, authoritative, creative, adaptable, sober, loyal, punctual, teachable person with strong convictions. I am an effective communicator with the vision, wisdom, and faith necessary to realize my dreams.

“I am an honorable person who is truly grateful for the opportunity life has given me and am committed to taking full advantage of that opportunity. These are the qualities of the winner I was born to be, and I am fully committed to developing these marvelous qualities with which I have been entrusted. Tonight I’m going to sleep wonderfully well. I will dream powerful, positive dreams. I will awaken energized and refreshed. Tomorrow’s going to be magnificent, and my future is unlimited!”

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Repeat the process the next morning and close by saying:

“These are the qualities of the winner I was born to be, and I will develop and use these qualities to achieve my worthy objectives. Today is a brand new day, and it’s mine to use in a marvelously productive way.”

After thirty days, add the next step:

Choose your strongest quality and the one you feel needs the most work. Example: **Strongest: Honest. Needs most work: Organized.** On a separate 3 x 5 card, print, **“I, _____, am a completely honest person, and every day I am getting better and better organized.”**

Do this first thing in the morning and last thing at night for one week; then repeat the process with the second strongest quality and the second one which needs the most work. Do this until you’ve completed the entire list. This process *will* change your life for the better.

Two thoughts:

1. Because of some painful experience in the past (betrayal, abuse, etc.), there might be a word or two, which brings back unpleasant memories (example: discipline). Eliminate the word or substitute another word.
2. Use this procedure as long as you want to get more of the things money and all of the things money won’t buy.®

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