

March 16, 2003

Week Twenty-Two: "Renewing the Mind"

Day One: Small Group Guide

Read: Romans 12:1-2 (p. 1295)

Read: Commentary (p. 1296)

Reflect: What habits of thought do you engage in that are destructive to your new life in Christ?

What ideas of our culture seep into your mind through media (TV, movies, songs)?

Dig: Read the last verses of chapter 11 (verses 28-36) to understand the "therefore" of chapter 12. What impresses you in this climax of the first 11 chapters of Romans?

Romans 12:1-2 is a conditional sentence. What must you do in order to know and delight in (approve of) the will of God?

How does 2 Corinthians 3:18 (p. 1330) shed light on how this transformation takes place?

Apply: What area of your life is still under the old way of thinking and acting? What is God calling you to quit conforming to? Ask him for the power today to take one more step to overcome and begin thinking new thoughts.

Week Twenty-Two: "Renewing the Mind"

Day Two: "Mental Strongholds"

Read: 2 Corinthians 10:1-5 (p. 1337)

Read: Commentary (p. 1338)

Reflect: If a pattern of thought or habit is followed for some time (six

weeks can do it) it can become a mental stronghold. What mental strongholds do you suspect have been established in your life?

Dig: How did Christ take thoughts captive in his battle with Satan? See Matthew 4:1-11 (p.1079).

What does Philippians 4:4-9 (p. 1371) teach us about taking thoughts captive? Can you state at least two concepts that are taught in this passage?

How does Paul begin this chapter? What does that tell you about how we are to fight this war?

Apply: Ask God to renew your mind today in this way: each time a thought comes to you that is of a temptation nature, take it captive to Christ's authority. Then rejoice that you need not be controlled by these thoughts!

Week Twenty-Two: "Renewing the Mind"

Day Three: "Letting Christ Rule in our Hearts"

Read: Psalm 119:1-16 (p. 671)

Read: Commentary (p. 670)

Reflect: In the battle for your mind and heart, what thoughts (pride, lust, anxiety, desire for riches) are keeping you from living life in freedom?

Dig: In verse 10 we have a thought expressed in the first line which is the ideal and then the second line expresses our human reality. How does this work out in your life?

What does it mean to "hide God's word in your heart"?

Compare this thought in verse 11 with Psalm 1:1-2. What did you learn?

With regard to God's law (way of life) what verbs are used to describe our heart's attitude toward God's way?

Apply: Using the illustration of the coffee pot and ice cube (see commentary on p. 670), what is God telling you about your thought life? Conclude by asking God to give you a heart to memorize scripture and thus defeat sin in your life.

Week Twenty-Two: "Renewing the Mind"
Day Four: "Choose the Truth"

Read: Philippians 4:4-9 (p. 1371)

Read: Commentary (p. 1370)

Reflect: How do you dispel darkness—in a room, in your soul?

Dig: In verses 6 and 7, in order to defeat anxiety in our lives, what is our part and what does God promise to do as a result?

What makes this section (verses 4-9) so powerful is in part is the circumstance that Paul was under when he wrote this letter. See the introduction on page 1364.

According to verse 8, would you say that the Bible teaches you that you can control your thoughts?

What does following a model have to do with thinking right? (see verse 9)

Apply: Since everything we do is a product of our thought life, what focus is God calling you to this day?

We win the battle of our minds by choosing truth: choose truth to meditate on today!

Week Twenty-Two: "Renewing the Mind"
Day Five: "Study God's Word"

Read: Ezra 7:8-10 (p. 514)

Read: Commentary (p. 515)

Reflect: When is the last time you really studied God's word? What did you learn?

Dig: What three things are recorded that Ezra did that are essential for renewing the mind? What order or progression do you see here? Why

might that be significant?

Notice the word "devoted." Look up Acts 2:42-47 (p. 1236) and notice how this word is used again. What were the results of this devotion in the church of that day?

Apply: What are you devoted to?

Ask God for a devotion to his word. What might answering that prayer mean for changes in your daily life?

Ask God for the power to make those changes.

Conclude with a reading of "Statement of Truth" number 7 on page 1513.