

# RENEW YOUR MIND

A Care + Counsel Resource

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## Have you discovered that your mind can have a mind of its own?

A mind that has a mind of its own is an unmanaged mind. And unmanaged mind leads to chaos - mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

### What consumes your mind?

<i>Regret</i>	<i>Bitterness</i>	<i>Lust</i>	<i>Anxiety</i>	<i>Resentment</i>	<i>Worry</i>
<i>Jealousy</i>	<i>Fear</i>	<i>Pride</i>	<i>Shame</i>	<i>Insecurity</i>	<i>Discouragement</i>
<i>Fantasy</i>	<i>Doubt</i>	_____			

*“As he thinks in his heart, so is he”*

Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV)

**What we think about, our brains become.** What we fixate on is neurologically who we will be. Our thoughts shape our emotions and our actions.

A unmanaged mind leads to chaos - mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. So, if you can manage your mind, you manage your life. It's simple, right?

There are countless self-help books written about how to manage your mind. Some include helpful tips and exercises. The problem is your mind doesn't need to be simply managed. It needs to be *transformed*.

Self-help books only help you be a better version of yourself. But Jesus transforms you into a whole new you.

You need to be *transformed by the renewing of your mind* if you want to have victory over anxiety, lust, alcohol, bitterness, and more.

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

Romans 12:2

# 1. Free Your Mind from Unhealthy Thinking

The first step to renewing your mind is to understand there is a battle in your mind. And you're not just facing one enemy, you're facing three enemies – the world, your flesh, and the devil.

## 3 Enemies Of Your Mind

**The World** – Romans 12:2 starts with “*don't be conformed to the pattern of this world.*”

What's the pattern of the world? It's the popular philosophies of the world like ...

- There is no God. You're the god of your life. This is humanism.
- Live for pleasure. Do whatever pleases you. This is hedonism.
- The more stuff you have the happier you will be. This is materialism.
- We determine our own meaning of life because human existence centers on the lived experience of thinking, feeling, and actions. This is existentialism.

These messages are pervasive in our culture –and these messages can mess with our minds conforming us to pattern of this world. But these messages are all lies.

**Your Flesh** – This is the old you; it's your sinful self.

Do you feel the battle between your flesh and you spirit? Your spirit is willing, but your flesh is weak?

*<sup>18</sup> For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. | Romans 7:18-20*

This battle with the flesh is really because there is a war with your mind seeking to make you captive to sin.

*<sup>23</sup> but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. - Romans 7:23*

**The Devil** – The goal of the devil is straightforward: to seek, to kill, and to destroy (see John 10:10). This is what he wants to do to you.

He is a lion that wants to devour you by getting at your mind. Satan is the deceiver, the father of lies. He has no power apart from his lies.

His strategy is the same as it was with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. His strategy is to cause doubt and deception.

- Did God really say that?
- God is withholding from you.

The devil can't force you to do anything against your will. But he can suggest things to you.

## How do we free ourselves from unhealthy thinking?

<sup>3</sup> For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ. | 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

### Strongholds:

habitual patterns of thinking based on lies that we believe.

#### Examples of Strongholds:

*God doesn't really love me.*

*I know better than God what will make me happy.*

*I can't forgive that person.*

*I can never forgive myself.*

*I'm never going to amount to anything.*

*If something bad is going to happen, it will be to me.*

*I will always be a victim.*

*I keep relapsing; there's no hope.*

*I'm not hurting anyone.*

*I am what was done to me.*

*One more \_\_\_\_\_ will make me happy (image, drink, bite, item).*

Behind every sin is a lie you believe. Satan desires to enslave you. Jesus says, I am the truth and truth will set you free.

#### Do you have any strongholds?

What are we supposed to do with strongholds? We need to demolish strongholds in our lives. But how?

- a) Take each thought captive
- b) Make each thought obedient to Christ

To take captive is to conquer; to make it obedient is to bring it under submission.

Studies show that the average person has 31,000 thoughts a day; 31 thoughts a minute. When we take each thought captive and make it obedient to Christ, we are freeing our minds - no longer enslaved to our unhealthy thinking.

But you might say, "I don't have the power to do that!" Well, yes and no. No, you don't have the human power to do that. But, yes, God has given you divine power to destroy strongholds.

*If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*

Romans 8:11

## 2. Fill Your Mind With Truth

All truth originates with God and His primary method of communicating truth is in His Word.

When we are transformed by the renewal of your mind you are “able to discern what is the will of God” (Romans 12:2).

### Would you like to know the will of God?

You can know the will of God and it's not as complicated as you might think. The will of God is:

- Less about where you live, it's more about how you live.
- Less about what job you have, it's more about what kind of person you are on the job.
- Less about who you marry, more about who you are in marriage or as you wait for marriage.

In other words, the will of God is more about following God's Word. The will of God is the Word of God.

**We need to fill our mind with God's Word.** We believe God's Word is true and transformative. Therefore, we open the Word of God believing God has a word for each of us. If we are disciplined in the Word, we will be disciplined in our mind. If we are undisciplined in the Word, our minds will be undisciplined as well.

### Renew Your Mind With The Word

**Hear the Word** – Make it a priority to participate in church and a small group. Listen to Word throughout the week. Put yourself in places where you can hear the Word.

**Read the Word** – Open your Bible during the week. What if you were to give the first minutes of each day to reading the Word? How could spending a few minutes reading the Word each day transform you?

**Meditate on the Word** – There are two prevalent forms of mediation in the world – mystic meditation and biblical meditation. And they couldn't be more opposite. Literally. Mystic meditation is about emptying your mind. Biblical meditation is filling your mind. It moves beyond reading the Word to reflecting on the Word throughout the day and personalizing it for yourself.

**Memorize the Word** – Each week at Hope Groups we identify a verse a week to memorize. We call it the “Renew Your Mind” verse. Many people think they can't memorize the Word. But that's a lazy answer. Anyone who truly wants to memorize the Word can memorize the Word. Simply write the verse on an index card. Read it 5x/day for a week and you'll have it memorized.

**Discuss the Word** – This is what we do each week at Hope Groups. We hear the Word and read the Word. Then we discuss it together to applying it in our lives.

**How are you doing with renewing your mind with the Word?**

Which statement of identity do you need to claim today for this week?



When you claim true statements of identity you are replacing lies about your identity.

### 3. Filter Your Mind for Healthy Thinking

When you're transformed by the renewing of your mind, you will focus your mind on closing the GAP -- that which is "good, acceptable, and perfect" (Romans 12:2).



The subway system in London is called the Underground. This symbol is iconic in London. It's a visual and audio warning that a train is approaching.

When we're filtering our thoughts, we need to "Mind the Gap" - is my thinking Good, Acceptable, Perfect?

We need to filter *out* unhealthy thinking and filter *in* healthy thinking.

<sup>5</sup> *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 set their minds on the things of the Spirit.*

Romans 8:5

You need to filter your mind – is my mind set on the flesh? Or is it set on the things of the Spirit?

*<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. –  
Philippians 4:8*

This grid is to help filter out unhealthy thinking and filter in healthy thinking.

GRAB THE THOUGHT <i>What is it?</i>	DIAGNOSE THE THOUGHT <i>Is it true?</i>
TAKE IT TO GOD <i>What does God say?</i>	MAKE A CHOICE <i>Am I going to believe God?</i>

**True** – Is it true?

- How much of what I worry about isn't true or won't ever happen?
- How much of my thinking is has been from conforming to lie rather than be transformed by truth?
- Not everything you think is true ... Just because you think something doesn't mean that it's true. You don't have to believe everything you think.
- Instead, run it through the filter of: Is it true?

**Honorable** – Does this thought honor the Lord, the person I'm thinking about, my spouse (or future spouse)? It needs to check all boxes. If it doesn't, it's not honorable. Is it honorable?

**Just** – Is it right? Not just right to me or others, But what's right in God's eyes. Am I focused on righteous things?

**Pure** – Is this thought pure? Will it lead to greater purity in my mind and life? Are you allowing impure images to come through your "eye gate"?

**Lovely** – This literally means – "love towards". Are you thinking about how to show love to others?

**Commendable** – Or admirable. Positive not negative. Constructive not destructive. If others knew what you were thinking, would you be embarrassed?

**Praiseworthy** – How much worship fills your mind? How much time do you spend thanking the Lord for who He is and what He has done?

Often our minds are like a glass of water filled with contaminants, dirt, muck, lust, impurities due to unhealthy thinking from the world, our flesh, and the devil.

The way we need to free our minds is to fill our minds with truth – truth from God’s Word about who God is and who we are. And by His Spirit through His Word, He frees us from lust, bitterness, regrets, shame.



Imagine a PUR water pitcher representing inputs into your mind. God’s Word is the filter that is used to take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ. To filter out unhealthy thinking and filter in healthy thinking.

**The secret to being transformed by the renewing of our minds in Romans 12:2 is found in Romans 12:1 –**

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

It begins with surrendering our bodies ... including our minds to him – day after day, minute by minute, thought by thought.