

Renewing Your Mind

What's in a word? At times we may believe that words are significant, or not significant, that they apply to us, or they don't apply to us. We evaluate words all the time in communication, whether written or verbal. Have you ever wondered why the original words of the Bible were written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek? Why did God choose these languages as the language to record His Word to us? Very simply.....these languages were very specific in their meaning. Words were formed in a way that they could **not** be misunderstood. They had grammatical rules that had to be followed to be true to the intent of the author. God did not provide the words of the Bible so they could be easily misunderstood. As our heavenly Father, He was very clear on the message He wanted to relay to His children. He did not want to leave any question unanswered about His intentions when it came to eternal salvation. Today, our languages are not as specific. Many times words are misinterpreted, truncated, or misapplied and this leads to confusion, wrong choices, oftentimes heartache and pain.

To provide an example of how the languages of the Bible are specific, we will take a look at Romans 12 verse 2 where it states, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind". Let's take a look at just one word. In the Greek it is μεταμορφοῦσθε (pronounced metamorphousthe). You may recognize our English word "metamorphosis". Here in English it is translated as "be transformed".

To understand what God meant to say in that one word, we need to break down the Greek word μεταμορφοῦσθε. This Greek word is a verb constructed in the Present Tense (today), Imperative (you must do this), 2nd person plural (all of you), Middle voice (acting in your own interest or benefit) and Passive voice (you being the recipient of the action). So when applied correctly the translation of that one word goes well beyond the phrase "be transformed". The literal and correct translation of that one word would read "All of you must keep on transforming yourselves today for your own benefit, by the renewing of your mind". Now that really changes how we can better understand God's intention! God wants us to be transformed (changed) daily for our own benefit and it starts with the renewing of our minds!

But do we resist that change or have we become complacent in our "metamorphosis"? Contemporary recording artists have popularized their songs "I Did It My Way", "I've Gotta Be Me", "I'm Woman, Hear Me Roar". The lyrics of these songs are completely antithetical to God's plan for the Christian. Have we ourselves given in to the attitudes "I just can't change" or "I'm too old to change" or "I don't want to change" or worse yet "I don't need to change"?! This is not God's plan for your benefit. We must be transformed every day by the renewing of our mind.

So how is our mind renewed? King David had a clear understanding that the mind and the heart had something in common - they could be cleaned and renewed because of God's grace and forgiveness. In Psalm 51 verse 10 he wrote, "Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me". David turned to God, his heavenly Father. So to renew your mind, first recognize that you have failed to renew your mind in a way that is pleasing to God and ask for His forgiveness. Second, turn to God and continuously pray He will renew your mind and that He provide you with a clean heart. Next, immerse yourself in opportunities to continuously expand your knowledge of God's Word by daily reading and obeying His Word, by participating as a vibrant member in His church here on earth, and by regularly attending church services and Bible studies. It is by God's grace and forgiveness that we have the ability and opportunities to renew our minds. It is God who creates a new heart for us and renews our mind when we are obedient to His Word. By renewing your mind "you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will".

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

Submitted by Bethany Lutheran Church Elders

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