

Summary

- a) This session is the seventh of ten sessions that looks at a vital principle that fosters Spirit-led living.
- b) The seventh principle that we will examine is this: Renewing your mind comes from meditation, and meditation always determines your orientation, whether you live from the spirit, soul, or body.

Activating Your Faith

- a) Paul said, “I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake” (Philemon 1:6).
- b) Faith
 - Hebrews 11:1, in the Darby translation, states, “Now faith is the substantiating of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”
 - When it comes to experiencing the indwelling life of Christ, faith substantiates. Faith gives substance or form to. Faith embodies. Faith activates life. Faith is how you experience His life in you.
 - Faith in God's facts allows the Spirit to make it real in your experience.
 - Faith comes by renewing the mind by meditation.
 - God's facts are what Jesus finished for you on the cross and what the Spirit finished for you in your spirit.
 - Faith in God's facts is the key that allows the Spirit to make it real in your experience—for you to experience His life in your heart, soul, and body.
 - Faith is the conduit through which God's inward grace (power) flows.
- c) Effective
 - The Greek word for *effective* is *energēs*. This word means “active,” “effective,” “productive,” or “powerful in action.”
 - The English word *energy* was first introduced into English in the 16th century, derived from the Latin word *energia*, which in turn came from the Greek *energēs*.
 - Today, the word *energy* is widely used to describe the capacity to do work, create motion, or bring about change in various contexts.
 - You can think of faith as a really good latte that gives you spiritual energy. If you ever feel spiritually sleepy, lethargic, complacent, or lukewarm, most likely your faith is not energized.
- d) Knowledge
 - The Greek word for *knowledge* is *epignōsis* and means “precise and correct knowledge.”
 - This word also means “recognition, full discernment, or acknowledgment.” Digging deeper, this word expresses “a fuller or a full knowledge, a greater participation by the ‘knower’ in the object ‘known.’”

- In short, *epignōsis* is precise, correct, and full knowledge gained by relational experience that one acknowledges.
- When I think of *epignōsis* in the context of this verse, three dynamics come to mind.
 - *Discovering* the truth with your mind by studying and properly interpreting Scripture.
 - From the truth you gleaned with your mind, *experiencing* this truth with your spirit through your spirit-to-Spirit relationship with Christ, where the truth of God's Word becomes your personal revelation.
 - Regularly *acknowledging* the truth and revelation you possess by meditation, using your mind and heart to reflect upon and remember the truth that has already become yours.
- In summary, *epignōsis* is:
 - *Discovering* the truth by study and interpretation;
 - *Experiencing* the truth by revelation; and
 - *Acknowledging* the truth by meditation, allowing you to reexperience the truth you originally experienced when first receiving revelation.

e) Every good thing in you

- What, exactly, are you to have full and precise knowledge of by study, revelation, and meditation?
- Paul said “every good thing which is in you.” This means all you have seen so far in this class, including *who you are in Christ, who Christ is in you, and how He has transformed your spirit*.
- Who you are in Christ.
 - In Christ, you are righteous, crucified, dead, resurrected, ascended, enthroned, and an overcomer.
- Who Christ is in you.
 - Christ in you is glory, rivers of living water, the Helper, the anointing, the truth, infinite wisdom (access to the mind of Christ), resurrection power, creative power, power for ability (grace), and the kingdom of God.
- How He has transformed your spirit.
 - Your new spirit is regenerated, righteous, holy, Christlike, complete, joined to the Spirit of Christ, and a partaker of the divine nature.

f) Hopefully, when you listened to and read the previous sessions and discovered the treasure in you, you started to feel excited and energized.

g) If so, you were experiencing what Paul taught in Philemon 1:6. Your faith was being awakened, activated, and made operative by the revelation and acknowledgement of Christ in you and you in Christ.

Biblical Meditation Activates Your Faith

a) Here's the good news and the main goal of this session. Your faith can be activated every day by meditation.

- b) This doesn't have to be a one-time experience for you. Nor does it have to be limited to just reading about it in a book.
- c) If you will incorporate biblical meditation into your prayer life—reflecting regularly upon the treasure in you—your faith will be awakened, activated, and operative, positioning you to live by faith.
- d) And the fruit of true faith is affection-based, grace-empowered obedience from the heart in motive, thought, and deed.
- e) With this in mind, pay close attention to what Paul told the Philippians when he said, “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12-13).
- f) Obedience is how the salvation in your spirit is worked out into your heart, soul, and body.

Lion King Example

- a) Most likely, you have heard of if not seen the movie the *Lion King*. My favorite part of the movie is when the prince lion Simba is exhorted by his father, the king, “Remember who you are.” In case it's been a while, or you never saw it, let me quickly detail this part of the movie.
- b) Nala, Simba's future wife, reunites with Simba and lets him know his uncle, Scar, has ruined everything. Simba is indifferent, so Nala drills him with questions, wanting to know why and how he has changed. Simba gets angry and the two get into a heated argument, eventually going their separate ways.
- c) As Simba departs into the open plain, he tells himself, “You can't change the past.” But he quickly shifts to self-condemnation, crying out to the sky to his deceased father, saying, “You said you would always be there for me. But you're not and it's because of me . . . It's my fault; it's my fault.”
- d) Out of nowhere, Rafiki, the mandrill with an eccentric personality, appears on the scene. To Simba's shock, Rafiki lets him know his father is alive and he can take Simba to see him. Though Simba thinks his father might still be physically alive, Rafiki leads him to a pond, where Simba sees a reflection of himself. Disappointed, Simba protests, saying the reflection is not his father. Rafiki then instructs him to look harder. This time, Simba sees his father and Rafiki tells him, “You see, he lives in you.”
- e) Suddenly Mufasa, Simba's father, appears in the sky, saying to him, “Simba, you have forgotten me.” Simba disputes this claim, saying, “No. How could I?” Mufasa replies, “You have forgotten who you are and so forgotten me. Look inside yourself, Simba. You are more than what you have become. You must take your place in the Circle of Life.”
- f) “How can I go back? I'm not who I used to be,” Simba replied. “Remember who you are. You are my son, and the one true king,” Mufasa answered.
- g) As Mufasa departs, he says one last time, “Remember who you are.”

Remember Who You Are

- a) Just as Simba had to remember who he was, remembering who you are reshapes your mind, awakens your faith, and empowers you unto obedience.
- b) As a result, you become Christlike in your heart and soul, just as you already are in your spirit.
- c) You are more than what you have become, and meditation helps close the gap between who you are in your spirit to who you can become in your heart and soul.

- d) This brings me to the seventh law of the Spirit-led life: renewing your mind comes from meditation, and meditation always determines your orientation, whether you live from the spirit, soul, or body.
- e) In this session, we will look at the connection between renewing the mind and the Spirit-led life.
- f) More specifically, this session will:
 - Answer the question What is the mind?
 - Explain what Paul meant by the law of the mind; and
 - Clarify how meditation leads to transformation.
- g) As you learn to renew your mind by practicing biblical meditation when you pray, faith is activated in your heart.

What Is the Mind?

- a) The first step to renewing the mind is answering the question What is the mind?
- b) Many atheists think we are just an evolved animal, a glob of cells and energy. They believe the mind and brain are synonymous. But Dr. Caroline Leaf, a cognitive neuroscientist, refutes this claim in her book *Cleaning Up Your Mental Mess*.

What is the mind? It can be a tricky concept, so it's best to start with what the mind is not. Your mind is not your brain, just as you are not your brain. The mind is separate, yet inseparable from, the brain. The mind uses the brain, and the brain responds to the mind. The brain doesn't produce the mind. The mind changes the brain. People do things; our brains do not force us to do things. . . .

The mind is energy, and it generates energy through thinking, feeling, and choosing. . . . When we generate this mind energy through thinking, feeling, and choosing, we build thoughts, which are physical structures in our brain. This building of thoughts is called neuroplasticity.¹

- c) Later in the chapter, Dr. Leaf explains the mind further, stating,

Thoughts with their embedded memories are also stored in the nonconscious mind as an energy field. This is the deep, spiritual level of a thought, which goes beyond the physical but is intimately connected to it. This spiritual level of thought storage is about you and your truth value; that is, your unique perception and way of experiencing the world.²
- d) Though this scientific description is a bit complicated, her explanation corroborates with Scripture. What she calls the spiritual level of a thought that goes beyond the physical or "mind energy" generated through thinking, feeling, and choosing, Scripture refers to as the immortal soul. And as you have seen throughout this class, the soul has a mind, will, and emotions.
- e) To simplify what Dr. Leaf stated, the mind and the brain are not the same. The mind belongs to the immortal soul whereas the brain is part of the mortal body.
- f) When you depart this life to eternity, your mind is going with you, but your brain will stay on earth.
- g) The brain is the processor while the mind is the operator.
- h) The soul's mind interacts with the physical and non-physical parts of you, receiving internal input from both the spirit and the heart and external input from the brain and the cells of the body.
- i) With all of this input, the soul's mind reasons, feels, and make decisions.

- j) A simple way to differentiate between the brain and the mind is to think of a computer and an operating system.
- A personal computer is comprised of hardware (circuit board, battery, and such) and software (an operating system).
 - A computer can't function without both hardware and software.
 - The operating system directs, manages, and controls the computer, which processes all the 1's and 0's fed by the operating system.
 - The brain is like a computer while the mind is like an operating system.

Where Do Thoughts Originate?

- a) The mind is comprised of trillions and trillions of thoughts.
- b) On average, you will have somewhere between 12,000 to 60,000 thoughts per day.
- c) A 2005 study from the National Science Foundation found that 80% of thoughts were negative and 95% were repetitive thoughts from the day before.
- d) So, the mind, by default, focuses on the negative and plays the same song on repeat.
- e) According to anesthesiologist and researcher Professor Stuart Hamerhoff, you have conscious bursts of activity around forty times a second. This means your mind is constantly thinking, feeling, and choosing.
- f) This data confirms what you likely know to be true about yourself. But have you ever stopped to ask where do thoughts originate? This is an important question.
- g) After studying Scripture for over thirty years and briefly studying science, your thoughts originate from the following sources:
1. Your brain
 2. Cells in your body
 3. Your mind
 4. Your heart
 5. Your spirit
 6. The indwelling Spirit
 7. Demons
- h) You already saw how spiritual thoughts work when I described how the indwelling Spirit communicates directly to your spirit's intuition, enabling you to receive revelation from God and know the Lord intimately.
- i) Thoughts inspired by demons and thoughts from your brain and body are beyond the scope of this class, so to keep it simple, I will focus only on thoughts originating in the mind in this session.
- j) Here's an easy way to distinguish thoughts from the mind, the heart, and the spirit:
- Thoughts from the mind are based in reason and logic.

- Thoughts from the heart stem from beliefs and desires.
- And thoughts from the spirit are characterized by intuition, conviction, and revelation, often transmitted by the indwelling Spirit.

The Law of the Mind

- a) Paul said, “I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members” (Rom. 7:23, emphasis mine).
- b) I can’t stress enough the importance of this law of the mind. Your thoughts, whether righteous or unrighteous, determine whether you live a spirit-led, soul-led, or body-led life.
- c) Stated slightly different, your meditation always determines your orientation, whether you live from your spirit, soul, or body.
- d) Like the laws of gravity, aerodynamics, and thermodynamics, the law of the mind is always at work whether you realize it or not. No matter how nice you are and how good your intentions, the way you think determines the way you live.
- e) The law of the mind, operating in the soul, is one of the most important spiritual laws, for it’s the decisive factor whether you live from self-life in your soul or from Christ’s life in your spirit.
- f) In addition, the law of the mind is intricately related to the law of faith (see Rom. 3:27). As you renew your mind through meditation, faith is activated in your heart, allowing the Spirit to make the truth real in your experience.
- g) That is why Paul said your faith becomes operative by acknowledging every good thing which is in you (see Philem. 1:6).

Meditation Leads to Transformation

- a) Paul said, “Those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:5).
- b) Always remember meditation determines your orientation—every single time. This is an immutable spiritual law.
- c) The focus of your thoughts always determines whether you live a body-led, soul-led, or spirit-led life. Therefore, if you want to live from your spirit by the power of the indwelling Spirit, then developing a lifestyle of meditating upon the things of the Spirit is vital.
- d) “Do not be conformed to this world,” Paul said emphatically, “but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2).
- e) The Greek word for renewing comes from a word meaning “to cause to grow up, to make new, to be changed into a new kind of life as opposed to the former corrupt state.”
- f) As you meditate upon the Holy Spirit and who you are as a new creation in Christ, you begin to grow up as a mature son of God. Your life begins to change into a new kind of life, progressively metamorphizing into Christ’s image and likeness. And the former corrupt state of the old self gradually loses its power and grip in your heart and mind.
- g) Meditation draws out the newness of your spirit, which then renews your soul and body.

- h) When Paul exhorted us to renew our minds, he used the Greek word *metamorphoō*, from which we get our English word *metamorphosis*. As this Greek word indicates, meditation metamorphizes you, transforming everything about you.
- i) By learning to think differently, you can be completely changed from the inside out.
- j) The dictionary defines metamorphosis as “a change of physical form, structure, or substance especially by supernatural means.”

¹ Caroline Leaf, *Cleaning Up Your Mental Mess* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2021), p. 132 in the Kindle App.

² Ibid., p. 140 in the Kindle App.