

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.

Review

- a) Philemon 1:6 states, “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.”
- b) Romans 7:23 states, “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.”

- 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.

- c) What is the mind?

- Dr. Caroline Leaf, a cognitive neuroscientist, explains the difference between the mind and the brain 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

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

- 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.
- When you depart this life to eternity, your mind is going with you, but your brain will stay on earth.
- The brain is the processor while the mind is the operator. The brain is like a computer while the mind is like an operating system.

- d) Where do thoughts originate?

- The mind is comprised of trillions and trillions of thoughts.
- On average, you will have somewhere between 12,000 to 60,000 thoughts per day.

- A 2005 study from the National Science Foundation found that 80% of thoughts were negative and 95% were repetitive thoughts from the day before.
 - So, the mind, by default, focuses on the negative and plays the same song on repeat.
 - 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.
 - 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.
- e) The seventh law of the Spirit-led life is this: Renewing your mind comes from meditation, and meditation always determines your orientation, whether you live from the spirit, soul, or body.
- f) In this session, we will look at the connection between renewing the mind and the Spirit-led life.

Biblical Meditation Is Important

- a) Be honest for a minute. When you hear the word meditation, what thoughts come immediately to your mind? Someone sitting with legs crisscrossed, palms turned upward, in quiet reflection? A person wearing yoga pants, engaged in Hindu-type exercises? Some type of New Age practice, where you look within yourself to discover the real you, so you can become the best version of yourself?
- b) Unfortunately, these types of images have stolen the beauty of biblical meditation from the church.
- c) Fearing New Age or Hinduism, many believers have shunned renewing the mind altogether, afraid they would be influenced by a false religion or a demon.
- d) But you can't refrain from renewing your mind if you want to live by Christ's indwelling life. If you don't meditate regularly on the treasure in you, by default, you will live a soulish, carnal life.
- e) The church desperately needs to recover meditation, since this practice is stressed in both the Old and New Testament and is a vital key to living from the spirit by the power of the indwelling Spirit.
- f) The Lord told Joshua, "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night" (Josh. 1:8).
- g) David said the righteous person "meditates day and night" upon God's Word (Ps. 1:2).
- h) We also see examples of the godly meditating upon the Lord and His works in Psalms (see Ps. 63:6; 77:12).
- i) In these four verses, the Hebrew word translated meditate is *hagah*, and it means "to moan, growl, utter, muse, mutter, meditate, devise, plot, speak." It also means "to murmur (in pleasure or anger); by implication, to ponder—imagine, meditate, talk."
- j) Biblical meditation must be voiced—whether by speaking, writing, or singing. Meditation engages the mind and the heart, renewing both.

What Biblical Meditation Is Not

- a) Before describing what meditation is, let me first state what it isn't. Of course, biblical meditation is not a New Age or Hindu practice, looking within yourself to make the best version of you.
- b) Even when it comes to Scripture, meditation is not merely reading the Bible—and it certainly involves more than studying the Bible.
- c) Obviously, both reading and studying the Bible are important. But meditation goes deeper than this. If all you do is read, analyze, and research Scripture, you have not truly engaged in biblical meditation.

What Biblical Meditation Is

- a) Spirit-led meditation is taking a biblical truth or promise, which was inspired by the Spirit and inscribed in Scripture, and pondering it until it becomes your own truth and personal revelation.
- b) Meditation helps the Word written on a page to be written on your heart. It's how you plant the Word into your own heart, so you take ownership of it.
- c) James 1:21 states, "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."
- d) Notice when the Word is successfully implanted, the Word itself has the inherent power to save your soul—to conform your mind, will, and emotions into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ.
- e) All Scripture is inspired by the Spirit. Men received revelation and they wrote down what they heard and experienced. When you meditate by the Spirit, you take what is written on a page and ponder it until it's inscribed on your heart. Until you own a truth, and you have the same revelation that Paul, John, or Peter had when they wrote the Scripture.
- f) According to Dr. James Richards, "Biblical meditation is when you think about, ponder, imagine, or consider any biblical promise until you have all the emotions of it being true at this moment."
- g) I would also add meditation is not just limited to promises. It also includes any truth in Scripture.
- h) Again, biblical meditation must be voiced, whether through speaking, writing, or singing. When the Lord commanded Joshua to meditate on the Word, he had to speak the Word. He was commanded not to let the book of the law depart from His mouth.

An Example of Biblical Meditation

- a) Perhaps my recent prayer will help you understand meditation better. I said to the Lord, "Let these truths on a page become my truth in my heart, forming and shaping my heart beliefs, renewing my mind, and activating my faith, so that Jesus Christ would dwell in my heart by faith." I encourage you to make this a regular prayer when meditating upon a truth in Scripture.
- b) Here's an example. God pronounces your flesh crucified and your spirit alive, whether or not you feel it (see Rom. 6:6,11).
- c) Meditation takes these two truths, disregards how you feel, agrees with God's facts, and reflects upon this truth over and over until you believe these truths in your heart.
- d) When this happens, your faith is activated, causing you to experience all the emotions of it being true in your heart at that moment. As a result, you then experience the Lord's crucifixion and resurrection by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- e) On the other hand, if you don't know or believe you died with Christ when He died and you were raised to new life when He was resurrected, you will not experience living by His life, even though this new way of living is available to you (see Rom. 6:3-4).
- f) This is why renewing the mind is so important, for meditation reckons the death of the Lord Jesus as your own death and His resurrection as your own resurrection.

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."

Examples of Metamorphosis

- a) A great example of metamorphosis is when Christ took the disciples to the mountain and unveiled who He truly was.
- b) During this experience, when Jesus' face became like the sun and His garments shined forth radiant light (see Matt. 17:2), the Greek word used to describe this transformation was *metamorphoō*.
- c) Likewise, when you develop a lifestyle of meditation upon the indwelling Spirit and who you are as a new creation in Christ, you will experience transformation. You will experience a metamorphosis, from living as an old creation in Adam to living as a new creation in Christ.
- d) Those familiar with biology already understand metamorphosis. A maggot is transformed into a fly, a caterpillar into a butterfly, and a tadpole into a frog.

- e) These creatures do not change into another animal; they change into a different state. The maggot is already a fly, the caterpillar a butterfly, and the tadpole a frog.
- f) A similar phenomenon takes place when you learn to meditate upon the Word of God. You change states—from a carnal state to a spiritual state.
- g) In Ephesians 4:22-24, Paul revealed how renewing the mind changes your state, from the old self (carnal state) to the new self (spiritual state). He wrote, “In reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, *and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind*, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth” (emphasis mine).
- h) As Paul revealed, renewing the mind changes your state, from the old self corrupted by the lusts of deceit to the new self created in righteousness, holiness, and Christlikeness.

Meditation Draws Out the Treasure of Christ in You

- a) Just to be clear, meditation is not brainwashing yourself into believing something you’re not. Nor is it confessing a promise repeatedly, so you can get what you want from God.
- b) On the contrary, the Word says you have already been transformed into a new creation in your spirit at salvation. You already have unfathomable spiritual wealth because the Spirit of God dwells within you.
- c) Meditation simply focuses your mind upon the greatness of Christ in you and the glory of His finished work in your spirit.
- d) At salvation, you received a prepaid debit card with unlimited spending. Meditation is using this debit card to draw out the treasure of Christ’s indwelling life from your spirit.
- e) Speaking of prepaid debit cards, did you know more than half of U.S. adults—51 percent to be precise—never use their gift cards. This adds up to over \$15 billion. What a colossal waste of money. Over \$15 billion worth of unused, prepaid gift cards.
- f) In a similar way, when you fail to meditate upon who you are in Christ, who Christ is in you, and how He has transformed your spirit, you are like a person who never uses their prepaid debit cards.
- g) This undoubtedly describes many born-again believers, who allow the unfathomable treasure of Christ’s life within them to lie dormant.

Meditation Removes Hinderances

- a) Meditation leads to transformation because it breaks down mental roadblocks, which are somewhat like a clogged drain.
- b) This reminds me of a traumatic experience Angie (my wife) and I had about a year after we moved into our current house. One day Angie decided to unclog the bathtub drain. But to her absolute horror, she pulled up a lengthy snake skin. Thankfully, there wasn’t a snake, but still, this was a traumatic experience for her—and me, too, when I heard about it later. We had all kinds of questions: Is this from the previous owner? Do snakes regularly get into the house? Did this happen when the house was built? Neither of us probably admitted it, but for a while, before we drifted off to sleep, we had images of sleeping in the snake pit from the infamous scene in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, where Indiana Jones lowered himself into a pit with a floor covered with slithering, slimy, and seething snakes.
- c) Speaking of snakes, have you ever heard of a drain snake? This is a long, plastic, inexpensive tool you can use to remove clogged hair from a drain. Two to three times a year, I have to use one of these in our showers to remove the hair clogging our drains. This is definitely one of my least favorite chores. And to be honest, even to this day, I am still nervous about pulling up a snake skin.

- d) Like a drain snake, meditation removes the clogs in your mind so the water of Christ's indwelling life can freely flow in you and through you.
- e) By nature, the mind gravitates toward the flesh. Left on its own, the mind naturally drifts toward thinking patterns rooted in pride, control, jealousy, anxiety, lust, bitterness, condemnation, unworthiness, doubt, and unbelief.
- f) Meditation helps dissolve these carnal mindsets hindering the release of God's life and righteousness from your spirit.

Meditation Shifts Your State

- a) If you learn to meditate upon your position in Christ—specifically, that you are crucified, resurrected, ascended, enthroned, righteous, and victorious in Him—it will change your living condition.
- b) If you learn to meditate upon your condition in Christ—specifically, that your spirit is resurrected, righteous, holy, complete, Christlike, a partaker of the divine nature, and one with the Holy Spirit—it will change your orientation from a body-led or soul-led life to a spirit-led life.
- c) If you learn to meditate upon who Christ is in you—specifically, shekinah glory, rivers of living water, resurrection life, the Helper, creative power, power for ability, the anointing, the truth, the virtue and nature of Christ, the mind of Christ, and the kingdom of God—your faith will be activated, allowing Christ to dwell fully in your heart and live His life in you and through you.
- d) Like a caterpillar changes into a beautiful butterfly, meditation changes you into a different state. It shifts you from living by self-life in your soul to living from Christ's life in your spirit.
- e) Renewing the mind is how you are transformed from living as an old creation in Adam to a new creation in Christ.
- f) Renewing your mind is not trying in your own effort to produce transformation. Rather, it is aligning your mind with the truth of who you already are in your spirit.
- g) Meditation is believing what the Word says about your new spiritual condition. It is looking in the water and seeing the reflection of Christ in you.
- h) You realize you are not a caterpillar trying to become a butterfly. You are a butterfly trapped in a caterpillar's body.
- i) Your spirit has already been transformed into a Christlike state, and this great work of God must be released outward into every facet of your being.

Renewing the Mind Releases Christ's Life

- a) Where I live in Georgia, we usually have our first freeze warning in late fall or early winter. When the forecast warns of temperatures dipping below freezing, it means going down to my basement and turning off the water supply to the outside faucet. Otherwise, the water could freeze and burst the pipes.
- b) Turning off the water is super easy. All I do is pull down a small lever so its perpendicular to the pipe. And then, several months later, when spring arrives and settles in, I do the opposite. I pull the lever up so its vertically aligned with the pipe.
- c) Turning the water supply on and off reminds me of living by Christ's indwelling life. Pulling the lever down to turn the water supply on is like renewing the mind by meditation. This releases the life of Christ in your spirit outward into your heart, soul, and body.

- d) Conversely, if your mind is focused on anything related to the flesh or the soul, which could literally be a million different things, this hinders the release of the Spirit and suppress Christ's life within you.
- e) Based on the Word of God and my own experience, there is nothing more vital than learning how to renew your mind and practicing this discipline on a daily basis.
- f) Since you already have everything you need pertaining to life and godliness in your spirit, acknowledging and agreeing with this finished work activates your faith and releases Christ's life from your spirit, like water flowing through a pipe to an outside faucet.
- g) To live by Christ's indwelling life, you have to learn how to release what you have already received by renewing your mind.
- h) Since the finished work of the cross is an accomplished fact in your spirit, your mind must acknowledge this to activate your faith and release Christ's life from your spirit.

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.