

Having the Mind of Christ

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A renewed mind – which is the mind of Christ in the believer -- is absolutely essential if we are to walk with God in Truth. In Colossians 1 we have what might be considered a good description of a renewed mind -- a mind that is renewed according to Christ and according to the Truth:

For this cause we also, since the day we heard [it], do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding -- that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful and ever good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. (Col. 1:9-10)

God inspired Paul to record these prayers, and so we can be sure that Paul's prayers represent what God wants for us, otherwise God would not have had Paul record it for our edification. And in this prayer we see a description of the mind of Christ. This is the renewed mind -- a mind that is filled with the knowledge of the will of God -- but in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. This is what it means to have the mind of Christ; a renewed mind.

This brings us to a definition: In the New Testament, a renewed mind is one that has been enlightened by an inward realization of Jesus Christ. It is a mind that has been set free from darkness by the light of truth in Christ. That will result in understanding and reasoning. We might even say if we would gather all that up -- that if you have the mind of Christ, you're going to see things and discern things the way Christ does.

That makes sense, doesn't it? If you have HIS mind you will see things from God's perspective. But there is more to a renewed mind -- to see things from God's perspective doesn't simply mean to see the FACTS – that is just the beginning. To have a mind of Christ will include that. But to have the mind of Christ also means to have the attitude and intent of Christ. Or to put it another way if we see life according to the MIND of Christ we will see life from the perspective of love and redemption. We will see the TRUTH, but we will see the TRUTH from the intent of LOVE.

The word "mind" in the New Testament includes more than just brain power. The ability to discern Truth must include the intent and the will and the attitude.

So to get to the bottom line on this -- to have the mind of Christ, a renewed mind, means yes, you will discern the truth, but you will discern it through the lens of God's love and redemption. You'll discern it through the lens of God's eternal purposes.

Discernment vs. Judging

Now, just to give you an example of this, perhaps we see somebody sinning. This could be a believer or it could be a non-believer. It is NOT wrong to discern that. Of course not. In fact, if you have Christ in you, and you have Truth in you, you're going to discern it. I could be facetious and say, "You're going to discern it where you like it or not!" Discernment simply comes with the reality of Christ in you. If you know the Truth, you're going to be able to discern the Truth or untruth. And so it's not wrong to discern. But we are also told not to JUDGE. What is the difference between discernment, and judging?

Indeed, if you look in the New Testament, there are many times when Jesus says, "Do not judge." And then there are other verses which clearly indicate we need to discern. The difference between the two is clear: To discern is to see the Truth in love. To judge may include seeing the Truth – but not in love, but rather in condemnation. To judge in the way God forbids means to condemn a person – to decide what they deserve; to decide you know their heart -- because of what you see. You are playing God. And that is a big leap.

Now, we ARE to discern. If we have Christ in us we WILL discern. But alongside of that discernment – built into it – will be a desire for God's will. If you see a person sinning you will desire their freedom. There will be a redemptive attitude that you have toward them of love, grace and attitude of restoration in Christ.

Now, having said that, that doesn't mean that the person will actually repent. But that will be your desire for them, just as it is God's desire. God desires that all men be saved and come into the knowledge of the Truth. We're told that in 1 Timothy 2. And yet it doesn't always happen. It doesn't happen because people choose contrary to God. But God's mind, God's intent is there unto that end.

And so all discernment that is of the mind of Christ will have the same desire. You discern something wrong. You're going to have a heart of love that wants that to be right. You see somebody sin, you're not going to condemn that

person and get self-righteous toward them. What you're going to do is understand that you're fallible too and you're going to want their freedom.

Now note: We do need to discern right from wrong. We will do so if we know right. BUT -- in no case should our discernment ever lead us to say that a right is wrong or a wrong is right. That's not discernment. That's deception. If you see the Truth you tell the Truth about it. It is never love to do otherwise.

The Self-Principle

Now if you look closely at what I'm saying here, you'll recognize that a lot of us have a long way to go with this stuff -- a long way to go. We tend to operate in life, even as believers, according to what we could call, "the self-principle." We tend to react towards something based on how it affects US -- or according to our sense of self-righteousness. And many of us actually think that this is how God leads us. There are many believers who cannot discern between themselves and God. They think whatever they feel, God is feeling -- or that God is making them feel that way. They assume that whatever they are thinking that God is thinking. This is deception. It needs to be broken, and can be, under the power of the cross.

Everyone of us need to discern between what is of ourselves and what is of God. And such discernment is possible if we will open to God. We find this promise given in the epistle to the Hebrews:

For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things [are] naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 4:12-16)

We can ask Jesus Christ to reveal both TO US and IN US the Truth -- we can ask Him to, "speak," into us the Living Word. When He does speak the Truth into us this will automatically create in us a separation in us between Truth and untruth. It will, as this verse says, "pierce even to the dividing of soul and spirit," that is, it will expose what is of God and what is of us. The question is, do we really want the Truth? We cannot want it more than God wants it for us. We need not guess. We need not try to figure it out -- we need to stop looking for the Truth by examining how we feel.

Jesus Christ is the Living Word. He is our High Priest. He wants to intervene and reveal in us the Truth – cutting through all emotion, intellect, and personal interests – cutting through the self-principle. If we will open to Him we can have the mind of God on any matter – the mind of faith, Truth, and love.

The Mind of Christ is to Govern

The Truth about the mind of Christ as opposed to our mind can be easily misunderstood. For example, you may have a situation in life where the stakes are high. Maybe it's a relationship, maybe it's financial, maybe it's a job. And then you hear, "You need to have the mind of Christ about that," or you hear that, "You must not operate from self" -- it can be easy to condemn yourself and get stressed because you care about your situation. Many believers have the notion, that in order to be really surrendered to God, that we must somehow eradicate from ourselves and purge from ourselves all human emotion, all care, all love, all consideration, and just become almost mindless automatons who don't care about anything. Some of us think that we must do this in order to be spiritual – and that we must do it if we are to really have God's mind.

That's utter nonsense. We are never going to be anything but emotional in our natural man -- and in this age our natural man is always going to be present. But God does not want our natural man to GOVERN the mind of Christ. Rather, if we grow in Christ – our relationship and knowledge of Him will GOVERN our natural man and natural mind. Thus, despite the fact that our natural man – emotions, intellect, and all the rest – is always going to be part of our makeup, as we grow in Christ it will come under the government of Jesus Christ in us.

Now, as the mind of Christ comes to govern our natural man – including all of our cares and desires – we will discover that there are many legitimate and good things that we love and care about – relationships, jobs, and other things – we will discover that these are within God's will for us. But we must see this distinction: Our natural man and emotions never determine the Truth about anything. Our natural man is never the source of that which is of God. But our natural man and emotions might happen to line up with the Truth; line up with God's will for us. Yet we will never know this unless we have the mind of Christ and know Christ.

As we turn ourselves over to God and begin to have his mind, then even those legitimate things that happen to line up with the Word of God and the will of God will begin to become all the more governed by the renewed mind in Christ. Likewise, if there are things that we care about or a perception that we have that is in error -- then as we get a renewed mind and have the mind of Christ, those things will be exposed for what they are.

If you see the end game here, it is that you and I are to be governed by our relationship with Jesus Christ -- our relationship in which the light and the Truth of God is prominent. We will want to know Him and we want to be governed by Him, but not just in a sense of facts -- and not just in a sense of knowing what to do or not do -- but also in God's attitude of love and grace. The mind of Christ is a mind of faith; it is a mind of love. That's what God wants in Christ to govern us over all that is legitimate even in our lives.

What God Births He Preserves

It is a fact that in order to come to know the Truth -- and to KNOW THAT YOU KNOW the Truth -- that the Truth must be proven in you and to you. And the Truth can only be proven if it is tested by contradiction to the Truth. Truth must be proven through victory. It must emerge from that which would seek to destroy it. But of course, this is simply a call to give ourselves over to God for His will -- without conditions attached. How many understand you can't go wrong giving yourself, and your, "something," into God's hands? You cannot go wrong because God won't fail to bring it to pass according to His will if you do. God will first reveal Christ in you, and through that revelation, you will grow to have HIS MIND. And then you will be able to walk in the will of God that He will surely bring to pass.

It is here that we are able to state a principle. It is perhaps a very general principle -- but it's all through the Bible. And that principle is this: Whatever God births, He will preserve. And if it's under challenge -- even if it seems to die -- nevertheless, whatever God births, He will restore.

We need to understand that God births His purposes for people in their lives. The Christian life is not supposed to be a matter of us deciding our purpose, handing it to God, and then expecting Him to bless it. No. God wants to initiate. God wants to birth His purpose. And God is not going to give up on that. Now, we do have to yield, we have to give ourselves to Him in that. But what God births, He will continuously want to bring to pass.

Now the other side of the coin is what man births, in other words, -- what God does not birth -- God is not going to support. Man may birth many religious things -- many things that, "look good." In His mercy and grace, God may allow this -- and even use it for His own purposes. But what God does not birth is not God's highest. It was not His will. God will not preserve it or bring it to pass. He will likely let it be exposed and die -- and come to nothing -- if not in this age, then certainly as it pertains to the age to come.

God Almighty is in charge. And if we have the mind of Christ, we're going to begin to live in and experience with God Himself births -- as opposed to what we might birth.

How many understand that this goes right in hand and hand with what Jesus said in John 3: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit?" God Almighty is not making things up as He goes along. He is not waiting for any of us to initiate. He knows what He's doing. And if God has birthed something, He will want to bring it to full maturity. That will be His will – regardless of how many mistakes we make along the way. If you continually turn to Him from your mistakes then what God births He will bring to pass.

A Spiritual Foundation

Now, we do need to examine this. God will always bring to pass what He births – if people yield to Him – but this is always based on what He first births SPIRITUALLY in us. Everything else, including external purposes in life, will be based upon that. Indeed, if God does not have a spiritual foundation of a relationship with Christ formed in a person, little can be built upon that in the outward life.

What God births He will preserve and restore. The foundation of this is our spiritual relationship in Christ. This will impact the outward to a greater or lesser degree. But there may be some physical things that have happened in our live that God cannot restore. For instance, suppose you're a woman and you have had an abortion. That is sin. You can be fully forgiven and restored in Christ. But if you do repent and turn to God, it will not resurrect the aborted baby in this age. There are consequences. There is a history. God will restore us spiritually and will restore the physical as much as is possible. But there are some outward, physical things that must remain.

I noted that God will not preserve or restore what was never of Him to begin with. God can't restore something He never birthed. He can't restore something that was never of Him to begin with because it was never His will – there is no will of God to restore. God allows and uses much that He never birthed and which was never His will – but we must not settle for that. There is always going to be loss. God wants us to enter into what He births, and to desire only His will.

So that's a general principle that we can look to. We need to get back on center with God on these matters. With God births, He will preserve under His wings. And even if we mess it up, He will bring to pass what He birthed. And if He did not birth it, over the course of time you'll find that it's something that bears the earmarks of man's work. That which is

born of the flesh is flesh. And even if it isn't toxic and destructive – even if it is religious -- it will be obvious that it is not of God.

The Mind of Christ

The mind of Christ is a mind of Truth – Truth in love. It's a renewed mind that is enlightened by an inward realization of Jesus Christ. That inward realization of Jesus Christ gives us discernment -- that inward realization gives us the ability to see things from God's perspective – the ability to see things from God's attitude of love and redemption.

We must not think that discernment is merely the ability to see the raw facts about something. It is not the ability to simply apply Bible verses. We could do all of that without the mind of Christ. It is very possible, and I think we all get guilty of this from time to time, to look at something and to see the truth about it, to see the facts about it, and yet to have a superior attitude, a self-righteous attitude, a judgmental attitude in the wrong way, and to completely miss the mind of God about it. We are all smart enough as people to be able to see some things now and again -- but only if we know Christ can we have His attitude. The mind of Christ is a discerning mind, but the mind of Christ views all things through the lens of God's love and redemption, with God's goals in mind.

Now again -- and I have to add this because people misunderstand -- when we say that the mind of Christ views things through the lens of God's love, we must realize that we are never to ignore the Truth – no matter how ugly the Truth might be. It is Truth. So in other words, as I noted earlier, if somebody is sinning, love calls it sin -- because the Truth is that it IS sin. If somebody has chosen a path that makes it impossible for us to continue to have a relationship with them -- then that is the Truth -- and our path in Truth will separate from their path. You can't walk with them.

We find that this is stated all through the New Testament -- with regards to people in the church that Paul put out of the church. Paul also says, "Don't have anything to do with heretics." And Paul makes room for the possibility of divorce in a marriage. Is any of this unloving? No. Actually, to do these things IS love. Rather than affirm the errors of others, or to become a partaker with them in their sin, we love them by separating. This is a matter of living the Truth in love – even if others do not understand, object, or condemn you for it.

A person with the mind of Christ will always live the Truth in love – and even if there must be some serious choices and dealings, this will be done in an attitude of love and redemption. There will be no compromise with the Truth or with God's glory. Love does not ignore the facts. Love does not ignore the reality or presence of evil.

Love tells the Truth about evil and desires redemption – but also realizes that many will not turn to God. We would be fools to assume that everything will be redeemed or restored in Christ -- because people make their choices. Again, we are to speak and discern the Truth in love. We are not to speak and discern the truth without love, and we are not to speak and discern in love without truth. It's to be both. That's the mind of Christ, and that is what he desires for each one of us. I've defined the agape love of God as an unconditional commitment to God's highest for the one loved. This is what the mind of Christ will want and desire.

How God Renews the Mind

How does God actually renew a believer's mind? It all begins to be possible only when we're saved. At salvation, we are joined to the Lord and made one Spirit with Him. (I Cor. 6:17) That union is a resurrection union. That union is one where our spirit is united with Jesus Christ through the Spirit of God. We become one with Him. We are baptized into Him in every way. Now, that's the core of it all. Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Col. 1:27)

But that's not just a fact that just passively sits there. That's not just a doctrine or a legal classification. No, we've been made one with the living Word, one with the Living Lord. He's a Person. And we are one with Him. This is dynamic. And this is never intended by God to be static or passive. That's why Jesus said, in John 14, 15, and 16, that God intends by virtue of the Spirit of God in Christ in you to guide you into all Truth. There's nothing passive about that or static. Right now God Almighty is trying to guide us into all Truth.

Now you can be ignorant of that and you can even resist it if you want to. People such as Calvinists try to say the grace of God is irresistible. That is nonsense. You can resist the grace of God. If God desires to lead us into all Truth then why are so many people still in error -- if you can't resist? But the point of the matter is that if you are united with Jesus Christ in resurrection union and He is your life (Col. 3:4) then that is a dynamic life that's always moving, always taking initiative, always creating.

This speaks to how God brings us into a realization of Christ -- and renews our minds, and gives us the mind of Christ. So, how does this work? Well, again, as I stated, it begins at the moment that you are born from above by virtue of your resurrection union with Christ. At that point, you have everything that God will ever have to give to you in His Son. You don't need any more. There's not another experience that you need. You don't need more of Christ. What you need, once you are baptized into Christ and are one with Him -- what you need is to discover the Christ you have already received.

Colossians 2:10 says, "We are complete in Him." Now, either that's true or it isn't. And if you are complete in Him, you don't need any more of Him. And if you are complete in Him, you don't need any more of the things of God -- because they're all given in Christ. But as it also says in Colossians 2:3, "All of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ." He is simply saying there that all is given IN CHRIST -- but now you need to come to discover the Christ in whom are all things. We need to come into a realization of Him, and as we do, then all the dynamics and realities that are in Christ will come

Into our discovery and realization because we are realizing Him.

Now again -- how does that happen? Well, if you have got Christ in you, then you can be sure that God is looking and creating ways in which to begin to reveal Christ in you. He does that through situations and events. He certainly does it through our surrenders to Him. God wants to invade us with the presence and the power and the inward realization of His Son. And when He does begin to do that, it will may happen in silent, subtle ways at first. God will be plowing away, plucking away, and ways we may not understand. Maybe we don't even realize the magnitude of the things that He is doing. God will begin to plant some seeds that will later come out and little. He will seep into our consciousness an awareness of Christ, the realization of Christ -- Christ will begin to dawn on us. It doesn't need to be a big event -- although sometimes there are big events. It can be slowly but surely -- but there'll be this invasion; this incursion of God in us, of Jesus Christ. We will need to yield -- but God is initiating this.

As we do begin to realize Christ, how many understand that it wouldn't be of any value unless it began to renew our minds -- so that we could think and discern differently? But the fact is, with a renewed mind we will think and discern according to His mind. We'll begin to see God Almighty -- which is the most important thing -- from a different perspective; the perspective of Jesus Christ. It may be imperceptible first but we'll begin to see.

And again -- I have to add this again -- it is not simply a matter of seeing facts differently, or of seeing a new meaning of a Bible verse, or understanding or discerning the meaning of an event, or whatever. And all that can be there, but this is a matter of having God's attitude and heart in a way that will push through you unto the Truth. This will begin to happen for us on the inside, slowly but surely. And as we begin to have this dawn in our consciousness, our minds will be renewed according to the truth; according to Christ, and will begin to have His mind.

How many see that the source of all of this is not us. This isn't us digging in and mustering up out of ourselves some latent potential. This isn't about us tapping into our brain power or natural mind. It isn't that at all. The source is the very Christ who is in us.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:30 that Christ is made to be unto us -- wisdom. We are one with Him. The source is Him. Remember II Cor. 5:17-18: "If anyone be in Christ, they are a new creation. "Old things" are passed over as pertaining to the new creation -- that is what the Greek says -- and all things have become new in that new creation. But Paul adds that all of these new things are --- out from God. Everything that is of the brand new creation is out from the Christ who dwells in us. We get to share in that and be a partaker, but we're not the source.

Neither are we the source of the renewed mind. No. It is the product of coming into a realization of Jesus Christ. It's a mind that has been enlightened by knowing Christ. This is a miracle and is supernatural. God works it from the inside out.

God Reveals How to Have a Renewed Mind

Now I do want to turn to a couple of other scriptures. One of the most obvious ones is found in Romans 12. Romans 12 states directly how we can come to know the perfect will of God through a renewed mind.

It reads a little different in the original Greek than it does in the KJV. It says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, because of the mercies of God." Note that: "By the mercies of God." Paul is not beseeching his readers under threat of punishment -- because of the wrath of God. He's not saying, "You had better get on this altar and present your bodies as a living sacrifice or God's going to punish you!" No, he's saying, "Look, this is the means of your deliverance. This is God's gift to you by His grace. I beseech you therefore brethren because of the mercies of God -- that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice -- the act of which is holy and acceptable to God. And this, doing this, is your reasonable service.

Now that word, "reasonable," speaks of a well-reasoned out choice. Paul is simply saying, "Listen, this is the only thing that makes any sense at all in the plan of God." He is telling us to think about this and to understand what this means because anything else would be nonsense. Paul is able to say this because if you do, "Present your body as a living sacrifice to God," in what better hands could you be? And the act of doing so is a holy and acceptable act unto the Lord. If you want to know how to please the Lord -- right here it starts.

In this passage we will read the key to a renewed mind. But before we read, let's back up for a moment and realize something else about the will of God. We think of the will of God as things, or situations, or happenings, but do we realize that a renewed mind ITSELF is the will of God? Indeed, it is the foundation for all of the rest of the will of God. For without a renewed mind we will not be able to understand the will of God the way He means it -- and we won't be

able to function or walk in the will of God according to the Truth. You'll misinterpret it at some point and things will go haywire.

If you're asking God for His will, He's going to say, "Well, the top of the list of answering your prayer I must create in you a knowledge of my Son. I want to renew your mind so that when I do reveal my will to you, you can understand it the way that I mean it -- and then more importantly -- so that you can walk in it according to the Truth."

Isn't that what we read from out of Colossians 1? It says that God wants us to be, "filled with the knowledge of his will." That's great. But – "In all wisdom and spiritual understanding." THAT is mind of Christ. That's not our mind. It is only the renewed mind of Christ that will understand the will of God, "in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." And the result of that is intended by God that, "We might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful and ever good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

This principle is all through the Bible – that God will do a work in us before He opens the door for His greater purpose for us. That God will create in us a renewed mind before He can open the door to a renewed outer life. And actually, if you examine it, this is often why when you pray for the will of God, is silent. He's saying, "I'm going to answer your prayer. I'm going to open up my will to you, but I must create in you the mind of Christ first. For if I open up my will to you, you're going to walk in it with your natural mind, in ignorance, maybe even in self-righteousness, and you're going to mess the whole thing up."

What we see here is that often when we make as our goal the outward will of God we miss God's goal which is the inward realization of Jesus Christ – the key to a renewed mind. No. God Almighty -- as part of His outworking of His will – shall always start in an inward way to reveal Christ and to create in us the mind of Christ. And I'm not saying we've got to spend 20 years to get all that settled before God would do anything. It's all progressive. But God works from the inside out. God is not, by and large, going to open up His will for us if we don't have a mind that is able to understand Him in that will and walk in it to His glory. He can't. It would damage us otherwise.

You have all the examples in the Old Testament -- and a few in the NT -- where saints like Moses, Joseph, Abraham, David, and the saints of old -- they knew the will of God – and they were right about it. They had it right. But in every case, what did they try to do? They tried to bring it to pass in their own understanding; in their own strength. And God let them. This resulted in consequences and often delay.

This is what we often will do. And God may allow us to do so to teach us what it means to walk with Him by faith in Truth. God wants -- even if we do know the will of God, and our certain that we know it, to give ourselves to Him in it. It won't die if it's of Him. It won't. Again, what God births He brings to maturity. When God has possession of us He can bring His will to pass to His glory and our full benefit.

God will say to us, "Look, I've given you this Truth; I've given you this discernment; I've shown you my will. Now I want to take a hold of you and I want to create a new attitude of faith, of love, and of grace. I want to create in you a commitment to my glory." God would say, "I'm going to create in you a realization of Christ -- and the relationship that will come out of it. THAT is my will -- it is the foundation upon which all else is built. This will enable you to walk through my will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Many of the Old Testament saints who knew the will of God tried to bring God's will for them to pass in their own hands. In these cases there were consequences. We can thank God even for those because we need this as part of a renewed mind -- we have to unlearn much. But in every case, once God did develop in them a commitment to Himself, and form in them faith, God brought His will to pass His way. And because of the work done in them they were able to safely walk in it to God's glory.

A Living Sacrifice

And so if you and I want the will of God, that's fantastic. But His will starts with His inward work in us of revealing Christ in us unto a renewed mind. In Romans, Paul goes onto write:

I beseech you therefore brethren because of the mercies of God that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, the act of which is holy and acceptable to God. This is your reasonable service.

Verse 1 is talking about getting on the altar -- which always represents the personal Cross. This is a matter of giving yourself to God as Jesus said in Matthew 16. He said, "Lose your life to Me in order to find Christ as your life." This is talking about unconditional surrender to God -- which as I said -- is not a negative thing. It's the best thing possible. It's freedom. Now it won't seem like freedom if you don't really trust him, but it is freedom because of the inward work -- and because he wants to do His will more than we want him to do it. It's a work of the cross.

On the heels of that appeal, Paul then says, "and be not conformed to this world." Now, what would it be to be conformed to the world? Well, certainly it would be to walk according to your natural mind. Because the natural mind is the world's mind. It's born into you through Adam. It's a mind that is governed by SELF. And if you really want a description of that, it's back there in John: The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. It's the self principle, as I alluded to earlier, where I'm governed by how things affect me. Paul warns us to not be conformed along that line.

Paul tells us to get on that altar and tell God to do whatever takes to set you free. He says that God wants us to BE TRANSFORMED. Transformed, how? By the renewing of your mind.

Those words suggest a progression from being governed by the natural mind to being governed by Jesus Christ through a renewed mind. If God is slowly making us realize Jesus Christ -- and this has impacted our consciousness, and impacted our discernment -- impacted how we view life -- we will progressively be able to see things more from God's perspective through the lens of love. If that's starting to happen we will be transformed by that -- our minds will be renewed.

If our minds are renewed according to Christ this is going to impact how we perceive life, and how we perceive God. For how we perceive God determines what we believe. It determines how we walk and how we choose as believers. Thus, we see the essential of a renewed mind.

Believers cannot discern Truth unless they see Jesus Christ. Again, you can have facts, but you won't have the attitude of God -- and that means that your facts will have no foundation other than your natural mind. Thus, we need to get on the altar and give ourselves to Jesus Christ. If we do, then Christ will begin to be revealed to you slowly but surely. No, it's not going to be with lightning bolts and thunder. It will be spiritually -- almost imperceptibly at times. As you encounter situations, you'll begin to discover him all the more. This will transform your mind over to the mind of Christ.

Paul tells us the result of being transformed by the renewing of the mind: That we may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. You want to know how to know the will of God? There it is. Can we once again see how God works? He FIRST reveals Christ in us. This will ultimately renew our minds. THEN we can know the perfect will of God. In other words, get on the altar, and God can reveal Christ in you -- and that will renew your mind -- and this renewed mind will equip you with a discernment and attitude that will prove in you and to you the perfect will of God.

Jesus said much the same thing. He said in Matthew 16 that if anyone wanted to come after Him they must lose their self to Him by picking up the Cross. He said that if a person would do that they would find Him as their life. But then John adds that in HIS LIFE is the LIGHT of men. So, if were to make a formula out of it, it would read: Lose your life -- you'll find Christ as your life -- and in His life is light --which means you will see, be enlightened, and know Him, and know the will of God. It's exactly what Romans 12 is talking about here.

And so the key is to give yourself to God. To do so really is what it means to be pure in heart. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." This is the key -- just like Jesus said in Matthew chapter 6, "The eye is the light of the body. But if your eye be single -- meaning single to the Lord -- be unconditionally committed to the Lord -- if your eye be SINGLE, your whole body will be full of light. But he also said if your eye not be single -- if your eye be evil -- your whole body will be full of darkness. In other words, have a double agenda with God and you're going to end up in darkness. And it can get so bad that even the light you think you have will be darkness. That is terrible deception.

Divine Guidance

When we speak of divine guidance aren't we really saying that we want to see the Truth about something? That we want to discern the mind of God on something?

I think we sometimes miss that. I think that a lot of us think that divine guidance is just a matter of God telling us things to do or not do. We think that divine guidance is a matter of God telling us to go here, go there, and so forth. I'm not saying all of those things cannot be built into our Christian walk. Of course they can. God takes us where we are and He works with us in whatever it is that we can function. He does. But ultimately, is that all that we want of a Christian life? That God simply hand out information to us about situations and people? For God to DO stuff in our life? For God to merely give us marching orders? Do we understand that we could have all of that and not know Jesus Christ?

Do we understand that if those things were all Christianity is that it is not much better than Old Testament Judaism with the name of Christ pasted on it -- because in that case we're walking according to the letter of the law. We're finding Bible principles and we're establishing them and we're ticking off boxes and we're saying, "Okay, this is a Christian walk." But none of that speaks of resurrection union with Christ. None of that speaks of an actual relationship of faith with Him. You can do all of that and never really know Him.

God wants so much more for His people. God wants fellowship with us and the life in Christ that emerges from that fellowship. God wants us to be living in and out from Christ as our life and as our Truth. God wants to reveal His Son in us – to renew our minds – so that we might KNOW Him and walk in Him.

So again, if all divine guidance consists of is God telling us things, or doing stuff in our life – and we do not have a renewed mind -- we would not really discern what God was telling us – not fully in the way that He means it. We'd understand it on a wrong level or a lower level.

I can prove that easily. Look at the disciples during the ministry of Jesus Christ. All the things that He said to them regarding the kingdom of God they did not grasp. He was speaking spiritually and they understood Him naturally. Why? They did not yet have a renewed mind. Indeed, He said to them, "The words that I speak to you are spirit and life -- the flesh profits nothing." He taught continually on the higher level of God's real intentions and spiritual purposes, but they continually interpreted it on a lower level. And during His ministry, they completely missed it. Even after that tremendous trauma of seeing him crucified, and even after seeing Him raised -- they still didn't get it fully. On the Mount of Olives they were still asking him about the natural kingdom. Only after Acts 2 -- once they had an inward presence of Jesus Christ, by the Spirit of God, were they able to begin to have His mind.

So we see that when we ask God for His will we are really asking for His mind. We are asking to see things from His perspective – but to also be able to walk through the will of God with that renewed mind for His purposes and glory. This is what God has for His people.

Is there not at all?

Spiritual Enlightenment

So again, in the New Testament, a renewed mind is one that has been enlightened by an inward realization of Jesus Christ. It is a mind that has been set free from darkness into the truth because of a realization of Christ. And the result is that, yes, a person will begin to see from God's perspective, but more than that -- a person will see from God's attitude and intent. In other words, we will see truth about life through the lens of God's love and redemption.

And that will come to govern us in our walk and discernment. It will even come to govern that which is in our natural man, our emotional life and so forth. Because Jesus will, in that case, be Lord of us.

Again, this is what Paul prayed in Colossians 1, but also in Ephesians 1: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him -- that the eyes of your understanding might be enlightened -- that you may know." What will we know? Well, he lists out all the tremendous purposes of God.

God's has got to do this on the inside of us in our spirit through an ongoing unfolding of Jesus Christ in us. And can we see that if that happens, it will impact our thinking, our consciousness, our discernment, and above all, it will impact our attitude and our heart toward God. It will both crucify us and raise us in Christ. This is real -- and is experiential. It's all the outcome of Jesus Christ in us and the outcome of an ongoing discovery of Him -- a discovery that will enlighten and renew our hearts and minds.

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