

## Devotional 2

# The Mind That Must Be Renewed

---

*Transformation Is Not Self-Improvement — It Is a Different Kind of Thinking*

## The Awakening

The world operates by a relentless process of formation. Before you opened your eyes this morning, the culture that surrounds you had already shaped what you consider normal, desirable, and possible. Advertising, social media, ambient cultural noise, the opinions of people you respect — all of it presses against the mind with constant, low-grade pressure. The result is not dramatic apostasy. It is quiet conformity. You do not fall away from God in a single catastrophic moment. You are squeezed, slowly, into a shape that was never designed for you.

Romans 12:2 does not pretend this is not happening. It assumes the pressure is real, constant, and effective — unless something interrupts it. That interruption is what Paul calls the renewal of the mind. And the stakes could not be higher: it is the renewal of the mind — not the accumulation of religious information — that produces transformation.

### **ROMANS 12:2 — FOUNDATIONAL TEXT**

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

## What the Text Reveals

### *Two Directions, One Moment*

The Greek *submissio* — 'do not be conformed' — is passive and continuous. You are not doing the conforming. The world is doing it to you, and it does not stop. Paul is not warning against a dramatic decision to abandon Christian values. He is warning against passive drift, the slow gravitational pull of the age that reshapes you without your explicit consent.

Metamorphosis — 'be transformed' — is also passive. Transformation is not self-generated any more than conformity is. But notice the mechanism: the renewing of the mind. The passive form tells you that God does the transforming. The phrase 'renewing of the mind' tells you that your active engagement with God's Word, in God's presence, is the instrument He uses. You are not the agent of transformation. But you are not passive before it either.

### *What 'Renewing' Actually Means*

The Greek *anakainosis* — renewal — carries the force of qualitative newness, not simply fresh repetition. This is not running the same mind through a cleaning cycle. It is the progressive replacement of the mind's foundational categories — what it treats as real, important, and true — with God's categories. The renewed mind thinks differently, not just about theological propositions, but about money, ambition, relationships, suffering, success, and time.

## ***The Result: Discernment, Not Just Information***

The purpose clause is decisive: 'Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is.' Docimadzein — to test and prove by experience — is the language of the assayer who tests metal to determine its true composition. The renewed mind does not simply receive information about God's will. It develops the capacity to recognize it in real time, in the midst of complex situations, without a direct divine word for every decision. This is the practical payoff of daily renewal: wisdom that functions below the level of explicit instruction.

## **The Biblical Architecture**

The mind's need for ongoing renewal is not a New Testament innovation. Deuteronomy 6 makes the same claim in covenantal terms. God's commands are to be upon your heart, spoken to your children, talked about as you sit at home, walk along the road, lie down, and rise up. The formation of a God-shaped mind requires saturation — not occasional exposure. The world forms the mind through constant presence. God's truth renews it through deliberate, repeated, structured engagement.

Psalms 1 draws the same contrast with the image of two trees. The blessed person meditates on God's law day and night — not as an academic exercise but as a living orientation that determines where roots go and what fruit grows. Colossians 3:2 — 'Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things' — assumes that the mind goes where it is directed, and that direction requires daily, intentional choice.

The ultimate endpoint of mind-renewal is glimpsed in 1 Corinthians 2:16 — 'We have the mind of Christ.' This is not a claim to omniscience. It is the claim that the Spirit who indwells us has the capacity to enable us to think as Christ thinks about the things that matter most. Daily renewal of the mind is the progressive actualization of what is already true: you have been given access to the mind of Christ.

### **CORE THESIS**

***Transformation is not the product of trying harder with the same mind. It requires a different kind of thinking — one that is daily renewed through Scripture, prayer, and Spirit-directed attention. The renewed mind does not merely know more about God; it learns to see the world as God sees it, and to recognize His will in the middle of the ordinary.***

### **THE QUESTION THAT MATTERS MOST**

*In what specific area of your life is the world's pattern of thinking most clearly winning? What would it mean to submit that exact area — not just in behavior, but at the level of what you believe about it — to the renewing work of God's Word?*

### A PRAYER FROM THE AWAKENING

*Father, we confess that we have underestimated the pressure. The world has been forming us in ways we did not notice, and we have offered our minds to it without resistance.*

*We have assumed that information about Your will was sufficient. But You have called us to transformation — to minds so renewed that we can discern Your will in real time, in the midst of actual life.*

*\*\*\*Renew our minds today — not with more data, but with a different way of seeing.*

*Replace the world's categories with Yours. Make us people whose thinking has been so saturated with Your Word that we cannot unsee what You have shown us.\*\*\**

*Do not let us be conformed. Transform us — from the inside, at the level of how we think. Amen.*

### Scripture Treasury

CATEGORY	REFERENCE	SCRIPTURE
The Pressure to Conform	<b>Romans 12:2</b>	<i>Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.</i>
	<b>1 John 2:15–16</b>	<i>Do not love the world or anything in the world... For everything in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life — comes not from the Father.</i>
The Renewed Mind	<b>Colossians 3:2</b>	<i>Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.</i>
	<b>Philippians 4:8</b>	<i>Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right... think about such things.</i>
Scripture as Instrument	<b>Psalms 1:2–3</b>	<i>His delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water.</i>
	<b>Deuteronomy 6:6–7</b>	<i>These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road.</i>
The Mind of Christ	<b>1 Corinthians 2:16</b>	<i>We have the mind of Christ.</i>
	<b>Philippians 2:5</b>	<i>In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.</i>