

# Loving God through the Renewal of Your Mind

*Romans Series*

By Pastor Sean Harris

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**Bible Text:** Romans 12:1-2

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We are at Romans chapter 12 and so let's go ahead and go there in our Bibles, Romans 12. Once you have found Romans 12 would you stand again? Let's get ready to read the text. We are going to look at verses one and two. You say, "Preacher, we already have engaged one and two."

That is true. We have, in fact, preached from one and two already, but like a pilot who flies over a target and realizes maybe I haven't achieved the desired results that the commander wants, I feel like the Lord wants us to re-attack verse number two and see if we can get some more desired effects from the truth that is contained in verse two. So I would like us to read one and two together and then I am going to preach from verse two.

I will read from the King James, but, really, I am going to personalize it.

Paul says. "I beseech you therefore, brethren,"<sup>1</sup> so brothers and sisters in Christ. That is us. Those are the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, those who have been radically converted by the power of the gospel and are now new creatures in Christ. That is us, he is writing to us.

"...by the mercies of God, that ye..."<sup>2</sup> so that is us. That I personally. I can personalize it. That Sean Harris would present his body "...a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is [my] reasonable service."<sup>3</sup>

Can you personalize it? In your own Bible can you read it in a sense that personalizes it?

Because, reading from verse two I am not to be "...conformed to this world."<sup>4</sup>

I am not to look like the world, smell like the world, talk like the world, listen to the world's music, walk like, smell like, talk like, or look like the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 12:1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Romans 12:2.

What then am I to be? I am to be “...transformed by the renewing of [my] mind, that [I] may [be able to] prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”<sup>5</sup>

Let’s pray.

*Father in heaven, by your Holy Spirit would you be gracious and make the Word of God come alive to us? We want to exalt Christ in the text. We want the Word of God to come and pierce our very hearts and to show us where we as a local New Testament Church need to be different. We pray, oh God, that if there is a soul here that is not born again, they are not converted, they have not trusted in Christ, the gospel has not changed them, we pray, oh God, that the Holy Spirit would work as the message is preached and their soul would be converted by putting their faith in the truth of the Word of God. And we pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

You may be seated.

So here is the question. According to verse number two, I want you to talk to me this morning. I want you to shout out the answers as the Holy Spirit leads you. Where in the world does transformation begin? This transformation process that God the Holy Spirit has begun in us upon salvation: where does it begin, Church? It begins in the mind. It begins in the mind. Transformation, according to the Word of God, begins in the mind, by the renewing of the mind. What does this renewal mean? It means renovation. I am going to use the idea of an extreme makeover. The Holy Spirit wants to do an extreme makeover on my mind. The Holy Spirit wants to change my mind. The mind that I received at birth has been corrupted by the fall of man. It is not the mind that can worship God, and I need a transformed mind. I need a renovated mind. I need to be remade. I need something different.

Who, then, is the agent of making my mind different? Who is the captain of the extreme makeover team? It is the Holy Spirit. It is God the Holy Spirit.

What does God the Holy Spirit use? What are the construction products? What are the tools? What are the nails? What are the studs? What are the tools? They are this, the Word of God.

God the Holy Spirit uses 66 canonical books beginning with Genesis and going down through Revelation. Sixty-six divinely preserved, inspired books are here for me. God takes the words off these pages, puts them in my mind and uses those words, those ideas, those truths to give me a new mind, to change my thinking, to renovate who I am.

God does that as I study the Word of God. God does that as I meditate upon God himself. God does that as I think about the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. God does that as I dwell on godly things.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

I am going to tie this to what the Lord told us from Matthew, Mark and Luke. Jesus said that I am to love the Lord my God with my heart and with my soul and with my mind.

So this morning I want to talk about intellectual love. I want to talk about how we are going to love God with our mind. I know how to love God with my heart. I know how to love God with my soul. I know how to love God with my strength. I want to know how to love God with my mind. How am I going to take the mind that God gave me and use it for his kingdom? He gave me a brain, he gave me a mind, a brilliant brain, and I need to love him with it.

Would you imagine with me, a scenario in which you and I are in the back of a boat like we are going to be on August second, third, fourth and fifth. I can't wait. We are going to live on the lake. I love the lake, Church. I love everything about the lake. And there is another dude in the boat with us and we start listening to him and he says, "Man, I love soccer."

"Really, you love soccer?"

"Yeah, I am crazy about soccer and soccer is a great sport and I love soccer."

And I say, "Well, we have got a great guy up at our church. He loves soccer, too." And I say to him, "Well, hey man, how did you enjoy the World Cup?"

And the guy says, "What?"

"The World Cup - you know what I mean right?"

"I didn't watch the World Cup."

"Really? You didn't watch the World Cup?"

"No."

"Well, what is it that you like about soccer?"

"Well, I just kind of like it."

"Well, can you tell me a little bit about the game? Do you like defense or offence or what part do you like?"

"Well, I..."

"Well, who is your favorite player?"

"I really don't know."

“How long does the game go on for?”

“I am not really sure.”

“How do they win when there is a tie?”

“I don’t know.”

Would you conclude that he loves soccer? No.

Here is my assessment. My contention this morning is that when it comes to Jesus, the American evangelical church says “I love Jesus.”

“Oh, really? You love Jesus. Tell me what you love about Jesus. Tell me about his person. Tell me about his work. How do the divinity and the humanity of Jesus come together? How has he always existed? Tell me a little about his work on Calvary. What did God accomplish?”

“I love it.”

“Well, tell me about it.”

“I love the gospel.”

“Really, what is the gospel?”

“Well, the preacher says it is the good news.”

“No, no. I am not asking you about what the preacher says. Could you tell me what the gospel is in your own words?”

“I love the Church. I am crazy about the Church.”

“Really? What is it about the body of Christ that you are crazy about?”

“I love the Bible.”

“Really? What part of the Bible do you love?”

I believe that we say we love God, but we don’t know how to love him with our mind. We haven’t been loving him with our mind. We need to learn to love God with our mind.

You see, my contention is that there is, in fact, an anti-intellectual bias in the American conservative Church. There is an anti-intellectual bias. I think it comes from three basic ideas. This is just my opinion. Number one, I think that we think intellectuals are geeks and nobody wants to be a geek. So if someone is articulate, if somebody is sharp, when a

teenager starts really getting into the Word of God, he is not encouraged, he is shunned in the youth group. We don't say, "Man, he really knows his Bible." We say, "Why are you doing that?" We put some silent pressure on him. We don't encourage intellectualism in the body of Christ. We are not encouraging him to pull out that knowledge. We are not thrilled that he knows doctrine. We are not thrilled that she is studying the gospel. We are not thrilled about the fact that she can give a great answer as to what the trinity is. We are surprised that they are spending so much time on what we perceive to be ridiculousness. It is just the opposite of what we want.

I would contend to you, number two, that intellectuals are perceived to be liberals. They are liberal in their theology. They are liberal in their morals. They are liberal in their political leanings. And so we have this anti-intellectual bias that has infiltrated our church.

And I am here to tell you we need intellectuals in the body of Christ. I say this again, Church. We need conservative intellectuals in America. We need people who are smart and can answer for the cause of Christ and they can debate intelligently. We don't need another moron to go on television and make us look bad. We need smart, conservative intellectuals who can defend the cause of Christ and can give a good answer.

Where are they going to come from if we have an anti-intellectual bias?

I think this is a reaction because Fundamentalism was actually first out of liberal theology. It was a reaction to liberal theology that had infiltrated the Church. In fact, this very church was founded 40 years ago in a reaction to the liberalism that had infiltrated the Southern Baptist Convention. But that doesn't mean that all theologians are liberals. There are conservative, rock solid, fundamental, theologians who can write well and they can communicate truth well.

So don't get scared now. I am going to give ten P's, not ten points, ten "P" words. I want you to take your bulletin and on the back where I have got the lines I would like you to write these ten "P" words down. Stay with me, please. I am going to go P1 through P10. These are hooks that we are going to hang our thoughts on as we work through the text. And if everyone would grab that, the sermon will actually psychologically seem faster to you if you are taking down some notes. And so that will help you.

**Point Number One: Pointless.** I am going to contend to you that studying your Bible outside of the Holy Spirit's divine presence is pointless. I need the Holy Spirit. I need the Holy Spirit to come and fill me with wisdom. This is his book. He wrote it. I need the Holy Spirit. He is part of the renewing process.

Where do you get that from, preacher?

Titus 3:5 uses the exact same Greek word "of" used only twice in our New Testament. The same Greek word is in Romans 12:2 that is used in Titus 3:5. And what the Bible teaches us is that the Holy Spirit is the renewing agent in my life, that God the Holy

Spirit is the one that renews my mind. So God the Holy Spirit uses this book right here to renew my mind. So I start my devotions; I start my study time; I start my meditation time in.... tell me, Church. Say it: prayer. I start in prayer.

God, you wrote this book. This is not a human book. I need you to open the Scripture. I need you to come and be part of this study time. I need you, God. That means I have got to clear my conscience, confess sin, get right with God and then open my heart to hear truth.

Why is this so important?

The Bible makes it very clear that the natural mind, the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit.

So, counselors, if you have got a young man or woman down there at camp and they are not born again, don't be surprised when they are bored with the Word of God. They have got a natural mind. They need a mind that has been made new through the power of the Holy Spirit to take in the Word of God. You have got a salvation issue right there, because if you are not born again, this is just an old boring book to you.

Greg, do you remember those days? Greg most recently came to Christ. I don't mean to embarrass you, but I am going to anyway. And now you love the Word of God. You can't get enough of it. Take it in; take it in. That is because you don't have a natural mind anymore. God has given you a new mind, and the new mind loves the Word of God.

The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 4:4 that "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not."<sup>6</sup>

And so if you are an unbeliever hanging out with us this morning—and we are thrilled that you are here—you need to know that the god of this world, Satan, has blinded your mind so this doesn't make sense to you. Quite frankly, you are bored stiff and you can't wait until this drumming is over with.

Why? You have got a mind that has been blinded by the god of this world. You need the Holy Spirit to come in, open this up to you, pull back the blindness and make the light of the Word of God shine in.

In fact, Paul says to us in Romans 8:7 that you have got a carnal mind, a fleshly mind. Your mind doesn't agree with godly things. In fact, it is just the opposite. It is hostile. You don't love God with your mind. You can't stand God with your mind. You are bored stiff. Why am I even here? When is lunch going to happen? And hurry up. It is because your mind has not been changed.

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<sup>6</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:4.

**Point Number Two: Pattern.** I want us as a church to follow this pattern, the pattern of the Lord Jesus Christ, the pattern of the early Church and more specifically the pattern of the Berean Church in Acts. So let's start with Luke's chapter number two, please. Turn over there in your Bibles to Luke two. Matthew, Mark and Luke, so right before John and right after Mark, really close to where you are. I want to draw your attention to two verses.

I will give you a second because I would like you to draw your attention to these two verses coming from the life of Christ. Talk about the humanity of Christ, the humanness of Christ, the fact that Christ had to learn, the fact that Christ had to read, the fact that Christ had to grow. And he provides for us, Luke gives us these two verses as a challenge.

Verse number 40 says, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with [what does your Bible say?] wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him."<sup>7</sup>

The child grew. I have got a simple question for you this morning. Are you growing? If you look at your spiritual knowledge, your spiritual depth, the wisdom that you have today versus one year ago, versus two years ago, versus five years ago. Is there any growth going on in your life at all? Are you able to defend your faith any better? Are you able to articulate the gospel better now? Do you know anything more about the Word of God than you did two years ago or five years ago? I am so concerned that our church just wants to plateau. That is the wrong answer. The fact that you are 62 years old, have retired and are collecting social security doesn't mean you are done learning. What if God gives you two more decades on this planet? You get 20 more years. Seniors, let's get back in the book and start growing.

Thank you, sister. I appreciate one amen out of that.

I am done. I am going to learn all I am going to learn. No, that is not what we are talking about. We need to keep growing. We need to keep digging. We need to keep learning. I am not content with what I know. I need some more wisdom. I am not content with one Sunday morning sermon a week. I need to get in the Word of God myself. I need to renew my mind myself.

And then verse 52, please. Please notice.

"And Jesus [what? He] increased."<sup>8</sup>

What is going on with the American evangelical Church? We are not increasing? We have plateaued? We are done. We know a few Bible stories. We know a couple of cute characters. We know a few books of the Bible where they are located and we are content with that knowledge. That is why we are not loving God with our minds.

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<sup>7</sup> Luke 2:40.

<sup>8</sup> Luke 2:52.

You have a two hour church service with a 20 minute devotional sermon and an hour and a half of songs. Now there is nothing wrong with singing, and the singing was beautiful today. But I need to love God with my mind. I don't need a cute little sermonette telling me how to manage my money better. I need to know the Word of God. I need to know the God of the Bible. I need to know who he is. I need to know how he thinks. I need to know his attributes. I need to know everything about him.

I want to know you, God. You gave me a brain and I want to know you with my brain.

Acts 2:42 the Bible says, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine."<sup>9</sup>

And when you mention doctrine today everyone goes, "Oh. Tell me how to manage my money better. Tell me how to have a better marriage." Doctrine is what changes people. If you can't articulate the person and work of Christ and how he fulfilled the messianic offices of the Old Testament, you are hopeless. You need to know the Word of God. You need to know what we believe and why we believe it so that you can interact with unsaved people from an intelligent perspective.

Quite frankly, we look like idiots most of the time. Why? We are not loving God with our minds.

When a guy knows more about football than the Word of God, something is broke, B R O K E, broke. Ok?

I know all the teams. I know all the players. I have got facts about them memorized. I know who is going where. I can map out the entire play off series for you. I know all the rules, but I don't even... I can't even articulate the gospel if you paid me to. Something is wrong. I have said it before and I will say it again. Pull out a blank piece of paper and write down the gospel. See how you do. See if you can write it down. I don't mean looking at your Bible. I mean right off the top of your head. If the gospel radically changed you, then why in the world do you need a note card in order to explain the gospel?

The Church at Berea: that is us. That is who we are named after. This is Berean, the Church at Berea. This is who we are as a church.

The Bible says "these"; the context shows us it is the Church at Berea.

"...were more noble than those in Thessalonica."<sup>10</sup> That is the sister city right over there.

"...in that [please notice] they received the word with all readiness of mind."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Luke 2:42.

<sup>10</sup> Acts 17:11.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



They used their minds to search the Word of God. They used their minds to study the Word of God. God gave them a mind and they are not going to sit in the pews as clueless robots. They are thinking. They are following along. They are taking notes. They are engaged in the Word of God. They are paying attention. The preacher can't slide something underneath the radar because they are looking. They know the Scripture. That is the Church at Berea. That is who we need to be, congregation. That is how we are going to make a difference in Fayetteville.

**Point Number Three: Preparation.** Please write down the word preparation. Number three is preparation. Intellectual love, loving God with my mind: that is studying the Word of God, the things of God, theology and apologetics. Studying these things is a way to prepare.

What are we going to prepare for? We are going to prepare for a war. What kind of a war?

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.”<sup>12</sup>

We do not have physical weapons. No M4s, no machine guns, no missiles for us. Our war is with words, ideas. Ideas are the second most powerful thing in the universe. God is the most powerful, and an idea is the second most powerful thing in the universe. And what are we going to do with our words? We are going to pull down strongholds. What kind of strongholds? Not castles, not physical strongholds. We are going to pull down intellectual strongholds.

Give me an example.

Darwinism would be an intellectual stronghold that has infiltrated the Church. It is amazing how many preachers have caved on evolution. Let's not do that. We are not caving. God made man. He spoke man into existence.

I will give you another intellectual stronghold, pluralism. Pluralism is an intellectual stronghold that is infiltrating the Church.

What are you talking about, preacher?

It is the idea that we all worship the same God and we are all working our way to the top of the mountain. Baptist is one road; Islam is another road; and Mormonism is another road. But don't worry about it. We are all going to the same top.

And I say to you. That is in an intellectual stronghold.

So, counselors, I preached at you last year. I am going to do it again. Are you doing anything to equip yourself to help pull down intellectual strongholds when the young

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<sup>12</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:4.

people come in and they have been going to secular schools and their minds are filled with garbage? If you are sending your son or daughter to a public school, I am not putting you down right now, but you need to understand that they are being fed lies. And so that means that in the mind of your son or daughter, an intellectual stronghold is beginning to take root.

What do you mean preacher?

What I am saying, Bob, is that Satan is building a castle inside the mind. A castle is being built, an intellectual castle, a stronghold is getting in there.

How do we tear it down? Verse five tells us.

We cast down or destroy imaginations. (That is arguments.) And we destroy every high thing that exalts himself against the knowledge of God. So we go in there with our baseball bats, Brother Smith, and we hit every argument and we get into an intellectual fight.

No, you will not have a stronghold here. And, no, that is not a question. I am going to take that thought and I am going to take it captive to what? Take it captive according to Scripture and to the obedience of Jesus Christ.

Are you bored this morning? Are you getting it? Do you understand what I am saying? There is a battle for your mind. There is a battle for your mind. There is a battle for your children's minds. There is a battle going on.

Right now there is an intellectual stronghold taking root in America and it is the stronghold that marriage is any gender linking up with any gender. That is a stronghold that is taking root in America. It is a stronghold. And the evangelical Church is asleep, sound asleep at the watch. No one is going in there and saying, "No, God created male. God created female. That is God's plan. That is the only plan that is acceptable. The Word of God is the divine authority. Anything less is sin."

Last year, every single time I preached on homosexuality there was a nasty note in my box. Every single time there was a nasty note in my box. Do you know why? Because Satan is building a stronghold, an intellectual stronghold and that is: Who are you to judge? If two females love each other, who are you to judge?

It is not me judging. It is the Word of God judging.

1 Peter 1:13 says this.

"Wherefore [therefore, this is the purpose. You are to] gird up the loins of your mind."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> 1 Peter 1:13.

What is this idea of girded loins? It means getting ready for battle. There is a battle going on. What is the battle for? Here it is right here. Listen to me, Church. There is a battle for the hearts and minds of children. There is a battle.

Did God make you? You are accountable to him. Or are you a product of a huge explosion with no accountability whatsoever? There is a battle. There is an intellectual battle happening in America. And, mom and dad, it is time for you to wake up. Get ready for battle.

Here is my contention. This is what I am going to tell you. Here is a great book. It is called *The Kingdom of the Cults*. It shows me what is wrong with cult x and cult y. And here is my contention: that I can take this book. I can open it up and I can study it. And when I study it, I take notes and I highlight and I prepare myself that I am, in fact, loving God.

Is it time for me to get together and I am going to worship you, Jesus. And I want to be prepared to defend my faith. I want to be prepared to give an answer. And I need to know what Buddhists believe or Hindus believe or Muslims believe or Mormons believe or Jehovah's Witnesses believe so that I can engage them not from a moron perspective because I am clueless, but because I have been given a mind and I am going to use my mind to learn.

In fact, everything about apologetics comes from this very Bible verse. Apologetics is scriptural.

1 Peter 3:15 says, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer."<sup>14</sup>

*Ap-ol-og-ee'-ah* is the Greek word. It is the word from which we get the word apologetics. You should be able to give an answer, be able to give an argument. Why in the world do you believe what you believe? Well, let me tell you why I believe what I believe.

But you can't do that if your mind is not girded up, if you haven't devoted some time to intellectual love.

Imagine a scenario in which a Christian expresses love for the Bible.

"Man, I love that Bible. Good Bible. I love it."

And the skeptic at the coffee shop or at work or the unbeliever at work says to you, "You know what I can never get over is why the Church has cherry picked the books that they like and didn't include all of the books that were written about Jesus."

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<sup>14</sup> 1 Peter 3:15.

And there you are going, “Other books about Jesus. I didn’t know there were other books about Jesus. I am clueless about the other books about Jesus. What other books?”

And now what happens? What happens, Church? You aren’t ready to talk about how we got the canonical books. You are clueless. You don’t know about the gospel of Thomas. You haven’t done any extra reading about that. You don’t understand why the Church recognized some books as canonical and saw other books full of heresy and so they were never included in the canon. You are not able to articulate intelligently.

And so you know what happens? The skeptic walks away saying, “Yeah, there’s another sucker.”

It is the truth. Do you know why? We are not loving God with our mind. We spend four hours watching sports and ten minutes watching or reading the Word of God.

Do you know what that says? I love sports more than God. It’s pure and simple. No argument about it. The idol in my house is ESPN. That is who I worship. I worship it every day.

You say, “Is there something wrong with sports?” No. There is nothing wrong with sports. But just go ahead and journal your week and see how many minutes and hours you devote to sports and how many minutes and hours you devote to anything related to Christianity. Chart the two and decide for yourself who God is.

**Point Number Four: Passion.** Let me move a little bit quicker. I am going to contend to you that intellectual love only occurs when truth moves you and moves your emotions.

Where are you getting that from, preacher?

I get that from Psalm one. Psalm one says that this man delights in the law of the Lord. He delights in it. Do you know what that means? He loves it. He gets joy out of it. He studies the law of the Lord and it brings him joy. He is meditating on the Word of God and that evokes love or praise.

Ruth, have you had that happen to you? You read the Word of God and God just speaks to you. I love you, God. You are awesome. What a great truth. Have you ever had that in your devotions? I needed that, God.

Isn’t it amazing what happens when the God of the Holy Spirit opens up the Bible to you and you get a truth out of it? And that truth now moves from your mind down to your heart and from your heart you say, “I love you, God. Thank you for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thank you for being a wise Creator. Thank you for saving my soul.”

It moves from intellectualism to your emotions.

**Point Number Five: Pure Minds.** Authentic, intellectual love is more than a check the block exercise. It's not about doing devotions for the sake of doing devotions. Ok, six out of six, five out of five. Yes, I did it.

No, no, no. Devotion time, study time, meditation time has a purpose or intent behind it. I have got to get something out of this, God. I want this to change my life.

Where are you getting that from, preacher?

I get it from Psalms 119 and all kinds of verses.

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart.”<sup>15</sup>

Why? Why are you hiding God's Word in your heart? So you don't sin against God.

Let's talk about iPods. Let's talk about what is on your son's or daughter's Ipod. When was the last time you took the Ipod, plugged it into a speaker system in your house and played some songs from it? Let's talk about renewing of your mind.

Johnny spends ten minutes in the Word of God and listens to an Ipod for five hours a day filled with garbage. How in the world are you going to compete with that?

Moms, dads, when was the last time you did an Ipod check?

Let me tell you something. There is nothing that is theirs. If they eat off your table and enjoy your carpet and your air conditioning, then there is nothing, nothing, nothing that is theirs. Take that Ipod. Plug it into some external speakers and start shuffling through it. See what you don't recognize. See what is filling their mind with garbage.

But you can't compete. This is my contention: “Garbage in, garbage out.” That is why I would be very careful sending your children to public schools. Know what the teacher is. Go and meet the teacher. Know what the curriculum is. Examine the curriculum. Know what they are teaching. Take the science book and don't be dumb about it. Open the science book, and see what they are teaching about the creation of man. Know what they are teaching. Look at the history book. Most of these history books are nothing but revisionist history. Know what they are teaching. Don't be naïve. It is your responsibility, mom and dad. Remember: “Garbage in, garbage out.” Don't be surprised after twelve years of garbage that they walk away from the Christian faith.

Don't say “Where did that come from?”

**Point Number Six: Prove.** I am going to use this in an archaic sense. The archaic meaning of prove is to learn or to find out. I need to renew my mind. Why? So that I may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. I need to learn or find out the will of God. I need to learn or find out these gray areas in life.

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<sup>15</sup> Psalm 119:11.

See, I have a lot of choices to make. There isn't a play button in the New Testament so that I can push the play button and say, "That is God's favorite music."

That means I need to examine every single song. I need to decide. Is this acceptable to you, oh God. How am I going to determine these gray areas if I am not in the Word of God?

Where are you getting that from, preacher?

Romans 14:5. Let's look at it together.

"One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike."<sup>16</sup>

So I have got two Christians. Both of them believers and one says, "The Lord's Day is special and I am really going to set it aside." And other one says, "Every day is special and every day is set aside."

What is the rule? What is the decision here? Paul says.

"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."<sup>17</sup>

Not my mind. John, you be fully persuaded in your mind. Marcus, you be fully persuaded in your mind. I don't make the decisions for your family. I am not the spiritual leader for the Lewis family. I am not the spiritual leader for the Burke family. Aaron needs to be fully persuaded in his own mind. I need to be fully persuaded in my own mind. This means I have got to study the Word of God, because there are a lot of gray areas.

Ladies, probably the biggest gray area that you deal with is what are acceptable garments to wear. What is modest? Well here is my contention. If you are never in the Word of God, if your mind is not being renewed on a regular basis and you go on a shopping trip, how in the world do you think the Holy Spirit is going to lead you during that shopping trip?

I heard one person say, "He is not."

That is right. That is right. And so here you are. It has been a long time since your mind has been renewed. You have been filling your mind with secular commercial garbage, materialism, ads coming in the mailbox. You haven't been in the Word of God lately. Now you enter into the store and instead of shopping like a Spirit filled believer, you are shopping at best like a carnal Christian.

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<sup>16</sup> Romans 14:5.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

So then you pull garments off the racks that are not modest because the Holy Spirit is not leading you. We don't need a preacher to issue out a laundry list of rules. We need born again believers who renew their minds every single day. Why? So that, number six, they can prove what is that good and acceptable will of God.

**Point Number Seven: Plan.** Loving God with your mind will not happen without a plan. You have to have a plan, men. When are you going to do it, ladies? When are you going to do it? What works best for you and what works best for me is going to be different. Do you do it at work, at lunch time? Do you do it in the early morning time?

At the Anchorage, it is easy. You have got a whole schedule and you block off devotion time. But our lives are much more complex than that. We would love to be at camp for the rest of the year, but we can't. Our boss gets us up at four o'clock in the morning. Many of us are at work at 5:15 getting ready for the day, and we work until six or seven o'clock at night. There are a lot of officers and NCOs in this room that work like that every single day. There are retired civilians and small business men working like that all the time.

So when are you going to make it happen, men? When are you going to make it happen, ladies? What is your plan?

Where are you getting that from, preacher?

I get it from a very familiar verse. We just looked at it. I want to call your attention to this word. They searched the Scriptures daily. They did it. They had a plan.

Hey, men. I fully realize that you cannot devote an hour or two every single day. I have got that piece. I know that. Let me ask you this. Could you set aside 30 minutes on a Saturday? Men, could you set aside 30 minutes on a Saturday in which you shut out the family, you turn off the phone and you say, "This is my God time. I want to meditate. I want to study. I have got my study Bible. I have got my note pad. I have got some internet connection so that I can get on some good websites. I want to learn right now"?

Could you do that once a week, men? Could you do that just one time a week for 52 weeks? Could you devote ten minutes at lunch time to reading a good book?

It is easy.

Young people, it is easy. But you are going to back to college. Then it becomes a lot more challenging, doesn't it? When everything hits you, exams and all the pressures, you have to have a plan. When am I going to study the Word of God? When am I going to meditate upon the Word of God?

**Point Number Eight: a Personal Christian Library.** This is just a personal opinion. I can't show you any Scripture. I think every single Christian family should be developing a personal library. Every single Christian needs a good study Bible. Several people in the

congregation have found this one to be a very good study Bible. It is very good and has a lot of notes and charts. I think I gave this to Aaron a couple of years ago and he has enjoyed it. It is a great study Bible. If you don't have a study Bible, please start setting aside your nickels, dimes and pennies until you get some money for a study Bible. You need notes, charts, diagrams, maps, commentaries, concordance, and articles to help you.

And I am telling you. I feel the feedback right now, Church. We are like this. Why? Why are we like this? Why don't we want to get more out of our devotion time? Why don't we want to get more out of the Word of God time? Why are we content reading a chapter and getting nothing out of it? Why do I feel arms crossed? I need to feel embracing.

Yes, preacher. Give us good tools. Show us how to study the Word of God. Yes, preacher. We want to get deep in the Word of God. We want roots that are deep, deep roots.

You also need good apologetics books. This has become my favorite called... it is on Amazon. It is only 15 bucks, folks. This is a great book. The reason I like this book so much for you is because it is alphabetized. You don't have to read the entire thing. It just has topics. When you need something, when somebody presents a term that you are unfamiliar with, you open it up and you know how A through Z works. You find it and you read a great article. It is going to give you some other suggestions and you pull a hold of it.

This is my contention. Every single Christian family should be developing a personal library. And then what you are going to do with that personal library is you are going to give that personal library to your children, who are going to give them to their children, who are going to pass it down to their children.

Now how cool is that?

Can you imagine receiving the Bible that your dad poured over, receiving the Bible that has dad's notes on it, mom's journal notes in it? Man, this is awesome. My mom and dad really were believers. They were converted. They served God. And you receive ten or fifteen books and then twenty books, and you pass it to the second generation or the third generation.

Can you prove that in Scripture? No, not at all; it is just an opinion.

Here is a great website for people who say, "I am broke and I don't have any money": Blue Letter Bible.org. This is called a free website. No charge whatsoever. Every single Sunday school teacher should be using this website. This is a great website. There are a lot of free resources to you. It is a great website.

By the way, for all you Iphone junkies, there is an app available for it, so you can pull it down that way.



See what you think about this idea.

Dads, instead of getting another tie, another pair of socks for Father's Day, why don't you put the word out that you want a good Christian book. How about we get our children a great study Bible for Christmas? How about we get them a good solid gift that can last for eternity?

**Point Number Nine: Present Progressive.** What? What are you talking about? Look at this word -ing. Do you know what the verb tense is? It is continually happening. That means I renewed my mind yesterday. I am in the process of renewing my mind, and I have got to renew it tomorrow.

The devotion I did five weeks ago won't cut it for today. I need a new mind today. The sermon is over with. Today is Friday. It has been five days. I need something for today.

Renewing is a present and progressive idea. Not only have I been renewed, I am being renewed and I need to continually be renewed again.

How does this happen? It happens by me making a decision.

**Point Number Ten: Purpose.** What is the ultimate purpose in all of this? Why in the world are we doing all of this? What in the world is the ultimate purpose for all of this? Why would we dedicate so much time to renewing our minds? What is the reason we are doing this? We are doing it because of this word right here: transformed.

A laundry list of do's and don'ts is not going to transform the body of Christ. Do this and don't do this is not going to transform the body of Christ. A laundry list of rules called the law did not transform the Israelites. It didn't do it. It didn't work.

Do you know what transforms us? The Word of God transforms us. The Word of God is what makes me a new creature in Christ. I am different. I don't want to be the same preacher I was four years ago. I don't want to be the same preacher I was two years ago. I want to be renewed. I want to be transformed. I need to be a new creature in Christ. How about you?

Are you content with who you were a year ago or two years ago? I am not. I don't want to be that same person. I want to be different. I want to be transformed. I want you to be able to see God is doing a work in our preacher's life.

Have you seen it in your own life? That is the purpose, the purpose of all this is to be transformed beings. Why? Because that is how we most glorify God.

Let's pray.