



Spiritual Warfare: Pulling Down Strongholds

EPHESIANS 4:20-24
LESSON 11 – RENEWING YOUR MIND – PART 3
PUTTING ON THE NEW MAN

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Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind

- ▶ Ephesians 4:20 20 But you have not so learned Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.
- ▶ Verse 23 ...and be renewed in the spirit of your mind...
- ▶ Paul has told us that we are not to walk like the Gentiles walk but are instead to walk in a manner that is fitting. We are to walk like we have heard and learned the truth from Jesus. We have seen how this means that in order to come to faith in Christ we must first repent. We must put off our former way of life, turning from our sin and to Christ in faith.

Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind

- ▶ Paul tells us that after we put off that former conduct, our “old man” that only grows more and more corrupt, then we are to be renewed in the spirit of our mind. This is a rich verse so we will take a few minutes today to take it apart into two phrases.
- ▶ **Be Renewed**
- ▶ Notice he does not say “act renewed.” It is not a command to learn about renewal or to start a renewal ministry or to find the secret of renewal. No. He says, be renewed. And the way he says it the reader should already know how to be renewed and that their duty then is to actually “be renewed.”
- ▶ When the Holy Spirit regenerates us we are indeed “born again.” Now we understand that when we repent and believe in Christ it is because we have been made a new creation. There is renewal. But being renewed in the spirit of our mind is not a one time act of renewal as when we are born again.

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- ▶ This word means that from the time we repent and, as we will learn tomorrow, put on the new man (Eph 4:24), from that time continuing through the rest of our life we are being renewed. It is the renewing of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5) as an ongoing part of the new walk of the new man in this new life.
- ▶ So the Spirit continually renews and refreshes us. How? The Word of God read, heard, obeyed, memorized, and meditated upon is the tool that the Holy Spirit uses to renew us and conform us to the image of Christ. As we are renewed we are indeed transformed (Rom 12:1-2) and as we are transformed our lives prove that God's will is perfect, acceptable, and holy.

Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind

- ▶ Do you need reviving? Do you need to rekindle your love for Christ? Do you need to grow in grace and get beyond a dry stagnant place in your walk with Christ? Get into the Word! Is it that simple? Yes. It really is.
- ▶ At times when things are dry and it seems as though God does not hear our prayers or care about us – during those times we often are fooled and deceived into thinking that the Word of God is dry so we do not pick it up and read it. We fail to understand that the Word of God is alive, active, powerful, effective, and sufficient. Don't believe me? Try me! The next time you find yourself in that place of spiritual barrenness – read your Bible. Anywhere. Just pick a book or chapter and read it. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your mind to the truth and just read. The truth is that we cannot read the Word of God and remain the same. The Word in the hands of the Spirit is used to bring about a continuing renewal. And we all know that we need renewal as often as the Spirit will renew us.

Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind

▶ **In the Spirit of Your Mind**

- ▶ So where is it that we are to continually be renewed? In the spirit of our mind. Okay. What is that? Our spirit? Our soul? Our mind? What exactly is the spirit of our mind.
- ▶ This is a phrase that refers to the inner man, the very deepest part of who we are that determines how we think and what we do. This is our heart of hearts. The very deepest part of who we really are. And this is what is renewed day by day through the power of the Spirit applying the Word to our lives.

Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind

- ▶ This deepest part of who we are must be renewed. True repentance will be followed with this renewal which in fact leads to putting on the new man. But even after we have put on the new man and trusted Christ we still must be renewed daily, moment by moment. For who we are, the spirit of our mind, is still embodied in this fallen flesh. And while the spirit wars against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit it is here in the spirit of our mind that we will win or lose the battle. For the spirit of our mind is that inner man, that part of us that determines what it is that we want (desire) and therefore what we do. Our motives and desires flow from the spirit of our mind.

Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind

- ▶ How interesting then that the contrast here in these verses is that of the difference between how those with and without Christ walk. The lost man walks in the futility of his mind. The repenter walks with the spirit of his mind being renewed over and over again!
- ▶ Where before we were unable to desire and do what was pleasing to God, now with the Spirit's help we are in our very inner man motivated and empowered to both want to do what is right, and to do it. We now have a moral capability that before we did not. Whereas we were dead in sin now we are alive to God. Where we were ambivalently apathetic toward righteousness now righteousness is what we crave as though it were hunger or thirst.

Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind

- ▶ Interesting also that the very thing that the Spirit uses to call us to this new life is what He uses to continually renew us in our inner man. The “gospel” is “the power of God to salvation.” The Word of God cleanses us, sanctifies us, renews us, transforms us, convicts us, breaks us, motivates us, and empowers us. The Word never returns void. It always accomplishes the purposes for which God sends it forth. The written Word of God presents and reveals to us the Living Word of God.
- ▶ Jesus once rebuked the Pharisees saying that they searched the Scriptures for law after law to obey so that they might be saved, but He said, “they testify of Me” (John 5:39). The Word does not give us eternal life through a system of obedience and good works. No. It is used by the Spirit to prove that we cannot save ourselves, that we need a Savior, and that that Savior is Christ! The Word in the hands of the Spirit calls us to Christ.

Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind

- ▶ No wonder then that the devil started in the garden by casting doubt on the Word of God. “Did God really say?” Do not underestimate the Word of God!
- ▶ As we repent and believe in Him we enter that continuing process of being renewed over and over again until the final redemption of our bodies at our glorification. This renewal continues until our salvation is complete. Of course, in God’s eyes it is complete, for Jesus declared from the cross, “It is finished.” He even refers to glorification in the past tense in Romans 8:30. But for us this must be worked out in time. And the way that it is worked out is through our sanctification. It is through the Spirit renewing and transforming us daily to the image of Christ.

Be Renewed in the Spirit of Your Mind

- ▶ So the secret is out – if we want to be renewed we must only pick up and read our Bibles, with the mindset to hear and do what it says. How many self help books can we toss out now? Is it really that simple? Yes it is. Paul tells us as simply as he is able by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.”

Put On The New Man

- ▶ Ephesians 4:24 ...and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.
- ▶ Salvation starts to unfold here before us as Paul continues to explain the difference between the lost and saved and the way that they live and think. Salvation, from our perspective, starts with the conviction of sin as the Holy Spirit convinces us that we are sinners and as such need a Savior. The response is that we first repent of our sin. We repudiate our sin, we turn from it, we reject it. This is the putting off of the old man and our former way of life. The next logical step then is that we are renewed in the spirit of our mind. The last step in explaining this process of conversion then is that we put on the new man. We are renewed and turn away from our sin and to Christ in faith and we are now living a new life as we are transformed and made more and more to look like Christ.

Put On The New Man

- ▶ As we have studied what it means to put off and be renewed, now we pick up in verse 24 where Paul tells us that if we have heard Jesus' call to salvation and have been taught the truth by Him then we will indeed put on this new man. Where does this new man come from – and who is he?
- ▶ The new man is the person that we are once we have been called to new, eternal life. This is the inner man revived from death. And we note by the word used that this is not a renovation of the old man. This is not the old man remade, it is a new man. If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation. Completely new. Where once we were dead in sin now we are alive to God. Where once we walked in the futility of our mind now we have the mind of Christ.

Put On The New Man

- ▶ The old man has been put off. Not changed, but put away forever. We are not who we were! We are indeed new. Born again. Alive. Redeemed. And this new man belongs to Jesus Christ having been purchased by His blood (1 Cor 6:19-20).
- ▶ We further see that this new man is created by God. It is not something that we will into being. It is not something we create by decision or choice. Our salvation and who we are in Christ is not something we determine or cause. Salvation is all by grace through faith and it is God who creates us and makes us new.
- ▶ And as God creates this new man, we see that the new man is created “according to God.” This means that the new man is created to be like God. Where once we were dead and lost and only able to sin, now we are alive, and new, and able to obey! Now we are new – new hearts, new minds, new lives.

Put On The New Man

- ▶ Further, this new man is created in true righteousness and holiness. This means that the new man is created with the capability and inclination to be right with others and right with God. True righteousness is the state of being in a right relationship with others and with God. And holiness here is the sacred observance of all duties to God. In other words, where we were incapable of obedience to God's Word now we are able, empowered by the Spirit, to keep the Law. Not that keeping the Law saves us – but it does prove that we are saved. Remember, we are saved by faith alone without works, but saving faith is always a faith that works.

Put On The New Man

- ▶ As we look at the Law of God we see that the first 4 of the Ten Commandments deal with the things that are necessary to be right with God and fulfill our duty to Him (holiness). And the last 6 of the Ten Commandments deal with what is necessary for us to be right with others (righteousness). So now we are in this new man able to obey God.
- ▶ It is interesting to me that before we are saved we have a fallen nature and sin originates in that fallen nature. We are bound in sin and indeed, as has already been stated, before Christ we are unable to not sin. We are sinners by nature.
- ▶ However, once we have been called to new life, we are now a new man created to be like God through righteousness and holiness. So now, as Romans 6 puts it, we are slaves of righteousness. Where before we were capable only of sinning, now we are capable of righteousness – and we have the ability now to NOT sin. We can resist the devil and overcome temptation. What changed?

Put On The New Man

- ▶ We are new. The old nature is gone. It has been put off. And we are a new creation. Old things have passed away and “all things have become new.” Some question this and would like to think that we can still blame sin on our old nature – but the old nature is clearly gone (see Galatians 2:20; 5:22-23; 2 Cor 5:17; Romans 6:6-14; etc). “Our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.”
- ▶ So where then does sin originate for the believer? James 1:14 makes it all clear. Each one, that is each believer, is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Where do these desires come from? His nature? No. His flesh!

Put On The New Man

- ▶ It is not that we still have a sinful nature that can only sin. No. We have a new heart, a new mind, and a new nature. Now we partake of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:2-4). But what is the one part of who and what we are that has not been changed yet? Our bodies! That is one of the reasons we have been given the Holy Spirit. He seals us for the Day of Redemption. He empowers us to battle sin. He indwells us. And when is our redemption complete? When we are glorified. And what happens when we are glorified? This corruptible body puts on incorruption (1 Cor 15:50-58). That is why we say that we are saved (justification and conversion), we are being saved (sanctification), and we will be saved (glorification). And thankfully, in God's eyes, it is a done deal that is played out in time as we are born again, converted, sanctified, and then one day will be glorified.

Put On The New Man

- ▶ Without the Holy Spirit we see that we would fall and fail and our flesh would dominate us. But because we have been given the Spirit we are constantly being equipped and empowered to stand firm, to grow in grace, and to be conformed to the image of Christ. The Spirit makes it possible for us to deny the flesh. He gives us gifts that enable us to have self control and longsuffering. He fills us – and Paul wrote to the Galatians that if we walk in the Spirit we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Walking in the Spirit is the antidote for being enticed by this fallen body into sin.

Put On The New Man

- ▶ We also must see that if we do not put off the old man, if we are not being renewed, and if we do not put on the new man and then begin to live differently – that is, if there is not a change from death to life, from the walk of the Gentiles to the Walk of the Saints – then we have not been saved! If there is no conviction there has been no conversion. If there is no repentance then there has been no regeneration. If there is no renewal then there has been no salvation.
- ▶ That is why we must make our calling and election sure. Because if we think that salvation is simply a matter of God accepting us as we are then we have believed a false gospel. God does not accept us just as we are. Just as we are we cannot inherit eternal life (1 Cor 6:9-10; 15:50; Gal 5:19-22; Col 1:12). That is why salvation is all by grace. He gives us grace, life, repentance, and faith. He empowers us to put off the old man, He renews us, He enables us put on the new man. And we are from that point forward walking in NEW LIFE (Romans 6:4).

Are You Sure?

- ▶ Today, thank God for the great transformation that He has accomplished in your salvation. And if you are unsure about your salvation having read this, then I would encourage you to read Romans chapters 6-8 today. If there is no fruit and no evidence of salvation in your life, today, call out to Christ in faith, turning from your sin and to Him in faith – *and He will save you!*
- ▶ Next in this series – Lesson 13: Learn to Discern – Hebrews 5:11-14