

# RENEWING OUR MINDS

Colossians 3:1-17

The ultimate freedom we have as human beings is the power to select what we will allow or require our minds to dwell upon.<sup>1</sup>

~ Dallas Willard ~

This holds true for the prisoner isolated in solitary confinement, cutoff from all external input; even he or she retains the ability to choose that what they think about.

The ability to select what we put before our minds is crucial to our becoming like Jesus. As we read Colossians 3:1-17 notice references to the mind and knowledge.

## Colossians 3:1-17

Ideas rule our lives.

We are shaped and driven by our ideas of success, family, friendship, marriage, patriotism, fairness, God, freedom, happiness, “the American dream”, work, self-worth.

Last week, Leo shared he was taught, “the world is out to get you”. That is an idea. What attitudes and actions might flow from the notion, “the world is out to get you”? Fear and paranoia on one end of the spectrum and on the other, aggressiveness and violence.

Ideas rule our lives.

Images also significantly influence our lives. Images powerfully reinforce ideas.

Because ideas and images so powerfully influence us, this is where Satan attacks the human race. With what did Satan bring about the Fall? *But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup> For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”* (Genesis 3:4-5)

Satan brought about the Fall through an idea – Eve could become like God.

Satan primarily attacks us in the arena of ideas and images. As “prince of the power of the air,” he has great influence over the ideas embraced in whole cultures. This is why the Apostle Paul explains that “...we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness....” (Ephesians 6:12–14)

The primary way we fight back is through the renewing of our minds by God’s truth.

We must keep God’s Word ever before our minds to flush out Satan’s lies and the ideas that hold us in bondage to destructive attitudes and behaviors. There is no becoming like Jesus without letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly.

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<sup>1</sup> Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 95.

If I have a wrong idea what do I need? I need the truth; I need the right information. If I have grown up believing I'm worthless with all the destructive feelings and behaviors that accompany that lie, what do I need to be healed? I need to know I'm created in God's image and that Jesus values me so much He sacrificed His life for me.

But hearing or reading this truth one time will not replace the lie I've repeated to myself thousands of times. For any truth to replace a lie, it must be taken into our hearts and minds at the deepest levels. We need to know the truths of God like the back of our hand. This comes about through meditation, memorization, and prayer. God will surely meet us there and be at work in us for it is His desire we become like Jesus.

I know I used the M word – memorize. And I know for many of us memorization has about as much appeal as flossing. But we need to get over it. You might think you can't memorize, but you can. God made our minds to memorize, and He will help us. He wants to set us free to become like Jesus.

The greatest impact will come through memorizing passages rather than isolated verses. That's why we're memorizing Colossians 3:1-17. Other powerful passages to memorize would be Romans 8, John 15 and 1 Corinthians 13. A lot of the work of memorizing is accomplished just by reading the passage repetitively. When Bob Bush was studying 1 Peter, he read it so many times he could hardly complete paragraph without quoting some part of 1 Peter.

I am also excited to share with you an app I discovered recently that is extremely helpful in memorizing Scripture. I'm using it to help me memorize Colossians 3:1-17.

The app is free. The King James Version is its default translation. You will need to buy a different translation such as the English Standard Version or the New International Version. You choose the passage you want to memorize. Verses supplies a number of memory games and keeps track of your progress.

Because ideas and images so powerfully influence our lives, we need to take our thought lives seriously. We become like Jesus as His thoughts and ideas become our own. It is the pathway to life and peace. It is what God wants for us, and He will empower any and every move we make towards Him in this area of our thought life.

**for if we truly do seek God as best we can, he, who always  
knows what is really in our hearts, will certainly make himself  
known to us.<sup>2</sup>**

*~ Dallas Willard ~*

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 95.