

# Renewing the mind

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.

# Renewing The Mind.

Your mind - friend or foe?

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## Introduction

The mind is an extraordinarily wonderful part of God's creation; so inventive and resourceful. However God had to intervene when man's thinking led him to build the Tower of Babel in defiance of God. That tower, built high into the heavens and made waterproof, was man's statement that he could outdo God - that is to say, man would be safe in his tower even if God flooded the earth again. (What 'Towers of Babel' are we building today?)

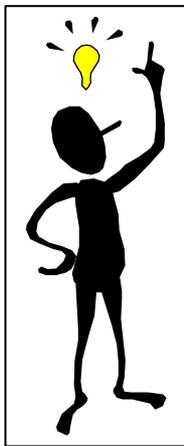
The Lord God came down and confused man's language, so that the common language of the day was lost, and it was replaced by many different languages. Suddenly, people who had freely communicated with each other, could not do so. The reason - *'And the Lord said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come let us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."*

Genesis 11:6-7.

Here we get a glimpse of the capabilities built into man at creation. Unfortunately, since the fall, those capabilities could be used for good or evil. The mind plays a dominant role.

Because the mind plays a dominant role, we need to learn how we can move in the best will of God, and how to avoid anything less. We need to be conversant with what the bible has to teach us about our own minds.

This booklet was originally written for people in business -but the principles herein apply just as much at the kitchen sink, in the church or in all aspects of life.



..... it is time for the light to come on in our understanding – so let us proceed.....

## **Chapter One.**

**As a man thinks, so he is.**

*'For to be carnally minded is death'* Romans 8:6

### **'Carnality' defined**

We need to define what the bible means by the term 'carnal,' in order to understand what it is because it will lead to death. In Greek the word is 'sarx,' which means literally 'flesh.' In expanded meaning it would cover that which is of the human nature, as opposed to being of the Holy Spirit. (See 'Inherent Power' in this series)

When we run our business, our career or any other aspect of his life without reference to the Holy Spirit, then we are being carnal. There is danger in being carnal – in the above quotation we read that the carnality of mind leads to death. In Proverbs (23:7) we read – *'as a man thinks so he is,'* meaning that we become what we think. What goes on in our minds is therefore vital to a fruitful life.

If we are going to rely only on our human nature at work – then it will lead to death – it will not bear fruit – it will be a dead work.

*'Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.'* Colossians 2:8

Even our business 'traditions' can result in loss to us, for we are called to operate in a new dimension of faith which stems from our relationship with Jesus. Traditions in other aspects of life can also rob us of the full blessings available in Jesus through faith.

The International Christian Chamber of Commerce calls christians at work to enter into a new dimension of business activity whereby, 'our plans and strategies become the outward manifestation of an inward walk of faith.'

This walk of faith can only result from an intimate relationship with the Lord, for it depends on hearing His voice. Faith is further explained in the booklet, 'Faith or Presumption,' in this series, and how to recognise God's voice in 'Hearing God Speak' also in this series.

A 'walk of faith' will be a Kingdom walk – that is a walk that realises that the 'Kingdom of God' is in us and all around us and relevant. The Kingdom is relevant to the Lord, for Jesus' Kingdom will certainly be established. Jesus is our King and therefore the Kingdom is relevant to us.

A kingdom is where a King reigns – Jesus wants to reign in us and through us. It has to start in us, such that we are perfected servants of the King ourselves. A servant follows the direction of his master and does not follow his own agenda.

### **Your thinking determines the outcome of your character**

In the book of Proverbs we are told of an evil man:

*'For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.'* Proverbs 23:7

Here a principle is set down. The way we think will determine what we are going to become.

Immediately we should see the dangers, as well as the potential benefits, that find their source in our thinking.

In Romans 1:18-32, Paul describes those whose thoughts became futile because they did not know God, did not glorify Him and were not thankful. Paul tells us that God gave them up to uncleanness in the lusts of their hearts. They became what they thought.

### **Our thoughts are not secret**

What we dwell upon, in the privacy and the secretness of our own minds, determines what we become. Not only that, but the Lord knows our every thought, so it is not private or secret anyway.

*'Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile."* 1 Corinthians 3:18-20

We are also told that the word of God is able to discern the thoughts of man:

*'For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.'*  
Hebrews 4:12

### **Fear**

Now that we have established that we become what we think, we should realise the danger of allowing fear to take root in our thinking. When speaking with business people, I have discovered that they often have a 'secret' fear that the business will fail. It is important that we establish the certain knowledge of our calling, and stand in that calling regardless of circumstantial pressure, resulting in the temptation to fear.

Fear in other aspects of life is just as damaging – it robs and destroys and we are explicitly instructed not to fear in Luke 12:32.

We have been warned - the way we think will determine what we become, and if we are merely carnal in our thinking, then the result is death; not only literal physical death, but also death working in the things we do.

Indeed, our business may fail, our career end in redundancy, perhaps it was just built in the flesh or even in disobedience, or maybe adverse circumstances were not overcome for whatever reason. Nevertheless, Jesus will never leave us nor forsake us. He is much more interested in us than in what we do. And ... He promises to bring good out of every situation for those who love Him. (Romans 8:28)

### **Positive advice**

No wonder Paul has this advice:

*'but to be spiritually minded is life and peace'* Romans 8:6(b)

The way to be spiritually minded is seen in the following quotation:

*'Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things.'* Philippians 4:8

This scripture also gives us a clue to what to do - that is to positively choose to think of the things described in the verse.

Here is the call and the antidote. The call of God is for us to be spiritually minded - that is to think in the way of the Spirit of God, that is to think like Jesus thinks, that is to think 'Kingdom of God' in all things, that is to think in agreement with the scripture. And this is the antidote - the antidote to carnality is spirituality. The way has been opened through the sacrifice of Jesus' life at Calvary. You and I are called, and designed, to become true sons of the Living God.

### **Spiritually minded at work?**

For business people we already have a problem. Is there such a thing as being spiritually minded about business? The answer is yes - we can be spiritually minded about all of life - indeed we are called to be spiritually minded. So, in business, at work, we can choose to know that the Lord is there, interested and available to us if and when we seek Him. And then go on and seek Him for His leading, His guidance, His strategy.

### **Personal humility**

Finally, in this first chapter, let us take note that Paul warns us not to become arrogant in our thinking - 1 Corinthians 10:12 - *'Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.'*

and ... Romans 12:3 - *'For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.'*

Personal humility is a safe starting place. After all:

*"A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven.'* John 3:27

So we are encouraged to get our thinking into Godly order - that will keep us safe as we walk through every aspect of life, including our day to day work.

Monday is just as important, if not more important, than Sunday; because on Monday we get to put our Christianity into practice in front of unbelievers. This is called being salt and light, and is the calling of every believer. This is where the Kingdom of God (in us) meets the Kingdom of this world.

**Sobering thought.**

When your business associates, friends, clients, customers, fellow employees – indeed anyone, meet you (and me) – what impression do they receive concerning the King and His Kingdom?

## **Chapter 2**

### **The mind - definition**

In order to be help in our study of using and training the mind, to make it a useful servant for us, it is necessary to be very clear in our understanding of what constitutes 'the mind.'

I define the mind like this:

'The mind is the seat of our capacity and ability to reason and understand.'

As such, the mind is a part of what is called 'the soul.'

The soul is made up of the mind, the will, and the emotions and the mind interacts with these other elements of the soul. This process of interaction will be dealt with in later chapters.

#### **The mind at three levels**

The New testament uses different Greek words which are translated into the English word 'mind.' For the purposes of this study it is helpful to understand two of them in particular.

*Phronema* means the mechanical action of thinking. I.e. the activity. So when Paul says, '*do not set your mind on high things,*' (Romans 12:16) he is saying do not allow your mind to actively think on matters beyond your calling and anointing.

*Nous* means the inner core of your belief. I.e. the 'doctrine' you fall back on and the doctrine against which you compare new thoughts. So when Paul says, '*But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind,*' he is saying that the flesh is trying to make him go against his core beliefs.

The third level of understanding the mind is that our conscience is part of the mind – it is that part which gives warnings and it is built into every human and seems to be sensitive to the moral and ethical leading of the human spirit. The conscience is hardened by constant over-riding.

One way of understanding the different roles of 'phronema' and 'nous' is to liken them to parts of a computer. In this analogy 'phronema' is likened to the RAM – that is the 'chip' that processes information, whilst the 'nous' can be likened to the hard disk – that is where we store our information.

In this case our hard disk stores our fundamental or core beliefs. These beliefs are not necessarily Christian – rather they are the result of all our experience to date, our education and our biblical / spiritual input. So our core beliefs will contain things which do not agree with scripture. These differences can be held with various levels of certainty – some becoming strongholds.

*Footnote:*

[In turn, the soul is part of what is often referred to biblically as 'the heart.' In scripture, we read that the heart is divided, and that out of the heart come both good and evil.

When we realise that the soul and the human spirit together are often referred to as the heart, then we can understand this statement of scripture. From the born again human spirit comes good and from the soul can come bad things. – thus the heart is divided. (For a deeper discussion see 'Inherent Power' in this series.)

When we are born again the Holy Spirit brings new birth to the human spirit and takes up His residence inside, so that we become one spirit with Him - '*But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.*' 1 Corinthians 6:17. Verse 19 goes on to tell us that our body has become the temple of the Holy Spirit.

From the moment of rebirth there is no ongoing problem with the human spirit - as God, Himself is dwelling within – in the form of the Holy Spirit, making us one with Him.

***So far as our souls are concerned salvation has to be worked at.***

Whilst the salvation of our spirit is a completed work, the scripture commands that '*we work out our salvation with fear and trembling.*' (Philippians 2:12) Here we see a reference to the working out of the deliverance from danger of the soul. (For more on this subject see "Inherent Power' in this series.)]

## Chapter 3

### The mind - the place of challenge

Every day we are faced with challenges in the mind. Every working man or woman faces challenges from their role in the marketplace, and has to make decisions on all sorts of issues. The same applies in all aspects of life.

#### **The basic mindset.**

Our first, and sometimes our most important challenge is that of the basic mindset. In Christianity there has been huge emphasis on evangelism, holiness, church growth, church activity, house or cell groups and so on. This emphasis is not wrong but incomplete. However, there has been very little emphasis on the secular world. Indeed, those in business or secular occupations have often seen themselves as second class Christians because of their involvement in secular work.

This mindset has resulted in business people having no or very little hope of seeing the Lord's presence and His blessing in their daily activity at work.

Now we need to change this mindset. Jesus wants His followers to be salt and light in the world (not in the church!) Those of us who work in 'secular' jobs are the ones who meet unbelievers every day. We are the ones who witness all day long by our actions, by the way we are – and where appropriate by the right word at the right time.

Jesus gave explicit instructions of what His followers are to do after He had gone. Those instructions are found in a number of passages. One passage which is frequently overlooked is Luke 19:11-13

*'Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately.*

*Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.*

*"So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, **'Do business till I come.'***

Here the instruction is to do business – go on with life, be salt and light, do business, live life – be a living witness.

It should be absolutely obvious that the Lord does not want every Christian to be a full time church worker, but He does want everyone to be a full time Christian.

Are you a full time Christian at work? Does your business / working life / everyday life have the 'stamp' and 'flavour' of Jesus and of His Kingdom?

Jesus wants the majority of His followers to be working in the world in 'ordinary' occupations. By reason of the fact that He calls us to these occupations, He will also give His blessing and His anointing. (See 'Anointing' in this series.)

### **Issues of activity**

It is the mind which forms a major interface with the world in which we live, and move, and have our daily existence. It is in the mind, that we will be challenged with every opportunity to sin, to miss God, and to fail to walk in the full fruitfulness of our calling.

For example:

In Matthew chapter 4 we read of the temptation of Jesus by satan.

*'Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*

*And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.*

*Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."*

*But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"*

*Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,*

*and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"*

*Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"*

*Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.*

*And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."*

*Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*

*Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.'*

Matthew 4:1-11

Satan challenged Jesus. - Immediately after Jesus is 'acknowledged' or, as it were, 'set in place', by God, through the ministry of John the Baptist, He is led into the wilderness where He faces the challenges of Satan.

Each one of those challenges comes to the mind of Jesus. Satan's first approach is: 'If you are .....' which could easily be rendered like this: 'who do **you think you are** ....if so, prove it.'

Satan fails with his attempts to get Jesus to prove who He is, at his behest. In the third trial Satan (who is the father of lies - so his offer was not true but a trick) offers Jesus a short cut. Jesus has certainly come for His kingdom - but He must go through the crucifixion first.

### **We will be challenged in our minds also**

So we can see that Jesus faced these challenges, the challenge of, 'who are you' and the challenge of, 'taking a short cut,' in His mind. (He also faced the challenge of not putting God to the test.)

Now the scripture tells us that Jesus was tempted in every way that we would be tempted:

*'For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.'*

Hebrews 4:15

Yes, you and I will face challenges in our day to day lives. Those challenges will be recognised as thoughts in our minds. For those of us in business the challenges are manifold:

Take too long to pay creditors their due debts.

Oppress workers by withholding wages or paying too little.

Extort customers by charging too much or giving too little in quality and quantity.

Enter into agreements that 'look good' but are not of God.

Make partnerships with people in the world.

Pay bribes or receive bribes.

Pay too little tax.

Overstate our expenses.

Use our resources for our own pleasure.

Fall into sexual sin - especially when we are away from home on business.

Manipulate people.

.... we could go on and on, and of course many of these temptations are also faced by brethren who are not in business, yet these things and others will be our temptations, our challenges, and every time it will be recognised in our thinking.

Maybe we do not fall into any of the above 'sins,' and yet we are still missing the mark, when we do not even think of referring to the Spirit and being led by Him – then our business activity is carnal.

Every walk of life has its own specific temptations and challenges – many opportunities to miss the mark.

### **In day to day life**

There are many other challenges which affect us in daily life. Many of the challenges can only be satisfactorily overcome after we have rewritten some of the core beliefs recorded in the 'nous' of our minds.

For example:

A young person, not wanted by his / her parents, then badly treated and told he / she will never be any good, is likely to grow up with a core belief in his / her own failure and unworthiness.

Such a core belief may even be so strongly held that it becomes a stronghold. No amount of counselling alone will shift the problem – what is needed is a change in the core belief from worldly / experiential to Kingdom / scriptural. (Making changes to core beliefs is dealt with later)

## **Chapter 4**

### **The mind - the place of decision**

We have seen some of the many challenges which come against us on a daily basis. Now we have to realise that the mind plays the key role in our response.

Truly our emotions and our will also play key roles, and we will examine those later. Meanwhile, the mind is where we will 'come to' and 'recognise' the decision we reach, in facing each challenge.

The mind is the place of decision – *'as a man thinks, so he is.'* If your mind says, "yes" to a course of action, then the fulfillment, the actual doing of it, will surely follow. This is why Jesus had this to say about adultery:

*'You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not commit adultery." But, I say to you, that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.'* Matthew 5:28

Once your mind, your thinking, lusts (lust means 'to have strong desires for') after a woman who is not your wife, you have lost the battle against sin - for you have already committed adultery in your heart. If you persist in this thinking the actual deed will follow sooner or later. Instead of allowing our mind to lust in this way or in any sinful way, we are to take control over our thoughts - more on this later.

#### **A business example - bribery**

Therefore it is not surprising that Paul says to the Romans - *'to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.'* Let us therefore apply this to our business thinking. As an example lets take the paying of bribes from our earlier list of temptations:

It is easy for us to think that the only way we will be able to obtain business in the world is to pay bribes - indeed in many cultures it certainly is considered normal or essential to pay bribes. But, God hates bribery - it is the way of the ungodly.

*'For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins. Afflicting the just and taking bribes; Diverting the poor from justice at the gate.'*  
Amos 5:12

*'Do not gather my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloodthirsty men,  
In whose hands is a sinister scheme, and whose right hand is full of  
bribes.*

*But as for me, I will walk in my integrity; redeem me and be merciful to  
me.*

*My foot stands in an even place; in the congregations I will bless the  
LORD.'*

Psalm 26:9-12

Now we can be faced with a temptation. I know I will get that contract or job if I pay a bribe. I know my competitors will offer to pay bribes. But I know that God hates bribery. How will I continue? Later on we record some testimony in this specific area, to demonstrate that God justifies the righteous.

This, or other challenges, are faced by businessmen very frequently - the challenge is all in the process of thinking out our decision. Bribery is the way of the world - therefore bribery is carnal - therefore bribery brings with it death.

Our decision should be so very very simple - God hates bribery, therefore I will have nothing do with it - I will neither give, nor receive bribes, ever. Yet our minds are apt to 'discuss these things within themselves' as if they are options we can follow - that is if we allow our minds to do this.

Invariably there will follow another challenge in our thinking. 'If I do not offer a bribe, how will I survive, how will I get any business?' Here the answer lies in one simple word - God, for He is Jehovah Jireh for me and for you. (Jehovah Jireh is one of the Old Testament names of God, which when translated means, 'The Lord my provider.')

### **Jehovah Jireh**

God is my, and your, provider. God **is** Jehovah Jireh. The mighty Lord God, who made all heaven and earth, can easily change the mind of man. God can easily make sure that you get enough business, and more than enough business, by the actions of His Spirit in the marketplace. This requires the change of mindset mentioned in the last chapter.

Look, when it came to the building of His temple (found in Zechariah 4), whilst it required the active participation of Zerubbabel, nevertheless he

was told - *'Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord.'*  
(verse 6)

Your life and my life are the same - for now we are the temple of God, and whilst it requires our active involvement, nevertheless the outcome is determined, *'not by might, not by power but by my Spirit, says the Lord.'*

*'And My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.'*  
Philippians 4:19

### **Taking Jesus into account**

Mr and Mrs Businessman, we must learn to take Him into account in our decision making, and not to be the same as the world. Take one more look at the building of the Temple (in Zechariah 4). In the hands of Zerubbabel you find a plumbline (verse 10) demonstrating that the building was to be straight and true - indeed, if the building were not straight and true, it would not last. In one sense the Temple was the very essence or centre of the Kingdom – God's glory was going to dwell there. How much more do we need to be 'straight and true' now that God dwells in us and His Kingdom is being established in us and through us.

You do not need every contract that comes your way - you need every contract that is from God. You and I need to discern what **is** from God and what **is not** from God. If you have to pay a bribe to obtain it - then that contract is not from God and its end result will have the taste and the smell of death around it.

We need to make decisions every day of our working lives. We need to know what it is to have the mind of Christ.

## **Chapter 5**

### **The mind of Christ - our biblical inheritance**

*'For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?"  
But we have the mind of Christ.'* 1 Corinthians 2:16

We can see from this verse, that we are entitled to expect our minds to become so renewed, that they become likened to the mind of Christ. Let us explore that concept a little:

#### **Jesus was subject to the Father**

Jesus' mind was fully subjected to the Father. The scripture reports that Jesus only did what He saw and heard His Father doing. Although the mind of Jesus had complete independence, He chose to be subject to His Father.

*'Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.'* John 5:19

Likewise, we can choose to have our mind subject to Jesus. Indeed the scripture likens believers to being the body of Christ with Him as the head. We are expected to be subject to the head – to Jesus.

#### **Jesus is the head**

*'But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.'* 1 Corinthians 11:3

*'but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ - from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

*This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,'*  
Ephesians 4:15-17

#### **Pushing the analogy along..**

If we follow this analogy, then we can see that Jesus is the one with the thinking organ -the mind. Of course the human body is subject to the

head. Likewise, of course, each believer should receive his instructions from Jesus, the head. A body which does not obey its head is referred to as being 'spastic,' because it cannot properly control its actions. Certainly, the body of Christ is not intended to be out of control or spastic in any way.

One of the promises of Jesus is that the Holy Spirit will bring to us His very words:

*"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you."* John 16:12-15

Another aspect of study shows that Jesus has every right to expect us to obey Him. On the cross He paid the price for us, to purchase us out of death and sin. We are bought with a price - that means He owns us. (1 Corinthians 6:20 and 7:23)

As owner, He is entitled to give us instructions and to expect our obedience. However, He chooses to woo us to Himself, rather than enforce His rights over us.

Jesus – the truth – the life – the way, our minds are to become likened to His.

### **Our choice**

So here we are faced with a fundamental choice. Will we choose to be subject to Jesus in our thinking process? Will we look for the leading of the Holy Spirit in our decision making process? Will we consult with the Spirit over our life and work related decisions - to find out the specific will of God?

The process of renewing the mind has a vital part to play in coming to know the good and acceptable and perfect will of God as Paul teaches the Romans:

*'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.'*

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.'* Romans 12:1-2

The process, of seeking the Spirit in decision making, is not easy and yet it is also very simple!

It is not easy because we have become so accustomed to making our own decisions. We have become accustomed to thinking that the Lord is not interested in our everyday lives, because we consider that they are secular. We have become guilty of going our own way through life. We have followed the world's way of doing things. The result is very often failure and disappointment or lack of fulfilment.

How can we be fruitful in the Kingdom if we are not listening to the plans, desires and commands of the King?

*'Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them...is like a man who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock.'*

Luke 6:47 and 48a

So then, we need to learn the techniques of following the Spirit. This is demanding because it means subjecting ourselves to Him. It means obedience.

It also means blessing because the plans of God, for His children, are good plans.

(Refer to 'Hearing God Speak' in this series.)

Our business drive, our business experience and our working lives, need to be subject to the Spirit, because the Spirit knows all things. The Spirit knows whether any particular business deal will be a success or a problem. The Spirit knows everything there is to know.

### **Testimony – a local builder**

Howard came into my office one day rather glum. He was facing the possibility of the business failing. He had done a job for a customer who had refused to pay. There was enough money at stake to threaten the very existence of his business. In discussion, I asked him, 'didn't the Lord warn you not to take this contract?'

'Funny you should say that, I felt very uneasy when I was signing the contract.' His hand was placed over his stomach as he said this – indicating that the unease was deep in his inner man.

‘Oh Howard, didn’t you realise, that was the Holy Spirit warning you against the contract. Don’t you know that Colossians 3:15 tells us to, ‘*Let the peace of God rule in your heart.*’ (‘Rule’ means ‘be the decision maker’)

It was now clear, to both Howard and myself, that this particular contract was not from the Lord. Although Howard used all available means to try to collect the debt, it was to no avail. The business survived because the hand of God favoured him with other work.

### **Following the Spirit**

It is also very easy to follow the Spirit once we have made the basic and fundamental choice to be subject to Him. (However, this basic choice is more than a once off affair - the next chapter explains – hence the fact that the Spirit’s guidance is still problematical for many.) Once we are choosing to be subject to the Spirit, we will be ready to learn His methods of guidance.

(Refer to 'Hearing God Speak' in this series.)

We are entitled to expect our minds to become more and more like the mind of Jesus - because the Lord has destined that we will be conformed to the image of His son.

*‘For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified ‘*

Romans 8:29-30

Surely, the more like minded we are with Jesus, the more readily we will be like Him in every way. That will mean that we will recognise the need to be righteous in all our actions, to maintain contact with God in the Spirit, and to be able to discern His guidance. We will have to recognise sin as sin and repent, rather than say, well that is just normal business practice or that is just normal life.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Renewing the mind - the need defined**

We have already seen that the mind is the place where we should recognise the challenges of life. The mind is the 'interface' with the situations we encounter, and the people we encounter. It also the place where the enemy will 'speak' to us by infiltrating our thought process.

I have heard the mind likened to the vacuum cleaner - in a sense, the mind cannot help sucking up everything, including all the rubbish. This likening of the mind to a vacuum cleaner, helps us to realise that there is a need for us to sort out the good from the bad. This is part of the renewing of the mind.

*'Test all things, hold fast what is good.'* 1Thessalonians 5:21

#### **The mind receives its information in a number of ways:**

1) Through our ears comes spoken information, music and other sounds.

Some of this is helpful and some of it unhelpful. A simple example is music. Some music is written to glorify God by its beauty, and or, by its accompanying words.

Some music is written by unbelievers, but it is written out of their gifting, it can be good or bad.

Some music is written specifically to glorify sin and to glorify the devil.

It is often constructively helpful for us to listen to good spiritual music - indeed church worship can be a wonderful gateway into God's presence. At home, or in the car, or wherever, good spiritual music can minister God's presence to us.

Equally, bad music can effect us in the wrong way. Often we can think we are 'enjoying' bad music simply because it is 'ministering' at the level of our flesh.

Our spirituality will be affected by that to which we expose ourselves. If we constantly listen to 'pop' music which is glorifying sin and glorifying the devil (I am not saying that all pop music glorifies these things - but definitely some does.) then these bad ideas become seeds planted within us.

The same applies to everything we hear. I used music as an example, but the same principle applies to everything we hear.

2) Through our eyes the mind receives information by picture, and by what we read. Again some of this is helpful, and some of it is neutral, and some is dangerous.

If we feed our minds with pornography it will create within us an evil spiritual stronghold. We should consider carefully what we allow our eyes to see – in this respect the media can be our enemy. Television and the press can enhance our lives but they can also feed us with unhelpful images..

If we feed our minds with that which is good it will create spiritual inner strength.

3) Through thoughts the mind is fed with information. These thoughts can come from different sources.

The Holy Spirit often speaks to us through what I would call 'quickened or spontaneous' thoughts. We are, of course, not to assume that every thought is from the Holy Spirit. Rather we must learn to discern, and to seek the Lord's confirmation, of what is from Him.

Equally others in the world and the devil plant thoughts in our minds. Clearly, sinful thoughts should be obvious. It is when a bad thought is 'dressed in sheep's clothing,' then we need to be particularly discerning. In business there will frequently be bad thoughts dressed up in this way. Any thought which offers us a questionable short cut to our objective, is dangerous.

(Earlier we referred to the third temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. The objective was fine, Jesus had come as Messiah to receive a Kingdom, but the short cut offered to Jesus by Satan, was definitely not. Jesus had to face rejection and crucifixion to fulfil God's plan of redemption.)

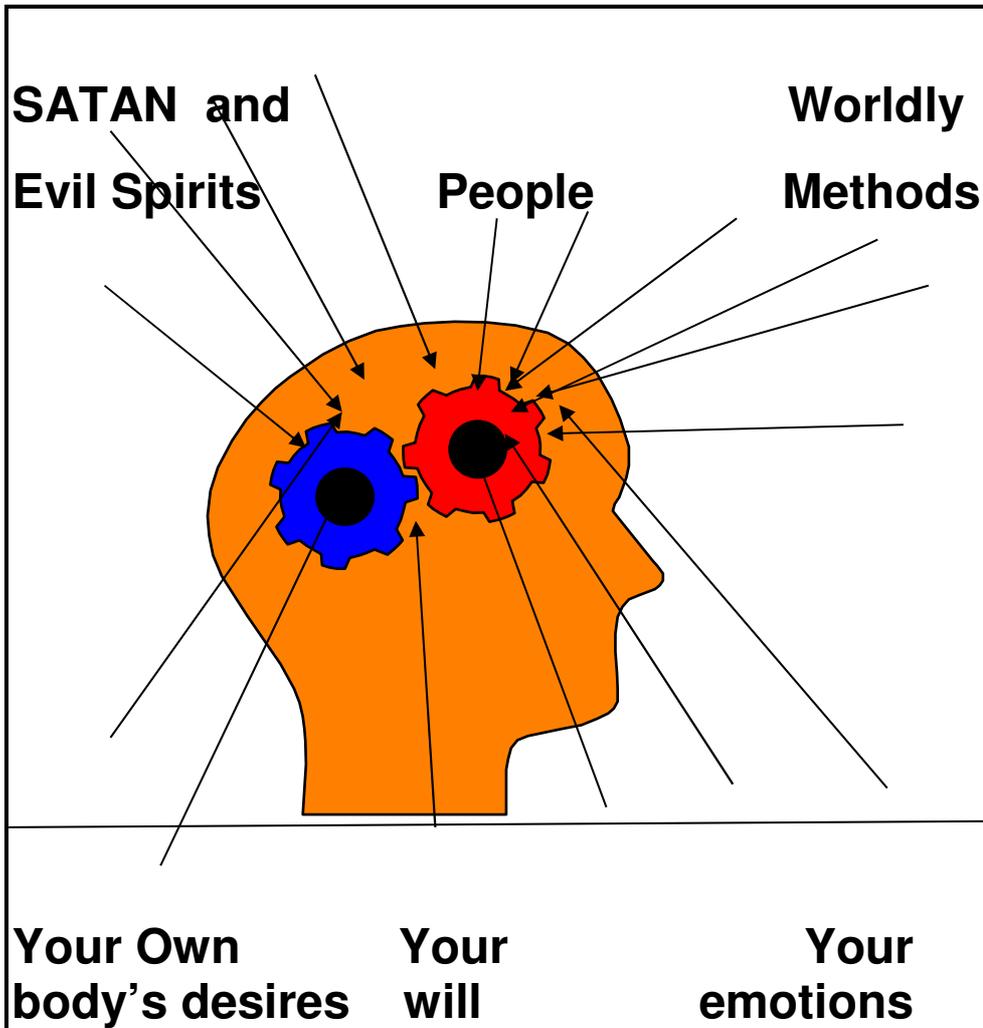
The flesh – that is our soul and our body, also feed thoughts into our minds either directly or by some method of indication. I.e. we feel hungry, so we think, 'I am hungry.' We feel rejected so we think 'I am rejected' .... And so on.

**A biblical example: The Gibeonites.**

Here is an example of wrong thinking, taken out of Joshua, chapter 9. The Israelites had been warned by the Lord not to enter into any covenant with the people of the land they were to possess.

After defeating Jericho and Ai the Israelites are met by the Gibeonites who come to deceive. They come with stale provisions and worn out clothing – ‘look we have come a very long way, enter into a covenant with us.’ (Actual distance covered less than 10 miles)  
Joshua and Israel looked, and saw, and judged by what they could see. The scripture records for us that they did not consult the Lord. The result – a covenant with the Gibeonites and a future snare for Israel.....

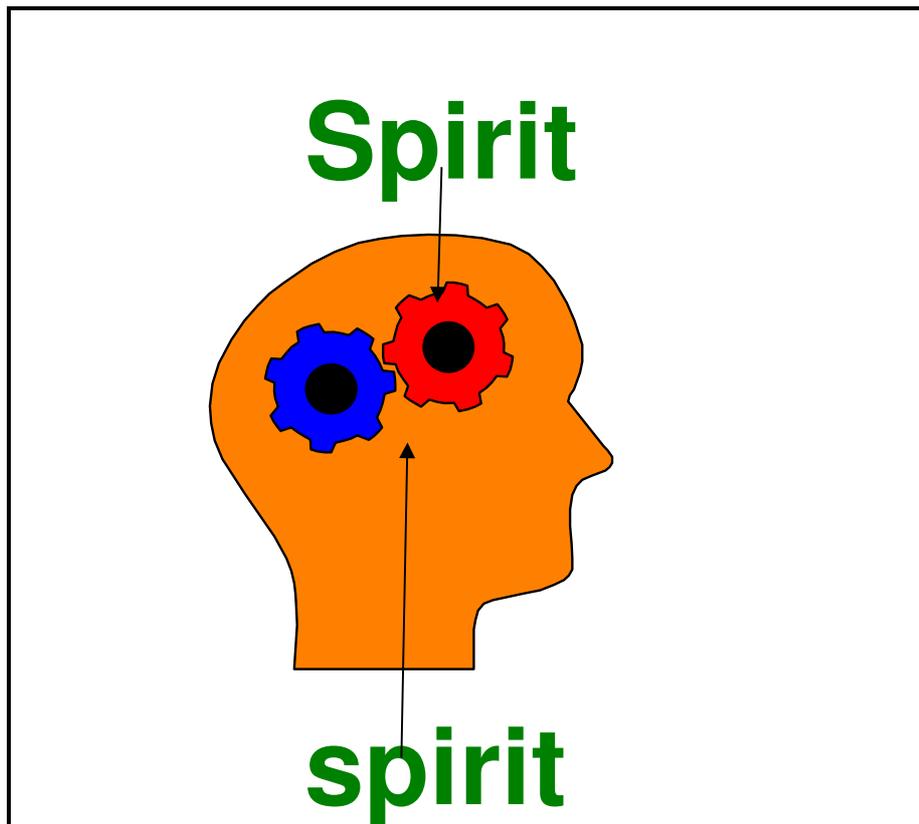
**Diagrammatic of the mind receiving input from varied sources:**



..... In life and business we will have to be very alert to Gibeonites. Satan will try to cause us loss. Only the Spirit of God can guide us through the 'mine field' of life.

So we are led to recognise that there is a need to keep our minds free from evil, and focussed on the true and good. This requires a process we will call 'renewing the mind.'

**Diagramatic of the renewed mind receiving guidance from the indwelling Spirit and from the external Spirit.**



## **Chapter 7**

### **Renewing the mind - how to do it.**

#### **The objective:**

To keep our minds in the perfect will of God.

#### **Good and evil**

First we must define 'good' as 'that which the Lord says is good,' and everything else is evil.

We have already seen that the mind is where we will recognise that which is evil.

For most of the time, for those who are born again, evil is obvious. That thought which says, 'I can overcharge,' or, 'I can get away with supplying less,' or, not paying full wages, not doing a good day's work, and so on. These things should be obvious.

Clearly, as ambassadors of Jesus, we are to go after the good and to shun evil.

#### **Truth and error.**

First we must state that 'truth' is 'that which the Lord says is true.' The bible is given to us as a handbook of truth.

Truth and error will again be obvious most of the time, to those who know the scriptures.

However, we need to subject ourselves to the truth – that is to deem that the scripture is true even if we can't understand it – or even disagree with it. Submission to the truth is the same as building on rock, anything else is building on sand – refer to Luke 6:47 and 48a for the significance.

Again, as ambassadors of Jesus Christ, who described Himself as 'the truth, the life and the way,' we can choose to only follow truth in our thinking and actions.

#### **The 'nous' of the issue.**

In Chapter 2 we saw that the part of the mind referred to as the 'nous,' is where core beliefs are stored – and it is these core beliefs we measure each new thought against – this is usually an automatic action which will often throw up internal discussions as we face new ideas. Many of our core beliefs will have been established in childhood and in our early years particularly through education.

It is absolutely essential that our 'nous,' our 'stored core beliefs' are themselves true. This will be an ongoing process of refinement, for none of us have all the truth. The process of refinement of our core beliefs will be done through bible study and through asking the Spirit to lead us into all truth. Bible study might be our own or studying that of others – like reading this booklet. In any event on going feeding on the word of God and on going crying to Him for understanding will keep us increasingly on the right track and is absolutely essential to a stable Christian life.

How to renew the core beliefs of the mind – the nous.

***Biblical meditation***

Joshua was told to mediate on this book of the law and you will make your way prosperous and successful. We have come into a better covenant, a new covenant. We will be strengthened from within the more we know, believe and understand the covenant God has made with us. Biblical meditation will help us rewrite our hard disk or 'nous' to change biblically wrong core beliefs.

Let's look at our earlier example of the person unwanted as a child, told they would never success in life etc. This person has their core beliefs programmed by their upbringing and their experience. The program says I am unwanted, I am unworthy, I will not succeed.

Counselling tries to tell the person, you are wanted, appreciated, you have a future and so on. That is good – even very good, Yet frequently it seems to fall on deaf ears, nothing making a breakthrough.

It is always possible that the Lord, by His Spirit will break through one day, maybe in a meeting or during prayer or whatever. However, if we are willing we can rewrite the hard disk ourselves through biblical meditation.

***This is how:***

Select a scripture which speaks into our known deficiency. Nothing ever works for you – then how about using Romans 8:28 – '*God will bring good out of every situation for those who love Him.*'

Then find somewhere nice and quiet and comfortable – for me that is lying on my bed.

Get comfortable and quiet. Now speak the scripture out loud. Think about it. Speak it out loud again. Think about it. Repeat this procedure many times over – maybe 20 or 30.

Now do the same every day for a couple of weeks. There is no reason why you shouldn't even personalise the scripture – i.e. 'and I know that God will bring good out of every situation for me because I love Him.' This process will rewrite your core beliefs – just keep it up until you find your inner thoughts have changed.

For my wife and I the learning and adopting of this practice has been one of the major, if not the major factor in becoming strong in love and faith. For my wife in particular coming to see depression as missing the mark was a significant stepping stone in her deliverance and freedom therefrom.

Biblical confirmation:

Joshua 1:8, Psalm 4:4 and others.

### **Brain washing**

Sometimes I am challenged that this is just brain washing. My answer is an emphatic 'YES.' My brain is subject to all the bad influence which comes from my surroundings, the news, the world, the contacts during the day, the negative thinking that my flesh and others would introduce and so on. My brain benefits from being 'washed' with the water of the word.

### **The role of conscience**

The human conscience is part of God's design of man - so that we are without excuse - for our conscience will alert us to wrong doing and error in our ways.

However, the scripture warns us that if we continually go against our conscience, it becomes hardened and therefore ineffective.

*'Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,*

Timothy 4:1-2

### **The role of the Holy Spirit.**

For the purpose of our discussion His role is twofold:

a) The Spirit is given to lead us into all truth - therefore it is advantageous for us to pray frequently asking Him to do that. Thereby we agree with the process and are more ready to receive. This prayer is one of my most frequent :

'Holy Spirit please lead me into more and more truth.'

We should see this leading into truth as being twofold also – firstly He will lead us into fundamental core beliefs, i.e. he will teach us so that our 'nous' is renewed, and secondly, He will guide us on specific issues/actions.

b) He is given to dwell in us, such that we are aware of His presence, so that:

i) We become more and more sensitive to His guidance.

ii) We become aware when our actions grieve Him - so that we are alerted to stop those actions.

When we learn the Spirit's guidance and His grieving in us when we stray from the straight and narrow path – then we are well on the way to a secure and steadfast walk in the Kingdom.

### **Prayer for alertness**

I have already spoken of one of my favourite and most frequent prayers, here is another one:

'Holy Spirit please make me very sharp in my mind - to recognise very quickly when it needs renewing.'

This prayer has the effect of increasing our alertness - then those occasions, when we find ourselves thinking things we should not think, are shortened and reduced.

Beware of making important decisions when tired or over tired – our judgement, and our ability to discern in the Spirit, can become blurred and unreliable at such times.

**How to actually renew the thinking process of the mind – the phronema**

*'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.'*

Romans 12:1-2

*'For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,*                      2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Here Paul is advising us that spiritual warfare starts in the mind. 'We do not war according to the flesh....' Let us take careful note - this is **warfare**. Our enemies will try to establish strongholds in the battlefield of our minds.

Paul goes on to tell us how to deal with these enemies. 'Take every thought into captivity...!' This is warfare language, it is talking of taking prisoners of war.

'.....unto the obedience of Christ.' Finally, Paul gives us something which helps us measure our thoughts. Every thought is to be brought into the obedience of Christ. What does this mean?

It means our thoughts should be holy and true.

It means that we should not indulge any thought that we could not openly share with Jesus, Himself.

It means we should not indulge any thought we know to be contrary to scripture.

It means we should not indulge any thought which would be harmful to our neighbour.

It means being 'active' and not 'passive' in taking control of our minds.

It means that our thoughts should fall into line with who Jesus is, and what He has done.

### **How do we renew our minds?**

Renewing the mind is a process every believer has to do every day and often many times a day.

Most wrong thoughts will simply give way to being repudiated - that is refused.

The concept of renewing the mind can be likened to rewinding the tape on the tape recorder and recording a different message over the wrong one. i.e. a renewed message. I.e. choosing what to think and what not to think – this is the norm. This is the normal way of renewing our mind – by choice.

However, sometimes thoughts have developed strongholds - i.e. it is very difficult, or seemingly impossible to stop them. These practical steps can help to tear down the strongholds -

- 1) State that you deny them.
- 2) Repent of any past agreement with them
- 3) Meditation as already described to change any wrong core belief.

Then in order to stop a wrong thought pattern:

- 4) Speak in tongues ....scripture tells us that when we speak in tongues the mind is rendered unfruitful . 1 Corinthians 14:14.
- 5) Read the Bible (preferably out loud) - particularly verses which replace wrong thinking with right thinking.
- 6) Start to sing and praise the Lord out loud, if possible. Praise overcomes and defeats the power of circumstances (2 Chronicles 20:21 - 25) and God inhabits the praise of His people. (Psalm 22:3 KJ)
- 7) Pray, preferably out loud. (One of the words for prayer, 'proseuchomai,' means 'to speak out loud,' and is used in the context of being bold and not becoming coward in Luke 18:1)
- 8) Proclaim scripture as a 'counter weapon.' Select verses which speak the truth against the stronghold in your thinking.
- 9) Ask the Lord for specific 'rhema' words to use as the 'sword of the Spirit,' as described in Ephesians 6:17.
- 10) Actively remember that you are dead to the flesh and that therefore you do not have to be carnally minded. (Refer to Romans 8)

It is not possible to overcome all the strong pressures and habits which can afflict our minds by the use of will power alone. Truly we are expected to set our will in that direction, but the ultimate victory is provided by the Lord – *'If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.'* Romans 8:13.

If you find yourself in a particularly long or hard struggle to see a stronghold pulled down the following approach has been recommended by Laurence Holt, Chairman of the ICCC Teaching Committee:  
'Demonstrate your desire and commitment to be free by regular and if necessary extended prayer. Simply place yourself before God, yield afresh to Him, acknowledging your continued struggle, commit the problem area to Him and ask for His help to be fully renewed in the

Spirit of your mind. (i.e. its very core). Then let it go, trusting that by His Spirit and grace He will sanctify you entirely. This process is akin to the simple instruction of Paul in Philippians 2:5 - *'Let this mind be you which was also in Christ Jesus.'* Conclude by thanking Him for encouraging promises such as: *'He who has begun a good work in you will complete it'* Philippians 1:6. Thank Him for the hope of a renewed mind for this a very important part of our inheritance in Christ.'

As we can see, the Lord has done His part, He has given us all things that pertain to living a Godly life:

*'Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,'*  
2 Peter 1:2-3

Example.

In our different cultures there are different 'strongholds.' In many places in Africa and Asia 'ancestor worship' is prevalent. In some places the culture 'demands' that a man has more than one wife, and so on....every culture has its specific strongholds.....

These are strongholds in certain places which speak into our minds. In Swaziland I met with a very high ranking Government official, a delightful Christian brother. However, as we talked I could see that he was under tremendous pressure to take a second wife. This pressure came from the spiritual principalities and powers in the land, the practice of those around him, and the pressure of family members who also followed the 'normal' practice of people in that nation.

Now he could use any of the above antidotes every time that thinking came into his mind - perhaps the best antidote in that particular case would be to proclaim, each time, 'let each man have his own wife,' 1 Corinthians 7:2 and 'if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife..' Titus 1:6

### **Done it all and still got problems.**

Finally, if all these fail after many weeks of rewriting the 'hard disk' of your mind, then seek mature Christian brethren to pray with you, and for you. It may be that the strongholds in your mind have been invaded by evil spirits and you need deliverance.

## Summary

- Change core beliefs by biblical meditation
- Renew thoughts – think on the good
- Overcome ‘bad’ or unhelpful thoughts by:
  - a) Exercising choice
  - b) Praise
  - c) Prayer
  - d) Speaking in tongues
  - e) Bible reading

## **Chapter 8**

### **The mind and the emotions**

We have previously seen that our soul is made up of mind, will and emotions. In this brief chapter we will record the interaction between mind and emotions.

Emotions can be very powerful - for example, even though Jesus knew He would raise Lazarus from the dead, He still wept over his death.

#### **Danger area**

We are in danger when we allow our emotions to have complete control. When we allow our minds to be completely dominated by what we feel, we can be led into error and danger. This is not to say that emotions are wrong or bad - they can be good and they can be bad - it is when emotions are in total control that they can be dangerous.

For example:

Say someone who owes us a business debt they cannot pay. We could easily feel the emotion of anger. In fact, most people would say, that was the normal human reaction. But, Jesus emphatically tells us to forgive and warns us that if we do not forgive we will be handed over to torment. You can read Jesus specific advice in Matthew 18:21-35.

Forgiveness is a choice. It is a choice our emotions would prefer we did not make. Hurt emotions are powerful, but must be subjected to biblical truth – especially in the area of forgiveness. Often it is helpful to enlist the prayer ministry of close friends.

If your mind goes over and over and over some hurt, or resentment, or bad treatment, or whatever, then you can be sure that you have a problem seated in your emotions. Make and express the choice of forgiveness. (If appropriate convey that forgiveness to the perpetrator). Then take control of your thoughts. Do not permit your mind the freedom to keep going over the matter as your emotions would wish – it will be very unhelpful. Make sure the matter is both forgiven and forgotten – otherwise it is not really forgiven. Renew your mind, take control, do not allow it the freedom to keep going over and over unhelpful matters.

So instead of anger or whatever, we must readily and truly forgive.

We are not called to be like 'ordinary human beings,' rather we are called to become more and more like Jesus, as the Spirit changes us from one degree of glory to another. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

### **Daily application**

This same principle, of not allowing our emotions to rule, will frequently be needed in normal daily living. It is very easy for us to hurt each other, or to cause rejection, or to feel rejected even when no rejection is intended.

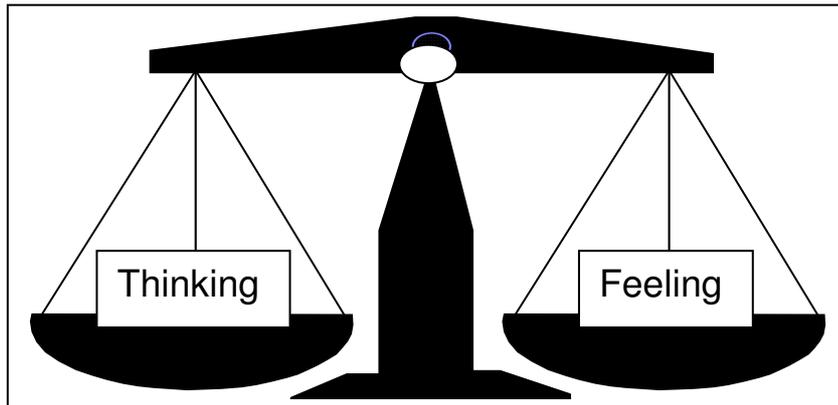
There are many work situations where this can occur:

Redundancy, business failure, lack of promotion, failure to make a sale, theft, incompetence, and so on - the opportunities for our emotions to wrong foot us are many.

Why not pray, 'Holy Spirit give me a strong mind, or increase the strength of my mind.'

### **Decision making - thinking or feeling?**

One aspect of detailed analysis of decision making shows us that, as human beings, we are subject to both 'thinking' and to 'feeling' in reaching our decisions. In this we all differ in degree. One degree is not better than another, just different. The more we understand of ourselves and of others, the better equipped we are to handle day to day life. We all fall somewhere on the following scale:



In the very extreme personalities the extreme thinker has little or no emotion, whilst the extreme feeler is driven very strongly by emotion.

The following few questions will give you some idea of your own leaning: **(Score yourself on both sides of the question)**

**Thinking**

**Feeling**

Do you make an objective analysis  
Weighing pros and cons carefully.

5 4 3 2 1

Or regardless of the pros and cons you  
Choose to follow that which feels better

1 2 3 4 5

You get on with your job regardless  
Of relationships around you.

5 4 3 2 1

Or when relationships are strained you find  
It difficult to get on with the job

1 2 3 4 5

If you have to choose truth is more  
Important than fact

5 4 3 2 1

Or fact is more important than truth

1 2 3 4 5

In a group your contribution is  
Objectivity

5 4 3 2 1

Or empathy and mindfulness of others  
Feelings

1 2 3 4 5

Do you repond with a critical  
Evaluation

5 4 3 2 1

Or are you spontaneously appreciative

1 2 3 4 5

In conversation are you precise

5 4 3 2 1

Or expressive

1 2 3 4 5

Are people more prone to error  
If they follow their heart

5 4 3 2 1

Or their head

1 2 3 4 5

More interest in things than people

5 4 3 2 1

Or more interest in people than things

1 2 3 4 5

..... Total this column and Total this column.....

(There is no right or wrong answer. A high score is not better than a low score, just different. Score both sides for each question according to how strongly you react – 5 being the strongest agreement and 0 the least.. Add

your total points for each side – this gives you some idea of your own thinking/feeling bias at the present time.)

Do you have a natural propensity to -

Come strongly on the 'feeling' side of the equation - you can actively ask the Holy Spirit to increase your 'thinking' side.

Or equally, the 'cold fish' or extreme thinker can ask the Holy Spirit to increase his or her feeling capacity.

Even being really aware of this analysis helps in handling ourselves and in relationship with others, understanding 'where they are coming from.'

## **Chapter 9**

### **The mind and the will**

The mind also interacts with the will.

We will do nothing unless our will is activated, or until our will is changed. The will is very powerful. (The will can also be influenced by the emotions)

The human will has to be broken so that it is ready to bow to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is entitled to tell us what to do and entitled to expect us to obey, because of His rights over us as our owner.

*'For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.'* 1 Corinthians 6:20

We were bought with a price. Therefore we are the property of our owner. Therefore our owner has the right to expect our complete obedience.

Jesus gives us some teaching which has particular application to our wills:

*'Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes"?'*

*"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*

*"And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."*

Matthew 21:42-44

Jesus is the stone, unless we fall on Him and are broken, He will fall on us and we will be ground to powder. That which is ground to powder is blown away by the wind. That which has fallen on Jesus is broken and now ready to do His will.

We could consider the wild stallion. Whilst in its natural surroundings it might look like a mighty powerful, even wonderful sight, but it cannot be used for anything. It cannot be ridden, it cannot pull a cart and so on. It is wild. Jesus did not save us for us to remain 'wild.' Once we were

‘driven’ by the course of this world, as Paul explains to the Ephesians in chapter 2 verses 1-3.

*‘And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.’*

But now we are to be changed into His likeness step by step. Our will has to be ‘broken’ just as the stallion has to be broken to become useful.

### **Submission to scripture - a sign**

Our attitude to scripture will be a sign of whether or not our will has been subjected to the Lordship of Jesus. If we are deciding what scripture is right and what scripture is wrong – or not applicable to me – then we must question whether or not we are submitted.

(Here I mean – when we understand the clear message of scripture in its context and in its application – if we then go contrary to the scripture we are not broken.)

### **Consider the marriage relationship as a type**

In my opinion, one of the most effective ways of seeing our wills really brought into line, is to consider the marriage relationship. We are the bride of Christ. What does a husband want? He wants the full attention and unfading love of his wife.

Jesus wants us to be 'head over heels' in love with Him. Then, there is unlikely to be any problem with our will not aligning with his will. The scripture goes on to say that the husband is head over the wife. The Lord has designed it so that the husband carries the ultimate responsibility. (That is why scripture says, 'Adam sinned,' and not 'Eve' sinned. It also accounts for the scripture saying, 'the sins of the fathers are visited on the children to third and fourth generation.') Jesus is to carry ultimate responsibility for His bride – us.

So it is that the will of the wife is to be subjected to the will of the husband.

(Refer to Genesis 3:16, Ephesians 5:22 and others)

Therefore, as scripture uses the picture of human marriage to represent some aspects of our relationship as Jesus' bride, so it becomes clear that

we are expected to obey Him, submitting our wills to His. This is another way of saying He is King and we are the subjects of His Kingdom.

**Footnote.**

***Dangers for wives.***

One of the results of the fall, for the woman, is found in Genesis 3:16 - *'Your desire will be for your husband and he shall rule over you.'* (The scripture is not referring to sexual desire. The Lord has designed husband and wife to emphatically enjoy their sexual relationship. Their intimacy is an earthly shadow of the spiritual intimacy we enjoy with the Lord. That is why the bible is so very strong about not entering into sexual relations outside marriage.) So we need to understand what is meant by 'desire.'

***Understand the meaning of 'desire'***

To understand the usage of the word desire we can look at the next chapter, verse 7. In context, the offering of Cain has just been refused by God, whilst that of Able has been received. (Able's offering involved blood, which brings forgiveness of sin and therefore brought acceptability before God.)

The Lord God encourages Cain to do well and he will be accepted, and warns him that if he does not do well, sin lies at the door, and its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.

Now we can see that 'desire' is 'desire to control.' This shows us that the danger for a wife is the desire to have control over her husband, rather having him rule over her. Thus upsetting the biblical picture of Jesus / Bride, Husband / Wife.

The church (bride) does not exercise control over Jesus, just as the body does not exercise control over the head. So it is that a wife should not exercise control over her husband – that is the spirit of Jezebel.

It must be said that the 'rulership' of a husband is to be exercised in the same way that Jesus is head of the church. This is not a mandate for domination, but an opportunity for a husband to demonstrate all the love, and care, of Jesus to his wife.

So husbands and wives can align their understanding of their roles with the truth, and in so doing they will open the door to greater and greater harmony, love, and peace, in their relationship.

## Chapter 10

### The mind and business life – using the plumbline

The principle of renewing the mind should now be established. But renew our thinking to what? The Lord has caused many men, over the years, to follow the inspiration of the Spirit in writing down the Scriptures. These scriptures are the very word of God for people of all time.

The scriptures represent the truth - we could liken this to the plumbline. A builder uses a plumbline to make sure that the building is straight and true. This is one of the purposes of the scriptures - so that we can build straight and true in our everyday lives.

Therefore, a good and thorough understanding of scripture will be invaluable, indeed a necessity, if we are to know how to build straight and true.

Fortunately, the Holy Spirit has been given to lead us into all truth, to help us in understanding what the scripture says, and means. This is why the prayer asking the Holy Spirit to fulfil that part of His ministry within us is so important.

One of the major requirements to get an accurate, and therefore safe, understanding from scripture, is to realise that the scripture covers all people for all of time. Within 'all of time,' God has chosen to deal with mankind in different ways, at different periods. All of this is included in scripture and we are urged to rightly divide the word - that means work out, and understand, which scriptures apply to us in this part of time in which we live.

Let me illustrate that, whilst every scripture is the truth, not every individual scripture applies all of the time:

*'He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.'*  
Isaiah 2:4

*'Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, 'I am strong.'"*  
Joel 3:10

Opposite instructions!

From these quotations you can see that at one specific time it was appropriate to prepare for peace, while at another point in time it was appropriate to prepare for war.

### **Using the plumbline**

When reference to scripture enlightens us, and when we have carefully studied to make sure we are rightly dividing the word, then we are expected to bow our intellectual, emotional, and experiential, 'knee' to the scripture and to align our thinking and actions with the revealed truth. Often times our experience will run contrary to our intellectual understanding of scripture. Often times our intellectual understanding will be affected by emotions and experiences. Frequently the pressure and power of 'the flesh' will try to move us away from the integrity of the written word of God. In all cases the scripture is true – for it is the inspired word of God – *'Forever O Lord Your word is settled in heaven.'* (Psalm 119:89) We will need to change, for we can neither add to, nor subtract from, the scripture.

If we think the scripture is wrong on some point – then we need to think again, for we are placing our revelation higher than the inspired word of truth\* – the scripture is right, it is our understanding that is inadequate or maybe plain wrong.

\* in effect we are placing ourselves 'as god,' in the sense that we are sitting in judgement over that which He has written by His breath.

### **Only the plumbline is safe**

Ultimately, only the truth is safe – everything else is like building on sand. It may seem to work for a while. It may seem to be a way to make quick progress, but building on sand cannot survive the storms which will inevitably come. This is why the renewing of the mind is so important.

Often, choosing to follow the truth will be difficult and painful. Difficult because it requires active trust in God and painful because our human nature will object.

Nevertheless, 'thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path' - the truth will illuminate the safe pathway.

(There are many aspects of 'biblical truth' relevant for our everyday and working lives. There are a wide range of ministries seeking to apply biblical truth to the world of work. One example is ICCC's 'Transformed Working Life' course, designed to bring good sound teaching by teaching how to apply biblical truth for those called to work in the marketplace.

This series of booklets was originally designed as a major part of the TWL course and enthusiastically welcomed around the world.)

## **Chapter 11**

### **The mind and business life - led by the Spirit.**

*'For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.'*  
Romans 8:5

#### **Good training**

Most of our training for work and business leads us into the normal ways of the world. These learned skills are, of course, of great value. Training develops, hones and sharpens skills, whether they be practical skills which use our physical abilities, or theoretical, managerial or entrepreneurial skills which use mental and applied character skills.

These trained skills are indeed of great value. Jesus learned carpentry skills at the hand of Joseph. Paul clearly learned the trade of tent making. These things are all together good.

#### **The element of God's favour**

However, we are expected to also take due account of another aspect - an aspect not known in the world. This aspect is the favour of God which is expressed twofold:

1) Firstly, there is the anointing of God which adds to us, as it were, a following wind of the favour of God. We could call this the general blessing of God which is available to us when we acknowledge that *'without Him we can do nothing'* and that *'unless the Lord builds the house they labour in vain that build it.'*  
(Refer to 'Anointing' in this series)

Even coming to this position requires the renewing of the mind. Jesus expressed it like this:

*'John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven.'*  
John 3:27

*"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.'*  
John 15:5

Without Jesus we can do **nothing**. Context – the bearing of fruit. Without Jesus we can do nothing that will survive the judgement of believers works. (1 Corinthians 3:13-15)

Therefore, to be fruitful, we need to be flowing in the anointing of God.

2) Just as Jesus experienced specific and supernatural intervention of God in all sorts of situations, so we are to know that God will intervene on our behalf, when we learn how to be led by the Spirit, and when we know how to operate in the realm of faith. (See 'Faith or Presumption' in this series.)

(This is an area of difficulty for many called to the workplace, one that we must overcome step by step. We need to throw off the thinking that 'secular' work is inferior. The Lord calls each one to his particular calling (Ephesians 2:10) and the vital thing is obedience to the calling whatever it might be. Then, we are told to do what we do heartily, as unto the Lord. (Colossians 3:23) Because we are told to do our work heartily as unto Him, we know that He is therefore interested in our work. Then add the understanding that the Lord is available to guide us in the way we should go and able to intervene on our behalf by faith.

*'Those who are led by the Spirit, these are the sons of God,'* is the plain statement of scripture. (Romans 8:14) It is not those who do a really splendid job, it those who are led by the Spirit of God and thus complete the particular calling of God. Because we do our work as unto Him it will be done with all the excellence we can muster, plus the real excellence, that 'over and above' distinctiveness of His anointing.

### **Overflowing with the Spirit**

Scripture tells us that we 'are born of the Spirit when we believe' and that 'we are one spirit with Him.' However it is also clear that the early church knew another level of the presence of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 4:31 we find the disciples praying to the Lord after experiencing some persecution. The scripture tells us *'the place was shaken where they were assembled together and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.'* Whatever one's theology about the Holy Spirit it is clear from scripture that Jesus sent Him to us, He indwells us and He will fill us. That is enough for me to react by telling Him He is welcome living in me and filling me with His presence, and telling Him He is free to fill me to the maximum. I know it will glorify Jesus because that is what the Holy Spirit wants to do.

### **Revealing the sons of God.**

In Romans 8 we are told that creation is groaning awaiting the revealing of the sons of God. The same passage tells us that the fullness of this revealing involves us coming into our glorified, or redeemed, bodies - this will happen when Jesus returns.

In the meantime, it is clear from Hebrews 6 that it is possible for us to *'taste the powers of the age to come.'*

### **The meaning of adoption**

The same passage in Romans informs us of our 'adoption' as sons. So we see these things clearly linked, so that we can sum this up like this:

'The adopted sons of God will move by the Spirit of God in such a manner that the powers of the age to come, that which creation longs to see, will be experienced in increasing measure. For all of us this will be manifest as we do the works prepared beforehand by God for us to walk in (Ephesians 2:10).'

### **So we need to understand the meaning of 'adoption.'**\*

The English word is used to mean the taking in to a family of one who is not a 'real' member of the family. This then creates the impression that adoption is not as good as being a natural child of the family. It is somehow second rate.

However, this is not, at all, the meaning of adoption in scripture. We need to look at three things to understand fully:

1) The word translated 'adoption' comes from two Greek words 'huios' and 'tithemi.' 'huios' means 'son.' 'tithemi' means 'set in place.'

2) The use of 'tithemi' shows that 'set in place' means put in as a foundation.

This word is used of apostles and prophets being the foundation (tithemi) on which the church is built. (Ephesians 2:20)

Again, in 1 Corinthians 12 we see Paul saying God placed (tithemi) in the church apostles, prophets, teachers and miracle workers.

3) Finally, an understanding of Hebrew practice, in Paul's day, in the marketplace will help. It shows us that, there comes a point in time, when the son of the family is enabled to speak with the authority of his father. In practice, a day came when the father would announce his son's 'adoption' or 'setting in place.' From this day, those who traded together in the marketplace, knew that the father would honour the agreements made by the son.

So now we see, this adoption is a setting in place in mature sonship, such that authority is vested in the son. Now this is what God did for Jesus. If you like, the moment of Jesus' adoption was the baptism by John, when from heaven God announced, *'this is My Son, in whom I am well pleased.'* Later we hear God the Father saying, at the transfiguration, *'This is My Son listen to Him.'*

Jesus is our role model, so we see in Him just how this adoption works.

- a) Jesus knew that the Father always heard Him. (John 11:42)
- b) Jesus could do nothing of Himself. He did only what He saw and heard the Father doing. (John 5:19)

So this adoption is not available to us 'in the flesh,' but only 'in the Spirit.' As we see and hear what the Father is doing, so we are empowered as co-workers with Him, by faith. By faith nothing is impossible. Note carefully that faith comes by hearing the specific instructions of God and **not** by **us** demanding what **we** perceive **we** want.

We are to come into the full foretaste of the adoption as sons in our calling.

So now we should be developing a higher view of our calling in the marketplace. We are not called to operate in the same way as the world. Rather we are called to also experience the favour, both general and specific of God, such that the world will again see the difference between those who serve the Lord and those who don't. (Malachi 3:18)

We should therefore expect, and experience, the glory of God in our working lives. That glory will be general – in that we flourish, and specific – in that we experience from time to time God's intervention in a miraculous way.

\* Here is the meaning as given by W E Vine in his Expository dictionary of bible words.

'God does not adopt believers as children; they are begotten as such by His Holy Spirit through faith. Adoption is a term involving the dignity of the relationship of believers as sons; it is not a putting into the family by spiritual birth, but putting into the position of sons.'

## **Chapter 12**

### **The conclusion - righteousness, excellence and integrity**

*'By their fruit you shall know them.'* (Luke 6:43-45)

The only evidence that we are mature in Christ is the fruitfulness of our daily lives. Fruitfulness is a 'big' concept. To understand it we would have to consider Jesus. He always had the answer to every problem. He was always able to help those who needed help. Jesus always had the answer for all who would receive.

Jesus' life was impeccable - He never put a foot wrong, He never sinned.

We are called to progressively become more and more like Him - this is fruitfulness.

***So our fruitfulness will be the evidence of our walk with Jesus.***

The process of renewing our minds is a major weapon we can use to bring us more and more into this maturity. Our inner thought life can be aligned more completely with the truth and with righteousness.

I hope that the following four point guide will help us:

#### **1) Righteousness**

Another way of defining righteousness is 'right standing.' That is right standing with God. The sacrifice of Jesus, on the cross, paid in full the due penalty of all our sin, past, present and future, and placed us in right standing with the Lord. Our fundamental righteousness is a free gift of God. (Romans 5:17)

In our thinking we need to know that our access to the throne of grace is not by our works, and not by our good behaviour, but by grace - that is unmerited favour.

We have received unmerited favour because of Jesus. Our belief and trust in Him opens the door. The Spirit comes in with new birth, we become children who are always welcome in the presence of the Father.

In our working lives we need to know that God is for us and not against us. We need to know that, as we obediently follow our calling, the presence, the wisdom and the power of God are all available. Therefore we should be ready, and willing, to come to Him with the problems that will inevitably beset us in this world. He not only has the wisdom, to

know the answer to every problem, but also, He has the power to effect that answer.

When our minds are fully renewed, we will know that we are welcome at the throne of grace, and, we will know that He wants us to cast all our burdens on Him, however big or however small they may be. Objective – to reign in life. (Romans 5:17)

*This is practical righteousness.*

## **2) Excellence.**

The renewed business mind knows that everything we do should reflect the Kingdom to which we belong. The renewed business mind knows that 'the quality is remembered long after the price is forgotten.' In scripture, Paul urges us,

*'and whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.'*

Colossians 3:23.

This is excellence, when we do our work as if Jesus, Himself, were our customer, then we will surely provide excellence in what we do.

True excellence is only found where the anointing of God is present. The anointing of God is present when we are following our calling. True excellence can have that additional element beyond normal human capability. We can always be sensitive to the Spirit as we work - the Spirit will surprise from time to time.

Laurence Holt testifies of his experience after a training program he was running. A delegate came up to him and said, 'that was good, thank you ..... Pause..... but there is something different about you .... You care.' By the grace of God something additional to the norm had been seen and imparted.

So, not only do we work to the very best of our natural ability, but we expect in addition the anointing of God to be present.

## **3) Integrity**

It should not need to be said, but for completeness - we cannot be involved in unlawful and shady dealing. We represent King Jesus on earth as ambassadors. His Kingdom is perfect in every way. We cannot follow the world's ways of corruption. Our minds are the battleground on

which this issue is fought and settled. (See also 'No one can serve two masters' in this series)

Let me quote the testimony of an ICCC member in Uganda. In Uganda bribery and corruption are unfortunately the normal way that business is conducted. Mabel runs a courier service. She knows and loves the Lord Jesus. Mabel has heard the ICCC 'Transformed Working Life' teaching and is in no doubt that bribery is not an option for Christians in business. Not so long ago she was delighted to get the contract for delivering documents for a government department. There was plenty of work - things were going very well. Then the payments began to dry up. She went to the department to see if there was a problem. She was told that the work and payments were drying up because she didn't pay the staff any money- i.e. she did not pay bribes.

Now she was faced with a choice, do I pay bribes and the business will be renewed, or do I hold to the right principle. For us this should not even be a question, but nevertheless it will be a temptation that we will have to settle each time it rears its head She decided - no bribes.

The business suffered. Mabel kept short accounts with the Lord. She expressed her needs. Then a man sought her out and offered to introduce her to a big customer. He wanted a bribe. She refused. He went away. Later he came back and made the introduction anyway. This was to a European Airline operating out of Kampala. An exceptionally good contract and no bribes. Mabel's business now flourishes.

Actually our willingness to stand out and not follow the world is a statement that we do trust the Lord. If we merely do the same as the world, in this respect, it demonstrates that ultimately we do not trust the Lord in our business.

#### **4) Generosity.**

We, that is those of us involved in business, operate in the kingdom of mammon. Money is immensely powerful and potentially very dangerous. In this area there is an antidote and that antidote is generosity. Again, our thinking plays a vital role.

*'But a generous man devises generous things, and by generosity he shall stand.'*  
Isaiah 32:8

Just consider this scripture, generosity plays a key role in our ability to stand.

We will do well to remember that the Lord loves a cheerful giver, that as we sow so shall we reap, and that God is not mocked in these things. God has cheerfully given us all things - we are called to be generous people.

I would say that the level of our generosity will be one of the determining factors in how the Lord releases His blessing over us - it is increasingly vital for us in business to be generous.

*'So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.'* 2 Corinthians 9:7

Few of us are naturally generous. However, we can ask the Holy Spirit to make us generous - that is to change us from one degree of glory to another degree of glory in generosity.

### **Finish the race....**

When we are seen to be walking in these four things, our fruitfulness will be obvious for all to see. The Lord will be glorified and we will walk on safe ground. Increasingly we will know the Lord is there, that He is faithful and true and that He will bring good out of every situation for us who love Him.

*'Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.'*

3 John 1:2-4