

In Romans 12:1-2, it says:

Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV)

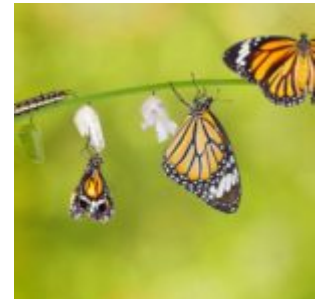
¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

² And *don't 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.



Verse 2 says not to be conformed to the world. The word “conformed” means “to be poured into a mold.” In other words, there will always be pressure from the world, from the devil, from unbelievers and from circumstances to make you conform to them. You cannot go through life without being pressured and melted one way or another, but you can choose what mold to fit in. You don't have to be bitter like the world, and you don't have to experience the defeat this world offers you either. Don't be conformed and poured into the mold of this world, but be transformed.

The word “transformed” in Greek is *metamorphoo*, from where we have the word “metamorphosis,” which is the transformation of a worm from a cocoon into a butterfly. If you want that kind of transformation where you are changed in your physical and emotional realm from a bitter and hurtful person into a loving and joyful one, from a sick person into a healed one, from a defeated person into the victorious person God wants you to be, then you need to renew your mind. Your spirit is perfect. The body just goes with the flow and it goes along for the ride. But what you think with your mind determines whether you experience the life of God or death and defeat in the natural realm. The renewing of your mind changes all that. The renewing of your mind produces your transformation and that transformation approves and confirms the good, well-pleasing, and perfect will of God in your life. How does this happen? The good, well-pleasing, and perfect will of God for you—revealed in the Gospel— is that you would have life in abundance, peace, joy, health, prosperity, and victory over sin. All these things, that represent the will of God for you, are already present in your born-again spirit. The moment you begin to be transformed outwardly and when what is inside of you becomes visible on the outside, you prove to the world that what God said about you and what God has put in your spirit is true and real. *Your transformation certifies and confirms what God has already accomplished in you.*



The verb “prove” in Romans 12:2 comes from the Greek word *dokimazo*, which means “to approve something or someone, to examine or test something or someone and prove him or it reliable and trustworthy, to determine, to certify, or to confirm” (The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Lexicon by Kittel and Friedrich Gerhard and Geoffrey William Bromiley). The exact same Greek word is used in 1 Corinthians 16:3 as well, where apostle Paul says:

1 Corinthians 16:3 (NKJV)

³ And when I come, whomever *you approve* by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.

Paul says that he will send the Corinthians' gifts to Jerusalem through people that have been tested by the church in Corinth and approved as reliable to carry such gifts. Now, returning to Romans 12:1-2, some more interpretive translations of the Bible (ESV, NRSV) have rendered the Greek word *dokimazo* as “discern.” The verb “to discern” in the English language is defined as “to find out, to distinguish, to detect, or

to perceive” creating the following connotation in your mind when reading Romans 12:2: “that by renewing your mind with the moral laws of God from the Bible regularly, you will learn to discern good and evil or what God likes and dislikes, which actually represents the good, well-pleasing, and perfect will of God.” Is this interpretation correct? As we have already learned, our mind doesn’t need additional refreshes of the moral laws of God (namely the Ten Commandments), because our conscience already knows good and evil very well and it reminds them to us on a regular basis, either we like it or not. Also, as I will explain later in more details, the renewing of the mind does not consist in looking continually in the moral Law of Moses to see our flaws and sins and then try to improve ourselves morally. Therefore, the translation of the Greek verb *dokimazo* as “prove” in the literal translations of the Bible (KJV, NKJV, NASB, LEB) is more accurate, because it correctly portrays the mind renewal process as an assimilation of a new identity, and not as a merely moral improvement of your old person. By the transformation that results from your identity replacement with Christ’s identity, you can confirm the will of God, which is not only morality, but righteousness, life, and power in all aspects of your life.

How do you renew your mind? It’s through the Word of God which tells you what is spiritually true and gives you a new mindset. You then have to conform yourself to what God’s Word has to say about you.

Acts 20:32 (NKJV)

³² “So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Apostle Paul says that the Word of His grace is able to build you up and give you an inheritance; it helps you enter in the possession of it. *The Word of God or the Word of His grace is the instruction manual of the new creation.* The New Testament contains most of those instructions and principles pertaining to the new creation and to the righteousness of God, but the Old Testament contains such instructions as well, because the Law and the Prophets greeted from a far the grace that was going to come to us. Allow me to share with you some other Scriptures that will bring even more clarity to what has happened in you. They will illustrate the truths about the change that took place in your spirit. In Ephesians 4:17 it says:

Ephesians 4:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ 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.*

The word “Gentiles” here refers to non-Jews. In that context, Paul was referring to people that were not in covenant with God. The way he would probably express the same thing today would be something like the following: “Don’t walk like lost people and like people that don’t have a relationship with God.” In other words, don’t just let your mind be controlled and dominated by carnal physical things. If you don’t begin to think spiritually and be spiritually-minded instead of carnally-minded, then you will shut off the flow of the life of God through you. A Scripture that reflects this well is Romans 8:6, where it says:

Romans 8:6 (NKJV)

⁶ For to be carnally minded is *death*, but to be spiritually minded is *life and peace.*

Carnal mindedness doesn’t mean sinful mindedness necessarily. Yes, it’s true that all sin is carnal, but not all carnality is sin. The word “carnal” literally means “everything you perceive through the five senses.” In other words, don’t let your mind be dominated only by what

you can see, taste, hear, smell, and feel. You can also perceive realities that exist beyond the senses, as your soul believes the Word of God. In the physical realm, you already can believe things that you cannot see with your physical eyes. For instance, we've come to realize that there are invisible germs all around us that can be seen only under the microscope. Because of that, we wash our hands even though we don't see those microscopic germs with our physical eyes. Likewise, there is the electrical power, radio waves, television signals, internet wireless networks and banking transactions all around us right now whether we are in the car or home. We don't see all these with our physical eyes, but we see their effects in our daily lives and we benefit from them. We've come to realize that there are things we cannot see, taste, hear, smell, or feel, but they are real nevertheless. And this is only the physical and natural realm that we're talking about, but if we transition to the spiritual realm, there is a whole spiritual world all around us that is real. In Ephesians, the Bible calls that spiritual world the heavenly places. Moreover, there are also certain spiritual realities present in you, in your born-again spirit. I am referring here to the spiritual part of you that you cannot perceive through your senses, but you can believe it as you discover it in the Word of God. Begin to use your mind as the Word of God instructs you, and not like the Gentiles, being controlled just by the flesh, because if you're carnally minded, meaning dominated by senses, that is death. But to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. The verse in Romans 8:6 that we've just read didn't say that spiritual mindedness tends towards life and peace or that it helps in some way to push you in that direction. No, it said that spiritual mindedness is life and peace. In other words, you could consider these statements as being a mathematical formula: spiritual mindedness equals life plus peace, while carnal mindedness equals death. This isn't talking just about the physical death of your body, although is included, but also about the slow death of depression, emotional sadness, loneliness, boredom, unbelief, hopelessness, bitterness, anger, lack of any kind, poverty, and sickness, that in the end will send you to the grave, sometimes earlier than necessary. Carnal mindedness produces death. Period!

What is spiritual mindedness? Let's read John 6:63 where it says:

John 6:63 (NKJV)

⁶³ It's the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you *are spirit, and they are life.*

Spiritual mindedness is Word-mindedness. If you're dominated by what God's Word has to say instead of what your physical senses tell you, then you're spiritually-minded, and that will produce only life and peace. Another Scripture that talks about the same thing is Isaiah 26:3 where it says:

Isaiah 26:3 (NKJV)

³ You will keep him in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on You*, because he trusts in You.

Notice again here how the Word links peace to the way you think. If you have a lack of peace, you may say it's because of certain circumstances or because of what someone else did to you, but that's not really your problem. The problem is that you have allowed your mind to be dominated by what you can see, taste, hear, smell, and feel. If you keep your mind stayed upon God regardless of your physical circumstances, He will keep you in perfect peace (Isaiah 26:3). Your spirit is always in perfect peace. But, if your mind is stayed on your problems, if you look at them and think about the potential negative consequences those problems might have and about what they have done to other people in similar situations, then even though you have the perfect peace of God in your spirit, you won't experience it in your soul. Not because it's not there in your spirit, but because you didn't release it; you didn't draw it out from your spirit and enforce it to your emotions. That valve that we were talking about earlier is closed and the life that is in your spirit is not flowing on the outside. Let's go back for a moment to Ephesians 4:17 and read also verse 18:

Ephesians 4:17-18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ 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,

¹⁸ *having their understanding darkened*, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.

Verse 18 talks about our understanding being darkened if we walk like mere humans. That refers to our mind again. If you don't use your mind to study the Word of God and if you don't renew your mind, then it will automatically gravitate towards what you can see, taste, hear, smell, and feel and what that will do, is darken your understanding. Allow me to underline the importance of "understanding" or of perceiving things, in the following way as well: we all know that the knowledge of God's Word is essential and you need to have it. However, you also need the correct understanding of that knowledge and the application of it in your day-to-day life through various associations and connections. *Understanding is the personalization of knowledge.* In other words, knowledge is like taking food and putting it in your mouth. That's the first step. But do you know what? You actually need to swallow that food and your body needs to start digesting it before all of the nutrients and the benefits in that food begin to be released into your body. The knowledge of God is important, but it reaches its potential only if you can understand it right and if you can release the life that it's in it. And this verse says that, if you are walking and living like Gentiles or like lost people, you are not seeing the spiritual truths, but you are just being dominated by your carnal mind and carnal thinking, and all you get as a result is death.

Verse 18 continues by saying that you get alienated from the life of God when your living is dominated by the physical world. In other words, the life of God is still there, but you are alienated and separated from it, because of your ignorance, again referring to the mind and the way the mind thinks. If the physical and natural things dominate you instead of the spiritual and supernatural truths, you alienate yourself from the life of God. That doesn't mean you lose your eternal salvation, but you don't benefit from the life of God here on earth. And this is what's happening to most of us unfortunately, because we don't think the way God thinks. God says: "You have been healed by Jesus' stripes" (1 Peter 2:24), but we look in the mirror and say, "Oh, is that cancer? That bump looks like a tumor." When we don't see the healing and we still feel pain because of some sickness or if we're emotionally drained and fearful over that sickness, then we might say something like: "Well, God says I've been healed, but I'm not; I mean I looked in the mirror and I'm not." And so we begin to think carnally and adopt the current physical manifestation of our reality through the words that we speak, which are contrary to the Word of God, being dominated by the five senses. Because of that, the physical reality will continue its course even though we have the life of God and the resurrection power in us. God's life will not manifest itself in our physical circumstance. If we want things to change, even if we still feel the pain and the symptoms of the sickness (whatever that might be - cancer, diabetes, different viruses, etc.), in the midst of it and preferably before it appears, we need to work on our conviction level about what the Word of God says on healing by continuing to renew our mind with that Word, by continuing to believe it and say it with our mouth until we make it work, and we see the results of healing or recovery manifested in the physical realm. That is how we work out our salvation (according to Philippians 2:12) from our inside spirit into our soul and body, converting a spiritual invisible reality into a physical visible one. We first change our thinking from a carnal one into a spiritual one, by aligning it to the Word of God, and that takes time. It doesn't happen over night. Changing our convictions, from being based on the visible five senses to being based on the invisible spiritual realities, takes time, effort, intentionality, repetition, and perseverance. But slowly, we will begin to make the shift and think spiritually and then adopt the spiritual reality that is supposed to manifest in the physical realm by the words we speak, which are now aligned to the Word of God and are dominated by it.

Let's take another area of our lives and see how mind renewal works. God says in His Word: "Through Jesus' poverty, you have been made rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9) and "You should have enough of everything at all times" (2 Corinthians 9:8) and "You should prosper in all things and be in health" (3 John 1:2) and "You will not lack anything and you will not want anything that you cannot have because the Lord is your shepherd" (Psalm 23:1) and "Everything you do, prospers" (Psalm 1:3), but we look at our bills and our debts and say something like: "I am behind with my payments again and cannot pay my bills in time; I guess I will be a poor person all of my life; in the current state and with

my current job, I will never be able to have enough to pay all my debts and loans, to have a house, and then have some extra to enjoy in vacations or to help others; God says I've been made rich and prosperous, but look at me, I can barely make it from paycheck to paycheck." As long as we keep thinking carnally in that area and adopt the current precarious financial situation through the words that we speak, which are contrary to the Word of God, poverty and lack will continue its course, even though we have all the prosperity and life of God inside us. That life will not manifest itself in our finances. On top of that, a vast majority of Christians today even believe poverty is the will of God for them and they raise poverty and lack to the level of virtue, although God didn't say and neither implied that anywhere in the Bible. The Gospel of Christ is not a Gospel of poverty and lack, but of prosperity and blessing. If we ever hope to change our financial situation for the better, we need to begin aligning our thinking, convictions, and speech to what the Word of God says about our finances and what other people say.

What about addictions and repeated sinful behaviors like drinking, drugs, sexual immorality of any kind, gossiping, anger fists, or overeating? The same thing applies. God says: "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man and I will never allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear" (1 Corinthians 10:13) and "Sin shall not have dominion over you because you are under grace" (Romans 6:14) and "You are dead to sin" (Romans 6:11) and "You have received a spirit of self-control and of discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7), but we look at our lusts and urges and say something like: "God says I am dead to sin, but it's not really so; He says that my spirit has self-control and self-discipline, but I can still feel the temptations in such a strong way that I don't think I will be ever be free of this; I tried everything I knew and although I want to get rid of my addiction so bad, I simply cannot do it." If we want freedom from these behaviors, then right in the midst of those temptations and preferably before we enter the temptations, we need to keep believing and saying what the Word of God says, disregarding the pressures we feel because of the temptations, the same way we would do with a sickness when we still feel its symptoms. This is how we will get free of those issues in our soul, mind, and emotions. In this way, the self-control power from the inside will kick-in on the outside and result in our freedom.

What does the Bible say about our salvation from hell? God says: "By grace you have been saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8). In this area, most believers are strong and believe beyond a shadow of a doubt that they will go to heaven when they die, even though they've never seen heaven or hell. That is a good thing and we should transfer the same kind of conviction and faith to all the other areas that we've just talked about, because if, for instance, we don't make healing work through faith here on earth, what makes us think that our salvation from hell is real or that heaven is real? After all, we don't have any physical proof of the existence of hell and both salvation from hell and physical healing have been included in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and in the same Word of God. The same goes for sanctification and prosperity, exactly like in healing. If all these things are in the Word of God and work by the same principle, then if one is true and real, all of them should be true and real and manifest in our lives, right? If salvation from hell is real and if heaven is real, then also sanctification, and healing, and prosperity, and raising the dead, and self-control, and peace, and joy, all of them are real and true. Why is it so easy to believe the Word of God about heaven, but not so easy when it comes to believing the same Word of God regarding our life here on earth? Have you ever wondered this? I always make this parallel because it helps me to go back to the simplicity of faith in all areas. I've come to realize that there are at least two reasons behind this phenomenon: (1) when it comes to salvation from hell, we don't have to prove anything right now and neither we're put face to face with the need to see the tangible manifestation of that salvation right now, because heaven is in the future, after death; (2) when it comes to salvation from hell, we don't really have another option if salvation from hell is not real, or heaven is not real, so we throw ourselves into that belief with everything we are and with everything we have, although we don't have any empirical proof that God exists, or that heaven and hell are real. That is exactly how we should believe also for healing, prosperity, and freedom from addictions. However, when it comes to these things, we are confronted with the need to see the proof of manifestation right now, and many times that proof is not visible immediately, probably because of a lack of revelation or a lack of understanding properly the new creation's rights and the way faith works. Plus, most of the times we have so many other options. When it comes to sanctification, we can always appeal to our own efforts and to morality. When it comes to prosperity, we can always try something humanly through our own strength. When it comes to sickness, we have access to so many hospitals, diagnosis, and remedies. Maybe that is why it's more difficult to believe for these things here on earth than for heaven. Maybe that is why in other countries, more divine healings happen, because those people don't have another option and don't have access to hospitals and modern medicine. They either believe the Word of God for healing or die. This doesn't mean that medicine is bad and that we should remove it completely, because it pursues the same good

goal of healing, but it's limited, and because of that sometimes it does to us more harm than good because it drains us of all our faith in the supernatural through its negative and naturally limited reports. Romans 8:32 says:

Romans 8:32 (NKJV)

³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also *freely give us all things*?

If God didn't spare His greatest possession – His only Son, Jesus Christ – but sacrificed Him for us, why wouldn't He want to freely give us all the other things like healing, prosperity, peace, joy, and sanctification? Let's not forget that He also gave us His other greater possession – the Holy Spirit. Are healing and prosperity by any chance more precious to God than Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit? Since God was able to save us from hell and completely recreate our spirit in a second at the moment of our salvation just through a simple prayer of faith, does healing and prosperity require more power than what was exerted at the moment of salvation? Of course not! Our faith in salvation from hell should strengthen our faith in all the other things, until we see them manifested in our physical realm. Once we see them manifested, then our faith in both the future salvation from hell and present salvation from sickness, poverty and addictions will be strengthened. Next time we will face another giant of sickness or financial pressure, it will be much easier for us to defeat it because of the faith we gained from our past negative experience that we overcame, and not just endured.

Most people allow feelings to run their course and dominate their personality. Feelings should be like the caboose on a train. They do exist, but they should not be the engine; they should rather follow along. Feelings should follow the way you think. For most of us, feelings have become the engine that drives us instead of us driving them through the engine of godly thinking.

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