

"The Truth Shall Make You Free"

The Importance of Renewing Your Mind with the Word of God

We like to quote that part of the verse, "**The truth shall make you free,**" and take it out of context, and use it to try to say all kinds of things. I have even heard unsaved people, in the media for instance, use it as a "catch phrase" and apply it to any kind of "freedom" they want it to mean. They also want to make it mean any old kind of "truth" instead of **the TRUTH of the WORD of God**. However, it is God's word, and we do not have any right to take a portion of a verse of Scripture out of its context and twist it to mean whatever we want it to mean (II Peter 1:20-21, II Peter 3:16). Let's look at the verse in context, and see what Jesus meant when He said it. In John 8:34-36 Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **whoever commits SIN is a SLAVE to sin**. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if **the Son (Jesus) MAKES you FREE**, you shall be free indeed." From the context, we see that Jesus' definition of freedom does not mean to be free to do whatever you want, but means **freedom from SLAVERY to SIN**. Slavery to sin comes in all sorts of varieties: alcohol or drug addiction; sex addictions; co-dependency and low self esteem; strongholds of pornography; compulsive lying and manipulating of people to get our way; and strongholds of anger and bitterness. There are also people who are bound up in the "**ATTITUDE SINS**" such as pride; covetousness and greed; fear of man; unbelief towards God; gossiping and a critical, condemning spirit; fear, worry and anxiety; selfishness; legalism and other false doctrines; and grumbling and complaining. Although some of these are harder to detect than the more overt sins, they are serious sins and just as destructive in peoples' lives (James 5:9, Philippians 2:14, Hebrews 12:15, Ephesians 4:30-31, Matthew 15:18-20, Galatians 5:19-21). Jesus wants us to be FREE from all of that baggage, so that we can **SERVE Him with a pure heart**. TRUE freedom is being **FREE to do what is RIGHT**.

- **Romans 6:16** "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves SLAVES to obey, you are that one's SLAVES whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness?"
- **John 8:31-32 & 34-36** "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, '**If you continue in My WORD**, then are you My disciples indeed; and **you shall know the TRUTH, and the TRUTH shall make you FREE**.'" "Jesus answered them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits SIN is a SLAVE to sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. If the Son therefore shall make you free you shall be free indeed.'"
- **John 17:17** "Sanctify them by Your truth. **Your WORD is TRUTH**."

We see that **the TRUTH which sets us free is God's WORD**. So, why is it that most Christians are not experiencing the freedom Jesus has promised in His word? It is because they forget the first part of what Jesus said, because **Jesus said this freedom comes from "continuing in His WORD"**! This "continuing in Jesus' word" is also called "renewing your mind" in Ephesians 4:23-24 and Romans 12:1-2, and Jesus calls it letting "My words abide in you" in John 15:7. This freedom is a PROCESS, because CONTINUING in God's word takes time and work. So, let's go over some basics, and see what renewing our minds and "continuing in the word" is all about:

1.) FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

We must renew our minds with the word of God for spiritual growth. What is your responsibility once you are born again? What do YOU need to do **AFTER** you have been **MADE** a new creation in Christ? You are responsible for your GROWTH - God does not want you to STAY a spiritual BABY forever! He wants you **to GROW and MATURE in Christ**, but it doesn't happen automatically. YOU must **FEED your re-born SPIRIT** with spiritual food, the **WORD of GOD**, in order to GROW. The SOUL and SPIRIT are closely linked together, so you must also **RENEW your MIND**, which is part of your SOUL (the SOUL is

made up of your **MIND, will and emotions**). You will truly see **spiritual GROWTH** and you will be **TRANSFORMED** into the likeness of Jesus Christ, as you renew your mind with the word of God.

- **I Peter 2:2** "As **NEWBORN BABES**, desire the **pure MILK of the WORD, that you may GROW** thereby (by the word)."
- **II Peter 3:18** "But **GROW in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen."
- **Ephesians 4:23-24** "And be **RENEWED in the SPIRIT of your MIND**; and that you put on the **NEW MAN**, which was **CREATED according to God**, in righteousness and true holiness."
- **Romans 12:1-2** "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."

RENEWING our MINDS with the WORD of God is like re-programming a computer - we must **REPLACE all the old THOUGHT PATTERNS** with God's thoughts (from His word). This is also called "**having the MIND of CHRIST**." When we constantly read and take into our minds the **WORD of GOD, our MINDS become RENEWED and re-programmed**, until we begin to **THINK** more and more **LIKE GOD**, and **ACT** like Jesus!

- **Philippians 2:5** "Let this **MIND be in YOU** which was also in Christ Jesus."
- **Romans 8:29** "For whom He foreknew, him He also predestinated (planned ahead) to be **CONFORMED to the image of HIS SON**, that He (Jesus) might be the firstborn among many brethren."
- **Hebrews 4:12** "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 5:12-14** "For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the **WORD** of righteousness, for **he is a BABE**. But **SOLID FOOD** belongs to those who are of full age (mature, grown up), that is those who by reason of use have their **SENSES (soul) exercised (trained) to DISCERN both good and evil**."
- **Colossians 3:16** "Let the **WORD of Christ DWELL (live)** in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and **SPIRITUAL songs**, singing with **grace in your HEARTS** to the Lord."

2.) FOR STRENGTHENING, BUILDING UP & GUARDING US from SIN

It is the word of God that builds us up in the faith (Romans 10:17), and gives us the strength to keep us from sin. When our **MINDS become RENEWED by the WORD OF GOD**, we become **CONFORMED to the image of HIS SON, Jesus**. Galatians 2:20 says, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but **CHRIST LIVES IN ME**; and the life which I now live in the flesh (this human body) **I live by FAITH in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave Himself for me." When people **begin to SEE JESUS in us**, that is when we become **EFFECTIVE** in bringing others to faith in Him. This is when we begin to walk in that freedom Jesus talked about. God's plan for our lives is **NEVER** for us to continue in our old sinful, selfish ways, because **that is bondage, not freedom**. His plan is to bring us **ALL** to full maturity in Christ, and He accomplishes this by His **WORD**.

- **II Peter 1:4** "By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious **PROMISES (in His WORD)**, that **through these** (the promises in **God's WORD**) you may be **PARTAKERS** of the **DIVINE** nature, having **ESCAPED** the **CORRUPTION** that is in the world through lust (evil and selfish desires)."

PARTAKE means to share or participate in; to take part in something. Rather than being **PARTAKERS** in the sin and corruption of this world, God wants us to be **PARTAKERS** of His

DIVINE NATURE. **God has given us a new nature at salvation**, and that new nature is created in the image of His Son Jesus Christ, so in a sense, we are partakers of the divine nature from the moment we are born again (Colossians 3:9-10, Ephesians 4:23-24). However, when it comes to **WALKING in that new divine nature** and escaping the corruption and sin of this world, we must renew our minds with the WORD of God, or it just will not happen. This is where "you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" and "If the Son therefore shall make you free you shall be free indeed" comes true. You will only experience this freedom from sin in your life as you strengthen and build up yourself with the word of God.

- **Colossians 3:9-10** ".....you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the NEW MAN who is renewed (created) in knowledge according to **the IMAGE of Him who created him.**"
- **Acts 20:32** "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to **the WORD of His grace, which is able to BUILD you UP**, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
- **Psalms 119:9-11** "How can a young man cleanse his way (keep himself pure)? By taking heed according to **Your word**. With my whole HEART I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! **Your WORD I have hidden in my HEART, that I might not SIN** against You."
- **Proverbs 4:4, 20-23** "..... 'Let **your HEART** retain **MY WORDS**; keep my commandments and live." "My son, give attention to **My WORDS**; incline your ear unto My sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the MIDST of **YOUR HEART**." "Keep (guard, watch over) **your HEART** with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."
- **Psalms 119:25 & 28** "My soul clings to the dust; revive me according to Your WORD." "My SOUL melts from heaviness (depression); **STRENGTHEN me according to Your WORD.**"
- **Psalms 119:105 & 130** "Your WORD is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." "The entrance of Your WORDS gives light; **it gives understanding** to the simple."
- **Romans 12:1-2** "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present **your bodies** as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is **your reasonable service**. And **be not 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."

3.) FOR OUTWARD CHANGE of BEHAVIOR

Many Christians spend their whole life trying to change their outward behavior in their own strength. They have an up-and-down, roller coaster Christian life with some periods of success and victory, but just as many periods of failure and slipping back into carnality and sin. Even worse, **some Christians get so discouraged**, that they just give up and fall back into sin altogether, because they have not learned how to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. Transformed means to be CHANGED and MADE NEW. It is true that **what you BELIEVE about WHO YOU ARE determines your behavior**. As you RENEW your mind with the WORD of God, you begin to understand **WHO you are in Christ**, and you are TRANSFORMED on the outside, in your life-style and behavior. In James 1:22-25, **the WORD of God is called "the perfect law of LIBERTY"** and is likened to a mirror by which we judge ourselves and make needed changes. If you want to see positive changes in your life, and if you want to experience the freedom and liberty Jesus speaks of, you **must renew your mind** by reading the **word of God, and then be a DOER of that word** (act according to what you have read). Without a renewed mind, you will think, act and talk **just like your old self, and any changes you try to make will be a struggle**. With a renewed mind, your whole way of thinking is changed, and you will begin to see things as God sees them, and your outward behavior will change as a result. You will "Walk in the Spirit and will not fulfill (carry out) the lusts of the flesh." You will be FREE to SERVE God with a pure heart, and carry out the commandment of Jesus **to LOVE one another as He loves us**.

- **II Corinthians 3:17** "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (freedom). But we all with unveiled face, **beholding as in a MIRROR** the glory of the Lord, **are being TRANSFORMED** into the same IMAGE from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."
- **James 1:21-25** ".....and receive with meekness the engrafted (implanted) WORD , which is able to save your souls. But be doers of **the WORD**, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the WORD and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face **in a MIRROR**; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into **the perfect law of liberty (freedom)** and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."

4.) FOR ENABLING US to LOVE as CHRIST LOVES US

If you are still **a slave to SIN and SELF**, and in bondage to old sinful habits and behaviors, you are not FREE to love others as Christ loves you. When you are still in bondage, you probably don't even understand fully what kind of love that is, because you are too self-centered and full of your own "stuff". Romans 13:8-10 tells you to love others as you love yourself. However, if you're still in bondage, and with an unrenewed mind, you don't love yourself, so how can you love others?

- **Galatians 5:13-16** "For you, brethren, have been called to **liberty (freedom)**; only do not use **liberty** as an opportunity for the flesh, but **through LOVE serve one another**. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: '**You shall love your neighbor as yourself**.'..... I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."
- **Romans 13:8-10** "Owe no one anything except **to love one another**, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'You shall not covet,' and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, '**You shall LOVE your neighbor as yourself**.' Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore **LOVE is the fulfillment of the law.**"
- **John 13:34-35** "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; *even* as I have loved you, that **you also LOVE one another**. By this all will **know that you are My DISCIPLES**, if you have LOVE for ONE ANOTHER."

Jesus said, "**If you continue in My WORD**, then are you My disciples indeed." (John 8:31), so continuing in His word is proof that you are a disciple of His. The other "distinguishing mark" or PROOF that we are truly disciples of Jesus is if we LOVE one ANOTHER. All the claims of faith and all the correct doctrine are basically worthless **if we do not have LOVE for one another** in the Body of Christ. If you only TALK the TALK, but do not WALK the WALK, you are just making a lot of noise, and it means nothing (I Corinthians 13:1-3).

- **Ephesians 5:1-2** "Therefore be followers of God as dear children. And **WALK in LOVE, as Christ also has LOVED us** and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God....."