

CHARACTERISTIC THREE: KNOWLEDGE

Lesson 8: Increasing Your Knowledge of God

In our last lesson we learned about good and bad knowledge, and we touched on the importance of gaining good knowledge. In this lesson we will continue with increasing our knowledge of God. All of us learn things from our childhood on up through adulthood from our parents, teachers, friends and those around us. Our minds are like recorders that take in information that becomes a part of who we are and in turn determines how we think, act and make decisions.

Unfortunately, for many of us, we were taught from a very carnal or worldly perspective and therefore think and respond according to what we've learned. Even being raised in a Christian home by loving, godly parents doesn't leave us immune to wrong thinking because no parent is perfect, even the most well-intentioned ones. Therefore, it's essential that whether one is a new Christian or one that has been serving the Lord for many years that we are continually filling our minds with God's Word so that we can respond to challenges the way God instructs us to and not how we learned growing up.

In Romans 12:1-2, the Apostle Paul says:

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. ¹

What is Paul saying here? He is talking about presenting every part of ourselves to the Lord— spirit, soul & body. He was reinforcing what Jesus said in Matthew 22:36-37, when questioned by one of the Pharisees as to what the greatest commandment was, when He responded by saying, "...YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

² Paul, as well is saying we worship God by presenting all our being to Him, including our minds. However, he goes one step further by pointing out that our minds by nature are corrupt and carnal or as he puts it "conformed to this world". In other words, the devil has so conformed our mind to this world and continues to try to, that the only way to be transformed is by renewing our minds and it is then that we will know and prove what God's good, acceptable and perfect will are.

The question then is, "How do we renew our minds?" The only reasonable answer is that we need to put new thoughts into our mind. We need to put the thoughts of God into our heart and mind by gaining knowledge of Him from His Word. This is why

reading, studying and memorizing the Bible is so important, it transforms our thinking from our old carnal nature into thinking the thoughts of God and what He says about us. So, let's look at the different ways we can get the Word of God into our hearts and minds to transform our thinking.

First, we get God's Word into our heart and mind by the preaching of the Word. This is why it's important to be a part of a local Church body where you can listen to a Pastor, who has committed themselves to studying God's Word and expounds upon it for our better understanding. This is how Jesus taught the Word to his followers and those who gathered around Him. Most Christians lives were first touched and transformed by the Gospel through the power of the preaching of God's Word.

Second, we get God's Word into our heart and mind by reading and studying the Bible. Aren't reading and studying the same? No, they're not. You can read without studying, but you can't really study without reading. I believe it's important to do both. For example, I have a systematic Bible reading plan that I read every day to start my day off right and get me in a proper mindset. But I'm just reading it. Yes, the Holy Spirit highlights certain verses and speaks to my heart through it, but I'm not studying it. Studying the Word, is going deeper, by looking up definitions of words in a passage or verse, cross referencing with other Scriptures, finding out the historical context or even why the author wrote the original book/letter.

Finally, we get God's Word into our heart and mind by memorizing it. Psalm 119:11 says, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You."³ Jesus said in John 14:25-26, "²⁵ 'These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.'"⁴ I can't tell you the number of times as a young man just starting out on my Christian walk and even in the years since that memorizing Scripture helped me overcome temptation or making a stupid choice in my life. But how do you make this a practice? Today there are apps for memorizing scripture, but I've found the easiest way is to get some index cards and write a verse or verses that you feel the Holy Spirit is wanting you to memorize and carry it with you. Then several times a day for a whole week , keep reviewing it until you feel confident that you've "recorded" it in your mind.

As I mentioned earlier, our minds are like recorders. It's our responsibility as men of God to do as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 when he says:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, ⁵

We are called to take every carnal thought captive and renew it with the thoughts of Christ and His Word. I want to encourage you to be faithful in your church attendance where you can hear the Word preached, read and study the Bible and finally, memorize Scripture so that you can stand when you are tempted.

Lesson 8 Questions

1. Why do we by nature think the way we think?

2. What is the difference between being “conformed to this world” and being “transformed by the renewing of our mind”?

3. What 3 ways can we fill our heart and mind with God’s Word?

4. Why is it important to memorize Scripture?

¹ Ro 12:1–2. (NASB).

² Lk 10:27. (NASB).

³ Ps 119:11. (NKJV).

⁴ Jn 14:25–26. (NKJV).

⁵ 2 Co 10:3–5. (NKJV).