

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

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Twisted and Bent Framework

Introduction

Sometimes we concentrate on the negative and overcoming the negative that we forget the bigger picture of the goal or objective. Jesus came to save us from our sins. This is wonderful. This is grace. This is the negative aspect of what God did for us. The positive side of this, the goal or objective is that we are to be conformed to the image of Christ. This is part of growing up in Him. Christ is to be duplicated or replicated in us.

[Galatians 4:19 NASB](#)

(19) My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you--

Paul is clear in this verse—the goal is “Christ formed in you” and he would pursue his endeavors with the Galatians until it is completed, until the goal is accomplished.

We know this is a process because there is a time element involved: “until”. This means that it applies to us also.

The work of Jesus is a multi-faceted accomplishment of the Lord to restore man to the place of fulfilling God's plan and purpose. It is important that we understand the application of the various aspects of the Lord's work to our lives beginning with the new birth.

When we are born again in Christ we receive a new spirit [*Eze.36:26*]. In the resurrection we receive a new body. However, we never get new souls. Our souls are what Jesus came to save. They must be transformed by the renewing of the mind [*Rom. 12:2*]. What does this mean?

The Way We Were

Our condition before we met Christ is presented to us by Paul

[Ephesians 2:1-3 NASB](#)

- (1) And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,
- (2) in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

- (3) Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

This is a clear picture of us before being born again.

1. DEAD in trespasses and sins
2. WALKED ACCORDING TO course of this world
3. WALKED ACCORDING TO prince of power of air, spirit working disobedience
4. FORMERLY LIVED in lusts of flesh
 1. INDULGING desires of flesh
 2. INDULGING desires of the mind
5. BY NATURE children of wrath

It is clear that the work of the Lord dealt with items 1 and 5: we are no longer dead but have been made alive and we are no longer children of wrath by nature but are now children of God. These two items are completely the work of Jesus without us having to do anything except believe and receive. The other items, however, are a little different. We have to become actively involved in their application to our lives.

There is no longer an obligation to walk or live according to the world. As a matter of fact, we are told by the Scriptures to not love the world or the things of the world and to not be conformed to the world. So, then, this becomes a choice on our part.

We are no longer under obligation to the prince of the power of the air to live in disobedience. We can now learn obedience as Jesus did and walk or live according to the Spirit of God.

We are no longer under obligation to live in the flesh indulging our fleshly desires. We can now put off the old man with his lusts and put on the new man who walks in righteousness.

We should clearly see that while the Lord meets us where we were it is not His intention to leave us there but through the power of His Spirit we are to move on into Him and mature in the Lord. The problem is that there are few left in the Church who are teaching people how to do this, how to embrace the process and change, be transformed, by the renewing of our minds.

Framework of the Inner Man

In Romans Paul uses the Greek word, *phronema*, to describe the way or the process of how we think. We translate that in English as *mind* but it relates more to the intents and purposes of our thinking.

Romans 8:5-8 NASB

- (5) For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.
- (6) For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,
- (7) because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*,

(8) and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

The only new testament passages employing *phronema* is Romans 8:6,7 and 27. In these verses Paul used it four times as he spoke of the difference between the new man of the Spirit and the old man of the flesh. While *phronema* is used only in Romans 8, *phroneo*, the verb relating to it, is used in several passages. *Phroneo* means "to have a certain frame of mind."

The root of these Greek words is where we get *diaphragm* which is the body cavity muscle and framework that holds our organs in place. So, we can think of the phronema as the framework of our thought. It goes beyond what we think and points instead to the way we think—*the framework of our inner man*.

The *phronema* is to our soul what the framework is to a house. As the frame holds up the walls and openings of the finished house, so our *phronema* supports our thoughts, ideas, and feelings.

Mindsets

Before knowing the Lord our minds were heathen. Our mental framework was twisted and bent to think like the world and subject to the influence of our enemy. This was the natural state of our minds at the time that we met the Lord.

As we said earlier, the new birth did not give us new souls. Our minds have to be renewed; that is, the bent and twisted framework of our inner man must be straightened and brought into alignment with the mind of the Lord.

After the new birth we still have minds that think like a heathen. We call this type of person carnal; that is, a born again person with an unrenewed heathen mind. The thinking processes have not changed but still operate as they did before we were born again. Our bent framework is still bent.

Symptoms of a Carnal Mind

Paul recognized the existence of this frame of thought in believers. He acknowledged that the people at Corinth:

1. were enriched by Christ in all utterance and in all knowledge (I Corinthians 1:5);
2. had received the testimony of Christ as it was confirmed by power (1:6 and 2:4);
3. had come to the full operation of the gifts of the Spirit (1:7a).

Based on this we would consider the Corinthians to be mature spiritual people; however Paul said this about them.

1 Corinthians 3:1 NKJV

- (1) And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.

Babes are those who have not grown up, who have not had their minds renewed. They still think as heathens.

The marks of carnality in the Corinthian believers were

1. jealousy, strife, and division (I Corinthians 3:3),
2. behaving like mere men (I Corinthians 3:3)
3. immorality (I Corinthian 5:1),
4. lawsuits among brothers (I Corinthian 6:1).

The reason for all of this came from the carnal frame of mind or mindset residing in so many of them. Notice that one of the marks of being carnal is that they “behave like mere men” which shows that their thinking processes are still like the world.

There are a number of other mindsets spoken of in the Scriptures but we don't have the time in this Teaching Letter to expound upon them. Instead, we will look at the contrast between the carnal mindset of the Corinthians and the mindset that Paul exhibited.

Kingdom Mindset

When Paul was to be put in jail in Rome, the Jewish leaders came to him.

[Acts 28:22 NKJV](#)

(22) But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere."

Think is from the Greek ***phroneo***, the verb form of ***phronema***. We would say "We would like to pick your brain to see how your thoughts are put together. What makes you think, talk, act, and react as you do?"

[Acts 28:23 NASB](#)

(23) When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.

They asked to touch the framework of his thought, his ***phronema***. In response, he explained and testified about the Kingdom of God. In this response Paul revealed his thought processes. Even though he was a prisoner, his frame of mind was that of a king in a kingdom. He thought in line with the Kingdom of God.

Results

Our mindsets are the result of our bent, warped, twisted framework of our inner man, especially the mind. The Lord's answer to this is our sanctification through the process of renewing our minds. This is necessary for us as we mature to become more like Him.

Our mindsets seem natural for us since in many cases we have been developing them all of our lives through our heritage, our culture, our environment, our education, and our own lusts. These warped mindsets open us to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons which particularly concentrate on our minds and thinking processes.

Mindsets can become strongholds or fortresses, which can be occupied by either our self or by a

demonic power. Most mindsets over time will become demonically empowered.

[James 3:14-16 NASB](#)

(14) But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and *so* lie against the truth.

(15) This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

(16) For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

James is speaking of an arrogant or worldly mindset that has a downward progression. It is first earthly, then natural and eventually demonic. This is the normal pattern if the bent, twisted framework is not straightened. Our minds must be renewed. Our way of thinking must change.

The Lord willing, our next issue will deal with the strongholds that arise from our mindsets and how to tear them down. -----Art Nelson

For further study, these lessons are available for free on my website:

[The Foundations of the Inner Man](#)

[The Deformed Inner Man](#)

[Restoration of the Inner Man](#)

[Salvation of the Soul](#)

[Growth of the Inner Man](#)

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