

1. **Introduction:** First, a brief review. Then the next topic which is “Renewing our Mind.”
 - Proper renewing of our mind is essential to developing a “Mind like Christ.”
2. **Review:** Scripture proclaims that people exist for a purpose. The Westminster Shorter Catechism says the chief or overarching purpose is to “*glorify God and enjoy him forever.*”
 - We glorify God by honoring him. We honor Him by believing Him and striving to live as He intends for us to live.
 - The Bible is the only infallible rule of belief and life. It is given to us so that we will know how to live to God’s glory.
 - The Bible principally teaches what we are to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of us.
 - Not everything in life that we believe or do is of equal importance. There are priorities.
 - Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to love God with all our being, and the second is like it – to love our neighbor as ourselves.
 - Jesus said we should seek first God and his kingdom. Jesus Himself is the only entrance into the kingdom. We must be “in Christ” to be in the Kingdom.
 - Thus, our highest priority is to seek our savior, our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Jesus said that if we love Him, we will obey what He commands.
 - Obedience to Christ necessarily requires knowledge, discernment, commitment, plus disciplined action. Conscious actions begin in our mind. A mind conformed to this world’s thinking is a major hindrance to the ability to please God.
 - Without faith, it is impossible to please God. The importance of faith in God is summed up by Paul in Gal 5:6, “...***The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.***”
 - The Holy Spirit energizes our life as a believer. We are to walk in step with Him, cooperating with His gracious work (Gal 5:25).
 - Serving Christ through righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit pleases God.
 - Faith is a confident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of the object of faith. Faith involves our intellect, emotions, and will.
 - Faith is meaningless without a foundation of reasons on which trust can stand (particularly when things go wrong).
 - Christian faith (a part of God’s special grace) is confident trust in God. Natural faith (a part of God’s common grace) is confident trust in people, things, ideas and events.
 - Actions are always carried out in the present, but an action’s outcome always lies in the unknown future.

- Action requires commitment before knowing the outcome of the action. Thus, all action involves risk-taking. Faith enables the risk-taking that is essential to life.
- Faith's validity is based on trustworthiness of faith's object. Strength of faith impacts willingness to act, but success of a resulting action is determined by trustworthiness of faith's object. Only God is totally trustworthy.
- Prudent actions are those actions compatible with the trustworthiness of the object of faith.

3. **Renewing Our Mind**: ***“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Rm 12:1-2).***

- God is the basis of all reality. Everything flows and takes its form from Him (Rm 11:36).
- Our relationship to God is the basis of all other relationships; Our duty to Him is the basis of all other duties. Having been redeemed through Jesus’ willing death on the cross, we should willingly present ourselves to God as a living sacrifice.
- The human mind is both finite and fallen. God’s mind is infinite and impenetrable by finite beings (Is 55:9). We would know nothing about God if He had not chosen to make Himself known. God has revealed himself: In the glory and order of His created universe. In Christ, the incarnate Word. In the God-breathed written Word. In His actions in history.
- The fallen human mind is both unwilling and unable to understand or believe the things of God. No one can properly discern and understand God’s truth unless God renews them, giving spiritual ears to hear, spiritual eyes to see, and a renewed mind to understand.
- What does Paul mean by, ***“do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world”?***
- Conform means to act or to be in agreement or accord, or to come to be of the same form or character. Thus, we are not to act in agreement with or come to be of the same form as the pattern of this world.
- What does “the pattern of this world” mean? In short, it is any anti-God world view or cultural pattern.
- Thus, the general condition to be avoided is worldliness, which means following any anti-God pattern. The suffix “ism” is often used for both good and bad conditions.
- The suffix "ism" forms abstract nouns to denote a practice, system, philosophy, condition, or characteristic. It can signify belief systems (Judaism, Communism, Capitalism, Socialism), actions (criticism), processes (hypnotism), or states of being (barbarism).

- The suffix can also signify an action or process (Plagiarism, criticism, tourism) or a condition or specific quality or condition (Realism, despotism, heroism).
 - Some examples of anti-God patterns that are widespread in today's world include: Secularism, Humanism, Relativism, Materialism.
4. **Secularism**: This umbrella term includes other "ism's," like humanism, relativism, pragmatism, pluralism, hedonism, and materialism. While no one word accurately describes the thinking of people of this age, secularism comes close.
- Secularism provides the mental framework and values of many people of our time.
 - Carl Sagan said, "*The COSMOS is all that is or ever was or ever will be.*" This is the overarching principle of secularism.
 - Christians live in the world and are rightly concerned about the world's affairs. We have legitimate secular concerns.
 - But secularism is much more. It is a philosophy that treats everything as though this age is all there is. It is an all-consuming term.
 - Secularism means thinking in terms bound up entirely in limits of the material universe.
 - It means disregarding the eternal and thinking only of the "now."
 - On the other hand, thinking Christianly means all things are thought of as related, directly or indirectly, to our eternal destiny as a redeemed and chosen child of God.
 - You can think secularly about everything. You can think Christianly about everything.
5. **Humanism**: This world view is often called secular humanism. It makes "man" the measure and focal point for all things, declares the COSMOS to be all there is, declares man to be on his own and therefore responsible for his own living and salvation.
- Proper concern by human beings for human beings is best called humanitarianism to distinguish it from philosophical humanism.
 - Humanism, as a philosophy, is opposed to God and hostile to Christianity.
 - There are 3 prominent public statements of modern humanism – A Humanist Manifesto (1933), Humanist Manifesto II (1973), and The Secularist Humanist Declaration (1980).
 - The 1933 document said, "*Traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to love and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them, is an unproved and outmoded faith. Salvationism, based on mere affirmation, still appears as harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter. Reasonable minds look to other means for survival.*"
6. **Relativism**: If man is the measure and focal point for all things, no area of life has absolutes. Prof. Allan Bloom in his book *The Closing of the American Mind* explored what the belief "truth is relative" means to education.

- For the relativist, learning to sift out error and discover what is true, good, and beautiful is impossible. Such concepts lose meaning for a relativist. One person's error can be another's truth. A "morals morass" and a "values vacuum" are inevitable.
7. **Materialism**: The belief that nothing exists but what is material.
- This belief says, live to please yourself. Get as much pleasure as you can, get as rich as you can, be as healthy as you can, live as long as you can, ...
 - Each of these concepts in materialism are representative of the anti-God "pattern of this world" and are not to be conformed to by the Christian.
8. **Mindlessness**: Another common attribute of people in our time is the inability or at least the unwillingness to look at what is happening around us in an analytical and critical way.
- Christians are never to be that way. We are to be a discerning, thinking people, looking to God's Word for guidance in all things.
9. **Our Minds Matter**: Christian faith, worship, holiness, guidance, evangelism and ministry are all impossible without a proper and energetic use of our minds.
- We must use our minds concerning faith (confident trust in God) – trust in His character, His word, and His promises. To do this we must understand each term.
 - Our minds must be used to grow in holiness. Sanctification is not merely a matter of emotional experience or simply following a formula.
 - Sanctification requires knowing the provision God has supplied in us and then acting upon it. It is knowing that we have been irrevocably changed and cannot go back to being what we were. We are to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and go forward.
 - Our minds are necessary in worship since worship is honoring God for who He is. In order to do that, we must understand something about His attributes – His sovereignty, holiness, mercifulness, wisdom, etc. Similarly, for all the activities of Christian life.
 - A renewed mind is a necessary condition for building the Christ-like character that enables living a life that is pleasing to God.
 - Regeneration and faith come first – a person, who doesn't know and acknowledge the God of reality, can't think clearly about anything.
 - If one is unable to think properly – about people and things, about their purpose, proper use, and their priorities of importance – life seems meaningless. Nothing seems to fit, everything is out of place.
 - Even after regeneration, renewing our mind is hard work requiring diligence and persistence as we cooperate with the gracious work of the Holy Spirit.
10. **Next**: We will continue to consider issues related to thought life.