

Be Renewed in Your Mind



How To Find God's Plan For Your Life (Part 3)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again today sharing with you out of truths that life has taught me. Truths that have made the difference between success and failure in my life and can do the same in yours. First let me say Thank you to those of you who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. Feel free to share with us your personal needs, your problems, your prayer requests.

This week I'm sharing with you on a theme that is of vital importance for each one of us: "How to Find God's Plan for Your Life."

In my two previous talks I've explained the first two steps. The first step: to let God create us anew in Christ. The second step: to present our body to God as a living sacrifice. When we take these two steps, God begins to renew our mind, to change the whole way that we think. Then to our renewed mind He unfolds His will for us in three successive phases: first, as good; second, as acceptable; and third, as perfect. In other words, the further we go in the revelation of the will of God, the better it gets.

Today I'm going to explain to you more fully the nature of the renewed mind. Yesterday we looked at what Paul had to say in Romans 12:1 and 2, and in verse 2 he spoke about being renewed in our mind. Now I'm going to read the next verse, Romans 12:3, for this explains what happens when our mind becomes renewed:

> "For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith." (NAS)

I want to show you today four marks of the renewed mind and, as I go through these marks you'd find it helpful to check on your own mind, try to see how far your mind has been renewed and are there areas perhaps where it still needs to be renewed.

First of all, the renewed mind is not self-centered but God-centered. It's not motivated any longer by those three verbs, "I want, I think, I feel." Instead it's motivated by God's values, God's purposes, God's objectives. These now become more important to us than our own. Let me give you just a few examples of what I mean. In 1 Corinthians 10:31, Paul says:

> "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (NAS)

Notice that last phrase, "do all to the glory of God." That's the motivation of the renewed mind. Its desire and purpose is to do only that which glorifies God. It does not ask, "Will this help me? What will I get out of this?" It asks, "Will God get glory out of this?" And then, again, in Matthew 6:10, in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us to pray this way:

> "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven." (NAS)

When we pray that prayer, we are actually renouncing our own will. We're saying, in effect, "If my will crosses with God's will, then let God's will be done, not mine." That's a mark of the renewed mind. And then the renewed mind associates itself by a decision with the ultimate purpose of God for this earth. What is that? "Thy kingdom come." The renewed mind is always directed toward the establishing of God's kingdom on earth. Its ultimate purpose is God's will and God's kingdom.

The second mark of a renewed mind is that it is not proud or self- seeking. Paul said in that verse we've already quoted in Romans 12:3 that we are not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. I'd like to give you there some words of Jesus to His disciples in Matthew 20:25–28:

> "But Jesus called them to Himself, and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. 'It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.'" (NAS)

That's another distinctive mark of the renewed mind. It's not looking for opportunities to rule but to serve. It's not looking for opportunities to get but to give. It patterns life on the example of Jesus who did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life. Today, in our modern culture, the idea of being a servant is pretty unpopular. Everybody wants to be his own boss. Everybody wants his own rights. Everybody wants to steer his own course and look after his own interests. But that's not the renewed mind. The renewed mind doesn't say, "What can I get?" It says, "What can I give?" It doesn't seek to exalt itself but to humble itself. The great evangelist Moody said this about himself. He said, "When I was a young man, I used to think that God had His gifts arranged out on shelves and that the best gifts were on the top shelves. But," he said, "now I've learned it's the opposite. The best gifts are on the bottom shelves. You don't reach up for them, you stoop down for them."

The third mark of a renewed mind is that it's sober and realistic. Paul says again in Romans 12:3 we are to think so as to have sound judgment. Another translation uses the word "sober." I like that word "sober." The renewed mind is sober and realistic. It avoids two extremes. On the one hand, fantasy and wishful thinking and the other hand self-depreciation and depression.

Those of us who have or have had teen-aged children will quickly recognize that one of the problems of the teenage mind is that it easily indulges in fantasy, daydreaming, wishful thinking. It's hard for a teenager to stay in touch with reality, face the objective facts of life, even objective facts about his or her own person. Now we understand that in teenagers and God, I trust, gives us grace to be patient with them. But we have to recognize that nevertheless its not a mark of maturity. A mature mind does not indulge in fantasy and wishful thinking and the process of daydreaming and imagining things.

On the other hand, another common feature of a teenage mind is that it tends to get easily depressed and often a teenager will isolate himself or herself or shut himself or herself off, sit in a room alone, and go lower and lower in his estimate of himself as a person. And often, there's a kind of moodiness and a depression that results from this. Again, these are not consistent with the renewed mind.

Many, many years I struggled with a problem of depression in my own life and eventually God showed me, amongst other things, that I was in charge of my own mind. I didn't have to give way to negative thoughts. He showed me that I'd have to rediscipline my own mind and change many of my patterns of thinking. And as I did this, I was delivered from that awful problem of depression. So that's the third mark of the renewed mind: sober, realistic.

The fourth mark of the renewed mind is something that's not always easy for us to understand. We go back again to the words of Paul in Romans 12:3. He says we are "to think so as

to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith." The renewed mind stays within the proportion or the measure of God-given faith. It doesn't make unrealistic boasts and claims. It doesn't claim to have a faith that isn't real.

One of the big problems I've encountered in people, as a minister, is that they think they have much more faith than they have. And they say, "I believe God is going to do this and that," and it doesn't happen and then they're cast down and depressed and sometimes they almost blame God. The problem is they went far beyond the proportion of God-given faith.

I'm going to show you in my next talk that there's a reason why God gives us a certain proportion of faith. If we understand God's reasoning and we're in line with His purposes, we'll find that the proportion of faith He's given us is that which we actually need. We don't need more faith than God Himself has allotted to us. He allotted to each one of us the proportion of faith that we need but it's a very common thing with religious people, people who fancy themselves to be spiritual, to try and believe for more than they really can believe. And it leads to many kinds of problems. Sometimes people who could legitimately have medical help go without it because they believe they have faith for healing but they don't get healed. You see, faith is always humble. That's something we need to remember. Habbakuk 2:4, the key verse on justification by faith, says this:

> "Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith." (NAS)

The King James Version says:

> "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." (KJV)

Whichever version we follow, you see that the soul that exalts itself, that's puffed up, that makes claims that are not justified, is not in faith. Faith is humble. Faith does not have a big "I" and a small "god." Faith has a big "GOD" and a small "i," and we have to move within the proportion of God-given faith.

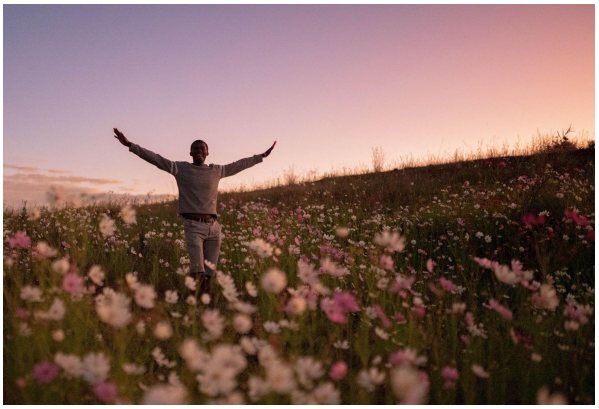
All right. Our time is up for today, but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be explaining the next step in finding God's plan, which is becoming a member in a functioning body.

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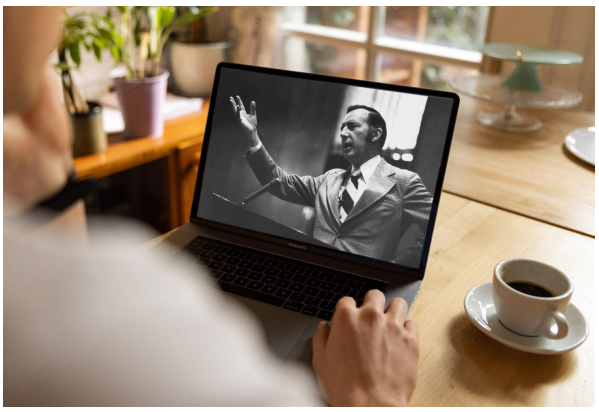
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