

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Lesson 7: The Renewed Mind

Power of Right Thinking

This series concerns genuine life transformation for the believer. It is titled "The Righteousness of God" because that is the goal of the transformation process, i.e., that believers would increasingly reflect the righteousness of God in their lives. Recalling that apart from God our **hearts** are darkened (Rom. 1:21) and our **minds** corrupt (Rom. 1:28), the prior lesson showed that transformation occurs when our hearts and minds are oriented to the things of the Holy Spirit, and especially the Word of God. After Paul finished laying the theological groundwork for salvation in Romans 1-11, he exhorted his readers to (1) offer their bodies as a living sacrifice and (2) be transformed by the renewing of their minds. This exhortation pulls together in a few words the practical way forward in his readers' Christian walks. The goal in today's lesson is to address specific ways in which we renew our minds. This is not just knowing information, or some rules for Christian behavior, but a comprehensive reconstruction.

1. **Paul's Central Exhortation (Rom. 12:1-2):** Pulling together the theological groundwork of the preceding chapters, Paul exhorted his readers to (1) present your bodies as a living sacrifice and (2) not be conformed to the culture but be transformed by the renewing of the mind. Another key passage is Eph. 4:17-24.

— Because we are no longer under the dominion of sin, we can yield ourselves to righteousness (Rom. 6:18-23), but that only happens in conjunction with renewing our minds

— Our minds are not renewed **solely** by having new information or by knowing behavioral standards

— The renewed mind **begins** with the theological content of Romans 1-11, including especially what we called in prior lessons "the predicament" and "the new reality" of who we are in Christ

— We must be a student of the Word and the culture

— **How can we be a good student of the culture?**

— **How might knowing history be important?**

2. **Discernment:** A renewed mind has discernment based on applying the word of God in the classroom of life. Key passages are Hebrews 5:12-14 and those cited below.

— We need **training** in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 12:5-11) and biblical wisdom (e.g., book of Proverbs)

— We need to learn the **foundations** of a Biblical worldview so that we can recognize how prevalent ideas in our culture undermine and are inconsistent with a Biblical worldview.

— We need to understand the **iceberg principle**

3. **Deceptionism:** Satan's methodology for destroying freedom is to (1) attack the **foundations** by working to change the core institutions, ideology and beliefs upon which the nation was founded, including revising history; (2) attack the **structures** by undermining the rule of law on multiple fronts, causing chaos, and overwhelming the system; (3) attack the **people** to incite division and tolerate no rivals; (4) seize **power** by taking over and weaponizing institutions and using ideas / indoctrination and ultimately force to empower the human leaders of the movement. It is imperative we understand we live in an age of unbridled deception (John 8:44; Acts 13:10; 1 John 5:19) that infiltrates every area of life (2 Cor. 10:3-5; Col. 2:4-8) even those claiming to speak for God (Ezek. 13; 1 John 2:18).