

A NEW DAY

~ Pastor Steve Michels ~

II Corinthians 5:17:

Therefore, if any man *be* in Christ, *he* is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.

When a man or woman accepts Jesus as Lord, believing in the heart that God raised him from the dead, he or she is given a new life in Christ, which is of a spiritual nature. This new nature gives that person the ability to read and understand the Word of God.

With this new ability, an individual can know God's will for his or her life. The Book of Romans contains the foundational doctrine God set up, telling us first what that doctrine is, then explaining how and what to do in light of this doctrine. Every day we can choose to practice this doctrine and walk above the things of this world, our thoughts being from above rather than earthly.

However, because God gave us free will to choose, we can sometimes make the wrong choice and fall short. But when this happens, we can plead the precious blood of Jesus Christ from a repentant heart, coming to God with true sorrow to confess those sins. God says that when we agree with Him that something is sin, and are honestly sorrowful, He will cleanse us from all unrighteousness, reinstating us once again into that perfect fellowship with Him.

Every Day Is A New Beginning

Every day we have the choice to do things the world's way by being conformed to it, or God's way by being transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Romans 12:2:

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

It has been observed that once the water in a river passes by, it is gone, never to flow by again. It is always new water. Life is like that. The past days are gone forever, but each new day we are given a new beginning, a new chance to renew our minds, which is an ongoing process.

Philippians 3:13 and 14:

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,
I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

“Those things which are behind” could be our past accomplishments as well as failures. Neither, however, is of any profit to us, since dwelling on the one produces prideful self-reliance, while dwelling on the other brings condemnation. We must instead look ahead toward our goal.

God Himself does this. We read in II Corinthians that “old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.” God overlooked all the wrong, unworthy things in our lives, looking instead at His Son, Jesus Christ, who fulfilled all things on our behalf to make us worthy.

The second verse of Romans 12 speaks of renewing our minds, but we are given the basis for this in the first verse:

Romans 12:1:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

This “reasonable service” is the logical worship that results when we realize just how much God has given and done for us – everything we think, say and do should be offered as true worship of God, which is the presenting of ourselves as living sacrifices. We give Him our all-in-all.

That word “sacrifice” should make us stop and think. Whenever sacrifice is made, priorities are changed. When we allow ourselves to be living sacrifices, we have to be willing to do without certain things that we might be part of something greater.

Having decided to change our priorities in this way, we come to verse 2, which tells us that rather than be conformed to or fashioned after the ways of the world, we are to be transformed by renewing our minds with God’s Word.

“Renewing” is a continuous state – as we saw, yesterday is gone, and every day is a new day for God’s people. We are to deal with the NOW, rather than the past.

Ecclesiastes 7:10:

Say not thou, What is *the cause* that the former days were better than these? for thou does not inquire wisely concerning this.

Evaluating where we are in our lives by making comparison to past accomplishments is never wise. We certainly should not long for “the good old days,” since in our lives with Christ Jesus, everything is new. The possibilities that lay before us today are equal to those that were there yesterday and tomorrow.

King David gives us a great perspective in this regard in the Psalms.

Psalms 143:5:

I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.

If we are going to look back at all, it should not be on our accomplishments or failures, but on what God has done. David spoke here of God's work, and what God did ages ago for men and women He can do today for us.

Not Our Ability, But God's Power In Us

It is all about God, not us, and about acknowledging His love, wisdom, power and might, and how we may walk in His ways. We are not to be the focus.

Romans 12:3:

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

We must trust in God's abilities, and in what He did for us. One of these works was the giving of holy spirit, which God gave equally to all those who believe. Therefore, no man or woman has an advantage over another when it comes to being able to believe what God has set before us. We all have the same gift of holy spirit, the same entrance in unto the Father by way of that spirit, and the same ability to believe the Word.

That is why Paul told the Corinthians to have the same care one for another. Everyone is unique, important, and able to contribute to the good of the whole. God has a vast variety of people to contribute in all these different ways, but it is up to Him – we need only ask. David understood this principle also.

Psalms 143:8:

Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

David presented himself in that light with each new day. What a wonderful lesson! Not our works, but the works of His hands – this lesson is profitable to us because we can trust in Him today, seeking his Word and Will as direction for our walk.

What are some of the ways in which we can contribute to the Body? What are some of the things God has set up for us when we seek His Will?

Romans 12:6:

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;

“Gifts” could also be called “giftings.” They are God-given abilities. “The proportion of faith” is the standard.

Romans 12:7-18 lists the other different ways we give in the Body, all of which started with the gifts and calling of God. But can we do any of these things without God's help? Of course not!

We must acknowledge our dependence on our Father, which can be difficult if we are being conformed to this world and thinking carnally. Sometimes it is necessary to get a new start in our thinking and our hearts.

Psalms 51:10:

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Was this something David could ask and expect to happen? Will God do this for us as well?

Ezekiel 36:26 and 27:

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.

God, who is infinite in His resources, can certainly give us this request, but only God is able to do this.

What better kind of prayer with which to start a new day, a new year? We hold our belief systems in our hearts and out of the heart proceed all the issues of life (Proverbs 4:23).

Our Reasonable Service

Since every day is a new beginning, every day and every year we can love Him more. If we love and serve Him and our Savior more, it stands to reason that we will tend to serve one another more. This kind of service can only come from a loving, pure heart.

I Timothy 1:5:

Now the end [purpose or goal] of the commandment [Word of God] is charity [love] out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned [undisguised].

We do not get this pure heart just because we want one; we get it by going to God and requesting that He create in us a new heart, then putting on the pure thoughts of the Word of God.

If we have this love, it will first be expressed toward our heavenly Father, and for the Lord Jesus Christ. If we love them, we will have love for one another, and for the people of the world.

With an attitude like this, we will not have the erroneous notion that our actions are dependent upon what others do. We cannot demand that someone behave in a certain way in order for us to do what is right. Instead, we are each required by scripture to live by the Word of God, regardless of what others do or do not do. And we certainly do not retaliate when wronged!

Romans 12:19:

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

That is all we need to know – God is keeping score and is the only one good enough to make sound judgments about a person. What do we do instead?

Romans 12:20:

Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

This is referring to that wonderful Oriental custom of warming others by bringing around hot coals in the morning for them to stoke their fires.

In this way we truly become those living sacrifices we read about in Romans 12:1, since being a living sacrifice has everything to do with our thoughts and actions. This is what Romans 12:2 means by “renewing” our minds.

“Renewing” in the Greek means “from upward receive new thoughts.” These are new in quality; every day we need that Word for new thoughts. Then we, not God, prove His good, acceptable and perfect Will. He lays out what is available to all His people, but each of us must decide how to handle each new day.

New Life Vs. The Old Man

To be renewed, then, is the basic, fundamental thing required to live our new lives in Christ. In this way, we continue to be changed, transformed into Christ-like men and women. These are the only two possibilities – to be conformed to the world or be transformed by the Word. Life is very black-and-white, with no grey area in between.

Ephesians 4:21 and 22:

If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus;

That ye put off concerning the former conversation [behavior] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

This “old man” is the old nature which we had from birth.

Ephesians 4:23:

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

Here, “spirit” is referring to the life or center of our minds – the heart and belief system.

Ephesians 4:24:

And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The old man has its roots in carnality and selfishness. Before we knew Christ, or even at those times when we are unrenewed, everything was, or is, about us rather than God. For this reason, we need to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, putting on the new man, which Paul talked about in Romans 12.

With this renewed mind and new heart, new thoughts and desires are generated.

Psalms 37:4:

Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Those desires ought to be new every day, since we are given new directions, guidance and opportunities every day. Truly this is a great transformation in our lives, one that begins with the spirit of God, and which we apply to our hearts and minds when we put Romans 12:2 into practice.

Part of the new desires are new affections, which are those things we enjoy thinking about.

Colossians 3:2 and 3:

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.
For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

“Dead” is referring to the old nature, those thought processes we had before we knew God and became new creatures. God created this new nature in us.

Ephesians 2:10:

For we are his workmanship [masterpiece], created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Those good works are action – doing! God has the plan, knowing how each of us is different from another, and He knows who can best fill each role needed to carry out His plan. We saw some of this in Romans 12:7-18, where God lists the wonderful giftings He presented to the Body.

As we also saw, in order to carry out God’s will, we need the necessary strength, which is not our own, but the Lord’s.

Psalms 103:4 and 5:

Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

Who satisfieth thy mouth with good *things*, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Age is not even important – we can have child-like energy and youthful excitement in our new life in Christ. Further, we can be renewed day by day when we look to the source. Jesus talked about this to the Samaritan woman at the well.

John 4:10 and 11:

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knew the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

He went on to explain that he was that water. In John 6:35 he called himself the bread of life. He also told people that they would have to eat his body and drink his blood, but they did not understand and walked away (John 6:56-66). When he asked his disciples if they would leave, too, Peter said, “Where will we go? You have the words of life” (John 6:68 and 69).

In Christ we receive new life, not just at the moment of the new birth, but day by day because of the living water within us.

John 7:38:

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

This new life carries with it more than just this life on earth.

Colossians 3:3 and 4:

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

What a beautiful backdrop against which we should do everything in our lives. It is all about eternity, about Jesus going to prepare a place for us, getting a new body, the trumpet sounding and us going to dwell with him forever, being with God for eternity!

The Right Response To Truth

After this, Paul continues by telling us what our natural reaction to such truth should be.

Colossians 3:5:

Mortify [blow up, destroy] therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

These things have their roots in that old nature – selfishness, greed and lust.

Colossians 3:10:

And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

We are truly renewed in the knowledge of Him, which knowledge we get from His Word.

Colossians 3:11:

Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all.

Remember, who we were and where we came from do not matter, because we all have equal footing in the family of God, having been given the same measure of spirit. We also have the potential to think the way Jesus Christ did when he was upon the earth.

II Corinthians 4:13 and 14:

We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you.

Looking Toward The Hope

We have seen the basic, foundational truths about who we are and what we are to do. We have been given new life in Christ, which is renewed every day as we change our thinking to line up with the Word, transforming us into those men and women God would have us to be. As His obedient children, walking in His ways, we operate the spirit to benefit the Body in the unique way each of us has, behaving according to the Will of God and not according to what others do.

We can look ahead to the glorious hope, living each day in the present, looking back only to remind ourselves of God's wondrous works, which He will also continue to do on our behalf as we go forward. Our desires and affections are refocused, as are our priorities, as we present ourselves daily as living sacrifices. Our hearts can always be full of excitement and youthful vigor as God strengthens us with His might, encourages us with His promises, and energizes us with the hope of His Son's return.

II Corinthians 4:15 and 16:

For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day.

The “inward man” is the new creation within, that new life in Christ. Does this mean that life will be easy every single day? Paul understood this perhaps better than anyone.

II Corinthians 4:17:

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

Nothing in this life measures up or comes close to that which is to come when Christ returns to gather his church. It is all a matter of perspective. What are we looking at?

II Corinthians 4:18:

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

Before we accepted God’s plan, we were unsaved, having none of the things we have read about as God’s children.

I Corinthians 2:14:

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

To the natural or “old” man, spiritual things are foolish, whereas to those with the spirit of God, it is possible to think and act as Jesus Christ did when he walked upon this earth. This brings us back to renewing our minds.

Philippians 2:5:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

“Mind” in this verse is not just referring to “grey matter,” but to our thoughts. The key word, however, is “let.” It does not say that once we are born again, we will have the mind of Christ automatically. It is a free will choice, and is totally up to us. It is something we determine depending upon the course we want for our lives.

Our Daily Battle

In I Corinthians we find perhaps the greatest passage of scripture to illustrate what it means to renew our minds day by day. Because we are in a battle against a personal adversary, God expresses it in military terms.

II Corinthians 10:3:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

We have bodies, five senses and emotion.

II Corinthians 10:4:

(For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

These weapons are not earthly or according to man's wisdom. The context is war, and weapons are required for victory. No one goes to war with the intention of losing. We need weapons that will enable us to win, and God has provided such. Furthermore, these weapons are mighty!

"Strong holds" is representative of impenetrable walls or a fortress. We all at times have had these, two of which are temptations and bad habits. God tells us how to get rid of such things.

II Corinthians 10:5:

Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

We throw down our erroneous reasonings, such as finding scriptures to substantiate a desire which is contrary to God's will. We may find an appropriate verse, but it will not be in its proper context.

These things do not exalt themselves against our opinions or the opinions of others, but against the knowledge of God. That is why it is so important to put the Word on in our minds daily, since it is the standard against which we measure everything we think, say and do.

"Bringing into captivity" – The objective of any war is to capture the enemy! This is indeed a lofty challenge. It is not the criterion for salvation, but it is the criterion for whether or not we are moment by moment conforming to the world or being transformed according to the Word.

Giving God Our Hearts

Proverbs 23:26:

My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

God is after our hearts, not lip-service. Nothing thrills Him more than us giving Him our hearts. However, we cannot do this independently of our Heavenly Father. We must be humble, do our best, and let Him take care of the rest.

Psalms 119:32-36:

I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.
Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it *unto* the end.

Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.

Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.

Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

God can do this for us when we ask Him.

Psalms 10:17:

LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:

The humble are those who recognize their dependency on the Creator of the heavens and the earth. If we want our hearts prepared for great accomplishments, we must be humble.

Psalms 27:14:

Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

As we have seen, God is the source of our strength. If we ever feel faint in heart, God will strengthen us, filling us once again with a fire in our hearts.

Isaiah 57:15:

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive [excite] the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

The Lord is faithful to establish us, keep us from evil, and direct our hearts as we are obedient.

II Thessalonians 3:1-5:

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you:

And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all *men* have not faith.

But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep *you* from evil.

And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

What better way to have our lives directed than into the love of God, all in light of that patient waiting for Christ.

Accomplishing Our Goals

It is up to us to set our own course, and do it with a specific purpose. Goals are good, and there are five “D”s to accomplishing them.

1. **Decision:** We make the decision by looking at the Word, then looking at our lives and weighing out the pros and cons to figure out what we want. The desire does not come first, but follows decision.
2. **Desire:** Once we have made this decision, God will honor it and give us the desire we need.
3. **Details:** This is the step-by-step information we need to carry out the decision.
4. **Discipline:** No one can discipline us but ourselves.
5. **Deliverance:** This is the desired result, the end goal.

Someone once said, “Vision without action is merely a daydream.”

Discipline, we should note, is the characteristic of a disciple. The apostles whom Jesus chose were first recorded in scripture as disciples. A person is not an apostle first, then a disciple.

Discipline requires an effort and determination. It has been said that anything worth having is worth fighting for. Our goal should be worth fighting for, which is that discipline.

We should never think that spiritual things always come easily, because it often involves a fight. There is often difficult work involved. God utilizes figures of speech and refers to us as athletes, soldiers, and farmers, and with each of these references are certain attributes that pertain to those kinds of people:

- A Biblical athlete trained hard, exercising himself in light of obtaining the garland. Anyone who has been involved in physical training knows it is not easy.
- A soldier endures hardship. He is not playing for a medal, but for life and death. He fights to win.
- A farmer works long, hard hours, and must have great patience to wait for the fruit of his work, the harvest.

Our Help Comes From God

We have looked at all these things with regard to transforming our lives with the truth, rising to greater heights, knowing we require God's help, guidance, strength and abilities in us.

Psalms 27:1:

The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

He concludes this in verse 14:

Psalms 27:14:

Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

That is where our strength comes from. What a great and mighty God we have, Who is so worthy of our praise and trust!

Isaiah 40:8-31:

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift *it* up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong *hand*, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young.

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or *being* his counsellor hath taught him?

With whom took he counsel, and *who* instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?

Behold, the nations *are* as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

All nations before him *are* as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.

He that *is* so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree *that* will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, *that* shall not be moved.

Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof *are* as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:

That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.

To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that *he is* strong in power; not one faileth.

Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding.

He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength.

Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

Here, then, is the whole point – we can live that new life in Christ by utilizing the basic principles in God’s Word, but only with His help. Every day is a new day; our past is gone, just like the water in a river. In Christ Jesus we have new life that is renewed day by day because of the spirit residing within us and the Word of God that is living and real.

Let us continue to grow in our knowledge of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, and in so doing, come to a greater knowledge of God’s will for our lives.

II Peter 1:2-4:

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

According as his divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

It is a new day, and in it we have a new beginning.