



# RENEWING YOUR MIND

BECOME MORE LIKE CHRIST

NEIL T. ANDERSON



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# Introduction

## The Victory Series

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught” (Colossians 2:6–7). Paul’s New Covenant theology is based on who we are “in Christ.” As a believer in Christ, you must first be rooted “in Him” so you can be built up “in Him.” Just as you encounter challenges as you grow physically, you will encounter hurdles as you grow spiritually. The following chart illustrates what obstacles you need to overcome and lessons you need to learn at various stages of growth spiritually, rationally, emotionally, volitionally, and relationally.

### Levels of Conflict

	<b>Level One</b> Rooted in Christ	<b>Level Two</b> Built up in Christ	<b>Level Three</b> Living in Christ
<b>Spiritual</b>	Lack of salvation or assurance (Eph. 2:1–3)	Living according to the flesh (Gal. 5:19–21)	Insensitive to the Spirit’s leading (Heb. 5:11–14)
<b>Rational</b>	Pride and ignorance (1 Cor. 8:1)	Wrong belief or philosophy (Col. 2:8)	Lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:6)
<b>Emotional</b>	Fearful, guilty, and shameful (Matt. 10:26–33; Rom. 3:23)	Angry, anxious, and depressed (Eph. 4:31; 1 Pet. 5:7; 2 Cor. 4:1–18)	Discouraged and sorrowful (Gal. 6:9)

## Introduction

	<b>Level One</b> Rooted in Christ	<b>Level Two</b> Built up in Christ	<b>Level Three</b> Living in Christ
<b>Volitional</b>	Rebellious (1 Tim. 1:9)	Lack of self-control (1 Cor. 3:1–3)	Undisciplined (2 Thess. 3:7, 11)
<b>Relational</b>	Rejected and unloved (1 Pet. 2:4)	Bitter and unforgiving (Col. 3:13)	Selfish (1 Cor. 10:24; Phil. 2:1–5)

This VICTORY SERIES will address these obstacles and hurdles and help you understand what it means to be firmly rooted in Christ, grow in Christ, live free in Christ, and overcome in Christ. The goal of the course is to help you attain greater levels of spiritual growth, as the following diagram illustrates:

### Levels of Growth

	<b>Level One</b> Rooted in Christ	<b>Level Two</b> Built up in Christ	<b>Level Three</b> Living in Christ
<b>Spiritual</b>	Child of God (Rom. 8:16)	Lives according to the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23)	Led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14)
<b>Rational</b>	Knows the truth (John 8:32)	Correctly uses the Bible (2 Tim. 2:15)	Adequate and equipped (2 Tim. 3:16–17)
<b>Emotional</b>	Free (Gal. 5:1)	Joyful, peaceful, and patient (Gal. 5:22)	Contented (Phil. 4:11)
<b>Volitional</b>	Submissive (Rom. 13:1–5)	Self-controlled (Gal. 5:23)	Disciplined (1 Tim. 4:7–8)
<b>Relational</b>	Accepted and forgiven (Rom. 5:8; 15:7)	Forgiving (Eph. 4:32)	Loving and unselfish (Phil. 2:1–5)

*God’s Story for You* and *Your New Identity*, the first two studies in the VICTORY SERIES, focused on the issues that help the believer become firmly rooted in Christ (level one in above chart). If you have completed those studies, then you know the whole gospel, who you are in Christ, and who is your heavenly Father. *Your Foundation in Christ*, the third study in the VICTORY SERIES, and this study, *Renewing Your Mind*, discuss issues that are related to your growth in Christ (level two in the above chart).

## Introduction

As you work through the six sessions in this Bible study, you will learn how to tear down mental strongholds that keep you in bondage, allow Christ to rule in your heart, be led by the Spirit, live under grace, and overcome anger, depression and losses. Growth requires the right foundation, which is your personal identity and security in Christ. The Steps to Freedom in Christ will be mentioned during this study. This booklet can be purchased at any Christian bookstore or from Freedom in Christ Ministries. The Steps to Freedom in Christ is a repentance process that can help you resolve your personal and spiritual conflicts. The theology and application of the Steps is explained in the book *Discipleship Counseling*.

Before starting each daily reading, review the portion of Scripture listed for that day, then complete the questions at the end of each day's reading. These questions have been written to allow you to reflect on the material and apply to your life the ideas presented in the reading. At the end of each study, I have included a quote from a Church father illustrating the continuity of the Christian faith. Featured articles will appear in the text throughout the series, which are for the edification of the reader and not necessarily meant for discussion.

If you are part of a small group, be prepared to share your thoughts and insights with your group. You may also want to set up an accountability partnership with someone in your group to encourage you as you apply what you have learned in each session. For those of you who are leading a small group, there are leader tips at the end of this book that will help you guide your participants through the material.

As with any spiritual discipline, you will be tempted at times not to finish this study. There is a "sure reward" for those who make a "sure commitment." The VICTORY SERIES is far more than an intellectual exercise. The truth will not set you free if you only acknowledge it and discuss it on an intellectual level. For the truth to transform your life, you must believe it personally and allow it to sink deep into your heart. Trust the Holy Spirit to lead you into all truth and enable you to be the person God has created you to be. Decide to live what you have chosen to believe.

Dr. Neil T. Anderson



## SESSION ONE

# Being Transformed

**A**lbert Einstein said, “It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity.” In other words, knowledge does not equate to character, which Paul warned us about: “We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know” (1 Corinthians 8:1–2). When we make knowledge an end in itself, it undermines the very purpose for which it was intended. “But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Timothy 1:5 NASB). Jesus said, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).

The smartphone has changed the way we live. Information about almost everything is now available at our fingertips. The accumulation of knowledge is doubling every two years, but where is the personal transformation? Where has all this information led us?

## Being Transformed

### Daily Readings

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1. Renewing Our Minds	Romans 12:1–8
2. Tearing Down Mental Strongholds	2 Corinthians 10:1–5
3. Letting Christ Rule in Our Hearts	Psalms 119:1–16
4. Choosing the Truth	Philippians 4:4–9
5. Observing God’s Word	Ezra 7:8–10

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# 1

## Renewing Our Minds

Romans 12:1–8

### Key Point

Transformation begins at salvation and continues as we renew our minds.

### Key Verse

*And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

2 Corinthians 3:18

**M**any new believers have never been part of a Christian fellowship before. In a good church the people seem friendly enough, and the people go out of their way to make new believers feel welcome. New believers are initially encouraged by the message that they are new creations in Christ. They would like to believe that, but they wonder why they still struggle with the same old issues, thoughts, and feelings. All new believers have probably wondered that—and they deserve an adequate answer.

Let's start with an illustration. Suppose you played for an abusive soccer coach. He belittled his team and ruled with fear and intimidation. In order to make the team, you had to learn how to cope, succeed, and survive under his authority. Then one day you were traded to a new team, and you got a new coach. The old coach was gone. You were no longer under his authority, and you no longer had any relationship with him.

Your new coach was nothing like your old coach. He was kind and respectful to his team, and he motivated the players out of love. But how do you think you initially related to your new coach and teammates? Probably the same way you had been trained under the old coach. Hopefully, your relationship with your new coach, your behavior on the field, and your attitude toward the game would slowly change as you got to know the new coach and learned how to be a better team player on a well-coached team.

We all started out on the wrong team. We were born physically alive but spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins (see Ephesians 2:1), and we learned how to live independently of God. We had no relationship with God and no knowledge of His ways. So we learned how to cope and tried by our own efforts to succeed in this fallen world. Having no other recourse, we “followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of [darkness] . . . gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath” (Ephesians 2:2–3). As a result, sinful thoughts and desires were deeply ingrained in our minds.

Then one day we became new creations in Christ. We were transferred to a different team and got a new coach, but nobody pushed the “clear” button in our memory banks. All the previous training experiences, memories, and habits were still programmed into our minds, which is why Paul wrote, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2).

We all were conformed to this world. Even as believers, we will remain conformed to this world if we continue believing and living as we always have. So we must make a conscious decision to put aside the lifestyles of this “present evil age” (Galatians 1:4). We must continuously be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The English word “transformation” comes from the Greek word *metamorphosis*, which implies a total change from

## Renewing Our Minds

inside out. The key to this transformation is the mind, which is the control center of our thoughts, attitudes, and actions.

Why do believers still often struggle with many of the issues they had in their former lives before coming to Christ?

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Why are we told to lean not on our own understanding but in all ways acknowledge God?

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How do we move from information to transformation?

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How did you live under the ruler of this world as compared to living under the lordship of Christ?

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## Being Transformed

Should you seek to be transformed in order to be accepted, or have you been accepted and need to be transformed? Explain.

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*“Be transformed by the renewal of your mind” tells us what form is guilty, for every soul once had the form of wickedness. . . . Our mind is renewed by the practice of wisdom and reflection on the Word of God and the spiritual understanding of the law. The more one reads the Scriptures daily and the greater one’s understanding is, the more one is renewed always and every day. I doubt whether a mind which is lazy toward the Holy Scriptures and the exercise of spiritual knowledge can be renewed at all.*

Origen (AD 184–253)