

“Be Transformed by the Renewal of Your Mind”

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Romans 1:18–25 (ESV)

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.¹

Have you ever wondered why people interpret events in very different and very predictable ways? Think about some of the most controversial issues. Last summer, a series of videos were released by the Center for Medical Progress. These videos exposed some of the practices of Planned Parenthood, the largest provider of abortions in America. Some people were appalled by the content of the videos and cried out for justice. Some people were appalled by the videos themselves and said that they were heavily and dishonestly edited to distort the truth. Or take the shooting at Pulse, the gay nightclub in Orlando. Some people noted that the shooter claimed allegiance to ISIS and they said, “See, that’s what Islamic terrorism does!” Others blamed the availability of guns. Some of these people blamed homophobia and religious conservatives.

Why is it that the same event can be interpreted in very different ways? Why do people seem to have very predictable views on politics and ethics?

The answer is that we all have worldviews, and there are only a few major types or families of worldviews that are out there. Everyone has a slightly different perspective on reality, but most people’s views tend to fall into one major worldview or another.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV).

Now, I've used the word "worldview" before without carefully defining it, and since today I'm going to spend more time talking about worldviews, let me be a bit clearer about what a worldview is. One theologian, Kenneth Richard Samples, defines a worldview this way: "In the simplest terms, a worldview may be defined as how one sees life and the world at large. In this manner it can be compared to a pair of glasses."² Of course, he doesn't mean that a worldview is how we physically see the world. He's talking about vision in a metaphorical sense. How we envision and interpret reality is our worldview. For those of us who wear glasses, we see the world through the lens of our glasses. Once you've become accustomed to wearing glasses, you probably don't think about those glasses any more, unless they're dirty or unless the strength of the glasses is no longer sufficient. In a similar way, all of us have a way of looking at the world and interpreting it, whether we think about it or not.

But with glasses, you can always take them off. You can't really do that with worldviews. In that sense, a worldview is more like a set of eyes. You see absolutely everything through them. You don't think much about them unless your eyesight starts to fail. Perhaps a cataract forces you to think about your eyes and you have surgery to improve your eyesight. In the same way, our worldviews can distort and misinterpret reality. But we may not notice that.

Let me give another example of what a worldview is like. A worldview is like a set of ears. We hear everything through our ears, and if our hearing is good, we probably don't think much about it. But what if there's a problem in our hearing? I've had tinnitus, a ringing in the ears for ten years now. I experience a very high frequency that almost constantly rings in my left ear. This first came to my attention almost ten years ago. I noticed it when I was at home and it was very quiet. We didn't have kids then, Kathy had gone to bed, our dogs were just lying around, and there was no television, radio, or computer on. But I could hear the ringing. I assumed it was coming from some external source. I got up and I listened to the appliances. I checked our refrigerator, which was fairly new at the time. I thought there was something making that high-pitched noise in the real world when the truth was that there wasn't a ringing noise outside of me. The ringing noise was coming from within me. So my ears were distorting reality. It wasn't until I became aware of what was going on that I learned the truth.

So it is with our worldview. We may think we know the truth about what is happening in the world, but if our worldview isn't right, then our perception of reality will be distorted. In

² Kenneth Richard Samples, *A World of Difference* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 20.

those examples of vision and hearing, if we have poor vision or poor hearing, we might not see and hear everything that there is to see and hear. If we're colorblind, the true colors will be distorted. If we're blind, we can't see at all. If we're hard of hearing, everything will sound muted, and if we're deaf, we can't hear.

Here's another definition of a worldview. This definition comes from Nancy Pearcey: "A worldview is like a mental map that tells us how to navigate the world effectively."³ Most of us have a good sense of where we are right now, geographically speaking. Perhaps children don't have as strong a sense of geography, but even my young children know they're in West Bridgewater. But what if you were blind folded and dropped off in a city you didn't know? You wouldn't know where you were and where you were supposed to go, unless you had some kind of map. If you were given a map that had errors on it—the street names were all wrong, or the streets didn't go in the same direction on the map that they do in real life—you would have a distorted view of where you were. You wouldn't know where to go or how to get there. Unless you have a right map—whether that's on your phone, or on paper, or just a general picture in your head—you would be lost. So it goes with worldviews. If we have a wrong worldview, we'll be lost.

A worldview is also a story. We all interpret events within the context of a narrative, whether we realize it or not. Every worldview has some kind of creation or origins story. Every worldview has a fall story, an account of how things went wrong. Every worldview has a redemption story, how things are made right.

Now here's my point: The Bible says that we begin life with a false worldview. Because we fail to recognize who God is, we view his world in a very distorted way. The only hope for us is to be reconciled to God, and for him to change the way that we think. The way that we think depends on what we desire. And our thoughts and our desires affect our behavior. In fact, our behavior often shapes our thoughts and desires. We need God to come into our lives and reorient our lives. We need him to give us a new set of glasses and a new map, so that we can have an accurate view of the world. We need to enter into God's story to know how to interpret life.

Today, we're taking a break from the book of Acts. We're going to look at one of Paul's letters, Romans, instead. I wanted to take this one-week detour because it's connected to what I talked about over the last two weeks. I talked about how Paul went to Athens and interacted with

³ Pearcey, *Total Truth*, 23.

people who had very different worldviews than he did. And that's what we Christians experience today. We're surrounded by people who view life in very different ways than we do. If you're not a Christian, I would encourage you consider how you view life and whether the Christian view of life just might be true.

So let's take a look at some of what Paul writes in Romans. Romans is Paul's most developed explanation of what the gospel is. And after an introduction, he starts to explain what our problem is. That's one question any worldview should answer: What's wrong with us? How did we get this way? Paul tells us that what's wrong with us is that we've turned away from God. And when we do that, other things follow.

Let's look carefully at the verses that were read earlier. Let's break it down in smaller sections. I'll first read verses 18-20:

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Paul starts out with some striking words: God's wrath is being revealed. Why does God have wrath? What does that mean? Well, God's wrath isn't some out of control, unreasonable anger. But God is angry over sin. Why? Because it's a corruption of his good creation. Sin hurts people, and when people you love are doing something self-destructive, there's something in you that gets angry. We're told that God has wrath because people are ungodly and unrighteous. They got that way because they suppress the truth. The truth is that there is one God who created the universe for his own purposes. Later in Romans, Paul writes, "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen" (Rom. 11:36). That verse is on the wall in the foyer. All things are from God, through God, and to him. That means he made all things, they are sustained by him, and they are for him. The universe exists to show how great God is. That's why we exist.

Paul says that we all know this truth. We all know there's a God who is eternal and powerful because God has demonstrated that much in the things that he has made. Paul doesn't mean that we can know everything there is to know about God just by examining his creation. We need God to reveal himself to us through his Word in order to know him with any kind of

specificity. But when we observe the sun and the moon, the stars in the sky, mountains, and the ocean, we see God's craftsmanship. When we come to learn about the complexity of biological systems, we understand that there is an intelligent Designer who made all things. When we learn about the vastness of the universe, we realize there is an incredibly powerful Being who made it and sustains it. We all know that, but we tend to suppress it because we are unrighteous. We don't do what is right. We don't *want* to do what is right. Our problem is that we don't regard God as the ultimate thing. We make something else—something he has made—the object of our worship.

That's what Paul says in the next few verses. Let's read verses 21-23:

²¹For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

Here Paul says that although we all knew the truth about God, we don't honor him. We don't worship him. And we're not thankful. Instead of seeing the beauty of a sunrise or a sunset and saying, "Thank you, God," people invented sun gods. Instead of thanking God for food and drink, people fabricated gods of feasts and wine. Today, instead of thanking God for our prosperity, we make a god out of money. We tend to think that money is the ultimate good.

When we fail to see God behind everything, we become futile in our thinking. We don't think right. And our hearts become foolish and darkened. That means we don't desire the right things. Our desires, our wants, are disordered. We think we're wise, but we're really fools. We exchange the glory of God for idols. That's what Paul means when he writes, "images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things." Actually, what Paul is doing is referring back to Genesis 1, the beginning of the Bible. When God made human beings, he said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (Gen. 1:26). People were made to reflect who God is, to be mirrors that reflect his greatness throughout the world. And they were made in his likeness, to be his obedient, loving children. Not only that, but they were made to rule over everything else on the earth. They were supposed to rule the world by coming under God's rule. And they would do that by obeying God's Word.

But Paul says everything has become backwards. Now, instead of worshiping God and ruling over everything else, they are worshiping everything but God. And this is a foolish thing to do.

I said this two weeks ago, but it bears repeating. If an atheist hears this, he may object. He may say, “I don’t worship anything!” But the fact is that all of us make something ultimate in our lives. We either love something or someone in an ultimate way, so that our lives are defined by that something or someone, or we think something is ultimate. For some, it may be money. For others, it may be an ideology, or a philosophy. Everyone has something at the center of their lives. That something is functionally their god.

A few years ago, I read a quote from a writer named David Foster Wallace. The quote comes from a commencement speech he gave at Kenyon College, a liberal arts school in Ohio. He said, “[I]n the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship.”⁴ Kenyon College is not a Christian school, and as far as I know David Foster Wallace wasn’t a believer. But he was perceptive enough to know that everyone worships something. We were made to worship, so we are going to worship something. That’s going to happen, whether we think about it or call it “worship” or not.

Why is it foolish to worship something other than God? The simple answer is that nothing else is worthy of worship. Nothing else and no one else is greater than God. If we reject the true God, we get a narrower view of life. We reduce reality to something smaller than it actually is. And when we do that, our worldview can’t account for reality.

This is what Nancy Pearcey says about what happens: “If reductionism is like trying to stuff all of reality into a box, we could say the problem is that the box is always too small. Idols deify some part of the created order. But no matter which part they choose, a *part* is always too limited to explain the *whole*.”⁵ When people reject the true God, they cut out important things in life. That’s a foolish thing to do.

Last week, I talked about Darwinism, the idea that all of life is the result of a blind, purposeless process of evolution. This worldview cuts God out of the picture. But when we do that, we cut out the very reason we were created. That means people are cut off from the only

⁴ David Foster Wallace, *This Is Water* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2009), 98-101.

⁵ Nancy Pearcey, *Finding Truth: Five Principles for Unmasking Atheism, Secularism, and Other God Substitutes* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2015), 103.

hope they have in this life and the next. And we cut out the very idea that human beings are made in the image of God. That doesn't elevate the value of human life. It actually reduces the value of life. If we are taught that we are animals, then we should not be surprised when we treat each other as animals.

There's an atheist and a Darwinist named Peter Singer, who is a professor of ethics at Princeton University. He has written a number of books describing his various beliefs. He's a vegetarian, which is fine. But he's more than that; he's a champion of animal rights. And he doesn't think human lives are worth more than animals lives. In fact, he believes that parents of infants should have up to twenty-one days after the child's birth to decide if that child should live.⁶ Last year, he was interviewed by a Swiss paper and he said this:

Why should all members of the species homo sapiens have a right to life, whereas other species do not? This idea is merely a remnant of our religious legacy. For centuries, we have been told that man was created in the image of God, that God granted us dominion over the animals and that we have an immortal soul.⁷

Here is a man who has rejected the Christian worldview. He's been consistent with a worldview that says there is no God. He believes human lives are no more special than animal lives. And he's teaching at an Ivy League school.

Here's another way that cutting God out of the picture is foolish. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the father of psychoanalysis, was an atheist. He believed that religion was an illusion. This is what he writes about religious teachings:

They are illusions, fulfilments of the oldest, strongest and most urgent wishes of mankind. The secret of their strength lies in the strength of those wishes. . . . The terrifying impression of helplessness in childhood aroused the need for protection—for protection through love—which was provided by the father; and the recognition that this helplessness lasts throughout life made it necessary to cling to the existence of a father, but this time a more powerful one. Thus the benevolent rule of a divine Providence allays our fear of the dangers of life.⁸

⁶ Mary Poplin, *Is Reality Secular? Testing the Assumptions of Four Worldviews* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2014), 94. See also Mark Oppenheimer, "Who Lives? Who Dies? The Utility of Peter Singer," *Christian Century*, July 3-10, 2002: 24-29, available at <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=2659>.

⁷ Michael Cook, "Peter Singer 'Disinvited' from German Philosophy Festival," *BioEdge*, June 20, 2015, <http://www.bioedge.org/bioethics/peter-singer-disinvited-from-german-philosophy-festival/11491> (accessed July 16, 2016).

⁸ Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 47-48, quoted in Anthony Kenney, *A New History of Western Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 993.

In other words, Freud thought that people made up the idea of God because they wanted a cosmic Daddy in the sky to save them. I don't know if he considered whether atheists don't believe in God because they have a wish not to have such a father. But he believed that the way forward was a scientific and psychological approach to mental health.

Here's my question: In the 115 years or so of psychoanalysis, are we mentally healthier? My answer is no. Now, I don't think it's always wrong to seek therapy. There may be a time and place for certain medications that help deal with depression or anxiety. But despite the prevalence of therapy and medicine, we see many signs of mental unhealth all around us. We are a society that is overmedicated and unhappy. The suicide rate has increased. In 2014, it was at a 30-year high. In 1999, there were 29,199 suicides. In 2014, there were 42,773.⁹ The reason why we're mentally unhealthy is because we were made to have a relationship with God. Apart from that, we will find no ultimate happiness and meaning. As Augustine prays to God in his *Confessions*, "You stir men to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."¹⁰ The only cure for the restless heart is a relationship with God.

Any other object of worship will demand and demand and demand, but it will not give. If you worship money, you'll never have enough, and it will require great effort—and perhaps even immoral actions—to acquire it. If you fail to obey the rules of money—you lose it in an investment, or you lose your source of income, or you spend it foolishly—and the god of money will not forgive you. But there is a God who forgives us when we fail.

Now let's read what Paul writes in verses 24 and 25:

²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

First, we should consider what he says in verse 25: People exchange the truth about God for a lie and worshiped something in creation instead of the Creator. In fact, in the Greek, it says, "They exchanged the truth about God for *the* lie." What lie does Paul have in mind? Perhaps he means the first lie. If we go back to Genesis, we might recall the third chapter, when Eve is tempted by

⁹ Sabrina Tavernise, "U.S. Suicide Rate Surges to a 30-Year High," *New York Times*, April 22, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/22/health/us-suicide-rate-surges-to-a-30-year-high.html?_r=0 (accessed July 16, 2016).

¹⁰ Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3.

the serpent, who is the embodiment of Satan. What does Satan say to Eve? First, he gets her to doubt what God said about the forbidden fruit. Eve says that if they eat the forbidden fruit, they will die. Then, Satan says, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God” (Gen. 3:4-5). Eve then listened to Satan instead of God. So the lie is that God is wrong, or God has bad intentions. The lie is that we can make up the rules for ourselves. In a sense, the lie is to remove God from his throne. The lie is that we can be gods.

Biblical Christianity teaches that there is God and then there is his creation. The two things shouldn't be confused. One theologian, Peter Jones, calls this “Two-ism.”¹¹ The fact that God is the Creator means he has set limits for us. He has given us roles. He makes distinctions between men and women, leaders and followers, parents and children, and so on. False worldviews tend either to remove God from the picture, or to make the creation or something in the creation equivalent to God. Peter Jones calls the false worldview “One-ism.” In atheism, there is only the natural order. There is no God, no soul, no miracles, and no afterlife. Everything is matter. So everything that exists is one thing. In pantheism, everything is god. In other forms of idolatry, a false god is something within the universe, which makes that god different in degree, but not in kind, from anything else. When we collapse the reality of Two-ism into One-ism, we start to fail to make distinctions. We forget God's intentions for his Creation. We ignore God's intelligent design and we try to come up with our own plans. We think we're gods. We think men and women are not just equal in worth, but are the same and are interchangeable.

When that happens, God gives us over to our desires. He basically says, “You don't want me? You don't want to do things my way? Fine. Let's show that goes.” And he lets people fall into all kinds of self-destructive habits.

In Romans 1, we see a number of sins that Paul mentions. In verses 26 and 27, he writes,

²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; ²⁷ and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

Despite the best efforts of revisionist theologians, this passage means what it seems to mean. Paul is saying that homosexuality is an unnatural, sinful practice. Instead of men and women

¹¹ Peter Jones, *One or Two: Seeing a World of Difference* (Escondido, CA: Main Entry Editions, 2010).

joining in marriage, women engage in sexual relations that are contrary to God's design, and men do the same. They fail to make the distinction between man and woman. They fail to acknowledge God's ways.

The reason why Paul highlights sexuality is because in God's design, the relationship between a man and woman in marriage is supposed to be a picture of God's relationship with his people. It's a hetero relationship: It's not God and God, or people and people. Rather, it's God and people, two different parties coming together. So the rejection of God's design for sexuality and marriage is a serious matter. And I think the same can be said for transgenderism.

I want to hasten to add that we should be kind, loving, and compassionate to people who have same sex attraction. Some people have same sex desires that they don't want. Other people experience what is called gender dysphoria. They believe they are male when they are biologically female, or they believe they are female when they are biologically male. These desires are a result of sin in the world. They are a result of our disordered desires. Those who experience such desires need Jesus. But so do all of us.

If we continue to look at the sins Paul mentions, we see that all of us have turned away from God's design. Here are verses 28-32:

²⁸ And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹ foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³² Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

Who of us hasn't coveted, or had malicious thoughts? Who hasn't envied? Who hasn't been involved in a verbal or physical fight? Which one of us hasn't gossiped or been heartless? ("Oh, I don't have a problem with gossip. But let me tell you who does . . .") Paul says that all of us are in the same position. Because we turned from God, he gave us over to a debased mind. Instead of living in light of the truth, we went after a lie. We thought doing things our way instead of God's way would bring us happiness. But our way leads to unrighteousness. Our way leads to death. So let's not think that we are so much better than "those people."

Paul tells us that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). That's bad news. But Paul doesn't leave things there. He gives us good news. He says that God came to

us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. God came to us because we can't find our way to him. God became man and lived a perfect life of righteousness. Jesus was the only one who never sinned or fell short of the glory of God. And though he was innocent, he died for everyone who ever turns to him and puts their trust in him and follows him.

This is what Paul writes in Romans 5:6-11:

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.
⁷For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—⁸but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.⁹Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.¹⁰For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
¹¹More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Jesus died for the ungodly. He died in our place so that God could punish our sin. God is a perfect judge. He can't just let sin go. Jesus experienced the wrath of God for all who turn to him. He experienced hell on earth when he died on the cross so we don't have to experience hell forever. We are justified by his blood. That means we're declared righteous even though we're actually unrighteous. His death paid for our sins and his perfect moral status is credited to us. He reconciled us to God. And we can be confident that when we die, we will be saved finally and ultimately because we are united to him.

Jesus is the answer to the human predicament. And so is the Holy Spirit. In chapter 8, Paul tells us that the Spirit of God—the third Person of the Trinity—is given to those who are united to Jesus. The Spirit of God gives us new life. He changes us from the inside out. He “helps us in our weakness” (v. 26). God doesn't just wipe away our sins and credit us a righteousness we don't actually have ourselves. He gives us the power to live rightly.

After Paul explains this good news, he gets to chapter 12. At the beginning of chapter 12, he says that in light of the fact that God has rescued us from sin, death, and condemnation, we should worship him with our whole lives. Here are the first two verses of Romans 12:

¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

In Romans 1, Paul tells us that people turn away from God. They refuse to worship him (v. 21). Because of that, their thinking is futile (v. 21) and God gives them over to a debased mind (v. 28) to do with their bodies what shouldn't be done (vv. 24, 26-31). Here, we see a reversal of that condition. Now, Paul says that the only reasonable thing to do in light of God's salvation is to present our bodies as living sacrifices. We don't have to pay for our own sins. Our worship isn't a sacrifice in that sense. But Jesus gave his body in death so that we can offer our bodies to God in life. We offer up who we are—everything—to God. We worship God rightly by offering ourselves. Don't just give God an hour or two on Sundays and a few dollars in the offering plate. Give him all your hours and put yourselves in the offering plate. (Okay, don't actually try that. Someone might get hurt. But you understand what I mean.) That doesn't mean all our time is spent in church or doing "religious things." That doesn't mean all our money goes to the church. But it means we must honor God by the way we live, all the time. When we live life out of thanksgiving for what God has done for us, when we obey him because we know God loves us and his design for our lives is good, then we're honoring God. That can be done when we read the Bible or enjoy a nice meal. Working and resting honor God's design for our lives.

Instead of having futile and debased minds, we're supposed to be renewed by the transforming of our minds. That means that we must not be conformed to the ways of the world. The world rejects God and his ways. The world seems to be going insane now. We have to make sure we don't go the way of the world. We need to be careful about the ways that we think. We also need to be careful about our habits and our hearts. All these things are connected. We tend to let our desires shape our habits and our thoughts. What is it that you want? Do you want God or someone or something else? What do you spend your time doing? If you spend a lot of time watching TV or on your phone, that is shaping you in some way. Those desires and those habits will tend to shape how you think.

We need to guard our hearts, our habits, and our thoughts. The best ways to do that aren't all that new. We need to engage in the spiritual disciplines. We need to read the Bible. We need to pray. We need to worship together. We can sing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs when we're together or when we're alone. We should serve in the church and serve each other. When we do these things, these habits are shaping and forming us.

I think one of the best ways to be transformed by the renewal of our minds is to read. I have written an article on reading that you can find in your bulletin. You can also find it on our

website.¹² Reading helps us to think more deeply and more clearly. Besides reading the Bible, I would encourage us all to read about how we can apply biblical principles to all of life. The Bible doesn't just speak to "religious issues." It should form the way we think about family, money, hobbies, politics, and everything else. We should see all of life through a biblical worldview. That means that we should look at everything with reference to God. What does God have to do with the way we spend our time and money? What does God have to do with the way we live with our families? What does God have to do with television and movies and technology and the way we vote?

If you don't feed your mind with God's Word, you won't be transformed. If you don't spend time learning how to apply all of God's Word to all of life, you won't be equipped. And if you don't come to understand the difference between the Christian worldview and other, false worldviews, you won't be armed against the lies that besiege us. The unread, empty mind is an unarmed mind, susceptible to the enemy's attack.

Let us desire rightly, think rightly, and act rightly. Let us be transformed by the renewal of our minds.

¹² "The Case for Reading: Why Christians Should Be Readers," <http://wbcommunity.org/the-case-for-reading>.