

Changed into the image of Christ #2 Changed to think like Christ

Last week we started talking about being changed into the image of Christ.

I believe in Christ but am I becoming like Christ?

We focused on 2 Cor. 3:18 and we noticed that:

- Change comes from God
- Change comes from God gradually
- Change comes from God's word

We noticed that change is possible! God can change us and transform us into the image of His Son.

Today, I want to focus on WHERE and HOW that change begins.

- How do we start to become like Christ?
- How do we begin to look like Him?

The Bible tells us that transformation begins in the mind...when we start to THINK like Christ...then we start to BECOME like Him.

Prov. 23:7

For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he.

Luke 6:45

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Prov. 27:19

As in water face *reflects* face,
So a man's heart *reveals* the man.

Our mind is an amazing thing...it controls our actions, our habits, our character...our mind tells every organ in our body how to function.

Did you know that our mind can be changed...it can be altered...it can actually be "re-wired"!

Let me talk about the brain for a minute before I get into scriptures that will guide our study:

This fascinates me and especially since my stroke 3 years ago...I have been focused on brain health and how the brain works.

When you have a stroke...and this happens with other events too...but we can lose some brain function, they call it deficiencies...(age can also affect brain function).

Scientists have found that our brains are not just fixed objects that can be damaged but never repaired...they found that our brain can be repaired and even changed.

Your brain has 86 billion neurons (nerve cell)...these neurons are wired together, and this forms WHO WE ARE (habits, speech, character, etc).

But scientists have discovered a neuroplasticity in our brain function.

This means our brains are living and active...always moving...it also means that we can change the way our mind works.

When we do something different or start a new habit(if you brush your teeth with your right hand...try your left hand)...we are actually making these neurons fire in a different way and wire themselves together.

<https://maidenlanemedical.storymd.com/story/OoYQ8LBtXo-7-reasons-why-your-brain-is-the-most-amazing-thing-in-existence>

We can actually rewire our brains!

Dr. Kevin Elko says this, “Neurons that fire together wire together. Your brain is a bunch of neurons, little pieces of matter that send messages to each other. And the messages you send begin to wire your brain in a certain way. What we think about and see in our minds eye begins to wire the brain to see it, too. If we visualize an outcome over and over, it begins to re-wire our brain to see it and believe it will happen.”

This can have a profound effect on our minds and consequently our lives. We can become so much more than we are right now. We can become what we see! (Believing in Seeing, Dr. Kevin Elko, pg. 27)

Dr. Elko tells a story about a study done at Cleveland Clinic. They took ordinary people...half of them went to the gym to do arm and finger exercises. The other half were told to only visualize the workout in their minds.

At the end of the study:The ones that went to the gym increased their strength by 30 percent. The ones that visualized increased their arm strength by 15 percent and their hand strength increased by 35 percent. They never set foot in a gym, never lifted a weight, yet they grew stronger because they could see themselves grow stronger (Elko, pg. 26).

If our mind/brain can help our muscles grow just by thinking about it...we can also grow spiritually just by thinking spiritual thoughts!

Phil. 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

When we think on these things...we are actually re-wiring our brains!! We are changing our mind to be what God wants us to be.

And a change of mind will lead to a change in action, a change in character, a change in direction, a change in every area of life!!

- But it takes visualizing who we want to be
- It takes building our spiritual muscles through thought and meditation, prayer, and study.
- It takes rewiring those neurons in our brain to change our habits so that we can think like Christ!

When the Sergeant put that bucket on the head of Gommer Pile...he knew exactly what he was doing!

Gommer told Andy...you know the Sargeant was right...I am thinking better...I'm just thinking and thinking...here, take a think under there!!

No, we don't need to sit with a bucket on our head...but we do need to sit still and think about who we want to become and how we are going to get there!!

Ps. 46:10

Be still, and know that I *am* God;

Col. 3:2

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Isa. 26:3

You will keep *him* in perfect peace,
Whose mind is stayed on You,

I don't know if you can really build muscle just by thinking about it (I'm going to sit in my recliner and see) if Rachel says, you need to get up...I'll just say, "I'm exercising"

I don't know if that really works...but I do know that I can change who I am and what I am by

- thinking about God
- thinking about His promises
- thinking about His commandments
- thinking about His goodness, love, mercy and compassion.

I Cor. 2:16

For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

We have the mind of Christ in our hands!!

We need to mediate and examine the mind of Christ...and then work on becoming like Him.

What does the Bible tell us about the mind of Christ? If we can learn the mind of Christ...then we can reshape our mind to be changed into His image.

I. THE MIND OF CHRIST WAS FILLED WITH HUMILITY

Phil. 2:5-8

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.

Christ had every right to keep His position in heaven...He had every right to stay in heaven and NOT come to earth.

But because He was filled with humility...he made the decision to leave heaven...and put on flesh and to give His life for us on the cross.

When I think of the mind of Christ...I think of a man that was filled with humility.

- A man that washed feet
- A man that talked to children
- A man that touched lepers
- And ate with sinners

Jesus put others ahead of Himself!

That's the mind of Christ...to look out for the needs of other people.

Phil. 2:3,4

in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

I love the practical definition of humility:

*"Humility is not thinking less of yourself.
It is thinking of yourself less."*

If we want to change into the image of Christ, then we need to train our brains to think less of self and more about others.

We need to think about the needs of the sick, lonely, hurting, the discouraged.

Matt. 9:36

But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

There is an entire world in front of us that we can help and comfort and teach...but we've got to get ourselves out of the way before we will see them!

Phil. 2:5-8

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

What was the mind of Christ? The mind of Christ was filled with humility!

II. THE MIND OF CHRIST WAS FILLED WITH OBEDIENCE

When Jesus was left behind in Jerusalem (12 years old) and they found him in the temple...

Luke 2:51

Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them.

Not only was he obedient to his mom and dad on earth...He was also obedient to His Father in heaven.

John 14:31

but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.

Jesus prayed this 3 times in Gethsemane...

Luke 22:42

not my will, but yours, be done.

John 8:29

for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.

Jesus was filled with obedience to His heavenly Father.

- He didn't grumble and complain
- He didn't ask why

He fully submitted to the father in heaven...the mind of Christ was to do everything the Father commanded.

If we want to have the mind of Christ...then we need to fully submit to our Father in heaven.

When we are submissive and obedient to the word of God...then we are becoming like Christ!!

Heb. 5:9

And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him

John 14:15

If you love me, you will keep my commandments

- The mind of Christ submitted to the Father.
- The mind of Christ obeyed God's will

If we are going to be changed into his image, then we must be willing to deny ourselves and follow Him through obedience to His will.

So many other points that could be added to this lesson...the mind of Christ was filled with purity, compassion, kindness, forgiveness, service.

But I want to close with this point...

III. THE MIND OF CHRIST WAS FILLED WITH SCRIPTURE

Of course, Jesus was the Word—John 1:1

He used scripture to defeat Satan in Matt. 4....when satan tempted, Jesus fought him with scripture saying 3 times “it is written”

Jesus used the OT to teach others:

Matt. 5 “you have heard it said, but I say”

Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy, Leviticus, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Psalms and Proverbs

The life of Jesus was filled with a knowledge of the word of God!!

John 17:17

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

If we are going to change the way we think and the way our brain works...if we are going to re-wire our brain...we need to be thinking, meditating and studying the word of God!

Col. 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,

Ps. 119:11

Your word I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.

If we are going to be changed into the image of Christ...our mind/lives must be surrounded and filled with God's word!!

When the word of God dwells in our hearts and minds...then we will start to conform to the image of the Son of God.

The mind of Christ was filled

- with humility
- with obedience
- with scripture

Our minds are constantly being filled by something—news, entertainment, social media, work, worry, etc!

But God wants us to be different, God wants us to have the mind of Christ—Phil. 2:5

- I want to think like He did
- For my mind to be filled with the things His mind was filled with
- To be able to think on things that are pure, lovely and holy

Yes, I believe in Christ...but I want my mind to become like the mind of Christ!

Rom. 12:2

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

God says, I don't want you to be like the world...I want you to be like my Son!

That process of being conformed into the image of Christ begins in our minds!!