

“Renewed Joy for Living”

Series part1

January 5, 2025

Scripture Text: Romans 12:2 (NKJV) *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.*

VERSE 2 Deals with the metaphysical aspect of who we are – our minds.

In Paul’s day, the Jews focused all their attention on a person's ethical and public behavior, which should be admired in many ways. Many had achieved a lifestyle of righteousness from outward works but not from the heart.

However, Jesus is not satisfied with mere external, physical obedience as His followers. He has called us to have clean hearts and clean hands.

As good parents, we raise our children to be respectful, honest and have boundaries. The last thing a parent wants is to be embarrassed by the actions and behavior of a member of their immediate family.

The world's systems pressure us to conform to their way of thinking to control human behavior. You can get a quick fix... *“You don’t have to pray, read the Bible, and seek the Lord... just ask Seri!”* **You don’t need a relationship with a non-audible God! Seri,** “Should I forgive Mr. Crabapple, who didn’t say, he was sorry for closing the door in my face?”

As Children of God, we stand out because of the indwelling person of the Holy Spirit who enables us to be like Christ and produce His fruit... love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things, there is no law. {**Galatians 5:22-23**}.

The ultimate goal of life is to be like Jesus Christ in character and deed. “Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust (Adam), we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven (Jesus).” **1 Corinthians 15:49**

The Holy Spirit prompts us daily to renew our minds by reading the Word of God. We can choose to obey or not! Sin and righteousness are the two alternatives that begin in the mind. We can conform to this world, miss God’s will for our lives, or be transformed, joyfully allowing the Word to order our steps. When we allow the Word and the Holy Spirit to transform our lives... we stand out as a reflection of Jesus Christ. We bring light

and illumination to a world that continues to conceal the truth in a cloak of darkness as alternative truth.

We must never forget Jesus's redemptive work of canceling our debt through His death, burial, resurrection, and the promise of His return.

Titus 3: 3-5 (NKJV) For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. **4.** But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, **5.** not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

VERSE 3 *For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.*

Discontent and hatred toward others' offenses would enrage us and cause us to turn from mercy and compassion to vengeance. We all sinned and were enemies of God who deserved a death sentence, but we justified our actions to be excused. Someone or something else always causes us to act out of character, and we don't want to be accountable for our sinful actions. Unknowingly, we are earning wages that produce death and not life. **Romans 6:23** *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

There is great joy in the forgiveness of our sins when Jesus cancels our debt forever through His death, burial, resurrection, and imminent return!

VERSE 4 *But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,*

When we experience God's grace in the person of Jesus Christ, our life's paradigm trajectory changes with a heavenly view. Instead of living under guilt, shame, and condemnation with eternal separation from God as our destiny, we live to be with Christ in Heaven.

It was a game-changer when I repented for my sins and asked the Lord to come into my heart. It was the first time that I felt loved and accepted after dealing with the pain of rejection. I was overcome with joy, which continues to flood my soul when I think about the goodness of God extended to me!

VERSE 5 *not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,*

It wasn't hard to recognize that I could not do enough good deeds in a lifetime to be good enough to earn a place in heaven. That Sunday morning in the church at the age of 20, as I responded to the Holy Spirit's prompting, I knew that my life would be forever changed for good. Good works do not save us; we are saved for good works.

The Holy Spirit cleansed me from all my sins by sealing me as God's property.

Ephesians 1:13-14 says, *“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.”*

The sealing is a past action that occurs once and remains with us for eternity.

The sealing is a guarantee of our faith.

The sealing means that we can't lose our salvation.

The sealing is a deposit that guarantees our inheritance with Christ.

The sealing is a sign of established ownership... God's property, no trespassing.

Applications:

When our focus is on the Lord's Word, it clears our path.

Time spent in His presence in prayer increases our joy for living.