

Sermon 6: Renewing in the Truth

Since there is abundant evidence the many Christians are captive to the culture, how to we free ourselves and renew our minds in the truth? This sermon focuses on some practical ways to live free of cultural captivity. Our culture bombards us with false ideas. Satan is working to deceive us. That is why it is so important to embrace the truth of Scripture and renew our minds.

How can we develop our defenses against his constant attacks so that we can focus our attention of sharing the eternal good news with others? This sermon should challenge the congregation to live for Christ by understanding that we must think and act differently from the world.

Fast Facts

Here are some statistical insights from the book, *Cultural Captives*. These statistics are from the survey the Barna Group took for Probe Ministries examining, among other things, the perceived source of beliefs of born-again, young adults in America.

- A significant change is apparent in the stated beliefs of American teenagers versus those of 18- to 29-year-old emerging adults. Much of the change is a result of no longer living in their parents' household; of being in a position to decide what is important for them.
- However, most born-again emerging adults (~ 70% of them) state that their parents/families were the single most important factor in establishing their current religious beliefs. Unfortunately, most of them report beliefs that are not consistent with the clear teaching of Scripture.
- Among born-again, emerging adults, college has an interesting impact on their beliefs. A college graduate influenced by sources other than their family is 33% more likely to be a regular church attender with a biblical worldview than a college graduate whose primary influence is their family and 110% more likely than a young adult who did not graduate from college.



A renewed mind
transforms our life and
provides discernment.
We should feed on
God's Word and apply
it so we can live
transformed lives.



Sermon Videos:

Don't Let Me Go

vimeo.com/probe/dontletmego

Suggested Sermon Ideas

Renewing in the Truth

I. Introduction

A. Spiritual transformation

1. God wants to transform us.
2. He does this through a renewed mind (Romans 12:1-2).

B. Spiritual life

1. No doubt you have had times when you have given your sins (anger, greed, lust) to the Lord and found that they returned.
2. Why do we seem to battle temptation and sin?
3. Can the Bible and the power of the Holy Spirit help us to be victorious in this spiritual battle?
4. We need to know how to be transformed by God's Word.

II. Renewed Mind Transforms Life (Romans 12:1-2)

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:1-2

A. What does transformed mean?

1. The Greek word is “metamorphoo” which means to change into another form. It is the root word from what we get “metamorphosis.”
2. God does not want us to remain spiritual caterpillars but to become spiritual butterflies.
3. The Bible uses the same Greek word to describe what happened to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:12).
4. Paul says that we become new creatures. That is how he describes spiritual transformation in his letter to the Corinthians.

“Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold, new things have come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

B. How does spiritual transformed take place?

1. The first step is to learn from God's Word
2. There are thousands of self-help books on the market, but only the Bible can truly change you from the inside out.
3. Our mind cannot be renewed on a starvation diet where we rarely read God's Word.
4. Our mind cannot be renewed on a junk-food diet where we fill our minds with immoral images from television or the movies.

5. We should feast on God's Word.
6. We should not only read God's Word, but we should also meditate on it.

“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”
Joshua 1:8

7. Use the process of biblical study and biblical meditation to bring God's principles into your life.
8. Declare war on unbiblical and immoral thoughts that come into your mind.

“Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.” Colossians 3:2

C. The principle of replacement

1. This involves a two-fold process of “putting away” certain things and “putting on” other things.
2. We must “put away” the immoral and sinful things of the world that tempt us to sin.
3. We must “put on” the good and godly qualities and attributes that God teaches in His Word.

D. Probe-Barna Survey

1. The survey identified 25 sinful activities and found that a majority of born-again adults (18-40) believed these behaviors to be wrong and felt guilty or embarrassed if they engaged in them.
2. They did not have victory over these various sins and behaviors.
3. If anger is your problem, then “put away” your bad temper and “put on” self control.”
4. If lying is your problem, then “put away” dishonesty and “put on” honesty and integrity.
5. If pornography is your problem, then “put away” lust and “put on” purity.
6. A key difference between worldliness and godliness is a renewed mind under the control of the Holy Spirit.

III. Renewed Mind and Discernment (Romans 12:2)

A. Culturally captive Christians

1. The Probe-Barna survey illustrates that only about one-third have a biblical worldview.
2. Of those, fewer still could answer questions about Jesus, science, the Bible, etc. in a manner consistent with the Bible.
3. Paul warns us not to be conformed to this world (Romans 12:2).

B. Wisdom and discernment

1. Many biblical passages call for believers to exercise discernment.
2. Solomon prayed for wisdom and discernment: “So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” (1 Kings 3:9)

My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you, Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God.

3. Proverbs (2:1-5) encourages us to seek wisdom and discernment:
4. Paul said it was his prayer “that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.” (Philippians 1:9-10)
5. John taught that we should “not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1)
6. The writer of Hebrews (5:14) reminds us that “solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”
7. When we have discernment, our senses will be trained so that we can distinguish between good and evil.

C. Three sources of seduction

1. John warns us of the three categories of things in the world that can seduce us and conform us to the culture:

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

2. Lust of the flesh – can be seen in our sexualized culture.
3. Lust of the eyes – advertising that encourages our greed and materialism
4. Pride of life – narcissism of our society, pride and ego cause us to make wrong decisions.
5. A wise and discerning Christian is always asking whether a particular activity (TV, music, websites) is what God would approve of.

“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.” (Ephesians 5:15-16)

IV. Bible is God's Truth

A. Inspiration

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16

1. The Greek word for inspired mean “God breathed.”
2. God breathed His instruction to us in His Word.
3. God's Word helps us teach, reprove, correct, and train.
4. We should also accept the authority of the Word of God.

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.” (James 1:17-18)

B. Reliability

1. The New Testament was completed in the first century.
2. The New Testament was written by eyewitnesses.
3. External evidence for the reliability: nearly 25,000 manuscripts.
4. Confirmation of the reliability: from history and archaeology.

C. Application

1. Paul reminds believers in Ephesus that God's Word can build them up and transform their lives.

“I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” Acts 20:32

2. Peter encourages us to use God's Word because it can transform us.

“His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.” 2 Peter 1:3-4

3. James (1:23) warns again believers who are only hearers of the Word and not doers of the Word.