

AN EXAMINATION OF THE RENEWING OF
THE MIND IN ROMANS 12:2

by

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Man's responsibility and involvement in the process of personal sanctification has been heavily debated. Some suggest that there should be a passive waiting upon the Spirit to work, while others emphasize that the believer is solely responsible for his own sanctification almost to the extent of precluding the personal ministry of the Holy Spirit. This paper examines, in a limited scope, the function of man's rational capabilities as well as his responsibility in the area of personal sanctification.

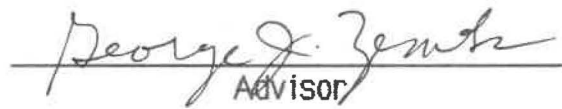
After ascertaining a biblically functional definition of the Pauline concept of *vous*, the harmartiological impact upon the mind is examined in several key NT passages. The moral deficiencies of the mind are detailed with some reference to the original creative intent for the mind. Conclusively, the mind has been morally debilitated by sin.

Since the mind has been harmartiologicaly hamstrung, it is in need of a restorative process so that it might once again function in a manner that would enable man to discern that which is pleasing to God. The apostle Paul labels this restorative process the renewing of the mind. The focus of this study is in Romans 12:2 where the concept of mind renewal is more fully developed than in other NT passages.

The corruption of the mind is not primarily found in its latent rational ability (although this has been affected to some degree by the fall), but rather in the moral standards, norms and values that are used to evaluate acceptable and desirable behavior for the individual. Man has developed an independent world view where God is no longer his pou sto of knowledge acquisition. Man himself has become the ultimate authority for determining truth.

It is at this juncture that man's mind requires renewal. He is desperately in need of a new world view where Jesus Christ and His word is the central focus and ultimate authority. In the light of this research several guiding principles are suggested for a biblical methodology of ministry that recognizes the estate of man's mind and the God ordained means of progressive sanctification. It is the stated purpose of these conclusions to better equip ministers of truth to more effectively shepherd the Lord's flock in a life progressing in holiness.

Accepted by the Faculty of Grace Theological Seminary
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Advisor

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<u>BAGD</u>	<u>Greek-English Dictionary Of The NT</u>
<u>GTJ</u>	<u>Grace Theological Journal</u>
<u>ICC</u>	<u>International Critical Commentary</u>
<u>LXX</u>	<u>Septuagint</u>
<u>NIC</u>	<u>New International Commentary of the New Testament</u>
<u>NIDNTT</u>	<u>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</u>
<u>NT</u>	<u>New Testament</u>
<u>OT</u>	<u>Old Testament</u>
<u>TDNT</u>	<u>Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament</u>

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Romans 12:2 presents a challenging picture of the standards of sanctification in the Christian life. The charge to "be not conformed to this world" is a very broad and weighty prohibition. Yet the directive to "be transformed" is equally probing, even to the very inner recesses of the human soul. The question is, "How is this dramatic metamorphosis to take place in the believer's life?" The text succinctly responds, "by the renewing of your mind." The substance of this paper will deal with the meaning of this concept of practical sanctification as it is portrayed in Romans 12:2.

Chapter II will focus on the NT usage of *voûs*. The function of the mind as designed by creative intent will be explored. The theological import of this primarily Pauline term will also be developed.

As Romans 12:2 states, there is a need for the *voûs* to be renewed. This implies that there is some deficiency or defect in the normal functioning of the mind. This defect has been initiated by sin in the human race. Several contexts will be examined where the harmartiological impact upon the *voûs* is detailed. These passages will be examined in order of the significance of their contribution to the discussion. This will constitute the substance of chapter III.

Chapter IV will investigate the concept of renewal as found in Romans 12:2. This will include a discussion of the vocabulary, literary, and grammatical structure used in this context. This chapter will also include a synthesis of the information established in the previous chapters. This

synthesis will target the area of need for the renewal of the *voûs*. With the debate on the believer's responsibility in progressive sanctification as a backdrop, this paper will labor to establish an exegetical perspective for a biblical understanding of the believer's role in sanctification, be it active or passive.

It is imperative for those that labor in a ministry of the Word to expend their efforts in a manner that is in harmony with the divinely ordained process of sanctification. This requires an understanding of the renewing process as well as the implications of that process upon one's methodology for ministry. It is the intent of chapter V to explore some current models of ministry and arrive at several exegetically founded principles that should temper any ministry of the sword of the Spirit.

CHAPTER II

BIBLICAL USAGE OF Noûs

In an examination of *noûs* it is essential to determine by its biblical usage what is the scope of meaning which is encompassed by this word. In the New Testament, *noûs* is primarily used by Paul. Of the 24 occurrences in the New Testament only three lie outside the Pauline corpus.¹ Unlike many important words in the New Testament *noûs* does not have an Old Testament equivalent.² Although לֵב/לֵב is used in rational and cognitive contexts³, לֵב/לֵב is more the equivalent of καρδία than of *noûs*. Paul's usage of *noûs* is much more specialized than that of καρδία. *Noûs* occurs approximately 35 times in the LXX, its sparing use is more reflective of the Hellenistic thought of the inter-testamental literature than it is of the Hebrew idiom.⁴ Even though *noûs* is frequently used in Greek philosophical

¹W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, A Concordance to the Greek Testament, revised by H. K. Moulton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), p. 670.

²Samuel Lewis Johnson, Jr., "A Survey of Biblical Psychology in the Epistle to the Romans" (Doctoral dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, January 1949), p. 112.

³Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. "καρδία," by Friedrich Baumgartel, 3:606-607.

⁴New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s.v. "noûs," by Gunther Harder, 3:124-125.

literature its meaning there does not appear to influence the Pauline usage. "Paul took this wholly Greek term and paying little conscious heed to its original Greek meaning continued to use it in the same way as Hebrews of the Greek empire had used it."⁵ In light of these observations one may conclude with Johnson that "the apostle Paul is responsible for the peculiar significance of *voûs*, the doctrinal and theological emphasis of the great apostle undoubtedly accounts for his use of this discriminating word."⁶

It is hard to imagine that the philosophical discussions of Paul's day did not have some impact on his use of this term, yet Behm maintains otherwise. He insists that, "The naive view of *voûs* found in the NT can be understood only on the assumption that primitive Christianity stood apart from the philosophical reflection and religious mysticism of the surrounding world."⁷ It appears that Paul has taken a popular Greek term and elevated the meaning through its usage to describe a divinely created function. The emphasis is upon a man in control of his senses who is able to produce clear thoughts in intelligible words. This conclusion is derived from

⁵W. David Stacey, The Pauline View of Man in Relation to its Judaic and Hellenistic Backgrounds (London: MacMillan and Company Limited, 1956), p. 198.

⁶Johnson, "A Survey of Biblical Psychology," p. 112.

⁷TDNT, s.v. "*voûs*," by Johannes Behm, 4:960.

1 Corinthians 14:14 ff. where it states when a man is experiencing a state of spiritual rapture the activities of the *voûs* are suspended.⁸

Far from being merely speculative philosophical reasoning, when Paul uses *voûs* the "implication is always that decision and action will result from the process of thought."⁹ The mind is used to evaluate and choose a practical course to follow consistent with the standards contained in the *voûs*. It is easy to see why Eggleston posits that "*voûs* is not used of man engaged in speculative reflective reason but of man engaged in practical judgment."¹⁰ Paul uses this term when the "reasoning faculty is determinative for man using his powers of judgment."¹¹ In light of the six occurrences of *voûs* in the epistle to the Romans Johnson states, "the mind is the faculty of reflective thought and moral judgment."¹² Another writer describes the function of this mind as a "religious faculty of judgment."¹³ This concept is exemplified by its usage in Romans 12:2. The purpose for the "renewing of the mind," is so that one might be enabled to discern the

⁸Ibid., 4:959.

⁹Stacey, The Pauline View of Man, p. 179.

¹⁰Donald Eggleston, "The Biblical Concept of *voûs*: The Noetic Effects of the Fall and Regeneration" (Master of Divinity thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, May 1979), p. 25.

¹¹Ibid., p. 198.

¹²Johnson, "A Survey of Biblical Psychology," p. 122.

¹³NIDNTT, 3:127.

"will of the Lord."¹⁴ The use of the verb δοκιμάζω which means, "to test with a view to accepting," shows that the νοῦς is the "faculty for testing, through reflection and moral discernment, various courses of action with a view to choosing and pursuing that which is God's will."¹⁵ The emphasis appears to be on the processing and screening of data according to a given set of standards including the resulting decision and choice of action. Eggleston, after a lengthy discussion of its biblical usage, arrives at a similar conception of νοῦς: "Noῦς is the total inner man viewed from the mental perspective which consciously acts in making practical moral judgements."¹⁶ This will be the accepted working definition for the purposes of this paper.

¹⁴εἰς with the infinitive indicates purpose or result. (cf. John A. Sproule, "Greek Exegesis: Selections in Romans," unpublished class syllabus, Grace Theological Seminary, p. 56).

¹⁵Stacey, The Pauline View of Man, p. 201.

¹⁶Eggleston, "The Biblical Concept of Noῦς," p. 35.

CHAPTER III

EFFECTS OF SIN UPON THE NOÛS

In light of the fact that it is the function of the voûs to make ethical evaluations to determine the response an individual will make or an activity he will involve himself in, how trustworthy is the voûs since the fall? Is it capable of functioning in a manner that is consistent with the standards of God? What damaging effect, if any, has the fall had on the voûs as it impacts the lifestyles of men? If one is to have a right understanding of the believer's role in sanctification, the abilities or liabilities of the voûs must be understood. It is with this in mind that the venerable J. C. Ryle prefaces his work on holiness.

He that wishes to attain right views about Christian holiness must begin by examining the vast and solemn subject of sin. He must dig down very low if he would build high. A mistake here is most mischievous. Wrong views about holiness are generally traceable to wrong views about human corruption. I make no apology for beginning this volume of papers about holiness by making some plain statements about sin.¹⁷

It is at this juncture that the effects of sin upon the voûs will be examined.

Romans 1:28

The most notable passage on sin's effect upon the mind is found in Romans 1:28. Here it is recorded that "even as they did not like to retain

¹⁷J. C. Ryle, Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots (London: James Clarke and Company, 1956), p. 1.

God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which were not seemly." "The godlessness of the state of mind is apparent--they did not cherish the knowledge of God because they did not consider God worthy of such thought and attention."¹⁸ For this apostasy a corresponding judgment followed: "Because they have rejected God as not worth reckoning with, God has delivered them into a condition in which their minds are fit only to be rejected as worthless, useless for their proper purpose, disreputable."¹⁹ It is intimated by Cranfield that God's original intent for the mind was to retain God in its knowledge and direct the life in righteous conduct consistent with the mind's knowledge of God.

Since man chose to reject God, God gave man over in judgment to an ἀδόκιμος νοῦς. "The ἀδόκιμος νοῦς is a mind so debilitated and corrupted as to be a quite untrustworthy guide in moral decisions."²⁰ The most notable characteristic of the ἀδόκιμος νοῦς is that it is not receptive to divine truth and as a result is not able to determine ethical conduct in accordance with divine truth.²¹ The explanation of what a reprobate mind

¹⁸John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, vol. 1, NIC (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), p. 49.

¹⁹C.E.B. Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans, vol. 1, edited by J.A. Emerton and C.E.B. Cranfield, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1979), p. 128.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, "The Epistle to the Romans," vol. 5 trans. Peter Christie, Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, 11 vols. (reprint, Winona Lake: Alpha Publications, 1979), p. 68.

entails is found in the text, "to do those things which are not fitting."²² The illicit fruit of a corrupted mind is found in the catalog of vices in vv. 29–32. The extent to which the νοῦς has fallen as the ethical and moral determiner of behaviour is evident in the statement of Romans 1:32, "who, knowing the judgment of God, that they that practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but consent with them that practice them." The hearty approval and fellowship shared in the sins of others demonstrates the moral crookedness of the ἀδόκιμος νοῦς.

Further ramifications of the ἀδόκιμος νοῦς can be found in the grammatical structure of Romans one. The phrase εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν is grammatically parallel to εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν in v. 24 and εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας in v. 26.²³ In each case the defilement results in behavior that is "wholly alien to and subversive of the revealed good pleasure of God."²⁴ The εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν is particularly descriptive of sexual aberration²⁵ while πάθη ἀτιμίας emphasizes the impure character or quality of the desires.²⁶ In both cases the distorted function of the νοῦς is clearly seen. Although it continues to consciously function as the determiner of behavior, the νοῦς has ceased to discern in sympathy with the revealed good pleasure of God.

²²Murray, Romans, 1:49.

²³Cranfield, Romans, 1:128.

²⁴Murray, Romans, 1:44.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Cranfield, Romans, 1:125.

The norm or standard by which the *voûs* conducts its judgments has been corrupted.

"One of the highest and noblest functions of man's mind is to listen to God's word, and so to read his mind and think his thoughts after him, both in nature and in Scripture."²⁷ Since the mind has been corrupted, it is no longer capable, apart from the influence of the Holy Spirit, to receive divine truth or direct one's life in accordance with it. The created intent and function of the *voûs* has been crippled by sin.

Romans one is not the only description that the apostle Paul provides of the sin scarred and debilitated condition of the *voûs*. In other contexts he employs further adjectives to describe the moral deviations and current status of the *voûs*. An examination of these terms will reflect the inspired Pauline perspective on the impact of sin upon the *voûs*.

Titus 1:15

In Titus 1:15 Paul describes the mind as having been *μεμιάνται*, which comes from the root *μαίνω*. Although this root can be used to describe the "staining of glass," when used in ethical considerations, as it is here, it has a dishonorable signification.²⁸ The LXX uses the term in reference to external cultic or ritual defilement through touch or exposure

²⁷John R. W. Stott, Your Mind Matters (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1972), p. 21.

²⁸Richard Chenevix Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), p. 110.

to that which is unclean.²⁹ "In the NT which no longer thinks in ritual and cultic terms, μιλίνω is very rare."³⁰ The term is understood to mean "to dye with another color, to stain"³¹ or "moral defilement by sins and vices."³² Here the focus is on the internal spiritual estate and is used "in the religious and moral sense of the defilement of the person by inner apostasy from God."³³ The mind has become ethically "tainted" by sin.

It is interesting to note once again that Paul "makes moral character equivalent to moral action."³⁴ In summarizing the interrelationship of the mind and the lifestyle as the apostle portrays it in Titus one, White states "the order of the words is to be noted: their moral obliquity is more characteristic of them than their intellectual perversion. . . . Their intellectual apprehension of these things is perverted."³⁵ The νοῦς has been

²⁹ TDNT, s. v. "μιλίνω," by F. Hauck, 4:645.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 4:646.

³¹ Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures of the New Testament, 6 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1931), 4:601.

³² BAGD, p. 522.

³³ TDNT, s. v. "μιλίνω," by F. Hauck, 4:646.

³⁴ Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, "The Epistle to Titus," vol. 9 trans. Peter Christie, Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, 11 vols. (reprint, Winona Lake: Alpha Publications, 1979), 9:289.

³⁵ Newport J. D. White, "The Epistle to Titus," in vol. 4 of Expositor's Greek Testament, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), p. 190.

colored or tainted by sin. This alters the mind's perception of ethical appropriateness which in turn results in morally reprehensible behavior. The degenerative effect of sin upon the functions of the νοῦς is clear here.

2 Corinthians 11:3

There is yet another word with its compounds that Paul uses to describe the effect of sin upon the νοῦς. This root is φθείρω. In the realm of morals and religion it carries a meaning of "to ruin or corrupt someone in his inner life by erroneous teaching or immorality."³⁶ The best example of this significance is found in 2 Corinthians 11:3. The influence of false teachers is likened to the influence of the serpent in the garden upon Eve. The concern which the apostle Paul voices is that through the inculcation of false standards (as the serpent did in the garden) that the Corinthian's "minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." From this example it is easy to see how Harder defines φθείρω in the moral sense as to "lead astray, to ruin"³⁷ for that is precisely what occurred to Eve. She was lead astray and ruined morally. This whole process "corrupts" the faculty of moral judgment.³⁸

³⁶BAGD, p. 865.

³⁷TDNT, s. v. "φθείρω," by Gunther Harder, 9:94.

³⁸Ibid.

2 Timothy 3:8

In 2 Timothy 3:8 those that are described as κατεφθαρμένοι τὸν νοῦν are mentioned. These individuals have been affected by the tenor of the times and are said to "resist the truth." This perfectivized form of φθείρω means to "ruin, corrupt, become useless or depraved in mind."³⁹ Ellicott describes the influence of sin depicted by this phrase. "The clause marks the utter moral depravation of these unhappy men; their νοῦς is corrupted, the medium of communication with the Holy Spirit of God polluted: the light that is within is becoming, if not actually become, darkness."⁴⁰ Their ability to receive and respond righteously to divine truth has been greatly impaired by sin.

1 Timothy 6:5

In 1 Timothy 6:5 another compound of φθείρω is found. In this case the compound is from διαφθείρω. "The difference between the compounds διαφθείρω (1 Tim. 6:5) and καταφθείρω (2 Tim. 3:8) is very slight; both are intensive, the former pointing perhaps more to the pervasive nature, the latter to the prostrating character of φθόρα."⁴¹ The meaning remains essentially the same. The mind has been "corrupted." Guthrie comments on

³⁹BAGD, p. 421.

⁴⁰Charles J. Ellicott, A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, reprint (Minneapolis: James Family Publishing Company, 1978), pp. 156-7.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 157.

the fruit of this corruption saying, "For when reason is morally blinded, all correctives to unworthy behaviour are banished, and the mind becomes destitute of the truth."⁴²

Colossians 2:18

Paul not only describes the *voûs* as corrupted and impure but further modifies his description of the character of the *voûs* in Colossians 2:18. Here he portrays the moral quality of the *voûs* by the phrase "τοῦ νοὸς τῆς σαρκὸς." This designation of the mind as fleshly is a peculiar but duly emphatic description. Consistent with other occurrences, the term *σάρξ* is here used as a description of unregenerate humanity.⁴³ Furthermore, *σαρκὸς* is a genitive of possession which is emphasizing the fact that the 'flesh' possesses and governs the 'mind.' The mind "was wholly under the sway of a nature unchanged by the grace of God, and which therefore exercised its predominance to serve and please itself."⁴⁴ This is not a mind that is concerned with functioning within the bounds of divine truth.

⁴²Donald Guthrie, "The Pastoral Epistles," in vol. 14 of The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, ed. R. V. G. Tasker (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), p. 112.

⁴³John Eadie, Commentary on the Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, reprint (Minneapolis: James and Klock Christian Publishing Company, 1977), p. 190.

⁴⁴*ibid.*

Romans 8:7

The concept of the *voûs* found in Colossians 2:18 is parallel to Paul's discussion in Romans 8:7.⁴⁵ Here Paul discusses the relationship between the mind and the flesh as well as the relationship between the mind and the Spirit. In verse six he declares that to be "carnally minded is death." The concept he details is "the principle of death is separation, and here the most accentuated expression of that principle is in view, namely, separation from God. This separation is thought of in terms of our estrangement from God."⁴⁶ The cause of this "separation" or "death" is found in the phrase τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός. It denotes here the "flesh's (i. e., fallen human nature's) mind, that is, its outlook, assumptions, values, desires and purposes, which those who take the side of the flesh share."⁴⁷ The direction of this mind is not in sympathy with the purpose of God. This mind has a world and life view that is totally independent of God.

The reason that this "mind" results in death is found in verse 7: "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God." This "enmity towards God is the actualizing principle and governing propensity of the mind of the flesh. And when we keep in view what is meant by 'mind' in this connection

⁴⁵J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, reprinted (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1976), p. 198.

⁴⁶Murray, Romans, 1:285.

⁴⁷Cranfield, Romans, 1:386.

the implication is that the disposition underlying all activity is one of opposition to and hatred of God."⁴⁸

It is easily seen that this "mindset" of "opposition to and hatred of God" is not disposed to mold behavior in a manner that is pleasing to God. In fact, the verse describes not merely an unwillingness but an inability to submit to the standards of God. "The last clause 'neither indeed can it be,' points to the impossibility that resides in the mind of the flesh and means nothing less than that it is a moral and psychological impossibility for those who are 'in the flesh' to have any disposition of obedience with respect to the law of God."⁴⁹ Although this concept is normally applied solely to the unsaved, the context seems to suggest that the believer may be influenced by the unsubmitive and unruly nature of this mode of thinking.⁵⁰ This resistance and inability to receive and submit to the divine standards is another reflection of the crippling effect sin has had upon the *voûs*. In the NT several compounds are formed on the root *voûs*. These compounds also portray man's mind as being plagued by harmartiological problems.⁵¹

⁴⁸Murray, Romans, 1:286.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰Cranfield, Romans, 1:387. See also Sproule's comment, "The warning in 8:12ff, however indicates that the Christian can have problems with the 'flesh.'" in *Romans syllabus*, p. 66E.

⁵¹For an excellent overview of these NT compounds cf. George J. Zemek, Jr., "Aiming the Mind: A Key to Godly Living," GTJ 5 (Fall 1984): 210-215.

Perversion Of The Noûs

It is the function of the voûs to consciously act in making practical moral judgments. This evaluation process eventuates in behavior that is consistent with the ethical standards of the voûs. Originally, "the mind of man was created with innate laws of thinking and innate knowledge. The mind was functioning properly, with God as the point of reference for understanding everything. The result was man not only knew truth, but he lived a righteous and holy life in conformity with that truth."⁵² But now, the knowledge or standards which the voûs employs have been distorted.

Paul documents the effect that sin has had upon the function of the voûs. He describes the voûs in Romans 1:28 as having been corrupted, making the mind a "quite untrustworthy guide in moral decisions."⁵³ It was also found that the voûs has been severely handicapped in its ability to receive divine truth, moreover, the fleshly mind is said to be at enmity with God. The mind has been tainted by sin and has deviated from the ethical and moral purity which it was created to function within. Although the function of the voûs continues, it is no longer, of its own abilities, capable of discerning the righteous will of God. John Owen summarizes the present condition of the mind.

It were easy to evince, not only by testimonies of the Scripture, but by the experience of all mankind, built on reason and the observation of instances innumerable, that the whole rational soul of man since the fall, and by the entrance of sin, is weakened, impaired, vitiated, in all

⁵²Eggleston, "The Biblical Concept of Noûs," p. 82.

⁵³Cranfield, Romans, 1:128.

its faculties and all their operations about their proper and natural objects.⁵⁴

He goes on to describe what was once the object and function of the mind now corrupted by sin.

There was the same cogitative or imaginative faculty in us in the state of innocency as there remains under the power of sin; but then all the actings of it were orderly and regular, --the mind was able to direct them all unto the end for which we were made. God was, and would have been, the principal object of them, and all other things in order unto him.⁵⁵

In his treatise on knowledge, Reymond discusses the interesting relationship between knowledge and righteousness. Included in this discussion is how the mind handles this relationship as demonstrated by Adam and his progeny.

He (Adam) gladly acknowledged the fact of God's sovereignty over him and the fact of his own creaturehood. God was his *pou sto* for knowledge, his final reference point for every human predication. It was God who determined for him right and wrong, and he willingly thought God's thoughts after Him. . . . By his fall man shifted ultimate epistemological authority in the universe from God to himself. He did not cease to be man, but he claimed for himself the right to be creatively constructive in his knowledge aquisition. He continued to employ his reason, but now man became his own *pou sto*. It became his nature to suppress God's revelation to him, both general and special. He found the most successful means of doing this to be a preoccupation with his own ideals and purposes on the one hand, and increasing sin and immorality on the other.⁵⁶

Sin has clearly marred the function of the mind and left the *voûs* in a very needy condition. "If we accept the biblical witness to human depravity

⁵⁴John Owen, The Holy Spirit (Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1971), p. 248.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 251.

⁵⁶Robert Reymond, The Justification of Knowledge (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1979), pp. 85-86.

and iniquity, then there must be a radical breach with sin in its power and defilement if the demands of the biblical ethic are even to begin to be realized in us."⁵⁷ Torrance speaks of this need.

Sin is properly of the mind, which is evident from the New Testament teaching about the renewing of the mind. As a natural gift, the reason is not totally destroyed, though it is seriously impaired, and totally perverted. The total perversion of the mind or the reason means that the whole inclination of the mind is in the direction of alienation from God. The reason has therefore lost its original rectitude,⁵⁸ and is indeed alienated from right reason, until it is renewed by the Spirit through the Word.⁵⁹

Warfield comments on this biblical notion of "renewal."

This thing is so of the essence of the religion of revelation that it could not be absent from any stage of its proclamation. That it should be absent would require that sin should be conceived to have wrought no subjective injury to man, so that he would need for his recovery from sin only an objective cancelling of his fault and reinstatement in the favor of God. This is certainly not the conception of the Scriptures in any of their parts . . . Sin, in other words, is not merely guilt but depravity; and that there is needed for man's recovery from sin, therefore, not merely atonement but renewal.⁶⁰

This need for renewal is also emphasized in Romans 12:2. The final clause (that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God) "implies that the *vous*, so far from being an unfallen element of

⁵⁷John Murray, Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics, reprint (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), p. 203.

⁵⁸The author defines rectitude as the "constant dependence upon God, the order of grace in which the world was made."

⁵⁹T. F. Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine of Man (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), p. 116.

⁶⁰Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, Biblical and Theological Studies, ed. Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 351-352.

human nature, needs to be renewed, if it is to be able to recognize and embrace the will of God."⁶¹ The need for this supernatural work is imperative for the voûs to be enabled to receive divine truth.

The Scriptures make it crystal clear that merely finite efforts pertaining to the reception and dissemination of essential spiritual truths are impotent. This valid conclusion is based upon oppressive internal and external realities pertaining to the bondage of the faculties of post-Fall mankind.⁶²

Calvin points out the error of those who depend upon the mind for spiritual direction apart from the renewing process.

For they set up reason alone as the ruling principle in man, and think that it alone should be listened to; to it alone, in short, they entrust the conduct of life. But the Christian philosophy bids reason give way to, submit and subject itself to, the Holy Spirit so that the man himself may no longer live but hear Christ living and reigning within him.⁶³

Since the mind has been corrupted by the influence of sin, it requires supernatural renewing to regain its original "rectitude." Without this renewing process the mind remains unreconciled with the purpose of God and is unable, due to moral perversity, to function in sympathy with the divine intent. This condition would preclude any advancement in sanctification and personal holiness as Ryle describes it.

⁶¹Cranfield, Romans, 2:609.

⁶²George J. Zemek Jr., "Exegetical and Theological Bases for a Consistently Presuppositional Approach to Apologetics" (Th. D. dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, May 1982), p. 47.

⁶³John Calvin, "Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion," trans. and indexed Ford Lewis Battles, in vol. 20-21 of The Library of Christian Classics, ed. John T. Mc Neill, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n. d.), 20:690.

Holiness is the habit of being of one mind with God, according as we find His mind described in Scripture. It is the habit of agreeing in God's judgment--hating what he hates--loving what he loves--and measuring everything in this world by the standard of His Word. He who most entirely agrees with God, he is the most holy man.⁶⁴

⁶⁴Ryle, Holiness, p. 35.

CHAPTER IV

THE RENEWING OF THE MIND

Since the *voûs* has been corrupted, this process of renewal is essential to a believer's growth in the Lord. His advancement in holiness is dependent upon this renewing process. What does this renewing entail? What does it do? How should this concept be understood and defined in light of the biblical data? What is the believer's individual responsibility in conjunction with this biblical teaching? These questions will be the focus of this chapter.

ἀνακαινώω and *ἀνακαίνωσις*

The verb *ἀνακαινώω* and its noun *ἀνακαίνωσις* "have not been traced in any source earlier than Paul, who might very well coin a word of this sort--there is however no proof that he did so."⁶⁵ In addition to not being attested earlier than Pauline writings, *ἀνακαίνωσις* is not known outside Christian literature and is found only twice in the New Testament (Romans 12:2; Tit. 3:5).⁶⁶ The corresponding verb, *ἀνακαινώω*, is found in the New

⁶⁵James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), p. 34.

⁶⁶NIDNTT, s. v. "καίνός," by H. Haarbeck, H. G. Link and C. Brown, 2:673.

Testament only in the Pauline corpus (2 Corinthians 4:16; Colossians 3:10).⁶⁷ In 2 Corinthians 4:16 Paul "is not thinking of a process of moral alteration or a progressive course of sanctification. . . . He is simply expressing the glad certainty that each day he is renewed and strengthened as a Christian and lifted above all external pressures."⁶⁸ The three remaining texts deal with the concept of moral renewal in the process of sanctification. The lexical definition of this word group is to "renew."⁶⁹ However, this definition is not extremely helpful in describing the concept of renewal; it merely provides an English translation for the Greek. That sanctification is in view, is clear from Romans 12:2. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" "is exhortation to the sanctifying process and the terms used are specially adapted to a definition of that in which this process consists."⁷⁰

Romans 12:1-2

Literary structure

What light can the context of Romans 12:1-2 shed on the perspicuity of the concept of renewal? This passage "is the primary transitional link in the letter. It bridges the chasm that always exists, at least potentially,

⁶⁷BAGD, p. 55.

⁶⁸TDNT, s. v. "ἀνακαινόω," by Johannes Behm, 3:452.

⁶⁹BAGD, p. 55.

⁷⁰Murray, Romans, 2:109.

between doctrine and living."⁷¹ This practice of developing doctrine followed by a section on practice is a common element of the Pauline pedagogy.

A doctrinal position which makes no moral difference can find no support in Paul's epistles. Indeed, it is a characteristic of many of those epistles that an ethical section is added after the doctrinal exposition. The close connection between ethics and doctrine is in no sense accidental for Paul. He could not conceive of a separation between them.⁷²

The pertinence of noting Paul's literary style can be seen in the following comments.

These are the most neglected chapters (12-15) in Romans. Yet, they comprise the part of the epistle in which Paul exposes the practical implications of the theology he has so majestically presented in the earlier chapters.⁷³

Paul's dogmatic teaching is misunderstood if it is not seen to require ethical action and his ethical teaching cannot be grasped if it is not recognized that it rests at every point upon the dogmatics.⁷⁴

It can be concluded that Paul is entering into a section of practical and critical importance concerning sanctification in the believer's life. This section of practical theology is based upon the theological content of the preceding chapters.

⁷¹Horace E. Stoessel, "Notes on Romans 12:1-2: The Renewal of the Mind and Internalizing the Truth," Interpretation 17 (April, 1963): 161.

⁷²Donald Guthrie, New Testament Theology (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1981), p. 913.

⁷³R. Alan Culpepper, "God's Righteousness in the Life of His People: Romans 12-15," Review and Expositor 73:4 (Fall, 1976): 451.

⁷⁴C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1957), p. 230.

Grammatical structure

This structural observation also finds support in the grammatical introduction of verse one. The inferential conjunction οὖν connects the preceding theology with the following exhortation. Some would seek to limit the connection of οὖν with 11:35-36.⁷⁵ Yet, this does not seem to reflect the fullness of the Pauline idea here. "The true connection with what precedes is much wider; it is nothing less than the relation between the two parts of the epistle."⁷⁶ Cranfield displays how well this understanding fits the force of Paul's style.

The implication of this 'therefore' is that Christian ethics are theologically motivated or--to put it in a different way--that the Christian's obedience is his response to what God has done for him in Christ, the expression of his gratitude. Given its full force, the οὖν makes clear right from the start the theocentric nature of all truly Christian moral effort; for it indicates that the source from which such effort springs is neither a humanistic desire for the enhancement of the self by the attainment of moral superiority, nor the legalist's illusory hope of putting God under an obligation, but the saving deed of God itself.⁷⁷

The inferential conjunction serves as a pivotal point in Paul's thought. The impact of chapters 12-15 is hinged by οὖν upon all that has gone before.

⁷⁵Meyer, Romans, p. 467.

⁷⁶Frederick L. Godet, Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans, trans. by A. Cusin (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Publishers, 1883), p. 424.

⁷⁷Cranfield, Romans, 2:595.

"Paul intended his foregoing extended theological argument to call forth a response of gratitude and commitment which would reorient the life of the community."⁷⁸ The content of chapters 12-15 is the standard that the apostle desires believers to conform to.

Σχήμα and μορφή

After the phrase, "present your bodies as a living sacrifice . . .," verse two begins with the instruction "καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε." The relationship and meaning of συσχηματίζεσθε with μεταμορφοῦσθε is particularly helpful in understanding the concept of renewal.

Very many interpreters have claimed that a significant distinction is to be discerned here between συσχηματίζεσθε and μεταμορφοῦσθε. The former, it is argued, refers to outward form only and so indicates something external and superficial, whereas the latter refers to inward being and so indicates a profound transformation.⁷⁹

Trench is representative of those who see a significant difference in meaning between these two words. He argues:

It is possible for Satan μετασχηματίζειν himself into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14); he can take the whole outward semblance of such. But to any such change of his it would be impossible to apply the μεταμορφοῦσθαι: for this would imply a change not external but internal, not of accidents but of essence which is quite beyond his power. How fine and subtle is the variation of words at Romans 12:2. 'Do not fall in with the fleeting fashions of this world, nor be yourselves

⁷⁸Culpepper, "God's Righteousness in the Life of His People," p. 451.

⁷⁹Cranfield, Romans, 2:605.

fashioned to them (μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε), but undergo a deep abiding change (ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε) by the renewing of your mind.⁸⁰

Although Trench argues admirably, Cranfield differs with the conclusion.

While it is certainly possible to discern differences of meaning between μορφή and its cognates and compounds on the one hand and σχῆμα and its cognates and compounds on the other, there are too many examples of their being apparently treated as simply synonymous for it to be justifiable to assume that a distinction is intended unless the context gives support to the assumption.⁸¹

The context does not appear to support Trench's position. "A sharp lexical distinction would tend to minimize the significance of the negative imperative."⁸²

If there is not a great distinction in meaning between συσχηματίζεσθε and μεταμορφοῦσθε in this context, what is their meaning here? Meyer suggests that they "denote any kind of conformation according to the context . . . here of moral conformation."⁸³ Robertson understands συσχηματίζεσθε to come from a late Greek verb meaning "to conform to another's pattern."⁸⁴ The concept of "conforming to another's pattern" is supported by Brown when he states the believer is "not to allow

⁸⁰Trench, Synonyms, pp. 263-264.

⁸¹Cranfield, Romans, 2:607.

⁸²George J. Zemek Jr., "A Survey of the καινός and νέος Word Complexes in Reference to Salvation and Sanctification" (Postgraduate seminar paper, Grace Theological Seminary, January 31, 1980), p. 51.

⁸³Meyer, Romans, pp. 468-469.

⁸⁴Robertson, Word Pictures, 4:402.

the influence of things seen and temporal to be the forming, regulating principle of their conduct."⁸⁵

The grammatical significance of μή with the present imperative is explained by Cranfield.

The present imperative may be used to indicate that an action already happening is to continue indefinitely, and in a prohibition to indicate that an action which is happening is to stop. So here the συσχηματίζεσθε which is happening is to stop, the μεταμορφοῦσθε which also is already happening is to go on indefinitely.⁸⁶

The grammar and vocabulary are best reflected by the translation "stop being fashioned" or "do not have the habit of being fashioned."⁸⁷ The concept of having an improper standard to which one is currently conforming his actions to is an accurate encapsulation of the meaning here. The believer is to "resist the process of being continually molded and fashioned according to the pattern of this present age with its conventions and its standards of values."⁸⁸

Transformation

In contrast to being "conformed to this world" the believer is to be "transformed." The basic concept of this word is "to remodel" or "to change

⁸⁵John Brown, Analytical Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans, reprint (Minneapolis: James Family Christian Publishers, 1979), p. 436.

⁸⁶Cranfield, Romans, 2:607.

⁸⁷Robertson, Word Pictures, 4:402.

⁸⁸Cranfield, Romans, 2:608.

into another form."⁸⁹ "The reference to an outward change of form perceptible to the senses determines the use of the word."⁹⁰ Yet, "in some cases the verb refers to an inner spiritual change."⁹¹ For its meaning within the context of sanctification as found in Romans 12:2 it is interesting to note the function of μεταμορφώω in the Greek cultic literature. "In the Hellenistic mystery religions transfiguration is a parallel idea to regeneration or deification. To be changed into a god-like being is the great goal which the initiate, moving from one stage to another, strives to reach by vision of the deity."⁹² Although the object of the believer's attention is "the glory of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18)," the thought of changing to become like the deity is precisely the concept found in Romans 12:2. The instrument or means by which this transformation takes place is clearly defined by τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοός.⁹³

Need For Renewal

The νοῦς has previously been defined as "the total inner man viewed from the mental perspective which consciously acts in making practical

⁸⁹TDNT, s. v. "μεταμορφώω," by Johannes Behm, 4:755.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 756.

⁹²Ibid., p. 757.

⁹³Cf. Nigel Turner, Syntax in vol. 3 of A Grammar of New Testament Greek (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), p. 240, for the significance of the dative of means.

moral judgments."⁹⁴ It is the function of the *voûs* to evaluate and make decisions consistent with the norms or standards which it possesses. However, it is precisely these standards of the *voûs* which have been corrupted by the effects of sin thereby distorting the ethical accuracy of the judgments made by the unaided *voûs*. This is the reason and need for "renewing" in the believer's mind if progress in personal sanctification is to be achieved. But what does this renewing entail?

The need for change has already been suggested by the contrast of *συσχηματίζεσθε* and *μεταμορφοῦσθε*. Yet, that is also the suggestion in the use of *ἀνακαινῶσαι* with possible reference to the qualitative aspect of the renewal.⁹⁵ "What must be in view here is the changing of the basic thought forms, decision making structure, and motivational structure to bring them into correspondence with universal reality as God sees it."⁹⁶ This includes the believer "refusing the norms of conduct employed by the sinful world and reaffirming for himself the spiritual norms befitting the redeemed."⁹⁷ On this transforming of character John Brown's comments are very insightful.

⁹⁴Eggleston, "The Biblical Concept," p. 35.

⁹⁵TDNT, s. v. "νεός, ἀνανεόω," by Johannes Behm, 4:900.

⁹⁶Douglas Harold Jackson, "An Exegetical Study of Some Important Pauline Passages Dealing with the Role of the Word in Progressive Sanctification" (Th. M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, May 1973), p. 25.

⁹⁷Everett F. Harrison, "Romans," in vol. 10 of The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gabelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), p. 128.

'The renewing of the mind' is not descriptive of some physical operation--such as the putting a new thinking principle into the individual, or even the superadding of some new physical capacity of thought and feeling to the intellectual and moral frame of our nature: the mind is renewed, when, under the influence of the Spirit, the truth is understood and believed, so as to displace the ignorance and error that previously prevailed. It is the truth, understood and believed, that purifies the heart from the love of the world; and, just in proportion as that truth is understood and believed, are men transformed. It is by men's being formed to a right way of thinking, that they are formed to a right way of feeling and acting with regard to this world and the next--to God, and our brethren of mankind (emphasis added).⁹⁸

This is the crux of the renewing of the mind, "to displace the ignorance and error that previously prevailed" with the truth of God as it is rightly believed and understood.

The problem of what fills the Christian's mind and thinking is pivotal to the progress of the believer in sanctification. "In connection with the concrete and practical details of life there is no more searching question than that of the patterns of thought and action which we follow. To what standards do we conform? . . . But there are patterns that must not be adhered to."⁹⁹ Harry Blamires speaks with decisive insight on the problem of the believer's "mindset" or as Romans 12:2 would phrase it, "being conformed to this world."

But as a thinking being, the modern Christian has succumbed to secularization. He accepts religion--its morality, its worship, its spiritual culture; but he rejects the religious view of life, the view which sets all earthly issues within the context of the eternal, the view which relates all human problems--social, political, cultural--to the doctrinal foundation of the Christian's faith, the view which sees all things here below in terms of God's supremacy and earth's transitoriness, in terms of Heaven and Hell . . .

⁹⁸John Brown, Romans, p. 437.

⁹⁹Murray, Romans, 2:113.

Except over a very narrow field of thinking, chiefly touching questions of strictly personal conduct, we Christians in the modern world accept, for the purpose of mental activity, a frame of reference constructed by the secular mind and a set of criteria reflecting secular evaluations.¹⁰⁰

This practice is not in harmony with the the import of renewing. The Christian's mind should be a constituent "part of a thorough reorientation of life in accordance with the truth learned in Christ."¹⁰¹ The mind of Paul in Romans 12 is reflected in the "words of a man whose world view the gospel shattered. Therefore, after accepting a new center and basis of faith he had to re-think things from the ground up."¹⁰²

According to standards

Rather than the Christian mind adapting to the philosophies of this world, the Christian mind should be a "mind trained, informed, equipped, to handle data of secular controversy within a framework of reference which is constructed of Christian presuppositions."¹⁰³ This is to have the mind renewed with a "biblical ethic." "In the biblical ethic we are concerned with the norms, or canons or standards of behaviour which are enunciated in the

¹⁰⁰Harry Blamires, The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think? (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1978), pp. 3-4.

¹⁰¹ Stoessel, "Notes on Romans 12:1-2," p. 166.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 172.

¹⁰³Blamires, The Christian Mind, p. 43.

Bible for the creation, direction, and regulation of thought, life, and behaviour consonant with the will of God."¹⁰⁴

This biblical ethic that transforms the believer's thinking and living is not obtained through mere intellectual assent.

It demands, instead, the mind-renewal that issues from the internalizing of truth. To what does this phrase refer? Primarily, it refers to a process embracing two distinct though not independent steps: (1) receiving and affirming a basic theology; (2) discerning and acknowledging the implications of that theology for my personal situation.

But since it is a theology of transformation, this truth must become indwelling; there it can dislodge the thoughts and attitudes of 'natural man.' For this to happen though, I must discern and acknowledge precisely those implications of kerygmatic theology that lead to my transformation.¹⁰⁵

The mind renewal that the apostle speaks of is a personal learning and changing experience. As one learns the mind of God through the truths of scripture, these truths replace the standards and norms which were formed according to the pattern of this world. These standards are those that were twisted and corrupted by sin. In replacing these standards, distorted from God's perspective by sin, the believer is bidding adieu to his own counsels and desires.¹⁰⁶

"The result of this purification is to make the intellect, which is the seat of moral judgment true and exact in judging on spiritual and moral

¹⁰⁴Murray, Principles of Conduct, p. 14.

¹⁰⁵Stoessel, "Notes on Romans 12:1-2," pp. 168-169.

¹⁰⁶John Calvin, Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans, trans. and ed. by John Owen (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1947), p. 454.

questions."¹⁰⁷ "It seems to follow from Romans 12:2 that the renewal of mind which accompanies Christian conversion equips the believer with a sharper means of discernment than he had before (he can prove God's good, acceptable, and perfect will)."¹⁰⁸ In this renewing or sanctifying process, not only does it bring "new insights into God's will," but "God's will becomes the norm for Christian living, and the Christian mind is expected to seek an understanding of that will."¹⁰⁹ Concerning this process of renewal Zemek concludes that "there are indications that implementation and actualization are in some ways proportionally dependent upon theological growth (i. e., advancement in doctrine and Christian living are inextricable related)."¹¹⁰ The concept of renewing seen thus far in Romans 12:2 would support this observation and should eliminate any degree of tentativeness in the conclusion. Progression in personal sanctification is inextricably related to advancement in or internalization of truth.

Continually

Since renewing of the mind is the means whereby the transformation or experiential sanctification takes place in the believer's life, what is the time frame suggested by the scriptures that this growth should occur in?

¹⁰⁷William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans," in the ICC, ed. by Charles Augustus Briggs (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 354.

¹⁰⁸ Guthrie, New Testament Theology, p. 169.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 919.

¹¹⁰Zemek, "A Survey," p. 34.

The present imperative μεταμορφοῦσθε suggests an ongoing process. Harrison concludes, "Significantly, there is a shift in the tense of the verbs to the present tense, pointing up the necessity of continual vigilance lest the original decision be vitiated or weakened."¹¹¹ The need for continual diligence is due to the nature of transformation itself. "The transformation is not something which is brought about in an instant; it has to be continually repeated, or, rather, it is a process which has to go on all the time the believer is in this life."¹¹² For those that teach or display attitudes in this life that reflect the concept of "having arrived" or "attained" spiritually, they stand in opposition to the truth Paul teaches here. Murray notes this fact while commenting on the need for continuing renewal: "Sanctification is a process of revolutionary change in that which is the centre (*sic*) of consciousness. This sounds a fundamental note in the biblical ethic. It is the thought of progression and strikes at the stagnation, complacency, pride of achievement so often characterizing Christians."¹¹³ The comments of Murray and Stoessel are instructive on the need for continuing renewal:

Sin began with acceding to the lie of the father of lies. Integrity begins with the implantation of truth in our inward parts and the reception of the love of truth and of the truth in love. The onward course of ethical integrity is not an automatic process; it is one of progressive

¹¹¹ Harrison, "Romans," p. 128.

¹¹² Cranfield, Romans, 2:607.

¹¹³ Murray, Romans, 2:114.

conformation realized through the understanding and approval of the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.¹¹⁴

Mind-renewal is so real and personal that we are always constrained to press on and lay hold of the truth that has grasped us. We cannot stop short of becoming related to the truth as meaningfully as Paul was. Therefore, not even acquaintance with the words of Paul insures the relevance of his truth for us, although it is necessary preparation for our internalizing of truth. But we must press on and ask how we stand in relation to the truth.¹¹⁵

This continuing need for personal growth suggests the pertinence of a consistent relationship and exposure to the truths of God's word. A regular exposure to truth provides opportunity for self-examination to discern any values, attitudes or standards that fail to conform to the revealed divine perspective.

Believer's Responsibility

In this whole process of the renewing of the mind, what is the believer's responsibility? "Is it a work of the Spirit in which the Christian participates only passively, or in a vague sense? Or is the Christians role as active and definite as when he presents his body a living sacrifice?"¹¹⁶ In short is the believer active and responsible or passive and without responsibility in this sanctification process? Titus 3:5 declares that this renewing process is rightly within the realms of the work of the Holy Spirit. Yet, the context of Romans 12:1-2 with its emphasis on the imperatives and

¹¹⁴Murray, Principles of Conduct, p. 225.

¹¹⁵Stoessel, "Notes on Romans 12:2," p. 175.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p.161.

personal responsibility seems to emphasize the believer's active role concerning the internalizing of truth. Yet Cranfield insists

that he (Paul) does not think of the ἀνακαίνωσις τοῦ νοός as something which his readers can accomplish for themselves is clear enough in light of Romans 7 and 8. It is the Spirit's work (cf. 7:6 for the connection between καὶνότης of life and the Holy Spirit), though, as we saw above, the Christian is not thought of as a merely passive object of the Spirit's action, but as a responsible sharer in it, yielding himself freely to the Spirit's leading.¹¹⁷

With this spectrum of thought, Johnson agrees: "This work is the work of the Holy Spirit whereby he seeks to bring every thought into captivity to Christ. In this work the believer is to co-operate with the Holy Spirit although he does the renewing."¹¹⁸ Murray's comment emphasizes the believer's role.

This definitive transformation, summed up in the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new, does not remove the necessity or the fact of progressive renewal. It is eloquent of this necessity and of the responsibility which is entailed for the believer that in both passages where Paul contrasts the new man with the old there should be express notification of this progressive renovation . . . And this necessity enlists not only the continuously operative grace of God by which he is being renewed but also draws within its scope the responsible activity of the believer himself.¹¹⁹

The responsible activity of both the believer and of the Spirit points to a "thoroughly manifested Scriptural tension, a Biblical synergism."¹²⁰

¹¹⁷Cranfield, Romans, 2:609.

¹¹⁸Johnson, "Biblical Psychology," p. 120.

¹¹⁹Murray, Principles of Conduct, pp. 218-219.

¹²⁰Zemek, "A Survey," p. 23

After further study on this issue, Zemek concludes that "renewal involves an essentially incomprehensible synergism."¹²¹ Although it is not the intention to be dogmatic nor overly compartmentalistic here, the responsibility of the believer is essentially understandable as it is delineated in Romans 12:2. It seems quite clear that it is the believer's responsibility to resist the process of "being continually molded and fashioned according to the pattern of this present age with its conventions and its standards of values."¹²² At the same time, the believer is to adhere to the truths of God's word "so as to displace the ignorance and error that previously prevailed."¹²³ It is the believer's responsibility to be actively engaged in the learning and internalizing of the new values, attitudes, norms and standards as found in God's word. However, it is readily confessed that it is only by the efficient influence of the Spirit that one is able to understand divine truth. Kentopp draws this conclusion concerning the renewing of the mind:

The Pauline concept, as far as this passage reveals, is that of a process of radical alteration of the believer's intellectual, discerning, and volitional faculty. It is not a process of mere cognitive reprogramming, but rather a process by which a believer is enabled to internalize truth through the work of the Holy Spirit and the activity of his own will.¹²⁴

¹²¹Ibid., p. 34.

¹²²Cranfield, Romans, 2:608.

¹²³Brown, Romans, p. 437.

¹²⁴Richard Kentopp, "The Renewing of the Mind" (Th. M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, May 1979), p. 20.

It is, therefore, the believer's responsibility to be actively engaged in learning a new perspective from the Scriptures while it is the Spirit's role to enable him to understand. Renewal is a synergism with the believer and the Spirit working together. With hearty concurrence Zemek's conclusion on this point is cited. "The implementation of renewal is therefore concentric with sanctification as it is outlined in Philippians 2:12-13."¹²⁵

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:12-13).

¹²⁵Zemek, "A Survey," p. 35.

CHAPTER V

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Renewing of the mind is at the very heart of sanctification. As already shown, the implementation of renewal is concentric with the process of practical sanctification. Since this is true, how should it impact one's methodology of ministry? In what way should the teaching, preaching and counseling that occurs for the glory of Jesus Christ be affected by the biblical process of renewal?

The function of the *νοῦς* has already been explored, yet by way of recapitulation Stoessel's comment is cited:

Noûs always includes the idea of an external standard. Sometimes 'standard' is the primary idea; in these passages *νοῦς* is virtually equivalent to 'theology,' that is, the ideas or principles which are the springs of action. This is the meaning in 2 Thessalonians 2:2, where *σαλευθῆναι ὑμᾶς τοῦ νοός* expresses the idea of being removed from one's moorings. The context reveals the moorings in this case to be Paul's teaching, both doctrinal and practical, concerning the Parousia.¹²⁶

Stacey maintains that the *νοῦς* is the "faculty for testing, through reflection and moral discernment, various courses of action, with a view to choosing and pursuing that which is God's will."¹²⁷ The Christian mind, then, contains the values or "springs of action" which are used to evaluate

¹²⁶Stoessel, "Notes on Romans 12:1-2," p. 164.

¹²⁷Stacey, The Pauline View of Man, p. 201.

and decide upon the conduct that lies within the sphere of that which is pleasing to God.

It is significant that Paul precedes this teaching with eleven chapters of solid theology that will serve as a touchstone for the renewing of his reader's minds. In this pivotal verse (Romans 12:1), Paul encircled all that had preceded and made it the standard whereby his readers should reshape their values and attitudes. It was Paul's conviction that to change one's values was to change the manner in which they lived. This must be the axis upon which any biblical methodology of ministry, in light of the doctrine of sanctification by the renewing of the mind, must turn.

Stoessel's comments also reflect this conclusion on a biblical methodology of ministry.

From Paul's practice of alternating between declaration and argument we infer, then, that internalizing the truth includes both affirming kerygmatic theology and discerning-acknowledging its implications. We infer moreover, that each part of the process of mind-renewal is called forth by a method (proclamation-persuasion) consistent with the gospel of God.¹²⁸

This proclamation-persuasion concept parallels the structure of the Pauline epistles. As was stated previously,

A doctrinal position which makes no moral difference can find no support in Paul's epistles. Indeed, it is a characteristic of many of those epistles that an ethical section is added after the doctrinal exposition. The close connection between ethics and doctrine is in no sense accidental for Paul. He could not conceive of a separation between them.¹²⁹

¹²⁸Stoessel, "Notes on Romans 12:1-2," p. 169.

¹²⁹Guthrie, New Testament Theology, p. 913.

Implications

In formulating a biblical methodology for ministry in light of the Pauline teaching on mind renewal it is essential to recognize that "mind renewal is not mere cognitive reprogramming, but rather it is radical ontological restructuring of a believer's thought patterns and structures (not merely content), and the consequent altered volitional and behavioral patterns."¹³⁰ It must be remembered that the activity of the *voûs* always leads to behavior. Since resulting behavior is an integral part of the renewing of the mind any ministry model conceptualized without equal emphasis upon changed behavior is remiss.

Mere cognitive reprogramming is not seen as effective in inducing lasting behavior change unless it is accompanied by concomitant behavioral activity. . . . Implicit in this observation is the fact that both see overt action as a reinforcement to the altered belief pattern. In other words, purely cognitive change of itself will not produce lasting behavior change, and without conscious and volitional behavior change, the cognitive change itself will most likely extinguish.¹³¹

Cognitive Psychology

Yet, before any behavioral changes can be expected, there must be a change in the individual's perspective and thinking on any given issue. This biblical concept of renewal is recognized, at least in part, by one school of thought in secular psychology. "The basic tenet of cognitive psychology is that what people believe and tell themselves determines their behavior and

¹³⁰Kentopp, "Renewing," p. 51.

¹³¹Ibid., pp. 46-47.

feelings about life."¹³² Since this is true it is essential to isolate unbiblical thinking.

In order for change to occur, new habit patterns must be developed on new and more appropriate beliefs. For that to happen, old inappropriate beliefs must be challenged and abandoned. But in order to challenge inappropriate beliefs, they must be identified and recognized as inappropriate.¹³³

William Backus, a graduate of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and recipient of a Ph. D. in clinical psychology from the University of Minnesota, has attempted to integrate the concepts of cognitive psychology with Scriptural truth. The resultant eclectic counseling method yields some valid principles coincident with the biblical concept of the renewing of the mind. Backus provides an overview of his methodology.

'Misbelief Therapy,' as we have called our *modus operandi*, involves putting the truth into our value systems, philosophies, demands, expectations, moralistic and emotional assumptions, as well as into the words we tell ourselves. The Bible says it is the truth that sets a man free. Jesus Christ is the living Truth. When we inject the truth into our every thought, taking a therapeutic broom and sweeping away the lies and misbeliefs which have enslaved us, we find our lives radically changed for the happier better.¹³⁴

In dealing with secular models of psychology and counseling it must be recognized that, although they may appear to be similar to the biblical concept of the renewing of the mind, there are fundamental and critical differences. Although individual points of the system may indeed be

¹³²William Backus, Telling The Truth To Troubled People (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1985), p. 10.

¹³³Kentopp, "Renewing," p. 53.

¹³⁴William Backus and Marie Chapin, Telling Yourself The Truth (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1980), p. 10.

biblically accurate, the entire system is not predicated by an objective examination of the only authoritative source of truth, the Scriptures. The Scriptures are the ultimate test of accuracy and reality. There are at least two points at which Cognitive counseling therapy fails from the biblical model.¹³⁵ First, it fails to recognize the activity of the Holy Spirit as being crucial to the process of sanctification. Second, the reality of God and His Scriptures are not the standard that determines the "appropriateness" of any belief that is used to displace "irrational" or "inappropriate" beliefs. The legitimacy of any system, that appears to be similar to the biblical concept of the renewing of the mind, can be evaluated by the accuracy of its "approved beliefs" with those values, attitudes and beliefs that are normative in the Scriptures.

Guiding Principles

Since the process of sanctification, as understood in this study of the renewing of the mind, is a synergistic work between the believer and the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to chart a step by step procedure that would accurately reflect a concise biblical methodology. The ministry of the Spirit is much too dynamic to assign a check list of steps that are guaranteed to result in growth. God will not be manipulated by a purely mechanistic procedure. However, the biblical data examined in this work is sufficient to establish several guiding principles that should be inherent in any model of a biblical methodology for ministry.

1. Recognize that it is the responsible activity of the believer and the enabling power of the Holy Spirit that results in progressive

¹³⁵Kentopp, "Renewing," p. 51.

sanctification. This recognition should evidence itself through a consistent dependence upon the power of God through prayer.

2. Identify the unbiblical values, attitudes, assumptions and standards that shape the thinking and behavior of those ministered to.

3. Challenge the accuracy and appropriateness of those unbiblical values, etc., through a clear presentation of the Scriptural truth with a view to displacing the unbiblical beliefs.

4. Structure and provide ample opportunity (through homework, modeling, role playing, etc.) for these new truths to be evidenced and practiced in the lifestyle of those ministered to.¹³⁶

These guiding principles should serve as a framework which should be included in any teaching, preaching or counseling methodology. Their validity is determined by an examination of revealed truth as contained in the Scriptures, not by an affinity with any psycho-therapeutic models currently in vogue.

¹³⁶A similar list is found in Backus and Chapian, Telling Yourself The Truth, p. 181. The above list is derived from the inductive study of the author whose conclusions were formed independent of Backus and Chapian.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It has been the intent of this paper to explore the function of the *voûs*, as depicted in Pauline theology, as well as its place in the process of sanctification as described by the renewing of the mind. In light of this research conclusions were drawn concerning guidelines for a theologically consistent methodology of ministry.

It was discovered that the *voûs* is "the faculty of reflective thought and moral judgment."¹³⁷ Yet this is not merely a speculative function but is always associated with subsequent behavior. It is the purpose of the *voûs* to determine behavior that is consistent with the good pleasure of God. However, as a result of sin the *voûs* has been corrupted and was rendered a "quite untrustworthy guide in moral decisions."¹³⁸ Apart from regeneration and renewing, it is a moral and psychological impossibility for the corrupted *voûs* to have any disposition of obedience with respect to the law of God.¹³⁹ Because of this inability and the minds adherence to the standards of this present age, it is necessary for the mind to be renewed. The concept of renewal is best reflected in Brown's comments on this subject. "The mind is renewed when, under the influence of the Spirit, the

¹³⁷Johnson, "A Survey," p. 122.

¹³⁸Cranfield, Romans, 1:128.

¹³⁹Murray, Romans, 1:286.

truth is understood and believed, so as to displace the ignorance and error that previously prevailed."¹⁴⁰ This new belief always results in behavior that is consistent with the newly learned truth.

It is the contention of this thesis that the process of renewing the mind should be a significant factor in determining the structure of any biblical methodology of ministry. Those that wish to see people's lives transformed to the glory of God must have methods that are consistent with the biblical process of sanctification if their efforts are to prove fruitful. In this regard, four guiding principles for any biblical methodology for ministry were suggested.

These guiding principles should influence the manner in which one conducts a teaching, preaching or counseling ministry. It is insufficient to merely instruct individuals concerning the facts that are contained in the Scriptures. A Bible Dictionary approach to the ministry is short of the biblical concept contained in the renewing of the mind. It is imperative that the ministry of the Word be structured to facilitate change, change in thinking and attitudes which leads to change in behavior. The minister must anticipate and challenge values that are short of God's values and displace them with a graciously pointed application of biblical norms and truth. An integral part of this application is to suggest and structure examples of how this new truth would evidence itself in appropriately changed behavior. This is the pattern that is suggested by the biblical concept of the renewing of the mind.

¹⁴⁰Brown, Romans, p. 437.

It is the sincere desire of the author that this paper will prove helpful to those that desire to shepherd the flock of God in a more effective and God honoring manner while influencing men and women for the cause of Jesus Christ.

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