

THE PURSUIT OF HOLINESS

Message 10: HOLINESS IN SPIRIT/MIND*

Romans 7:14-15 (ESV)

¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For **I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.**

Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)

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

Ephesians 4:22-24 (ESV)

²² ... to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to **be renewed in the spirit of your minds**, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

BIG question: How do I renew my mind?

The **bad** news: The regular practice of sin _____!

“Let your conscience be your guide” is _____ advice!

Why?

- *Our consciences can be _____ and _____
(Acts 23:1; 24:16; 1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 13:18).*
- *Our consciences can also be _____, _____, and _____
(Titus 1:15; 1 Cor. 8:7, 10, 12; 1 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 10:22).*

At first we feel _____ for our sins, but the more we do them, the less guilty we feel.

In fact, we can even come to believe that what we're doing is okay.

Eventually, the _____ no longer affects us.

We have an amazing capacity for _____, _____, and _____!

James 1:22 (ESV)

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, **deceiving yourselves.**

1 Peter 1:13-16 (ESV)

¹³ Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ As obedient children, **do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance**, ¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

1 John 1:8 (ESV)

If we say we have no sin, **we deceive ourselves**, and the truth is not in us.

*Don't believe everything you think. You cannot be trusted to tell yourself the truth.
Stay in The Word. - Jerry Bridges*

The **good** news: NEUROPLASTICITY!

My brain is both _____ and _____!
_____ leading to holiness is possible!

Remember – true holiness can never come from _____.
Transformation comes from the _____ out. Not vice versa.

Transformation is not switching from the to-do list of the flesh to the to-do list of the law. When Paul replaces the list – the works – of the flesh, he does not replace it with the works of the law, but the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:19-22). The Christian alternative to immoral behaviors is not a new list of moral behaviors. It is the triumphant power and transformation of the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ – our Savior, our Lord, our Treasure. “[God] has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Corinthians 3:6). So transformation is a profound, blood-bought, Spirit-wrought change from the inside out.

- John Piper, Sermon: *The Renewed Mind and How to Have It*

Colossians 2:20-23 (ESV)

²⁰ If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— ²¹“Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” ²² (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? ²³ These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

“Renewing the mind” ... At least 6 necessary components

1. Raw _____

Mental health is an ongoing process of dedication to reality at all costs.
- Scott Peck, *The Road Less Travelled*

Spiritual health is an ongoing process of dedication to reality at all costs.

Some sources:

2. Radical _____

Failure is not necessarily final or fatal, but there are _____!

3. Routine of _____

Psalm 119:9-16 (ESV)

⁹ How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. ¹⁰ With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! ¹¹ I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. ¹² Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes! ¹³ With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth. ¹⁴ In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. ¹⁵ I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. ¹⁶ I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

4. Relational _____

James 5:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

5. _____ as daily practice

Insufficient repentance =

Repenting in the full sense of the word—actually changing in the way described—is only possible for Christians, believers who have been set free from sin’s dominion and made alive to God. Repenting in this sense is a fruit of faith, and as such a gift of God (cf. Acts 11:18). The process can be alliteratively analyzed under the following headings:

1. Realistic recognition that one has disobeyed and failed God, doing wrong instead of doing right. This sounds easier than it actually is. T.S. Eliot spoke the truth when he observed: “Humankind cannot bear very much reality.” There is nothing like a shadowy sense of guilt in the heart to make us passionately play the game of pretending something never happened or rationalizing to ourselves action that was morally flawed. So, after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba and compounded it with murder, he evidently told himself that it was simply a matter of royal prerogative and, therefore nothing to do with his spiritual life. So he put it out of his mind, until Nathan’s “You are the man!” (2 Samuel 12:7) made him realize, at last, that he had offended God. This awareness was, and is, the seed bed where repentance grows. It does not grow elsewhere. True repentance only begins when one passes out of what the Bible sees as self-deception (cf. James 1:22, 26; 1John 1:8) and modern counselors call denial, into what the Bible calls conviction of sin (cf. John 16:8).

2. Regretful remorse at the dishonor one has done to the God one is learning to love and wanting to serve. This is the mark of the contrite heart (cf. Psalm 51:17; Isaiah 57:15). The Middle Ages drew a useful distinction between attrition and contrition (regret for sin prompted by fear for oneself and by love for God respectively; the latter leading to true repentance while the former fails to do so). The believer feels, not just attrition, but contrition, as did David (see Psalm 51:1-4, 15-17). Contrite remorse, springing from the sense of having outraged God’s goodness and love, is pictured and modeled in Jesus’ story of the prodigal’s return to his father (Luke 15:17-20).

3. Reverent requesting of God's pardon, cleansing of conscience, and help to not lapse in the same way again. A classic example of such requesting appears in David's prayer of penitence (see Psalm 51:7-12). The repentance of believers always, and necessarily, includes the exercise of faith in God for these restorative blessings. Jesus himself teaches God's children to pray "forgive us our sins... and lead us not into temptation" (Luke 11:4).

4. Resolute renunciation of the sins in question, with deliberate thought as to how to keep clear of them and live right for the future. When John the Baptist told Israel's official religious elite: "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance" (Matthew 3:8), he was calling on them to change direction in this way.

5. Requisite restitution to any who have suffered material loss through one's wrongdoing. Restitution in these circumstances was required by the Old Testament law. When Zacchaeus, the renegade Jewish taxman, became Jesus' disciple, he committed himself to make fourfold retribution for each act of extortion, apparently on the model of Moses' requirement of four sheep for everyone stolen and disposed of (Exodus 22:1; Exodus 22:2-14; Leviticus 6:4; Numbers 5:7).

- Excerpt from *Rediscovering Holiness: Know the Fullness of Life with God*, Chapter 5, by J.I. Packer

6. Reliance on the _____

Galatians 5:16-18 (ESV)

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Ephesians 3:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ ... that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being ...

Titus 3:5-6 (ESV)

⁵ ... he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior ...

2 Thessalonians 2:13 (ESV)

¹³ But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

Next week:

Do you really want to be **holy**?