

Prayer: 1st Corinthians 2:4 – “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power...”

Have you ever wondered why we are told in the Bible to renew our minds, and why it is necessary for Christians to continue in this process?

I am convinced this process is required for more than sin avoidance. While we certainly must avoid all willful sin, God’s desire for us to change is so we become like Him and therefore may become close to Him. God never wants us at a distance. He likes us close. This is very good news, by the way!

Let’s look at this process of renewal - there are two aspects – **Knowledge & Action**

In struggling with my past, I have tried to move on, get beyond the mistakes and regrets of yesterday by gaining knowledge. I attended church, read books, and asked many questions. These were all attempts to renew my mind in order to change the life I lived at that time which was causing me so much grief. I did not take specific action when guided by the Holy Spirit.

If you are familiar with this type effort, you know it is a lot harder than would first seem when you set out to change your mindset. Recently I bought more books on the subject of dealing with changing ingrained habits of thought. Each book required action on our part for us to change.

I find knowledge alone is not enough to change my behavior. Consider this example from medical science. A man is told he has stage four cancer and without treatment will die within days. Additionally, the man is told exactly how the treatment works, understands it and totally agrees with the process. He then leaves the doctor’s office... and does nothing.

We know the man must submit to instruction and receive treatment or die. Now apply this same scenario to us in spiritual concerns. The comparison is very simply made, but, I never took action with what I learned. To make matters worse, in the beginning I never questioned why I remained the same frustrated man. I just struggled harder without success against my temper, resentful nature, lust, un-forgiveness, etc.

When I asked other Christians for help, those I thought were seasoned in the faith, I got well meaning clichés like, ‘You know God doesn’t like us to be angry,’ and ‘Don’t let the sun go down on your anger,’ (**Eph 4:26**) or, ‘You really need to nail that temper (depression, lust, etc.) to the cross.’ OK, *How? Just pray*, they would say.

I can tell you praying *is* necessary and the importance of prayer cannot be underestimated, however, my experience has been that prayer must be joined to a specific action on our part. Knowledge alone will not remove the elements of sin with which we struggle.

In the next several devotions on Renewing the Mind, we will look at specific ways to take action. These actions will result in changes in the way we think and therefore in the way we act.

To help prepare for this we must acknowledge the Holy Spirit’s help. To this acknowledgement, we add the action of praying for God’s help, asking Him to do as He promises in His word - In the following verse, Jesus promises to answer prayer when we take action and believe.

- **“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”** [Matthew 21:22](#)

To pray in Jesus’ name means: His atonement (He died) for our sins, His authority to exercise power in our lives and His legal jurisdiction over us in order to change us (We give Him the right).