

Being a Spiritually Minded Christian
Part Eight
Being Transformed by the Renewing of Our Minds

Romans 12:1–2 (NKJV)

¹I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

- ***“that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” First, we need to come to the deep conviction within our own hearts that it is our reasonable service to be living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God.***
- ***If we desire to hear correctly what God’s Word is saying we must always hear it from the context that our reasonable service is to present our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God.***
- ***Many times Christians struggle with compromise, because they are asking the wrong question. The wrong question is “Does the Bible prohibit this? The correct question is “Does this glorify God?”***
- ***The naturally minded Christian asks, “What can’t I do?” because he loves rules and laws.***
- ***The carnally minded Christian asks, “Why can't I do it?” because his motivation is to satisfy his own lusts.***
- ***The spiritually minded Christian asks, “What do You want me to do?” because his primary motive is to please God even above himself, and live a life that brings glory to Christ.***
- ***Under the Mosaic Law, right and wrong were clearly spelled out and very much black and white from what one could eat to every detail of each sacrifice that needed to be made. However, in the New Testament we are under grace which is actually a higher standard and one that can only be properly understood and lived out if we are submitted to the Holy Spirit.***
- ***The naturally minded Christian loves religion and legalism, because he is motivated by self-effort and pride and he wants to establish his own righteousness. “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.” (Romans 10:2-3).***

- *The spiritually minded Christian doesn't study the Bible in an attempt to become legalistic by following rules. Nor does he study the Bible in an attempt to find loop holes to justify bad behaviour. He studies the Bible to understand the heart of God.*
- *A spiritually minded Christian understands that we are called to be living sacrifices for the glory of God.*
- *A spiritually minded Christian desires to learn to be led by the Spirit, because it is only when we are led by the Spirit that we will be able to know the will of God and have the grace to live it. "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." (Galatians 5:16).*
- *The way we learn to be Spirit led and to present ourselves as living sacrifices is by embracing "the mercies of God." We need to be confident that God is loving and patient and He is right there by our side to see us win and not lose, no matter how many times we may stumble and struggle. He continues to be there to encourage us, correct us, and strengthen us until we become the spiritually minded Christians He has called us to be.*
- *Romans 12:2 provides a number of key elements in how we can develop into spiritually minded Christians.*
- *"And do not be conformed to this world" not only provides a warning but also provides us with insights on how we can allow ourselves to be shaped by this present age.*
- *The Greek word for "conformed" means "to mold or form" and speaks about an outward pressure being exerted to shape something.*
- *When something is molded, the shape that it takes on does not reflect the nature of the material being molded, but is the result of the pressure that is applied by the mold.*
- *Once a person has repented and put their faith in Jesus Christ and is born again their nature has been changed. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17).*
- *Throughout the New Testament the concept that we as believers in Jesus Christ have received a new nature and a new identity is repeated over and over and over again.*

- *Although Christians have a new nature and a new identity in their reborn spirits, the enemy tries to use our fleshly impulses and our old ways of thinking to keep us in bondage and cause us to continue to act out and live according to our old ways before we received Christ.*
- **“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”** *Although the enemy has his plan to try to conform us to this world, God has His plan to transform us into the image of Jesus. And God’s plans are always so much better!*
- *Unlike the word “conform” which speaks of shaping something from the outside causing an external change, the Greek word for “transform” is μεταμορφῶ (metamorphō) which means, “to change the essential form or nature of something, to become something completely different.” From this Greek word we derive our English word “metamorphosis” which speaks of an internal change, from the inside out.*
- *God’s victorious plan is to transform us from the inside out through the new nature of Christ that God has given us in our reborn spirit. By the process of metamorphosis, a caterpillar changes into a beautiful soaring butterfly from the inside out until it is fully manifest to the world. Similarly, the life of Christ in our reborn spirit is able to transform our souls until we are able to be fully led by the Spirit and to be just like Jesus.*
- *What does it look like to be transformed from the inside out? It simply means to live just like Jesus. “He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.” (1 John 2:6).*
- *We need to yield to the Holy Spirit and just love and trust God on a daily basis. Then God will take every circumstance and experience, whether sweet or bitter, whether joyful or painful, whatever struggles we face, and use them all to conform and transform us from the inside out until we will be fully like Jesus! “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Romans 8:28-29).*
- *The specific process by which this transformation takes place is “by the renewing of your mind.”*
- *The Greek word for “renew” means “to cause something to become new and different with the implication of becoming superior.” This transformation in our souls begins with the renewing our minds as the Holy Spirit changes the way we think, so we change from being a naturally minded or carnally minded Christian to become a spiritually minded Christian. To be spiritually minded is so different and incomparably superior to being naturally minded.*

- *Often Christians become very discouraged and weary because they try so hard to change the way they are, to overcome bad habits, to become more spiritual, and to produce the fruit of the Spirit. Sometimes the reason they are not experiencing progress is that they are failing to realize first, they can't do it, they need the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, and second, the change comes by the renewing of their minds.*
- **“And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God...you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.” (1 Thessalonians 2:13, NIV). We can't change ourselves, but God's Word can—if we follow and obey.**
- **“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” (James 1:21). Think of God's Word as a seed, which if implanted in us, will grow and bear good fruit and cause us to become spiritually minded.**
- *Once our minds begin to be renewed, and as we become spiritually minded, we are able to evaluate things properly from God's perspective, “that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*
- **“that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” The Greek word for “prove” means “to test, examine, to recognize as genuine.” We must learn to recognize and discern the will of God.**
- *The spiritually minded Christian is able to recognize and discern the will of God. Then he is able to make godly decisions and not allow the enemy or even his own flesh to distract him from seeking God.*
- *As we become more spiritually minded our understanding and discernment become progressively more finely tuned, so we are able to recognize not only the good will of God, but also the acceptable and ultimately the perfect will of God.*
- *Being spiritually minded enables us to determine the “good” will of God. The Greek word for “good” means, “useful, honourable, upright.” We can choose to meditate on thoughts which are useful and honourable and which do not tear us down, but build us up to do the will of God. “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.” (Philippians 4:8).*
- *Being spiritually minded enables us to determine the “acceptable” will of God. While the English word “acceptable” may appear to be somewhat less than ideal, in the Greek it actually means “well pleasing, fully acceptable.” Being*

spiritually minded means to choose to think about and do what is fully acceptable to God.

- *When we act according to the acceptable will of God, we can have joy and confidence, knowing our actions bring joy to God's heart.*
- *Spiritually minded Christians are not motivated out of fear, guilt, or shame, but a desire to bring joy to our God simply because we love Him. A spiritually minded Christian is motivated by love—God's love for them, and their love for God. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us." (1 John 4:18-19).*
- *A spiritually minded Christian knows how to deal with their failures and sins in a good, fully acceptable, and well pleasing way. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9).*
- *When we confess our sins and fully embrace God's forgiveness with a thankful and joyful heart this is useful and fully acceptable to God. It reflects our full confidence in Jesus Christ and all that He has done for us through His sacrifice and glorious resurrection.*
- *The naturally minded Christian would reason that even after we have repented and confessed our sins, we still need to go through a period of time where we experience shame and guilt before we can feel fully forgiven. However, not only is this unacceptable to God, it actually plays right into the hand of the enemy who wants to drive us into despair, hopelessness, and away from God who desires to restore and help us.*
- *The natural mind is attracted to legalism and religion which produce self-righteousness accompanied by a sense of shame, guilt, and fear.*
- *The spiritually minded Christian recognizes his need to walk in holiness and freedom from the power of sin. He also recognizes that when he does fail there is forgiveness and restoration at the cross of Christ. "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." (1 John 2:1-2).*
- *Being spiritually minded enables us to determine the "perfect" will of God. The Greek word for "perfect" means "wanting nothing necessary to completeness, that which is perfect, full grown, of full age, completely mature."*

- *Being spiritually minded allows us to walk in complete confidence in God's love and allows Christ's character to be reflected to this world as He lives through us.*
- *Being spiritually minded in relationship to the perfect will of God is to be thankful no matter what circumstances we face. "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18).*
- *Being spiritually minded in relationship to the perfect will of God is to have complete faith and confidence in Jesus Christ. "Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." (John 6:28-29).*
- *This is the perfect will of God: to believe perfectly in Jesus Christ.*
- *The spiritually minded Christian recognizes that true and lasting joy and contentment come only from fully submitting to the Holy Spirit and walking with Jesus daily.*
- *Those who are naturally minded or carnally minded are deceived into thinking worldly success or worldly pleasures will result in contentment and satisfaction.*
- *George Bernard Shaw the famous Irish playwright, an avowed atheist, was the only person to win both the Nobel Prize in Literature (1925) and an Oscar (1938). He lived to the ripe old age of 94 and once said, "There are two tragedies in life: one is not getting your heart's desires. The other is to get it."*
- *No matter how intelligent or successful a naturally minded person is, they will fail to recognize that without Jesus Christ there is no true contentment, but that life ends in a most tragic way—with regret and futility.*

Matthew 14:28-32 NKJV

And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

- *When Peter stepped out of the boat he was motivated by a spiritual mind. "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."*
- *When Peter began to be fearful and sink he was seeing things from his natural mind, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"*

- *What was the source of the doubt reflected from his natural mind? He doubted the faithfulness and love of God.*
- *Peter went from being spiritually minded to naturally minded in one moment of time. When Peter's eyes were on Jesus, he had faith to step out of the boat. When he took his eyes off of Jesus and looked at his circumstances, he became fearful and began to sink.*
- *Here's the simple but profound conclusion, "Keep your eyes on Jesus and not the storms of life."*

Psalm 42 (NKJV)

To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation of the Sons of Korah.

- *Psalm 42 is a psalm of contemplation and as we meditate and consider what it teaches us, it will provide insights in how to develop into spiritually minded Christians.*

¹As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God.

²My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

- *Becoming a spiritually minded Christian begins with a deep longing to know God in a deeper and more intimate way. "As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God."*
- *Not only has Jesus promised to quench our deep thirst for Him, but to do it so perfectly that the water brooks will come forth from our inner being—Christ in our reborn spirit. "Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" (John 7:37-38).*
- *Framed in the context of the psalmist's deep thirst for God he asked this question: "When shall I come and appear before God?"*
- *Three times a year every male Jew came to the Temple in Jerusalem and presented himself before God to celebrate the three great feasts of the Lord—Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.*
- *Our intimacy and fellowship with God corresponds to the three great feasts of the Lord and the three ways that we overcome. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death." (Revelation 12:11).*

- *Passover is the feast where we fellowship with God as we enjoy all that Christ has done for us at Calvary. We rejoice in the joy of our salvation because we have overcome and are free from the penalty of sin through the blood of the Lamb.*
- *Pentecost is the feast where we fellowship with God as we experience the power of the Holy Spirit. God's grace is imparted to us through His Holy Spirit and through the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. We rejoice as God sanctifies us, so we can live holy lives for His glory. We overcome by the word of our testimony. Our joy is that we can be a testimony to bring glory to Christ to this world as salt and light.*
- *Tabernacles is the feast where we fellowship with God by experiencing His presence. It is where the flesh no longer is a distraction as we live lives completely surrendered to Him, seeking not to do our will, but seeking to do His will. Our joy is that we do not love our lives even unto death. "Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matthew 16:24-25).*

³My tears have been my food day and night, While they continually say to me,
"Where is your God?"

⁴When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, With the voice of joy and praise, With a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast.

- *There are times in our lives when we do not feel God's presence and may even feel He is remote and uncaring. "My tears have been my food day and night."*
- *The enemy will even taunt and mock us, because instead of being joyful, our hearts are filled with sorrow and sadness. "While they continually say to me, "Where is your God?"*
- *However, during times of suffering and sorrow, if we turn to God and begin to identify with Christ's suffering for us, then our suffering begins to make sense. "When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me."*
- *What crushes us most is not our suffering and sorrow, but when we fail to see any purpose for our suffering. "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy." (1 Peter 4:12-13).*

- *The spiritually minded Christian when facing a time of sorrow and tears can look past the immediacy of the sorrow and see that God has a purpose for allowing it. “Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).*
- *It is extremely important when going through a season of sorrow and tears to remember the times of joy we experienced in God’s presence. “For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, With the voice of joy and praise, With a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast.”*
- *A spiritually minded Christian will train himself to remember joyous times, especially when facing sorrow.*

⁵Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.

- *At this point the psalmist asked himself a very important question, “Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me?”*
- *The significance and the insight of this question may elude the naturally minded Christian, but the importance of it will be evident to the spiritually minded Christian.*
- *A naturally minded Christian just thinks, but a spiritually minded Christians thinks about what he is thinking about.*
- *There can be times when we begin to feel down and heavy hearted, but we are not really aware of it, even though we have this cloud hanging over us.*
- *We can have an “internal monologue” which keeps playing over and over in our thoughts which sets a negative atmosphere in our minds and emotions.*
- *The spiritually minded Christian will recognize when he is downhearted and his internal monologue is negative. He will take action to correct it by speaking to himself. “Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.”*
- *The naturally minded Christian is passive and allows whatever internal monologue is playing in the background to continue, but the spiritually minded Christian recognizes it and forcefully addresses it. “And from the days of John*

the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.” (*Matthew 11:12*).

- *The spiritually minded Christian begins to proclaim to himself that God is faithful and that God will use adverse circumstances for his good and for God’s glory. “Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.”*
- *The spiritually minded Christian resets the internal monologue to proclaim and meditate on the goodness, the glory, and the faithfulness of God, “I will also meditate on all Your work, And talk of Your deeds.” (*Psalms 77:12*).*

‘O my God, my soul is cast down within me; Therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan, And from the heights of Hermon, From the Hill Mizar.

- *The next step a spiritually minded Christian takes when he recognizes he is struggling with either depression or negative and discouraging thoughts is to turn to God in prayer and seek His help. “O my God, my soul is cast down within me.”*
- *No matter in what circumstance we find ourselves, we need to remember God continually.*
- *“I will remember You from the land of the Jordan.” The Hebrew word for Jordan means “to descend, to go down,” so it can also be a picture of those low times in our lives.*
- *However, the Jordan is also the place from which Israel was preparing to enter into the Promised Land. Israel had left the bondage of Egypt, but had not yet entered the Promised Land and the inheritance God had prepared for them. The Jordan can also represent those times in our lives where we are anticipating a new move of God in our lives, so it can be a time of excitement and expectation.*
- *The naturally minded Christian will find their times in the spiritual valley, the Jordan, a time of discouragement, while the spiritually minded Christian when in the Jordan will be filled with faith and expectation for what God is about to do.*
- *“And from the heights of Hermon.” The Hebrew word for Hermon means “sacred” and it can speak about those wonderful mountain top experiences where God’s presence is manifest in such wonderful ways, whether it is a time of prayer and worship or a time of fellowship. It can also refer to those special moments when we receive a personal revelation from God whether it is a prophecy, a vision, or a dream.*

- *We need to remember and cherish those wonderful mountain top experiences with God to help sustain us when we are passing through a spiritual valley.*
- *Some Christians only serve God when they are in a valley and they turn to Him because of difficulties. Others Christians can only serve God in mountain top experiences, when circumstances are ideal. But God wants us to be spiritually minded and remember Him both when we are in the Jordan or on the heights of Hermon.*
- *There are times when we are facing the Hill of Mizar. In Hebrew, Mizar means “regrets, sadness, remorse,” and speaks about those mountains in our lives that try to block us from moving forward in our journey with God.*
- *Shame, regrets, or simply overwhelming circumstances may try to stop us from continuing our Christian journey, but God wants us to remember and not allow our faith to waiver. “For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.” (Mark 11:23).*
- *What do we shout to those mountains in our lives that try to hinder us from moving forward with faith in Christ? “Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone With shouts of “Grace, grace to it!” ’ ” (Zechariah 4:7).*
- *We are not to shout at the mountains in self-effort. That will simply exhaust and discourage us. We are to declare that it is by the grace of God that we will be victorious, “Grace, grace.”*
- *God does not want us to shout at the darkness, but to face the light.*

⁷Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; All Your waves and billows have gone over me.

- *“Deep calls unto deep” In the midst of difficulties and trials, if we turn to God it will result in us developing a richer and more intimate relationship with God.*

⁸The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, And in the night His song shall be with me—A prayer to the God of my life.

- *The psalmist continued to proclaim that God’s lovingkindness was always with him day and night and prayer sustained him through this dark time.*

⁹I will say to God my Rock, “Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?”

¹⁰As with a breaking of my bones, My enemies reproach me, While they say to me all day long, “Where is your God?”

- *Although we are worshiping and praising God, the lack of an immediate change in our circumstances does not always reflect a lack of faith. It can simply mean that the Lord is walking with us through a valley until we reach the heights of Hermon.*

¹¹Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

- *Throughout the journey the psalmist continued to encourage himself and remind his soul of God’s faithfulness. “Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.”*
- *“Hope in God” – A spiritually minded Christian puts on the helmet of salvation (Ephesians 6:17), which is “the hope of salvation” (1 Thessalonians 5:8), that not only will God deliver him from the circumstances, but He will bring him through in complete victory.*