

Renew Your Mind

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Nineteen Eighty-four is a novel by George Orwell that tells the story of a world where the ruling authority known as “Big Brother” seeks to control the thoughts and actions of every citizen. In my opinion, this once futuristic novel describes much of our society today. I do not live under a totalitarian government with strict censorship, but it can be asserted that the media and advertising agencies are effectively controlling or at least strongly influencing, how people think and live. From presidential elections to financial decisions to life style choices, millions of people are drifting along through life, allowing their thoughts and actions to be manipulated by the mass media.

Experts on the art of persuasion report that media techniques have developed to the point that someone with skill and determination can manipulate the masses in any way he may wish. This manipulation however is not limited to those who are not Christians. According to pollster George Barna the moral principals and actual practices of most Christians aren’t much different from those of non-Christians. This means that too many Christians have the same fears, desires, and values in life as the non-Christian, and they reap the same worldly fruit. Far too many Christians are unaware of any way of thinking or living other than that of the secular culture that bombards them with its fears and ideals. But there is another way of thinking and living! In Romans 12:2, the word of God declares:

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 (NKJV).

Here’s how some other translations have put it:

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will (NIV).

Do not conform yourself to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect (NAB).

Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God...(Amplified Bible).

Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remake you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed (J.B. Phillips).

Don’t become so well adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead focus your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. (The Message)

I think you get the point! Our lost world has its values and standards, its certain ways of thinking and doing things and we must not allow ourselves to be manipulated by these things. We need to break out of the world’s “world view” and take on God’s “world view.” If we do, our lives will be dramatically changed for the better.

The phrase “do not be conformed” is translated from the Greek word suschematizo. It means to be molded or squeezed into a form. In other words we are not to be manipulated or

pressured into thinking and thus living like the unbelieving world around us. Rather we are to allow ourselves to be transformed by the renewing of our mind to the Word of God.

The word “*transformed*” translates the Greek word metamorphoomai. The English word metamorphosis comes from this word. It means to undergo a radical change in composition or in character; to go from one form of life to another, like a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. That’s the kind of dramatic change we can experience in life!

As followers of Christ we must no longer continue in the thinking patterns and practices of a sinful world. Ephesians 4:17 says,

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind...

The phrase “*futility of their mind*” describes the vain, empty or fruitless thinking and living of those whose thought patterns are void of the knowledge of God. That’s why we are exhorted to,

“be renewed in the spirit of your mind,”

so that we can put off an old fruitless way of life and put on a new fruitful one.

Here is a profound truth: **Ideas have consequences.** What we truly believe in our hearts, we live out in our lives. Having a godly frame of mind, leading to a godly worldview and godly actions, makes all difference in living a spiritually fruitful life. And we want our lives to be full of blessed spiritual fruit The Bible says that,

the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22).

These are the virtues that will characterize the life of a believer whose mind is renewed. These are the virtues that will enable us to bring glory to God, as we become more and more like Christ. Let’s not let “Big Brother” or the worldly news media control our lives, manipulating us to think and live as the rest of the world does. Let’s allow the Word of our Father to permeate our hearts so that we can be transformed and,

“prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”