

RENEWING THE MIND
ROMANS 12:2

Since the fall of man, everybody is born into this world physically alive but spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1). Having no relationship with God, we progress through those developmental years learning to survive without Him. Defense mechanisms are developed as we learn how to cope, relate, and hopefully succeed in life. Living a life independent of God, centering one's interest on self, is what constitutes the flesh. It becomes mental patterns of thought, a means of living without the benefits of God's presence nor the wisdom of knowing God's ways (Col. 2:8). God's plan is that we be "born again" and then be transformed by the "renewing of our minds" (Rom. 12:1, 2). Although we are new creations in Christ, our minds have been programmed to live without Him. The Christian who remains in this state is a carnal Christian or one who walks according to the flesh.

A. Faith and the renewing of our minds.

Faith is the operating principle of life. It is essential for salvation (Eph. 2:8, 9), and for ministry (I Tim. 1:12; II Tim. 2:2). It is required that stewards (I Cor. 4:1, 2) walk by faith (II Cor. 5:7). Since all that we are in Christ is appropriated by faith, it is crucial that the Christian understands this foundational issue.

1. Faith is dependent upon the object of faith. (Rom. 10:2)
 - a. The only difference between Christian and non-Christian faith is the object.
 - b. We all live and operate by faith.
 - c. Once lost it is hard to regain.
 - d. Jesus Christ is the ultimate object of our faith. (Heb. 11:6; 13:7, 8)
2. How much faith we have is determined by how well we know the object. (Rom. 10:17)
 - a. It can't be pumped up!
 - b. Faith becomes presumption when actions precede understanding.
 - c. God is under no obligation to man.
 - d. God will often put us in a position where we have to trust Him.

B. Strongholds and the renewing of our minds (II Cor. 10:3-5).

1. How strongholds are developed:

a. Stimulation

brief (situations, places, pictures, etc.)
prevailing (family, friends, job, neighborhood,
etc.)

b. Temptation (I Cor. 10:13)

c. Consideration

d. Choice

e. Act

f. Habit (it takes six weeks to establish a habit)

g. Strongholds

Strongholds are mental patterns of thought burned into our minds over time or from traumatic experiences. Strongholds are revealed in unchristian temperaments and behavior patterns often unrecognized by self, or if recognized, seldom understood as choice, "So what if I'm an insensitive person, that's just the way I am."