

Wholeness

Weekly Biblical reflections for looking after our Wellbeing

Reflection 7: Living a Life of Transformation

Do not conform 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.

Romans 12:2

When we think something, our body has a reaction, our thoughts are very powerful! Therefore, when looking at our wellbeing and emotional wholeness we need to start with our mindset as it affects every area of our life.

Selwyn Hughes, the Welsh Christian minister best known for writing the daily devotional Every Day with Jesus said:

'To win the battle of the mind is to win one of the greatest areas of life. It is said that no real change can take place until a person's thinking is changed.'

We know through studies that thoughts and feelings affect our physical health and vice versa. This has been designed to keep us safe, but at times our minds can have a negative effect on us and this can sometimes plague us throughout the day. Addressing what we're thinking and how this makes us feel can be a helpful start to bring about change in our lives.

'The good news is we know the brain is never static. The hardwiring of the brain is constantly changing and adapting to new information, to where ever we focus our attention (neuroplasticity).'ⁱ

So where should we focus our attention? Paul in the verse above explains where our attention should not be and then where it can be. Firstly, he talks about not conforming to the pattern of this world. We are constantly being made to conform and influenced through

the things we read, watch, from past experiences etc, and all of these things can bring pressure and have an effect on our neuro pathways. Only 12 years ago the smart phone was launched – suddenly it brought everything into one place, messaging, emails, news, games, social media, we don't even need to go to teletext any more for the weather (sorry if you are too young to know what I am talking about!!). We are bombarded with information and contact, a recent study found that the average iPhone user touches his or her phone 2,617 times a dayⁱⁱ we consume more information than ever before. John Mark Comer, in his book *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, states:

'We become what we give our attention to'ⁱⁱⁱ

We give our attention to so much in one day just through our phones but I think a good question to ask here is not 'should I stop using my phone?' but 'what is this forming in me?'

So if we are not to conform, what does Paul say we should do – we should be transformed by the renewing of our mind. All those years ago Paul would not have known about neuroplasticity, but he would have known that God could renew our minds and change the way we think – God's design of our mind is so amazing!!!

Many people will often say 'I think like this and behave like this because of who I am' but the Bible and neuroscience say it doesn't have to be this way. So how can we be transformed?

Declaring things daily can shape the way we think, many people will declare positive affirmations, but we can also declare scripture and allow God to be involved in transforming our thinking. It's great to declare scripture and make it personal; Psalm 23 is a great Psalm to declare over our lives. Our brain can be moulded and transformed like plastic. Transformed from the inside out!

Questions to reflect on:

- What influences my thinking? Do I feel bombarded with the amount of information that comes my way?
- What do I give my attention to? Is it always helpful?
- What positive affirmations and scripture can I declare over my life daily to transform my thinking?

Prayer:

Father, I thank you that you have designed my brain to be mouldable, that you have designed me so I don't need to be defined by past experiences and present ones. Help me

declare truth over my life so my mindset can be renewed and I can know your good,
pleasing and perfect will. Amen

ⁱ <https://www.inmindinbody.com/blog/how-thoughts-affect-your-physical-health/>

ⁱⁱ Naftulin, J “Here’s How Many times we Touch Our Phone every Day,” Business Insider, July 12, 2016,
www.businessinsider.com/dscout-research-people-touch-cell-phones-2617-times-a-day-2016-7

ⁱⁱⁱ Comer, J M. (2019) *The Ruthless Elimination Hurry, The Secret of an Easy Yoke*, Hodder and Stoughton p.55