

## The Renewing of Your Mind

by Hendrik Joubert

There are some clever slogans we may employ to help us feel better about a lack of spirituality, and we may even quote Scripture to *validate* it. Jesus turned water into wine (**John 2:1ff**), so we may abuse alcohol. The Lord warned against frivolous interpersonal judgments (**Matthew 7:1-5**), so you may not *correct* or *reproof* me; the purpose the Bible was given for (**2Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12**) so that we would *not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment*. (**John 7:24 NKJV**)

**Ecclesiastes 3** is another popular passage among those who would engage in sinful activities without concern. Solomon points out that there is a *season* for everything... *A time for every purpose under heaven:* <sup>2</sup> *A time to be born, And a time to die; ...* <sup>3</sup> *A time to kill, And a time to heal; A time to break down, And a time to build up;* <sup>4</sup> *A time to weep, And a time to laugh; A time to mourn, And a time to dance;...* <sup>8</sup> *A time to love, And a time to hate; A time of war, And a time of peace.* (**Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 NKJV**)

The intended lesson, or *conclusion* of the book, is ignored as God declares through Solomon: *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.* <sup>14</sup> *For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.* (**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 NKJV**) Instead some gather from this that *there is a time to sin*.

Every single act I engage in will contribute to my image as God sees me, even *every secret thing*. The *productive* things we engage in, often presented *to the glory of God*, may also cause us to lose our souls. The whole matter may be summed up in the following question Jesus asks: *For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?* (**Matthew 16:26 NKJV**)

When this life is over nothing of the fleshly entanglements which serves as spontaneous tests of our faith in God will remain, despite some looking forward to a renewed physical earth, or running their own universe as gods creating offspring with wives married for this life and the hereafter, or virgins waiting for them in heaven to reward them for bravery; ideas which only illustrate the level of fleshly mindedness of some who claim to believe in God or His Son.

In **Romans 12:2** God exhorts us through the apostle not to *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) Not only young people are vulnerable to peer pressure, adults have peers who will often attempt to make one feel foolish for being careful to do things God's way. From day one we are conditioned to conform to standards set by our environment, and it continues to the day of our death. God demands that we be transformed by *renewing* our minds, and there is a sense of challenge as He adds *that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Consider the pliability of wax. When heat is applied one could melt, and reshape a piece of wax many times into different shapes. It will take on the shape of any container it is poured into. Under the *heat* of pressure we often will take on the form of this world, in fear of losing the approval and acceptance of others. (**John 12:42-43**) In that sense we may become as wax to be what we need to be for the moment. Those who would be followers of God should not be shaped by this world.

Now consider the qualities of clay. While it is wet it may be shaped into anything we desire, limited only by our ability. In **Jeremiah 18** we find God as the Potter and Israel, as well as other nations, the clay. If we will allow God to shape us through His word, we will become vessels of honor. The heat applied to clay only serves to make the form God molded permanent – clay is hardened by heat.

The shaping by God takes place by a renewing of our mind, or thinking. In the gospel we have the righteousness according to God revealed. (**Romans 1:16-17**) Many choose to concentrate on the part Jesus played, and describe that as the *essence of the gospel*; however this view ignores the side the believer has to *obey*: *For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?* (**1 Peter 4:17 NKJV**)

Grace is considered an abstract concept suggesting one receive much for nothing. In **Titus 2:11-12** we learn that the grace of God instructs: ...*teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,*... (NKJV) Again God asks through Paul: *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?* In the next verse He supplies the answer: *Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?* (**Romans 6:1-2 NKJV**)

What the Bible says, and what the general view is differs greatly. If we want to please God we will have to allow the Bible to renew our thinking.