

## 04 Renewing Our Thoughts

### 04.1 Father God desires that our Thoughts be shaped by The TRUTH which cultivates HOPE.

**Key Definition:** **Truth** is reality; Truth defines what is really real. Truth has its origin in God who tells us what is really real. On the opposite side you have The Lie which comes from the Adversary.

**Hearing** The Word of God (The Truth, The Gospel) gives us **Hope** which leads to the renewal of our thoughts :

**Romans 15:4** For everything that was written in former times was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and through encouragement of the Scriptures **we may have hope.**

### 04.2 What are Thoughts?

**1 Corinthians 14:20** Brothers and sisters, do not be children in your thinking. Instead, be infants in evil, but *in your thinking be mature.*

“The realm of thought involves four main factors. These are ideas, images, information, and our ability to think, but the two most powerful ones are *ideas and images.*” [Willard, *Renovation*,96]

04.2.1 Ideas (Knowledge collected together in “Powerful Guiding Stories”)

“...[when Satan] undertook to draw Eve away from God, he did not hit her with a stick, but with an idea. It was the idea that God could not be trusted and that she must act on her own to secure her own well-being.” [Willard, *Renovation*, 100]

04.2.2 Images (“Mental Pictures,”The Imagination)

**Key Definition:** **Imagination** is our ability to see with our “minds eye”; the ability to produce “mental images.” Imagination is central to our thought process.

**Colossians 3:1-3** Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 3:2 *Keep thinking about things above, not things on the earth,* 3:3 for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

**Hebrews 12:1-3** Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great

cloud of witnesses, we must get rid of every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set out for us, 12:2 *keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus*, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy set out for him he endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. 12:3 **Think of him** who endured such opposition against himself by sinners, *so that you may not grow weary in your souls and give up.*

“Our essential nature as active and creative beings depends upon our ability to envision what is not the case as well as what is. Our ability to plan for the future must constantly run ahead of reality. And this we do in thought. A will that runs ahead depends, of course, upon our abilities to think; and *what* we think, imagine, believe, or guess sets boundaries to what we can will or choose, and therefore to what we create.” [Willard, *Heart*, 96]

#### 04.2.3 Information (Knowledge)

**Proverbs 1:7** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;  
fools despise wisdom and instruction.

**Proverbs 2:6-8** For the LORD gives wisdom;  
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;  
2:7 he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;  
he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,  
2:8 guarding the paths of justice  
and watching over the way of his saints.

**Hosea 4:6, 14** My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; ...  
and a people without understanding shall come to ruin.

#### 04.2.4 Ability to Think (Intellect)

Our ability to think is largely shaped by the things that we think about. We become like what we worship. If we fill our minds with the knowledge and wisdom of God, we will become “wise in the ways of the Lord.” Also, as we see truth worked out in the lives of others we will model them. *The Lord is not seeking the “intellectuals” in the sense of “smart” people to follow Him; He is seeking those who are smart enough to know that they are foolish to build their lives on anything other than His truth.*

“The first fruit of love is *the musing of the mind upon God*... He who loves God is ravished and transported with the contemplation of God.” *When I awake, I am still with thee*” (Psalm 139:18)... God is the treasure, and where the treasure is, there is the heart. By this we may test our love to God. What are our thoughts most upon? Can we say that we are ravished with delight when we think on God? Have our thoughts got wings? Are they held aloft? Do we contemplate Christ and glory? Oh, how far are they from being lovers of God, who scarcely

think of God!"

[Thomas Watson, *All Things for Good*]

#### 04.3 How are the Father, Son and Spirit working to shape our Thoughts?

04.3.1 Revelation and Illumination | Father God has “enlightened the eyes of our hearts”, but we still need Spiritual wisdom and revelation.

**Ephesians 1:15-20** For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 1:16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 1:17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, *may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him*, 1:18 **since you have had the eyes of your hearts enlightened**, ...

04.3.2 Knowledge (Information) | There are things that we need to know, since we have already been enlightened. These things we know—realize, accept to be completely true—by the work of the Spirit.

**Ephesians 1:18b ... that you MAY KNOW**

1) what is **the Hope** to which he has called you,  
 2) what are **the Riches** of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 1:19 and 3) what is **the Immeasurable Greatness of his power** toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 1:20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ...

04.3.3 We are called to Hope | Father God has called us to hope. Hope is foundational to all of life. Hope *precedes* both Faith/Truth and Love. (See 1 John 3:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)

04.3.4 We are Christ's Glorious Inheritance | We are the Beloved of God. WE are Christ's Eternal and Glorious Inheritance (See Isaiah 53:10; Hebrews 2:11-13)

04.3.5 We have access to the immeasurable Power of God | We have access to the same power that raised Jesus from the dead through the Holy Spirit who lives within us. (See Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12)

#### 04.4 The Will

“The ultimate freedom we have as human beings is the power to select what we will allow or require our minds to dwell upon.” [Willard, *Heart*, 95]

**\*We cooperate in our transformation first in what we choose to think about, what we choose to have our minds dwell on. Will we allow our minds to be shaped by The Truth or The Lie?**

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## heartWORK: Fixing Our Thoughts on Christ

07 **Soul Exercise | Hearing The Word and Seeing The Glory:** As we have already said, the transformation what we are experiencing in Christ is a gift of grace. It is initiated and sustained by Father God working in Christ through the power of The Spirit. Our first and primary cooperation in this work is one of humble receiving. We receive in two primary ways 1) Hearing the Voice of our Father and Shepherd and 2) Seeing the Glory of God in the face of Christ. I am not just talking about reading and studying the Bible here. This one point alone is beyond the scope of this study to develop fully. What I am talking about here is reading the Word and letting it take over all of our thoughts to the point that we are keeping company with the Father, Son and Spirit in all areas of life. We are directed by His Truth; we are captivated by His glory/beauty. In this way, we “realize” His presence with us in all of life. In this way He becomes our trusted ally, the “shade on our right hand” (see Psalm 131).

08 **Thinking Toward the Gospel:** Everyday we are bombarded with ideas and images that are from the World. Now, more than ever, the Enemy is able to pour a relentless torrent of anti-Truth and anti-Christ thoughts (ideas and images) into our minds. The first step in resisting this attack is to fill our minds with the Hope of the Gospel. This means that reading and hearing the Written Word of the Scriptures is absolutely essential to hearing from the Living Word—our Lord Jesus at work through the Holy Spirit.

We have to be active in processing all the information that comes our way:

1) Is this idea or image in line with the Truth of the Gospel?

2) If this idea or image is a lie, why is it a lie?

3) Is this thought leading me to Hope in Christ?

1 John 3:1-3 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 3:2 Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3:3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

09 **Turning from The World to Trust Christ:** I have become completely convinced that the Devil, our Adversary, who is at work in the World

is bent on keeping us from **1)** seeing The Glory of God in the Face of Christ (see 2 Corinthians 4:3-4) and **2)** knowing How much the Father truly loves us.

- 10 **Following the Master:** In Isaiah 50:4-9 we have the third of the Servant Songs. These songs foretell the ministry of Jesus. As we read and hear these, we should hear the words coming from the mouth of Jesus Himself. In this song we hear:
- “The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught,  
that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary.  
Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear  
to hear as those who are taught (as a Disciple).  
50:5 The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious;  
I turned not backward.  
50:6 I gave my back to those who strike,  
and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard;  
I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting.  
50:7 But the Lord GOD helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like a flint,  
and I know that I shall not be put to shame.  
50:8 He who vindicates me is near.  
Who will contend with me?  
Let us stand up together.  
Who is my adversary?  
Let him come near to me.  
50:9 Behold, the Lord GOD helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?  
Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment;  
the moth will eat them up.

The Lord Jesus modeled this very attitude and hope for us. Because He was instructed by His Father, because his ultimate hope was placed in His Father, because His ultimate trust was in His Father he could endure beating and short term shame. He was absolutely convinced that His Father would vindicate, glorify Him in the end.

**\*As you follow Jesus, are you hopefully convinced that your Heavenly Father will do and is doing the same for you?**



## 05 Renewing Our Emotions

“Feelings are a primary blessing and a primary problem for human life. We cannot live without them and we can hardly live with them. Hence they are also central for spiritual formation in the Christian tradition. . . . In the restoration of the individual to God, feelings too must be renovated: old ones removed in many cases, or at least thoroughly modified, and new ones installed or at least heightened into a new prominence.

We know for example, that feelings *move* us, and that *we enjoy being moved*. They give us a sense of being alive. Without feeling we have no interest in things, no inclination to action. . . .

So feelings are essential to life. We must accept this and work with it.”  
[Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*]

### 05.1 Father God desires that our emotions/feelings be shaped by tasting/experiencing/realizing His GOODNESS which cultivates our TRUST.

**Psalms 34:8** Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!  
Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

05.1.1 Provision | The Lord provides all that we need for life:

#### **Psalms 104:13-15**

104:14 You cause the grass to grow for the livestock  
and plants for man to cultivate,  
that he may bring forth food from the earth

104:15 and wine to gladden the heart of man,  
oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man’s heart.

05.1.2 Love | The Lord desires that we be completely captivated by the love that He has for us.

**1John 4:7-12** Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 4:8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 4:9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 4:10 ***In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation (the perfectly satisfying sacrifice) for our sins.*** 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 4:12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

“Self rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the sacred voice which calls us ‘Beloved.’ Being the Beloved constitutes the core truth of our existence.”  
[Henri Nouwen, *Life of the Beloved*, 23]

05.2 **What are our Emotions?**

05.2.1 Feeling | Emotion is very difficult, if not impossible to define. For our purposes, we can think of our emotions as the vast range of feelings that are produced as the “internal reality” (of our thoughts, desires and expectations) is confronted by the reality of the “external world” (circumstance).

05.2.2 Moved and Touched | We are moved by our emotions/feelings. We can be “touched” by certain things and thus feel love, nostalgia, compassion, fear, etc The root of our English term “emotion” come from roots which point to something “moving out.” We are moved by certain things. Our emotions “move out” of our deeper parts.

05.2.3 The Barometer of the Heart | I think the most useful way to think about our emotions is that they serve as the “barometer” of our hearts. They clue us in to what is going on deep in our depths. They are closely linked to our thoughts and desires. As we will see when we look at our desires, our emotions can clue us in to the real battle that is going on within us between the Holy Spirit who dwells in our hearts and the Sin which dwells in our Flesh.

“Feelings are, with few exceptions, good servants. But they are disastrous masters.” [Dallas Willard, *Renovation*, 122]

05.3 **We can be moved by Good, Godly Emotions which build up or Bad, Ungodly Emotions which destroy.**

05.3.1 Bad (Destructive) Emotions vs. Good (Edifying) Emotions.

Hatred	vs.	Love
Anxiety	vs.	Peace
Grief	vs.	Joy
Pride	vs.	Humility
Doubt	vs.	Trust
Bitterness	vs.	Delight
Despair	vs.	Hope
Apathy	vs.	Compassion

05.3.2 The Root of Action | Our Feelings and Emotions are most often the “Root” of our actions and this is disastrous when we are “moved” to action by ungodly emotions.

“They [feelings] more than any other component of our nature, are the ‘trigger’ of sinful action. If you consider the Ten Commandments after the first two, for example, you will see that it is feelings out of control that lead to their violation. In his own magnificent treatment of the moral life, Jesus makes a

point of putting anger, contempt, and lust in their place... Until that is done, nothing else works." [Willard, *Renovation*, 138]

05.3.3 The Root Problem of our Emotions | Our negative, unrighteous, destructive emotions are usually rooted in taking people too seriously and not taking Father God seriously enough. The goodness of God we experience in His unfailing love for us should be the ground for all our emotions. MOST OFTEN our negative emotions flow out of our believing *the lie that we are in control of our lives*. We are not in control; when we trust God who is in control, soon we find our emotions settling into peace and joy rather than turmoil and anxiety.

**Proverbs 29:25** The fear of people becomes a snare,  
but whoever trusts in the LORD will be set on high.

**Psalms 86:11** Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth;  
*unite my heart to fear your name* [bind my heart to the fearing of your name].

05.3.4 Christ desires that His Peace and Joy be ours in all things:

**John 15:9-11** As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 15:10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 15:11 *These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.*

**John 14:27** [Jesus speaking about His leaving and the giving of the Holy Spirit] "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; I do not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be distressed or afraid.

05.4 **Conscience:  
Are We Heading in the Right Direction with the Right Motives?**

**1 Timothy 1:3-7** As I urged you when I was leaving for Macedonia, stay on in Ephesus to instruct certain people not to spread false teachings, 1:4 nor to occupy themselves with myths and interminable genealogies. Such things promote useless speculations rather than God's redemptive plan that operates by faith. 1:5 **But the aim of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.** 1:6 Some have strayed from these and turned away to empty discussion ...

“No sin can be crucified either in heart or life unless it first be pardoned in conscience, because there will be want of faith to receive the strength of Jesus, by whom alone it can be crucified. If it be not mortified in its guilt, it cannot be subdued in its power.”

[William Romaine, *The Life, Walk and Triumph of Faith*]

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## heartWORK: Naming and Taming Our Feelings

- 11 **Soul Exercise | Praying at all times in the Spirit:** Our first exercise was that of Hearing and Seeing, receiving what Father God has freely given us in the grace of Christ through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Our second exercise is one of RESPONSE. When we engage in prayer we are keeping company with God, responding to the First Word of His grace to us. The Psalms are a great place to start to see how the emotions and feelings of the Psalmists infused their prayers and songs. They were moved by their emotions to cry out to God in praise, petition and lament. As we pray we are making ourselves open and available to the One before whom we stand “naked and exposed” already (Hebrews 4:13).
- 12 **Naming The Feeling/Emotion:** Remember, our feelings and emotions serve as the “barometers” for our hearts. They key us in to what is going on in our depths. They usually key us in to the struggle that is taking place with the Holy Spirit who dwells within us and the Sin that yet dwells in our Flesh. Once we know what is going on, we can actively subject our feelings and emotions to the grace of God.

The first step in dealing with our feelings and emotions is becoming fully aware of them by naming them. Here is a simple exercise to get this started:

“I feel \_\_\_\_\_ about \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.”

This simple statement puts three things in place for us:

- 1) the **feeling** or emotion: at this point just fill this in with one word; don't say “I feel like...” NAME the feeling: “I feel anxious...” “I feel joy...”
  - 2) the **ABOUT** slot labels the specific circumstance that has caused the emotion. This puts our feeling and emotions in **CONTEXT**. When we become aware of this, we will be able to know what triggers certain emotions.
  - 3) the **BECAUSE** slot asks us to analyze the **WHY** of the feeling or emotion. This may be the most important part of this whole exercise. When we know **WHY** we feel the way we do, we become open to the grace of God and others to help us deal with what is going on inside.
- 13 **Applying the Gospel to Our Emotions:** When we name and share good and right emotions they edify and encourage others. However, our negative, destructive, bad emotions are a different story. These must be replaced, transformed. As we work the above process with

negative emotions, we are on the way to transforming them. Yet naming them and understanding why they are present is not enough. Once they are exposed, we are ready for the grace of God in the **Truth of the Gospel** to help us deal with them effectively. First we *Identify* the **Lie** or **Untruth** that is at the core of the destructive emotion or feeling. We need to TURN from this lie in order to TRUST Christ. [Often these destructive emotions will be tied to some “Idol of the Heart”]. In our praying, we ask God to illuminate the lie that has taken root in our hearts. If we are willing for Him to do so, He will show us what is out of line with His truth, goodness and glory.

- 14 **Turning and Trusting:** Now RE-Mind yourself of the soul satisfying reality of “being accepted in the **Beloved;**” if God is for you, who can stand against you? Here, we **Turn** from our idols, our counterfeit saviors in order to **Trust** the love of Father God given to us in Christ through the Holy Spirit who lives within us, pouring this love into our hearts (Romans 5:5).

We may need to do something to be released from the bondage of the ungodly, negative, destructive emotions. We may need to forgive others of the wrongs they have done to us. We may have to confess our own sin and failure: we may have placed ourselves in the “center of the universe,” we may have been prideful, etc. Often we will need to do something. Here are some things that have helped others:

- 1) Write a ‘letter to the Lord’ and get the feelings out in the open,
- 2) Seek the counsel of a wise Christian friend who knows how to listen (both to us and to the Lord).
- 3) A fellowship group can develop a prayer ministry for this area,
- 4) Journaling can illuminate the ideas, images, past events etc, on which the destructive feelings are based. Once these are known, they can be replaced or healed.

- 15 **Following Christ in Freedom from Negative Emotions:** Now we are able, if we intend, to **Follow** Christ as He leads us into the freedom of His goodness and glory so that His emotional reality may fill us: *“These things I have spoken to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete”* (John 15:11); *“My peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give you. Let not your heart be troubled or fearful”* (John 14:27).

Romans 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in him, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.



## 06 Renewing Our Desires

“Desire is at the helm of our lives. It determines our behavior. *We always do what we want to do.* The question is, which of our desires is strongest at any given moment? [Tim Chester, *You Can Change*, 102]

### 06.1 Father God desires that our desires be shaped by His GLORY which then cultivates our LOVE.

*The Lord Jesus' desires were shaped by His primary desire of pleasing His Father:*

**John 4:31-34** ... the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” 4:32 But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” 4:33 So the disciples began to say to one another, “No one brought him anything to eat, did they?” 4:34 Jesus said to them, “*My food is to do the will/desire of the one who sent me and to complete his work.*”

**John 5:30** I can do nothing on my own initiative. Just as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will/desire, but the will/desire of the One who sent me.

**John 7:18** The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of Him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.

**John 17:1, 4-5** When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ... 17:4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. 17:5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.”

### 06.2 We are driven by our desires.

06.2.1 The Conflict of Desire | There is a conflict of desires within us. There are desires which come from the Sin which dwells in our Flesh and there are desires which come from the Holy Spirit (The Spirit of Truth) who dwells in our hearts:

**Galatians 5:16-17** But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out *the desires of the flesh.* 5:17 For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and *the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh,* for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want.

06.2.2 Corrupt Desire | We can be driven by ungodly, corrupt desires which come from the Sin which dwells in our Flesh:

**James 1:13-16** Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted by evil, and he himself tempts no one. 1:14 But *each one is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desires.* 1:15 Then when desire conceives, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is full grown, it gives birth to death. 1:16 Do not be led astray, my dear brothers and sisters.

“Only when we understand the role of our hearts can we truly understand the role of circumstances in sin. Our struggles and temptations often trigger sin, but they never cause it. The root cause is always the heart and its sinful desires. We choose how we respond to circumstance and what determines our choices are the thinking and desires of our hearts.”

[Tim Chester, *You Can Change*, 67]

06.2.3 Godly, Christlike Desire | We can be driven by godly, Christlike desires which are imitated as we think about the pattern of the Lord's own life. These desires are empowered by the Holy Spirit who dwells in our hearts:

**Philippians 2:1-13\***

If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any fellowship in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, a common life, [“same-soul” or “same-life”] being of one mind - [same purpose, same goal] 3 not according to selfish ambition, not according to empty glory, but in humility of mind consider one another more important than your own self. 4 Each of you should be concerned not only about your own interests, but about the interests of others as well. 5 Have this same mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 “Being [beginning] in the form of God  
He did not consider equality with God  
Something to be grasped, [taken advantage of]  
7 But Himself He emptied  
The form of a slave he took on  
Like other people He was born,  
And in the appearance of a human He was found,  
8 Humbling Himself,  
By becoming obedient to the point of death  
Death by The Cross!  
9 This is why God highly exalted Him  
And granted Him The Name  
The one above all names,  
10 So that in the name of Jesus  
Every knee will bend -  
(In heaven and on earth and under the earth!)  
11 And all tongues publicly proclaim that  
The Lord is Jesus Christ!  
To the glory of God the Father.  
12 So then, my beloved, just as you always obey, not only in my presence

but even more in my absence, with fear and trembling work out your [yall's] salvation; 13 for the one empowering in you both the desiring and the empowering for the sake of His good pleasure is God.

### 06.3 The Glory of Godly Love

**Galatians 5:6** For in Christ Jesus ... the only thing that matters is faith working through love.

**John 17:24** Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

“There have been times when I think we do not desire Heaven; but more often I find myself wondering whether, in our heart of hearts, we have ever desired anything else... It is the secret signature of each soul, the incommunicable and unappeasable want.” [C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 145]

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## heartWORK: Desiring the Glory of God

“Just as lies about God lead to the slavery of sin, so the truth about God leads to the freedom of service.” [Tim Chester, *You Can Change*, 77]

**Ephesians 4:21-24** ... indeed you heard about Him (Christ) and were taught in Him, just as the truth is in Jesus. 4:22 You were taught with reference to your former way of life to **lay aside the old man** *who is being corrupted in accordance with deceitful desires*, 4:23 to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 4:24 and to **put on the new man** who has been created in God's image—in righteousness and holiness that comes from truth.

16 **Soul Exercise | Submissive Service:** As we look at the pattern of the Lord's life, we see that it was one of humble, submissive service. He displayed the love and glory of God by serving, even to the point of washing His disciples dirty feet (John 13). It should not surprise us that Christ taught so pointedly on this issue of humble service, even defining the “greatest” in the Kingdom of the Heavens as the one who is humble like a little child (Matthew 18:4) and the one who is the servant of all (Matthew 23:11).

Paul prays this for the church in Rome: “Now may the God of endurance and comfort give you oneness with one another in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 15:5-6) When we are one, even as the Father, Son and Spirit are One, we display the glory—the captivating holy beauty—of the One True God to

those who are watching.

- 17 **Letting the Gospel Enlighten Our Desires:** Passages like the Philippians 2 that we considered earlier and Colossians 3 are very helpful to meditate upon and think on. They direct us in a pattern of living that is free of selfish ambition and focused toward mutual service and even self-sacrificial service. When we are humble, gracious, forgiving, serving one another we display the truth, goodness and glory of the One True God to a watching world. Our unity, our oneness is the very evidence that Christ is who He claims to be (John 17:21, 23). When we intend to let service characterize the whole of our lives, we will find that our desires are transformed. The Gospel calls us to “Delight ourselves in the LORD and He will give us the desires of our hearts” (Psalm 37:4). When Christ has truly “made His home within us” and He is the ultimate source of our security, significance and soul satisfaction, then we can be assured that our good and redeemed desires will be granted to us.
- 18 **Turning from Corrupt Desire to Trust Christ:** As we seek to label our corrupt desires there are several questions that are very helpful: 1) Is this desire selfish, self centered? or 2) Is this desire rooted in God’s truth, goodness and glory? Is the desire to exalt me or my Heavenly Father? Is the desire focused only on my welfare or one the welfare of others? These are the types of questions that we need to ask ourselves as we seek to turn from our selfish desires (idolatry of ourselves) so that we can trust Christ as we follow the pattern of His desires.
- 19 **Following Christ for the Glory of the Father:** “So Jesus said to them, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. And he who sent me is with me. *He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.*” As he was saying these things, many believed in him” (John 8:28-30). Jesus followed the desires of His Father to the Cross. There He was abandoned (for a time) by His Father to guarantee that you and I would NEVER be abandoned. Jesus’ self-sacrificial service for us has healed us and is making us whole. As we follow Him, abandoning our selfish desires in order to be pleasing to the Father, we find that the lies of Satan at work in our World are truly lies. Our Heavenly Father is Good, He is Faithful, He is the satisfaction of our souls. We get to know Him as we do the very things that He does.

“The only haven of safety is to have no other will, no other wisdom, than to follow the Lord wherever He leads. Let this, then, be the first step, *to abandon ourselves*, and devote the whole energy of our minds to the service of God.” [John Calvin, Institutes]

## 07 Extras:

“...remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. . . . There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.” [C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, 15]

## 07.1 How it all fits together:

	Thoughts	Emotions	Desires
<b>Satisfied and Shaped By:</b>	Truth	Goodness/Righteousness	Glory/Beauty
<b>Kingdom Values:</b>	Hear & See Listening vs. Talking	Pray Trust vs. Control	Serve Serving vs. Being Served
<b>Cultivates:</b>	Hope	Faith [Believe & Trust]	Love
<b>Realizes:</b>	God is in Control	God is Good	God is Glorious Love
<b>Desires:</b>	Significance	Security	Soul Satisfaction

## 07.2 A Selected Bibliography:

*Renovation of the Heart*. Dallas Willard. \*This book is a MUST read for anyone wanting to explore this issue of heart transformation.

\**Revolution of Character*. Dallas Willard. This is a shorter version of *Renovation of the Heart* with exercises and such.

*You Can Change*. Tim Chester. A very good book on spiritual transformation.

*A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World*. Paul Miller. An excellent book on prayer as an ongoing exercise that builds our intimacy with God.

*The Myth of A Christian Religion*. Greg A Boyd. A good resource for exploring what it means to have our desires shaped by submissive service.

*Seeing is Believing: Experience Jesus Through Imaginative Prayer*. Greg A Boyd. A good treatment of change and transformation that focuses on hearing the truth and seeing the glory of the Lord.

*Savoring God's Word: Cultivating the Soul-Transforming Practice of Scripture Meditation.* Jan Johnson. A good introduction to reading and meditating on the Word not for "study" but for knowing God more deeply.

\**Practicing His Presence.* Brother Lawrence and Frank Laubach. A compilation of two classics. These are journals of their progress in intending to keep the Lord present in their thoughts every minute of the day.

*Who I Am In Christ.* Neil T. Anderson. A devotion based on our new identity in Christ. A great book to cultivate a deep understanding of the Father's love for us in Christ.

\**ReJesus: A Wild Messiah for a Missional Church.* Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch. A good book for cultivating a "mental picture" of the real Jesus and the way He has changed the world through the lives of His followers.

*The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows.* James Bryan Smith.

*Follow Me: Experience the Loving Leadership of Jesus.* Jan David Hettinga. A very good book that invites us into soul satisfying reality of Jesus' leading us in love to the glory of the Father.