

PART 31 – THE IMPACT OF GOD ON YOUR LIFE

Having addressed the necessity for change, we know that there is a biblical basis for it. For the believer, change is inevitable and the biblical word that validates that is the word “**sanctification**”. It refers to God’s work in your life that is always driving you towards holiness and a deeper walk with God Himself.

Sanctification is a God-designed and God-ordained process to create biblical changes in your life.

Just think about some of the people in the New Testament who chose to follow Christ and what they had to change in their life. Think of what Matthew left behind as a tax collector, how Zacchaeus restored fourfold to those from whom he had defrauded, how Paul counted everything as rubbish for the knowledge of Christ, and how Stephen willingly gave up his life to preach the gospel.

KEY PRINCIPLE 102: FOLLOWING CHRIST WILL ALWAYS COST YOU SOMETHING, AND IF IT DOES NOT, THEN YOU ARE NOT FOLLOWING CHRIST.

So, if you are a believer, then biblical change is inevitable, essential, critical. If you know that there are areas of your life that are displeasing to God, then God is going to drive you toward being holy. Being unholy in your life is dishonoring to God, so if you are one of His, then He does what He has to do to drive you to His holiness. One key verse for this is found in [Hebrews 12:7-8](#),

Heb 12:7 (NKJV) If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

Now, you have to think about these two verses for a minute. They have two key truths that you need to both understand and embrace.

1. **God chastens His children when they are habitually disobedient.**
2. **If you are habitually disobedient, but are not experiencing God’s chastening in your life, then it is very doubtful that you are one of His children.**

For the unbeliever, God just allows sin to run its course in their life. Three times in [Romans 1](#), Paul declared that “**God gave them up**” or “**God gave them over**”. I.e., God simply said “*If you want to live in sin that bad, then go ahead.*” God already knows the landing zone for rebellion and sin in an unbeliever’s life, so He just lets them experience that landing zone in their life. If you think that you can escape the consequences of your sin, then you are greatly deceived. [Romans 6:23](#) says,

Ro 6:23 (NKJV) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

KEY PRINCIPLE 103: GOD WILL NOT LET YOU STAY LIKE YOU ARE WHEN WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS WRONG.

I know this may sound a little strange, but as a believer, God’s discipline on your life when you begin to live an unholy life **is your assurance that you are saved**. However, if you can knowingly and habitually live in sin, do what you please, and dishonor God in how you live and never be disciplined by God, then

you probably are not saved. I know that God is longsuffering and merciful, but you cannot overlook this necessary work of chastening and discipline when you are habitually disobedient.

God's discipline on your life when you are doing something that is wrong is the evidence that He loves you much more than you love Him.

You have been made "new". [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) says,

2Co 5:17 (NKJV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

This was instantaneous, immediate, and it means that you were made "*qualitatively*" new. You were given a new heart, a new mind, and a new understanding. At the moment of salvation, God did something in your life that made you qualitatively a different person, a new person. This is called positional sanctification. However, sanctification is also a process where you as a believer are constantly being renewed to a greater knowledge of God, and that renewing demands change. This is called practical sanctification. [Colossians 3:10](#) says that you...

Col 3:10 (NKJV) ...have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

The word "**renewed**" is a present tense verb which means that you are constantly being "**renewed**". Because of this verb and its parsing, you should always be experiencing God's supernatural renewing in your life. The word "**knowledge**" is the Greek word "*epignosis*" which means a deep knowledge and not just a superficial knowledge. **It is a knowledge of God that powerfully influences your behavior.**¹

If the Word of God is not greatly impacting your behavior, then there is something critically wrong in your life.

You must see that reality if you are ever going to make any progress in your life. If you do not see that and do not understand this reality, then I guarantee you that your life is literally headed in the wrong direction. If that is your mental trajectory, then you will not be pleased with your landing zone. If what you know about God and His truth is not changing your life, then in reality you are in a very dangerous place because you have been severely deceived and misled by the enemy and you have bought into his lies.

You can read the word of God all day, but until what you have read becomes a powerful and life-transforming influence on your behavior, you are just playing games with God and will not like the results.

You have a bad brain rut and a bad neural pathway that refuses to obey what you have read, and that literally makes your knowledge of God meaningless.

At some time in your life you have rationalized away the simple fact that ongoing obedience is the true evidence of genuine salvation.

Progress towards Christlikeness is what marks a true believer. Listen carefully. Your spiritual progress is built solely on the foundation of two things:

¹ Zodhiates, *epignosis*, 624,

1. **Divine knowledge**, and
2. **Obedience to that knowledge**.

Spiritual knowledge without spiritual obedience to that knowledge has zero value for your life.

That is a neural pathway that you do not want to develop in your life. So, if you have **casually justified and ignored** ongoing disobedience to the Word of God, then you need to resolve that you will change what you know is wrong. This is crucial if you ever want biblical assurance of your salvation. You have a bad brain rut that needs to be corrected. Sanctification is an ongoing process, and it consistently manifests itself visibly and audibly in a believer's life.

There is much biblical truth that on the surface seems like oxymorons to most people – **“love your enemies, bless those who curse you, and do good to those who hate you”**. To the natural man, to the lost man, that makes no sense. However, to you as a Christian, it should be your life. Pay careful attention to the next Key Principle. This is critical to understand. This is how God thinks and this should be your biblical mindset and the neural pathway that you have developed in your brain.

KEY PRINCIPLE 104: YOU ONLY GET TO KEEP WHAT YOU GIVE AWAY.

Luke 17:33 says this another way,

Luke 17:33 (NKJV) Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

The more you give your life away, the more of the life of God you experience.

So many Christians are trying to squeeze all they can out of the world, when in reality you should be trying to squeeze all they can out of God's Word. These kinds of verses must become your neural pathways. **2 Corinthians 4:16** says,

2Co 4:16 (NKJV) Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

Being **“renewed”** is built around the idea that you are **qualitatively** being made better. However, being **“renewed”** is directly connected to the true knowledge of God that you both learn and embrace. As a believer, your life is to always be progressing towards Christlikeness and godliness, never less and less.

1 Peter 1:13 says,

1Pe 1:13 (NKJV) Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your hope* fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

That is exactly what most Christians have failed to do – to **“gird up”** and to **“be sober”** about their Christian life. Many are simply playing a superficial game with God's Word. This is the only place in the New Testament where the word for **“gird up”** is actually used, and it is applied to **“your mind”** being held in constant preparation.² Your mind is where you win or lose this spiritual battle that we are addressing. This has to become a neural pathway and a way of thinking for your life. It is the idea that

² Zodhiates, *anazonnumi*, 148.

“I have been made new and I will obey the Word of God as my way of life. I will not make any excuses. I am going to give my life away.”

We often say that someone is “*set in their ways*”, when in reality, it is **their brain that is set in its ways**. They have a thinking problem, and a thinking problem is a spiritual problem. They have literally conditioned themselves to think the wrong way, and it has become very difficult for them to change. Christians do become set in their ways, but too often it is in the wrong direction. It really is very simple to understand. Over years of time, they have created these neural pathways in their brain that make it easy for them to think a certain way, and **these “brain ruts” actually control how and what they think** much more than the Word of God. If they have been thinking wrong for a long time, then it will be much more difficult for them to change. That is not an excuse they can use if they are a Christian and doing something wrong, but it is a physical cerebral reality. For instance,

1. Some Christians are very nice, but some are very grumpy.
2. Some Christians complain about everything, but some give thanks for everything.
3. Some Christians are very warm and loving, but some are very cold and spiteful.
4. Some Christians are incredibly benevolent, but others are extremely greedy.
5. Some Christians are patient, but others are very impatient.

In each case, either good or bad, each one of them has created a neural pathway that reinforces what and how they think, and what and how they think is exactly how they live. This is how God has made you, so just take a look at where your life is to see what kind of neural pathways you have developed up to this point. You may have many more bad neural pathways than you may be willing to admit.

BRAIN FACT:

1. Your neural pathways are neutral. They only respond to what you think. The neural pathway does not know the difference between what is godly or what is ungodly. It just takes your thoughts, and stores those thoughts in a unique brain pathway for each new thought. The more that happens, good or bad, the more it reinforces that thought pattern in the brain. This is how God has designed your brain to work.

❖ CREATING DOMINANT PATHWAYS

So, in simple terms, the more that you think about something and focus on something – good or bad, the more “**dominant**” that neural pathway becomes in your brain. A new thought always starts off as a fairly fragile and lesser pathway, but the more that you think about it, the more dominant that pathway becomes. If you never think about something, it will never impact your life. This is how your brain stores your thoughts.

KEY PRINCIPLE 105: IF YOU NEVER THINK ABOUT GOD, THEN HE WILL NEVER IMPACT YOUR LIFE.

Right now, today, you can do an assessment and evaluation of your life by simply recognizing what occupies your mind the most and what you are thinking about the most.

1. Are you thinking negative things about someone else?

2. Are you finding the worst in someone's life rather than the best?
3. Have you surrounded your life with people who are always negative?

When you allow these kinds of things to happen in your life, you become trapped by your own thoughts, and you are only making life more miserable for yourself and everyone else. This next Key Principle is very important to grasp, so please pay careful attention.

KEY PRINCIPLE 106: IF YOU ALWAYS FOCUS ON WHAT IS WRONG, YOU WILL NEVER SEE WHAT IS RIGHT.

You can keep looking at all the things that you do not like about someone's life, but the more that you choose to think that way, you will never be able to see what is right about their life. Let us just assume that you are always wanting someone else to change their life for you. That is a very bad neural pathway that you need to recognize has a stranglehold on how you see someone. So, in practical terms, if you will simply begin to see what is right and good about their life, the greater that specific neural pathway becomes in your brain. You need to constantly be saying to yourself "*I am going to find the good in this person's life and not what may be wrong.*" Build that neural pathway. Build that mindset. Build that spiritual perspective. Think like God thinks. If you are always criticizing someone and finding fault in their life, then in essence you are tearing them down and not building them up. You have simply become a fault finder. Just remember that **you will always find what you are looking for** – good or bad.

So, let us assume that you are a Christian who spends time in the Word of God. You meditate on it, you often memorize it, and you study it. You do this much more than just on Sunday morning at church.

The way that God has designed your brain to work is that consistently doing those simple activities will literally create neural pathways that predispose and influence you to think godly, to develop godly attitudes, and to reject ungodly thoughts.

It is like your brain has memorized how God wants you to live, and so it helps you with recall. When you think like God thinks, those godly thoughts will create in you a strong and spiritually powerful predisposition to do what God wants you to do. This is wonderful and amazing to me. If I can say it in a different way,

God has designed you in such a way that you can always have a strong predisposition to doing what God wants you to do.

I am not much on listening to all of the excuses as to why you cannot do what God wants you to do. Why? It is for several reasons.

1. You are fearfully and wonderfully made.
2. You are a new creation in Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
3. You are someone who knows the Word of God and what it says.
4. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.
5. You have been taught for years as to what is godly and what is ungodly.
6. You have been made in the image of God and therefore are designed by God to be godly.

The more excuses, rationalizations, justifications, reasons, and explanations as to why you cannot live a godly life is simply evidence that you have a very unbiblical mindset and some really bad neural pathways. If you are NOT inclined to implement in your life what the Word of God says, then you have developed a brain rut that lets you read the Bible, but ignore what you do not want to obey.

I personally believe that this is the predominant way that many Christians read the Scriptures. They just read, but do not pay careful attention to what the Scriptures are saying to them. They have rationalized away obedience and have no real intention of implementing into their life what the Scriptures call on them to obey. It has become a very deadly game of religion at that point – **reading, but ignoring**. If they do not want to do what the Scriptures press upon them to do, then they simply will not do it. They disguise their propensity to disobedience by merely reading. [James 1:22-24](#) describes this kind of person when it says,

Jas 1:22 (NKJV) But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

I think you could substitute the word “**readers**” for “**hearers**” and not lose the sense of the passage. This may be the curse of the modern church – people who know, but do not do. [V22](#) is very clear because it says that the person who “**hears**” (reads) and does not obey is greatly deceived. Being self-deceived is much worse than being deceived by someone else. They read the Word of God, they hear it at church, but for whatever reason they think that they are smart and capable and accomplished and do not have to obey it. Where in the world did that come from? The problem is that God sees them very differently than they see themselves, and he says they are very self-deceived. If you are someone who consistently knows what God wants to change in your life, but you refuse to let Him do so, then you are in a perilous spiritual place.

So, if you think about something over and over, or if you focus on something over and over, it becomes your dominant neural pathway and will greatly impact your life. The principle in this is very simple.

KEY PRINCIPLE 107: YOU HAVE TO TEACH AND DISCIPLINE YOURSELF TO THINK GODLY AND TO BE OBEDIENT.

You have to teach yourself and discipline yourself to think about the right things and to obey the Word of God - to simply think the way that God thinks. When you do that, it is like it resets and reprograms your brain. You simply do not have a green light to by-pass obedience simply because you do not want to do what God commands you to do. Continued disobedience in a believer’s life is the defining characteristic of being self-deceived, and probably of not even being saved.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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