

## STUDY 45 – MAKING THE RIGHT ADJUSTMENTS

One of the key verses that we have used throughout this study is [Romans 12:2](#) which says,

**Ro 12:2 (NKJV) And do not 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.**

Even though we have already addressed the issue of “renewing”, I want to reemphasize that the idea of “renewing” relates to a **qualitative** change in how you think about something. Dr. Zodhiates says that it is what makes you different from the way that you were in the past.<sup>1</sup> You use to live and think one way, but you have been transformed and now you live and think a completely different way. You use to have many unbiblical thoughts and ideas, but now, because you are saved, you think biblically. I.e., you are thinking more and more like God thinks. This is a very qualitative difference in how you think. Think of it this way. If you acquiesce in your mind to worldly ideas, you will create carnal neural pathways in your brain. **You cannot stop that from happening.** However, if you give your mind to that which is godly, you will create godly neural pathways. So, I want you to think of “renewing” as “mentally realigning” how you think”, as “mentally adjusting”. You make a conscious decision to choose a godly way of thinking over a worldly way of thinking. You **adjust** how you are thinking.

Life is a continuous process of learning how to adjust to what happens to you, and if you do not understand that simple reality, then life can become very difficult. Here is the next Key Principle that is very important.

<p><b>KEY PRINCIPLE 155: SOMETIMES GOOD THINGS HAVE TO FALL APART SO THAT BETTER THINGS CAN FALL TOGETHER.</b></p>
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Think of someone who has a bad attitude. A bad attitude is no different than a flat tire. You cannot go anywhere until you change it. Proverbs speaks more about a fool than any other book in the Bible. In some ways what it says is that the fool is always adjusting the truth so that he does not have to adjust to it. You have to make adjustments. You have to make adjustments when you fail and you have to make adjustments when you succeed, but the key is that you have to make adjustments that are aligned with Scripture. The world is constantly making adjustments, but rarely, if ever in a godly direction.

Let us take an everyday example of how this works. Let us just assume that someone does something to you or says something to you that is very unpleasant and hurtful to you – something that you clearly did not deserve and did not appreciate. Before this event ever happens in your life, you must have already made a choice that you will not react, but rather of how you will respond. This has to happen before this unpleasant event ever takes place in your life. When that difficult moment happens, you just stay calm, tranquil, peaceful, composed, and unruffled. Now, you may be thinking to yourself “*Gary, that sounds really great, but when someone hurts me, it is almost impossible for me not to say something.*” Okay, what is that? It is the devil’s lie, and you have to know that it is coming into your mind before this event ever happens to you, so just stay relaxed and focused on how God wants you to think, and ultimately respond. That is the adjustment that you have to make – to think what God wants

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<sup>1</sup> Zodhiates, *anakainosis*, ep.

you to do or say before what you know is coming has even happened. For instance, if you know someone is going to be caustic and say hurtful things to you, begin to think about something else so that you are not focusing on the hurt that you may be feeling. As best as you can, just do not say anything. Just let it go, just let it die on the vine. You have to decide if you want to win the battle or to win the war. [Proverbs 26:20](#) says that “**where there is no wood, the fire goes out**”. [Ephesians 4:29](#) is a remarkable verse which says,

**Eph 4:29 (NKJV) Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.**

The verb in the phrase “**let no corrupt word proceed**” is a command, an imperative mood verb in the present tense. What God is saying that there never is a time where we have a green light to just casually hurt other people with our words - never. The idea here is clearly that you never want to say something to someone that you know will hurt them, even when they may have said something that hurt you. That is not how God works. His ways are not our ways. To the contrary, you must exercise self-control and not say anything that will hurt them. In this verse God says one of the most remarkable truths that you can find in the Bible so listen very carefully. In my mind, this is one of the most profound truths that you can learn in this entire series.

**God says that your words and how you use them have the supernatural ability from God to impart the grace of God to other people, and especially to those who may be hurting you.**

I cannot tell you how much this spiritual reality has impacted my life. You are a vessel of God’s grace literally being given to someone else so that their life can be changed. They may not want to change. They may be stubborn, self-willed, independent, and simply not wanting to change, but your gracious words and your kind words will impact their life – and they will not even know it. [Proverbs 18:21](#) says,

**Pr 18:21 (NKJV) Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.**

The more gracious your words, the greater will be the unseen impact you will have on people. When you respond to someone else’s hurtful words with grace and kindness and forgiveness, they have no answer for that, no rebuttal. Jesus said it this way in [John 6:63](#),

**Jn 6:63 (NKJV) It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life.**

When you are really thinking like God thinks, then you will be talking like God wants you to talk. In this verse, Jesus is clear that using words that are hurtful, spiteful, angry, bitter, unforgiving words come directly from the flesh and “**profit nothing**”. They have no spiritual value - none, and they impart no grace to anyone. Think of it this way.

**The opportunities that God gives you to adjust your thinking so that the words you use in difficult and moments reflect how He thinks is an amazing spiritual privilege.**

So, if you want to say something to someone, but you just cannot do it with “**gentleness**” and “**grace**” then you would best be served by not saying anything at all.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 156: ANGER ONLY CREATES MORE ANGER.**

Anger also creates resentment, bitterness, and unforgiveness, so you will be much better off by just not saying anything, even if you have to walk away from the difficulty. Just build that neural pathway – “*I will not say anything ugly and I will just walk away if I have to walk away.*”

So, what you want to do is to “realign and adjust” how you are going to respond. What are you doing biblically when you “realign and adjust” your way of thinking? You are “**bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ**” in accordance with [2 Corinthians 10:5](#). Biblically, the word “**bringing**” means to carry something away captive, like a prisoner. By implication, you are subduing a wrong way of thinking and bringing it into subjection to the Word of God.<sup>2</sup> You are literally obeying Christ. The word “**thought**” is “*noema*” and it refers to a concept that you have in your mind and literally how you understand something.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Strong says that it represents the way that you perceive something that is happening to you.<sup>4</sup> When I was studying this word, I found it so interesting that the word “*noema*” is the same word that is used in [2 Corinthians 2:11](#) which says,

**2Co 2:11 (NKJV) lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.**

The word for “**devices**” is *noema*”. I.e., the devices that Satan uses against you are the thoughts and the ideas that he places into your mind, and what we have learned is that those thoughts eventually become words. That is his battlefield – your mind, and that is where he places his schemes and plots against your life – in your mind, in your thoughts, in your thinking – and eventually in what you say and how you say it.

Okay, let us assume that you have remained calm and composed in a very difficult moment. Maybe you have been hurt by something that someone else has done to you. It is very painful and heart wrenching to you and you say the wrong thing, use the wrong words, and hurt them back. I.e., you do to them exactly what they have done to you. Listen very carefully because this is so super important.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 157: WHEN YOU GIVE SOMEONE A PIECE OF YOUR MIND, YOU ROB YOUR MIND OF PEACE.<sup>5</sup>**

So, what you want to do is to build a neural pathway as to how you are going to respond when someone says or does something against you that is both wrong and unpleasant and hurts you. This happens all the time to everyone, so just be mentally and spiritually prepared. This is not without effort, and you will certainly fail along the way, but do not lose sight of God’s best. For the most part, you already know how most people act and think, so you should have no trouble in being prepared for what may happen when you are around them in your life. So, why will you able to stay calm and composed? It is because you have already built a neural pathway, a new way to think in your mind that honors God where you will only respond a certain way. Should you become angry when something hurtful happens? No! Why? It is because God’s Word tells us not to become angry. This is the adjustment that you want to

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<sup>2</sup> Zodhiates, *aichmalotizo*, ep.

<sup>3</sup> Zodhiates, *noema*, ep.

<sup>4</sup> Strong, *noema*, #3540.

<sup>5</sup> Anderson, *Managing*, 18.

make if you genuinely want to think like God thinks. Please remember one of the key verses of this entire study is [Philippians 4:13](#),

**Php 4:13 (NKJV) I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**

This verse clearly says that God will give you the strength to do what He wants you to do. Please do not let the enemy rob you of this outworking of God's grace and strength in your life. When you do not think that you can, God says that you can. This is how God builds endurance in your life. You must trust Him and place your faith in what He says is true. I know that the flesh may be strong, and it is, but the grace of God in your life is stronger. You can do what God wants you to do, so do not let a moment of failure become a discouragement to you. You will fail at times, but let that moment of failure draw you closer to God for the strength that only He can give you. He wants to show Himself strong on your behalf every day of your life, and He can if you will just keep coming to Him for His strength and wisdom and grace. So, when you feel like becoming angry, just cling to what God says to do. In [Ephesians 4:31](#) He says,

**Eph 4:31 (NKJV) Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.** (Your neural pathway)

I.e., just put your anger away. That is God's truth, and that is what you want to do and how you want to think. [Colossians 3:8](#) says the same thing,

**Col 3:8 (NKJV) But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.** (Your neural pathway)

God is NOT going to do this for you. It is something that you have to literally "learn" to do. It is a neural pathway, a way of thinking that when someone arouses your anger that you simply will not respond with anger. This is a choice, a conscious choice that you simply cannot ignore. Now, if you truly believe God and not Satan's lies, then this is exactly what you will do. Satan is going to tell you the opposite - that it is perfectly okay for you to become angry. He will whisper things like this to you.

1. *"Hey, this is not something that you deserve, so just say what you want to say".*
2. *"It is perfectly okay to speak ugly things back to the other person because they said something ugly to you."*
3. *"If they hurt you, then it is only right for you to hurt them".*
4. *"If they offended you, then you can offend them. No problem."*

All of these are lies that he wants you to believe. God NEVER thinks like this. This is wrong thinking, and it creates really bad brain ruts! You just saw that you are to "**put away**" anger from your life, and that you are to "**put off**" anger and wrath. Why are you do this? It is because [James 1:20](#) says,

**Jas 1:20 (NKJV) for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.**

This is the neural pathway that you must build before this uncomfortable moment ever happens. You must understand that the devil will lie to you as long as you listen to him, so you must take up the "**sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God**" and use it as your most powerful weapon to obey God.

Let us take a simple example that is a little more subdued and does not involve a personal conflict with someone. Let us say that something breaks in your home and you know that it is going to be expensive

to repair or replace and you do not have the money to pay for the repairs or to buy a new replacement. It could be a refrigerator, or a hot water heater, or your mechanical system.

1. You can react or you can respond.
2. You can become angry or you can stay calm.
3. You can become frustrated or you can retain your peace.

Here is what you already know before this repair ever comes into being. You know that appliances and mechanical systems only last so long before they wear out, so do not become angry at something that you already know is going to happen. That does not even make sense. Do not let a refrigerator make you mad or take away your peace. It is inanimate. The issue here is really very simple. **You cannot always control what happens to you, but you can control how you respond to it.** Listen to how Paul responded to being in jail in [Philippians 1:12-14](#),

Php 1:12 (NKJV) **But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,<sup>13</sup> so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;<sup>14</sup> and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.**

This is thinking the way that God thinks. Paul was in some really difficult circumstances, and I am sure that at times he felt a little disappointed and even confused. It is like he would say to himself, "*Oh no, not again! Lord, please give me a break.*" However, as he began to find the goodness of God in his circumstances, everything began to take on a different perspective. How would you like to have been a prison guard chained to Paul all day? I am sure that was some kind of experience second to none. Here is the principle that I want you to take away from this discussion. I have already given it to you before, but I want to reinforce it one more time in your mind. Here it is. **God always has a better plan for your life than you do.** God is smarter and wiser than all of us put together, and it is really foolish not to trust Him with your life. [Isaiah 55:8-9](#) says it this way,

Isa 55:8 (NKJV) **"For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor *are* your ways My ways," says the LORD.<sup>9</sup> "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.**

**KEY PRINCIPLE 158: YOU HAVE TO TRUST THAT GOD IS WORKING IN YOUR LIFE  
EVEN WHEN YOU MAY NOT SEE HIM WORKING.**

As I look back over my personal life, all I can see is the hand of God. I see it when I was young and foolish, and I still see it when I am old and foolish. I can see the hand of God in every area of my life, and it has all been good. Even when I failed miserably in my life, God used it for good. I am sure that I will fail in the future, and when I look back, I will be able to see that the hand of God was at work in my life. Even when I failed to learn what God wanted me to learn, He used it for good. Even when I failed to hear God and just lived how I wanted to live, He used it for good, and I remain encouraged that He is always working in your life for your good and His glory.

As I look back over the more than 18 months of studying and preparing for this series, I think that the area that has impacted me the most is developing a neural pathway in my brain to always be **looking for the goodness of God in everything that is happening in my life.**<sup>6</sup> This has been a life-changing reality for me. I knew that God was good, and I knew that God was good to me. The problem is that I have so often failed to actually be **looking** for that goodness. It is so easy to leave God out of our lives, and when we do that, it is almost impossible to see what He is actually doing on our behalf. As a believer, each of us should constantly be looking for God's goodness. He wants us to see His hand and His DNA in everything that takes place in our life.

**The more that you train yourself to look for and to see God's goodness in every circumstance of your life, the greater He will become to you.**

Just assume that something happens that is very stressful in your life, but as it happens, you begin to look for all of the good things with which God is helping you rather than all of the negative things that you can think of at that moment. As you begin to look for the goodness of God, you will begin to see God working in your life more clearly, but if you only focus on the negative, what God is doing will literally be lost to you. If I can say it this way again, by looking for what God is doing in your life, you are simply building a neural pathway that God wants you to have. He is the One who made your brain to operate this way, so you need to always be taking advantage of it. The result will be more grace, an overflowing of amazing peace and calm, and a trust in God that you did not have before.

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<sup>6</sup> Groeschel, *Winning*, 137.