

A NEW MIND FOR THE NEW YEAR

TEXT: ROMANS 12:1, 2

Introduction:

1. There is a Biblical basis for making New Year's resolutions and this morning I would like to look at it from a Biblical perspective.
2. Our Lord said in Matthew 22:37, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."
3. "This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 22:38, 39).
4. So according to our Lord, the first and great commandment is to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37).
5. I have preached this text before and divided it into three parts: love the Lord with all your heart; love the Lord with all your soul; and love the Lord with all your mind.
6. But this morning, I would like to just focus on the latter part of the Scripture: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind."
7. For an unsaved man or woman, keeping this commandment is an impossibility. They really do not love God.
8. Second Timothy 3:4 describes them as "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."
9. And since they do not love God, God is not in their thoughts.
10. Psalm 10:4 says, "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts."
11. And oftentimes even Christians struggle with this. So at the beginning of this new year I would like to encourage each person here to ask the Lord to help him or her to think properly. To think Biblically. Or to "think soberly" as it says in Romans 12:3.

I. A YIELDED MIND (12:1).

1. The word "present" in Romans 12:1 means "yield" (margin).
2. When we present our bodies to the Lord, we present everything to Him -- our hands, our feet, our eyes, our mouth, our ears, and our mind.
3. I believe strongly in education. But education must start with the Bible, the Word of God.
4. George Washington said, "The perpetuity of this nation depends upon the religious education of the young." And, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."

5. Abraham Lincoln said, "I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated to us through this book."
6. Daniel Webster said, "If there is anything in my thoughts or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love of the Scriptures. If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity."
7. It is plain to see we have changed direction here in the USA, and it is not the right direction.
8. The devil is a master at brainwashing. He uses the television, movies, music, the computer, the school system, politics, the news media, and many other things to confuse and brainwash people.
9. The Bible teaches us that the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to change our way of thinking. But in order for this to happen, we must yield to the Holy Spirit.
10. Consider the music we listen to. Time and time again I have heard young people admit they got backslidden and rebellious because they were listening to the wrong kind of music.
11. Music is a powerful form of communication. Television and radio advertisers recognize this. People who produce movies and television programs understand this.
12. People who manage stores and restaurants are aware of this.
13. Remember, the devil knows a lot about music. Ezekiel 28 gives us a vivid description of Satan. Ezekiel 28:14 says Satan was "the anointed cherub that covereth."
14. Ezekiel 28:15 says, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."
15. And Ezekiel 28:13 says this, "The workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created."
16. Matthew Henry said these tabrets and pipes refer to "hand-instruments and wind-instruments."
17. Therefore Satan is a musician and he is leading many people astray through music. Most popular music today -- whether you call it pop, or rock, or rap, or hip-hop, or country & western, or jazz, or rhythm and blues, etc. -- it all centers on lust.
18. The devil mixes together graphic lyrics with a sensuous beat to produce pornographic music. I went on line to see what the top songs

- are and unfortunately they were all dirty and vulgar -- without exception! I could not read the lyrics from this pulpit.
19. I glanced at a few of them and felt nauseated. Multitudes of young people are being swept away into promiscuity, drugs, drinking, the occult, despair and even suicide through Satan's music.
 20. Ephesians 5:18 says we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
 21. Then the next verse, Ephesians 5:19 says, says, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
 22. In other words, being filled with the Holy Spirit means you will have a new song in your heart. It is impossible listen to the devil's trashy music and to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
 23. Do you remember when an evil spirit troubled King Saul? First Samuel 16:23 says, "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."
 24. We see something similar in II Kings 3:15. The prophet Elisha said, "But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him."
 25. So the Bible teaches that good music can be refreshing and soothing. But on the other hand, the wrong kind of music can be very dangerous and harmful.
 26. There is good music and there is wicked music. Some of the most filthy, outrageous, disgusting videos are shown constantly on television networks like MTV and BET.
 27. Impressionable young minds are watching this garbage. Dirty lyrics and indecent dancing put devilish ideas into the minds of young people.
 28. And most parents do not seem to care. In fact, many of them are hooked on the wrong music too.
 29. I recently read an interview with a woman named Sheila Johnson. She and her ex-husband Bob Johnson founded the Black Entertainment Television (BET). They sold it to Viacom in 2000 for \$1.3 billion.
 30. Referring to the BET station she herself started, Mrs. Johnson said, "I don't watch it. I suggest to my kids that they don't watch it... I'm ashamed of it, if you want to know the truth."
 31. She said there is presently an AIDS epidemic in Washington, D.C., and says BET is making the AIDS epidemic worse, and is

- contributing to the spread of AIDS by promoting promiscuous sex in raunchy videos.
32. "When we started BET, it was going to be the Ebony magazine on television," Johnson told a blog. "We had public affairs programming. We had news... I had a show called Teen Summit, we had a large variety of programming, but the problem is that then the video revolution started up... And then something started happening, and I didn't like it at all. And I remember during those days we would sit up and watch these videos and decide which ones were going on and which ones were not. We got a lot of backlash from recording artists...and we had to start showing them. I didn't like the way women were being portrayed in these videos."
 33. Johnson says she has absolutely nothing to do with BET these day. "I just really wish—and not just BET but a lot of television programming—that they would stop lowering the bar so far just so they can get eyeballs to the screen," she says. "I know they think that's what's going to keep programming on the air; that's what's going to sell advertising. But there has got to be some responsibility. Somebody has got to take this over. Because with all the studies that are out there, this is contributing to an atmosphere of free sex."
 34. Let us make up our minds that we will yield our minds to the Lord this year and every year!

II. A TRANSFORMED MIND (12:2).

1. The many references in Scripture to proper thinking indicate its importance.
2. Job said, "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?" (Job 31:1).
3. You may recall that Job's wife had said to him, "Curse God, and die" (Job 2:9). But Job did not think this gave him an excuse to be unfaithful.
4. Job had the right kind of thinking.
5. People do not think right because they are being manipulated by the world and they do not even realize it. For example, a typical television show or movie will feature people committing adultery and it will be presented as something good and positive.
6. Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."
7. Wrong thinking leads to wrong decisions, and wrong decisions leads to wrong living.
8. Some one said,

9. Sow a thought, you will reap an action,
Sow an action, you will reap a habit,
Sow a habit you will reap a character,
Sow a character you will reap a life.
10. Regarding a transformed mind, Matthew Henry said, "This transformation is here pressed as a duty...Lay your souls under the changing transforming influences of the blessed Spirit."
11. Matthew Henry went on to say that the great enemy to this renewing is conformity to this world: "Be not conformed to this world" (12:2).
12. When people are being influenced and brainwashed by the world, they are being misled by Satan because Satan uses the flesh and the world and all their allurements to destroy people.
13. Our Lord referred to Satan as "the prince of this world" three times in the Gospel of John (12:31; 14:30; 16:11).
14. In II Corinthians 4:4 Satan is called "the god of this world." "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."
15. Satan blinds peoples' minds. He twists their thinking. For example, when I was a child, the vast majority of Americans considered homosexuality perverted and disgusting.
16. But surveys and statistics now tell us that today about half of Americans approve of homosexuality.
17. The devil has been very successful in brainwashing Americans. And not just Americans!
18. I read this in yesterday's morning newspaper: "Sandra Lee is the glamorous, live-in love of Gov. Cuomo - and nobody seems to mind that they're not married."
19. "The times, they have changed!" said Doug Muzzio, a Baruch College political expert. "Divorce or living together without being married are no longer a big deal. I mean, it's the societal norm."
20. It may be "the societal norm," but that does not make it right. The Bible says, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).
21. The article went on to say, "Though some may still raise eyebrows over Cuomo's relationship with the Food Network star, it's raised nary a public whisper from political rivals - or religious leaders."
22. "I don't hear anybody talking about it, absolutely not," said Michael Long, chairman of the New York Conservative Party.

23. Mr. Long is supposedly a "conservative."
24. The article then referred to the haughty mayor of NYC, Michael Bloomberg and his tacky mistress. "It certainly hasn't caused problems for Mayor Bloomberg and his longtime gal pal, Diana Taylor. Both are also divorced."
25. Well, it may not cause problems in New York City, which is a modern day Sodom and Gomorrah, but Mr. Bloomberg and Mrs. Taylor will surely face some problems when they stand before our holy God.
26. Somehow it is not surprising that the Roman Catholic Church has no problem with Mr. Cuomo and his girlfriend living together. We are told that they are good Catholics. "He takes his Catholicism very seriously," a Roman Catholic priest told the newspaper.
27. Of the Cuomo-Lee live-in relationship, the priest said, "I'm not going to condemn it, but at the same time, I'm not going to condone it."
28. How is that for double-talk! This confused, unregenerate priest needs to have his mind transformed by the power of the Gospel.

III. A RENEWED MIND (12:2).

1. Second Corinthians 10:5 says, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
2. How can we do that? We need to be yielded and surrendered to God. And we need to renew our minds (Rom. 12:1, 2).
3. When we recognize certain music is devilish we need to get rid of it and then replace it with Godly music. Ephesians 5:19 says, says, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
4. When we recognize certain movies or television shows or novels or magazines are vulgar and worldly, we should replace them with the Word of God.
5. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11).
6. In addition to reading the Bible, it is wise to read good Christian literature -- books and sermons by men and women of God.

7. It is good to read biographies of Christians like Hudson Taylor and D.L. Moody and George Muller and Isobel Kuhn and Amy Carmichael.
8. It has been pointed out that the word "renewing" literally means "renovated." This building used to be an old run-down, abandoned fish market. By the grace of God, we have renovated into a beautiful Baptist church building.
9. And just as our renovation project was gradual and took some time, it is the same with God's renewal program.
10. One preacher put it this way, "It is a joint effort between the indwelling Holy Spirit and the faculties of the yielded saint. The Holy Spirit initiates, illumines, enlightens, and quickens the mind. The believer integrates truth by reception, meditation, and obedience" (Harold Vaughan, *Lord, Help Me Not to Have These Evil Thoughts*).
11. A renewed mind has to be constantly nourished by the Word of God. Job said, "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12).
12. Peter said, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2).
13. God's Word strengthens and guides us.
14. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).
15. A renewed mind will reject thoughts and ideas that are contrary to the Word of God. Bad ideas and thoughts will come but we must not entertain them.
16. Someone said, "A bird might land on your head, but you don't have to let it build a nest."

CONCLUSION:

1. We are all familiar with the word "mindset."
2. It means, "a fixed mental attitude or disposition that predetermines a person's responses to and interpretations of situations; an inclination or a habit."
3. Because of sin, our minds are fallen. Our minds have a "mindset," that is, a bent that is hostile to the God's authority.
4. Ephesians 4:23 says, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind."

5. I will conclude with a quote from Andrew Murray. "The attempt to do the will of God with a heart that does not daily seek and find the renewing of the Holy Spirit in the spirit of the mind, must end in failure. It is only a healthy man who can do a healthy man's work. It is only a spiritual man who can walk in the spiritual path of obedience to all God's will" (*Thy Will Be Done*, chapter 14).