

## **Growing Deeper** *State of Mind*

### **Week One: *State of the Mind*** *Romans 12:1-2*

#### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. Congratulations on deciding to take a few minutes with God today! Sometimes one of the biggest challenges is just deciding to make this a priority, and there are always things that get in the way. What are three things competing with your attention to God and his Word right now?
2. Can you allow God to be powerful over everything, even over those three things, for the next fifteen minutes? If you are struggling to let them go, turn them over to him in prayer.
3. Our world is busy and many things compete for our attention all the time. Even in a moment where we would have a “break,” we fill the time with distractions on our phone, television, or radio. Read Romans 12:2. What is Paul’s answer to this?
4. What are some activities that “renew” your mind? Some people enjoy walking alone in nature, while others would enjoy being at a crowded zoo with lots of people. Some might enjoy creating a piece of art, while others might complete some household project. Your “renewing activity” may be different than anyone else’s, so spend some time considering what renews your mind and jot down a list.
5. How can you make time for a renewing activity this week? It might be today, or you might need to schedule it for later in the week, but consider how you can connect with God in this way and write a short plan to make it happen!
6. Look again at Romans 12:1-2. In the second half of the verse Paul says that the mind renewing happens so that you can test and approve what God’s will is. Those three things that you set aside at the beginning – they didn’t go away, they are just going to be reframed by looking through the lens that God provides. If you could sit down with God and discuss your three things over coffee right now, what would he say?
7. End your FIFTEEN by asking God in prayer to help you accomplish your plan. Try to remember when you get frustrated to ask God to renew your mind so that you can see through to his eyes. Then, come back tomorrow for a larger description of what these verses can mean for your life!

#### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two**

8. Read Romans 12:1-2. Paul urges his readers to be “living sacrifices.” That implies that you continue to be sacrificed as you live for Christ rather than die for him. Where is your biggest area of sacrifice right now?
9. A smart man recommended that whenever you see the word “therefore” in the Bible, it is important to ask yourself, “What is the ‘therefore’ there for?” It is a connection between something previous and what the author wants to say next. Read Romans 11:28-36. The entire book of Romans describes the mercy of God (verses 28-32). The end of the

chapter is a description of the qualities of God, a doxology (verses 33-36). Which of these two themes better sets up the “therefore” in Romans 12:1 for you?

10. In Romans 11:33-34 it talks about the “mind of the Lord” as something that is beyond description and understanding. Why is it scary to have a God you cannot understand? Why is it comforting to know that you have a God you cannot understand?
11. Whether you are amazed by human psychology, astrophysics, quantum mechanics, microbiology, or something else, many things in our world are extremely difficult for people to understand. Is your image of God big enough to include knowing these things as well? Why or why not?
12. God’s omniscience and omnipotence should do more than impress us; they should give us strength for the individual path that each of us is on. Spend the rest of your FIFTEEN in prayer before this impressive God who is full of love for you. Pray whatever is on your mind.

### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three**

13. Look again at Romans 12:1-2. As you are transformed by the “renewing of your mind,” you should spend some time considering the mind of God, as we did yesterday, but we should also spend some time considering ourselves and the unique mind God has created in each one of us. If you go back to the Nine Paths series from earlier this year, you may remember that people see through different lenses. The three centers are the head, heart, and gut centers. When faced with a tough decision, do you turn to your thoughts, do you listen to your heart, or do you go with your gut?
14. All of us are really a mixture of these three centers, but one may be more dominant than the others. How has your perspective been a blessing to you? How has it limited you?
15. Here are some different ways that renewing your mind may look according to the nine paths. Some may speak more to you than others, but spend some time looking to see what God would say to people on these nine paths. Which one speaks to you?
  - a. Gut Center – The challenger is someone who has a strong desire to be in control. If you are on the path of the challenger, how can you renew your mind by being vulnerable in the right situations with the right people? The peacemaker is someone who avoids conflict. If you are on the path of the peacemaker, how can you renew your mind by doing what is good rather than what is easy? The reformer is someone who has a strong desire to be correct. If you are on the path of the reformer, how can you renew your mind by seeing people and not just rules?
  - b. Heart Center – The helper is someone who has a strong desire to be needed. If you are on the path of the helper, how can you renew your mind by doing what God would have you do without any reward from others? The achiever is someone who wants to be seen as successful. If you are on the path of the achiever, how can you renew your mind by seeing how God has worked through failures? The individual has a need to be unique and special. If you are on the path of the individual, how can you renew your mind by focusing on others, not just yourself?

- c. Head Center – The observer is someone who prefers to watch rather than participate. If you are on the path of the observer, how can you renew your mind by engaging with messy situations? The loyalist is someone who is always prepared for the worst-case scenario. If you are on the path of the loyalist, how can you renew your mind by placing your faith in God and trusting the person he created you to be? The enthusiast is someone who has a need to always seek adventure and happy times. If you are on the path of the enthusiast, how can you renew your mind by embracing the sad and lonely feelings you encounter and not just the happy ones?

16. End your FIFTEEN by asking God to help you renew your mind in the ways that you have identified today.

#### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four**

17. Read Romans 12:3-8. While 1 Corinthians 12 is the most popular passage about the church being one body of Christ with many members, Paul does talk about this concept in several other places, including here. Why is it important for us to remember that we are a member of a body?
18. There are many different kinds of Christians throughout the world, but we still describe the Church as “ONE holy, Christian, and apostolic” church according to the Nicene Creed. How have you seen the people of God unified?
19. The body of Christ is also made up of many different people with different talents and perspectives. How have you benefited from a diverse body of Christ? How have you learned from other Christians?
20. Look again at Romans 12:3. The key to a healthy view of God’s people is humility. When has humility led to mercy in your life experience?
21. How can you appreciate the gifts of other people when they are so different from your own? Do differences make it hard for you to love other people?
22. As we continue the theme of “renewing our mind” according to Romans 12:2, how do the unity and differences within the people of God affect your ability to have a new “state of mind”?
23. Conclude your FIFTEEN by asking God to help you work to be more unified with those who are different than you.

#### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five**

24. Think about Romans 12:2, “... be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” What would be the one thing that you would hope could improve in your life by the renewing of your mind?
25. What are some things in your life that you have tried to change and yet have been a struggle for you? Maybe there is something personally, professionally, in relationships, or something else. What has been hard to change?

26. There is a concept called “immunity to change” that describes how we often fight ourselves when it comes to changes. A person may want to quit smoking for health reasons, but it is a struggle. They are conscious about the bad things about smoking, but they are often unconscious about all the things that keep them smoking, like the way it feels to hold a cigarette, the memories they have around smoking, the relationships that they have around smoking. When you think about something you are trying to change, what are some possible unconscious factors working against you being able to make that change?
  
27. Once you are able to identify some of the unconscious factors preventing positive change, then you need to figure out how you will address those factors and take those into account as well. How can you address some of those factors in your own changes?
  
28. Ultimately, a renewing of your mind does not come with enough effort and information, but change happens with God’s help. Spend the rest of your final FIFTEEN this week thinking through at least one change you would like to make in your life and turn it over to God, including the positive and negative factors, the conscious and unconscious things that affect this change, and let God be sovereign over those situations.