

Week Two - A Strong Mind

Romans 12:1-2; Proverbs 2:1-11

Spend FIFTEEN - Day One

1. Read Romans 12:1-2. What does v.1 say we should sacrifice? What does v.2 say we should transform?
2. The theme last week was about using our bodies to honor God. We see that truth confirmed in verse 1. But verse 2 brings up the next step, transforming our minds. What do you think that means? Is transforming your mind simply learning, or does it require something more?
3. Think of someone you respect because of his faithfulness or spiritual maturity, someone you would say is clearly transformed by Jesus Christ. If you had to guess, what do you think he does differently from other people to get that way?
4. Read Colossians 3:1-4. What do you think are some of the “things above” that we should be thinking about?
5. Now go to Philippians 4:8. This is a pretty good list of “things above.” How good a job would you say that you do thinking about such things, instead of negative or earthly things? On which of the good things in this list is it particularly hard to remember to focus?
6. Many years ago, long before the iPhone was invented, the Apple computer company relaunched itself with the “Think different” ad slogan. Whether you like Apple’s technology or not, you have to admit that their philosophy has led to the transformation of the technology industry. If we, as Christians, “think different” from the world around us (as in Phil. 4:8), how might we influence the world for the better?
7. There are a lot of negative things in this world that attract our attention. There is fear and violence and Facebook friends who have terrible political opinions! But there is also a God who continues to show miraculous grace to His broken creation. And we can choose on which of these we focus. Take a moment to list five amazing things that you have seen or experienced in the last week.
8. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer. Look again at Philippians 4:8. Ask God to help you shift your mind away from evil things which would drag you down and to give you spiritual eyes to see the good things in your life on which He wants you to focus. Ask Him to help you be a force for change in this world through the transforming of your mind.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Two

9. If you asked, most people would probably like to see their lives transformed. From house renovation shows, to homeopathic medicines and trendy diets, to self-help books on every topic—people would like their lives to be better. So why do you think most people’s lives *aren’t* better? What is stopping transformation in the lives of people around you?

10. What in your own life makes it difficult to transform your life for the better?
11. Read Romans 12:2. Paul gives two commands. What are they?
12. How easy would you say it would be for people to follow these two commands? For you?
13. The problem is that transformation is not a one-time decision. There's no magic pill, lottery prize or box to check that can suddenly transform our minds. We have to change our patterns. Have you (or someone you know) ever dropped an addiction or changed an unhealthy habit? What kind of life changes did that require?
14. Transformation will never be easy. But God does show us where the process begins. Turn to 2 Corinthians 3:18 and read it out loud. Which way do our faces (and minds) need to be turned in order to be transformed?
15. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer. Ask God to reveal His glory to you, and to help you keep your face turned toward Him and His Word, so that you might be transformed into His likeness. Commit yourself to memorizing 2 Corinthians 3:18 this week!

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Three

16. Read Proverbs 2:1-5. For what are we told to look?
17. We live in the information age. If you have a life problem, there's a self-help book that promises to fix it. If you want to look up a fact, Wikipedia is a mouse-click away. Even universities are now posting many college- and graduate-level courses online for free. What differentiates all the information that surrounds us from the wisdom of God?
18. Look again at Proverbs 2:1-5. What does the writer seem to be saying about the *process* of finding wisdom?
19. Verse 4 compares seeking wisdom to mining for silver or looking for buried treasure. Read Job 28:1-12 for a detailed description of mining. How would you guess this compares to modern-day mining?
20. Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty." Does this match your experience? What worthwhile things in your life required lots of effort, pain or difficulty to acquire?
21. The Bible says that seeking God's wisdom is the worthiest thing we can do, but it will never be easy. Therefore, commit to finding a partner or group to help hold you accountable to the difficult journey of persevering to seek God's wisdom. Look for a Bible study, small group, or friend with whom to read through Scripture.

22. Finish up your FIFTEEN in prayer. Ask God to guide you as you “mine” His holy Word for His divine wisdom.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four

23. Start your FIFTEEN today by reading Proverbs 2:1-8. This passage tells us that we are supposed to do the work of seeking wisdom, but from where does wisdom actually come?

24. What other benefits does God promise to those who seek His wisdom (vv.5-8)?

25. How easy or hard is it for you to place your trust in this promise? Have you seen examples of the Lord protecting His faithful from persecution? Or do you feel you’ve witnessed more harm and failure to those who trusted in God’s wisdom against the opinions of the rest of the world instead?

26. We live in a time when people are often mocked for taking the Bible seriously. What parts of God’s truth would you say are not very popular to the world around us?

27. The wisdom of the world is always tempting to follow; it’s often easier and more quickly rewarding to “go with the flow.” But worldly wisdom is missing the most essential element. Read Proverbs 9:10. What does this verse say is the most important characteristic of true wisdom?

28. “Fear of the Lord” is kind of an unusual phrase. Do you really think we should “fear” the Lord? Would you be comfortable telling an unbelieving friend to “fear” the Lord or would you rather use different language to introduce her to God? Why?

29. Finish with prayer. Wrestle with the Lord today about what it means to fear Him. Ask Him to protect and guard you. Ask Him to help you to trust in His promises as you try to follow His ways.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five

30. Begin your time with God today by reading the beautiful promise from the Lord in Proverbs 2:9-11.

31. What changes does the Bible say happen to those who have searched for God’s wisdom?

32. Read James 1:5. What is the only thing stopping us from having access to God’s wisdom?

33. Does this seem like it should be an easy or hard thing to do? Why?

34. As believers, we will never be done seeking God's wisdom. There will always be more that God has to share with each of us until the day He calls us home! Unfortunately, it can be tempting to stop seeking God and His wisdom when we feel we've learned enough. What types of things cause us to stop seeking God's wisdom?
35. For a perspective on this, read Hebrews 5:11-14. Based on this description, where do you think you are in your own journey of knowing God and His wisdom better? Are you still drinking milk? Or solid food? Why did you pick that answer?
36. If you said "milk," what are some practical next steps you think you should take to know God better? If you said "solid food," what specific thing can you start doing to help others know God better?
37. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer. Just like James recommends, ask God to literally give His divine wisdom to you. This may seem bold or scary, but God promises to do exactly that if we are bold enough to request His wisdom.