

APRIL 2024

Theme: Pressing Forward in Jesus Christ



**GRANT HILL MISSIONARY
BAPTIST CHURCH**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL
ADULT LESSON GUIDE**

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Theme: “Pressing Forward in Christ Jesus”



**April 2024
2nd Quarter**

Unit 4 Theme: Transforming Your Mind

Our 2nd Quarter Unit 4 theme for the month of April is *Transforming Your Mind*. Romans 12:2 states **Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is his good, pleasing, and perfect will. A person with a mind that has been transformed by the gospel will inevitably be humble, respectful, promoting unity and be responsible for building up the body of Christ.**

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Unit Theme: Transforming Your Mind

Lesson Topic: Living Out God's Will

Lesson Scripture: Romans 12:2-3

Key Verse: And be you not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

-Romans 12:2

Essential Questions:

1. Are you in your right mind? When is losing your mind a good thing?

Lesson Aims:

At the end of this lesson the participant will understand that:

1. Sometimes it becomes necessary for us, who claim to be believers, to change the way we think.
2. Transformation can come only through God's word.

Introduction

The what (Romans 12:2-3)

Be not conformed to this world.

Definition – 1. to conform means to comply with rules, standards, or laws; 2.to behave according to socially acceptable behaviors or standards

Who sets the standard of behavior for us?

What has to happen before you agree to conform to a set of rules or standard of behavior ? (one of 2 things)

How do we conform to the world? What does it look like?

Why do we conform to the world? What does the world have to offer us?

But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind

Definition – to be transformed means to make a **dramatic** change in form, appearance, or character.

What do you need to do in order to renew your mind?

How will you know what God's will is and what pleases him?

How should you think of yourself? (Better than, just as good as anyone, inferior to others?)

Read Romans 12:3)

What is the difference between self-confidence and arrogance?

Exposition

The Why

We must interpret life through the lens of God's word and the inspiration of the spirit. We see what the world sees, but through a different prospective.

We made the choice to choose the mind of Christ which lives inside of us. We can see beyond the trouble and chaos of this world and see the beauty of God's creation. (Philippians 4:8)

If we as believers don't renew our minds we will continue to walk around in defeat, struggle, and confusion. Our renewed minds allow us to be content in the mist of trouble. (See Philippians 4:11)

Renewing your mind means aligning your mind with the truth of God's word by learning to recognize the lies of the enemies and replacing them with the truth of God's word, and then reinforcing them. (John 16:13)

Proverbs 23:7 says "For as a man thinks in his heart so is he." Your thoughts create your beliefs resulting in your actions. If you want to experience a different life – the abundant life Jesus promised - you must learn to intentionally renew your mind.

The Lesson Applied

The How

1. **Recognize:** Compare each thought that comes into your mind to God's word and his promise for your life. Ask yourself "does this thought represent God's plan for me?"
2. **Replace:** If the thoughts that you are having don't agree with God's word replace them with promises from God. Often times the Holy Spirit will bring to your remembrance a scripture that is opposite the lie you may be faced with. Remember thoughts are like seeds and whatever you let grow in the garden of your heart will bring forth a harvest in your life. If you sow good seeds.....
3. **Visualize.** As you are replacing and reinforcing new thoughts based on God's words, imagine in your mind's eye what it would look like and feel like to experience life with this new reality. This will further stimulate your brain and accelerate your ability to come to an agreement with God on what's best for your life. There is an expression that says "If you can see it, you can be it." That certainly applies in this situation.
4. **Affirmation:** Continue to reinforce the truth of God's word inside your heart. Over time your subconscious mind will become convinced of the new truth you are aligning your heart with, rather than the old lies that you have been living with. As you do these things you will be amazed at the doors of favor that will appear in your life simply because you come into agreement with God's design for your life, rather than trying to make it happen on your own.

"Most of all let the word of God fill you and renew your mind every day. When your minds are on Christ, Satan has little room to maneuver."

- Billy Graham

**Unit 4 Theme: Transforming Your Mind
Lesson Topic: Guarding Your Heart**

Lesson Scripture(s): Proverbs 4:23

Key Verse(s): “Above all else, guard your affections. For they influence everything else in your life.” (TLB)

Essential Question: What steps are you taking in guarding (keeping) your heart?

Lesson Aim: The participants are to understand that:

1. The condition of our heart determines our love for God as well as for others
2. The condition of our hearts determines who we are and what we do
3. We need to do more than **guard** our heart, we also need to **give** our heart

Introduction

Scripture clearly teaches us that the real issues of life are spiritual and are really matters of the heart. The term heart generally speaks of the inner person and the spiritual life in all its various aspects. I found that the Hebrew translation of guard means to **keep above all else**. So, to "keep" something, in this sense, means more than simply "to keep or hold onto." It refers to maintenance (adjusting, cleaning, inspecting), protecting, and strengthening. So, above ALL the things that we guard, such as marriage, family, bank account, passwords, our car or house, we should guard our heart with greater diligence or consideration above anything else. And because we are all so easily influenced by the world around us, our hearts need guarding. Therefore, it is absolutely essential for us to guard our heart.

Exposition

Guarding is a continual growing and maturing process. Scripture places a strong emphasis on the heart as the source of good or evil. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick." This passage tells us that the heart is not only deceitful above all things, but that it is also beyond a cure. The human heart is diseased with sin and the rule of deceit. Therefore, our heart is not what we should be following because it will lead us after our sin nature. And we cannot make our heart right apart from the saving grace of Jesus in our lives.

We must guard our hearts from idolatry because the world and its ways want to crowd God out of our hearts (1 John 2:16).

Do you recall what Jesus said in Matthew 6:21, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matthew 6:21). In other words: whatever you place as your top priority; either the things of God or earthly desires, that’s where your attention will be. It will be one or the other. It cannot be on both. You see, on this side of eternity, you will always be subject to temptation in some form, for they are common to man. Temptation wins when your heart is unprepared for it. So, we must “put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts: Romans 13:47

You remember David, Solomon's father, well he certainly understood the influence the heart has on how we live out our morals and values. Remember when he stole Uriah's wife Bathsheba, committed adultery with her, and

then arranged for Uriah's death when he could not hide his crime any longer. All of that was out of the evil of his heart. (Samuel 11:2–5, 14–15). Oh, but, when David was under heavy conviction about his evil deed, he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). What is hidden in the heart is open to God's eyes. 1 Samuel 16:7 "man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

Seven Reasons the Heart Needs Guarding:

(1) The heart needs guarding because we do not naturally think and look at life like God does. We are basically ignorant of His mind and His ways. We desperately need the wisdom and direction of the Lord to know His ways and to know our own heart and its wicked ways. Proverbs 19:3 warns us that our foolishness twists or overturns our way.

(2) The heart needs guarding because, like sheep, we are prone to wander from God in our hearts (Isa. 53:6a). We want to live independently to control and direct our own affairs. We want to be in charge of our own destiny. Oh yes, some of us want to trust God with getting us into heaven, but we would prefer to direct our own affairs down here on earth partly because we are so committed to our own desires. To completely follow His directions means we may be called on to give up something that we think we must have in order to be secure or happy. It is much safer to be in charge ourselves, so we think. Our rebellious nature is a result of the fall.

(3) The heart needs guarding because the heart is not just deceitful, it is more deceitful than all else (Jer. 17:9a). We can't trust it because of its natural selfishness, self-centeredness, and self-protective ways and devices (Ps. 81:12-14; Jer. 17:9; 2:13). But to experience God's way we must first deny our self-trust or reliance upon those devices we use to protect ourselves. Then, in the place of self-trust, we need to learn to rely completely on the Lord regardless of how things seem. Rather than lean on our own understanding, we trust the Lord to direct our path (Prov. 3:5; Ps. 37:5). Because of our fears and selfish concerns, our hearts deceives us through vain actions or thoughts attempting to explain or justify those actions or thoughts. We must learn to recognize and know what His voice sounds like and obey it. And as we hide his words in our heart, we will have it to depend on in times of need.

(4) The heart needs guarding because the heart is desperately sick, i.e., incurably wicked (Jer. 17:9b). The NIV translates this "beyond cure." Remember that the word "heart" may be used for the mind, the emotions, the will, the whole inner man, or as here, of the sinful nature that is a part of the inner man. The sinful nature cannot be destroyed, it cannot be improved, or changed for the better. Human change doesn't work on the heart of man. So again, he who trusts his own heart is a fool! The pull of this old nature is always there to deceive us.

(5) The heart needs guarding because the heart cannot be understood by our own wisdom. Only God can reveal and lay bare our hearts to us (Jer. 17:10; 20:12, Pr. 17:3; Ps. 139:23). It is hard to know our own motives and reasons (1 Cor. 4:4). We are naturally skilled at deceiving ourselves.

(6) The heart needs guarding because the heart is a source of life; the fountain of attitudes, values, beliefs, aspirations, and pursuits (Pr. 4:23; Matt. 13:34; 15:18; 6:21). Because of this, we must guard it, or we develop what the world offers, and this will always lead us astray.

But there must be a balance to guarding our heart. We need to do more than guard our hearts. You also need to give your heart. To resist releasing yourself for fear of getting hurt may seem safe, but in the long run it's destructive.

You see, giving the heart means taking risk, entanglements, becoming vulnerable: It means having to step out in faith, believing God rather than our own strategies. It means having to give up something. And sometimes it's a lot. It can even mean having your heart broken and wrung like a towel. But to fail to give our heart means to lock it up safely in the casket of selfishness. And like a body laid to rest in a casket, the heart will change; though safe, dark, and motionless, it will rot and become a bag of bones.

And If you believe you can give your heart without being accountable, let me tell you, it's like believing that you can raise children without discipline, or run a company without rules, or lead an army without authority. Giving the heart means getting involved: Involvement with God, involvement with family, involvement with other Christians, and involvement with non-Christians. And what does involvement include: sacrificial love, walking by faith rather than sight, spontaneity rather than rigidity, the risk of vulnerability, and a willingness to become accountable.

You see fear and anxiety steals the peace of God in our hearts (1 Peter 5:7). Anything in our lives that is stealing our peace, hope, joy, faith, finances, or health is not from God. So, we must learn what it feels like to be protected by God's peace, and stay there. Temptations insist we ignore the Spirit's promptings in our minds (John 10:10). Clearly, anything taking God's rightful place in our lives is sin (Deuteronomy 4:8-10).

Jesus has shown us by example one strategy of guarding his heart. He often went away to pray alone (Matthew 14:23, Luke 9:18, Matthew 6:46). So, let us ponder how we can become disciplined to the task of guarding our heart. I pray we find some solitude today and take a few moments of silent reverence before God with Psalm 139:23-24, "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!"

Conclusion

In Summary, Just as the human heart needs preparation through proper diet and exercise in order to handle strenuous activity and be healthy in general, so our spiritual heart must be properly prepared if it is going to be able to effectively respond to God in the varied situations of life.

This is one of the ways we can guard the heart, but the emphasis here is on the need of spiritual preparation through the various biblical disciplines: honest, deep-down confession of sin, fervent prayer, careful Bible study, meditation on the Word, Scripture reading and memory, and fellowship with believers. We need these disciplines to stabilize the heart so we can respond positively to God in trust for the various situations of life.

Unit Theme: Transforming Your Mind

Lesson Topic: He created My Inmost Being

Lesson Scripture: Psalms 139:1-24

Key Verse: For you created my inmost being you knit me together in my mother's womb.
-Psalms 139:13

Essential Question: Who is the closest person to you? Do they know your inmost thoughts? Are there some things that you don't share with anyone? How do these questions relate to today's topic?

Lesson Aims

At the end of this lesson the participant will understand:

1. That God not only created us but he knows us better than anyone in this world.
2. He knows every thought whether they be good or evil.
3. Praising God is a mindset. It starts from the inside (in our inmost being) and then it shows up on the outside.

Introduction

Do you know him or her? There are several ways to answer this question. We can say yes I know him; No I don't know him; or sometimes we may say "I know of them, but I don't really know him or her", or in today's vernacular "I don't know her like that." What we are saying here is that there are different degrees of knowing people. Sometimes we may even say that I am familiar with them, but I don't really know them. The Psalmist in our scripture reference for today's lesson will take us to another level of knowing someone as he talks about God knowing his **Inmost Being**. This is a whole "nother" level of knowing someone. For our God sees all and knows all. In other words, God knows everything about us. There is no hiding anything from Him. When we talked about transforming our minds and having the mind of Christ, in our first lesson for this quarter, we established the fact that we must know him like he knows us. And now so that we may know him better, we present our exposition of today's lesson.

Exposition

Psalm 139 verses 1-6

- You have searched me and know me. You perceived my thoughts from afar off
- You are familiar with my ways
- You know my words before I even speak them. Taste your words before speaking. Ask God to control your words before you speak because once it is out there you can't take it back. Your words can have a lasting effect on people whether it is a good or a bad effect. It can build up or it can tear down. Sometimes it depends on how you say it. Its okay to tell someone the hard truth, but it may need to be seasoned with love. Don't let anyone tell you that words don't hurt. They hurt more than sticks and stones sometimes because it stays with you longer.

Verses 7-12

- Where can I go from your spirit?
- We can't run away from God. Ask Adam and Eve, or Jonah, or Elijah.
- Have you ever tried to hide from God? How did that turn out?
- The Psalmist says in verse 10 that “where I go thy hand shall lead me; thy right hand shall hold me.” These words should bring comfort to every believer.
- Even the darkness cannot hide me. For darkness cannot hide me. For darkness is like light to you.

Verses 13-23

- You knew me when I was in my mother's womb. My days were written in your book before one of them came to be.
- How precious are your thoughts God! How vast is the sum of them!
- I will praise thee because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works. We are made to worship you
- The Psalmist did not complain or moan about the way he looked or compared himself to others. He knew that God loved him just as he was.

Verses 23-24

This should be our prayer. Since God knows our heart our inmost thoughts, we should ask him to remove all offensive thoughts and ways in us and lead us in his ways. Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus - Philippians 2:5. Because he knows me and I know him I want to be more and more like him, and I will allow him to lead me in the way everlasting. Proverbs 23:7 says that “As a man thinks in his heart so is he; Verse 12 says “Apply thine heart unto instruction and thine ears to the words of knowledge”.

The Lesson Applied

We have found in today's lesson that our inmost being is the very core of our spiritual nature, our inner self. It contains all of our secret thoughts, some of which we do not reveal to anyone else. Our point today is that even if you don't reveal them to another human, God knows them. That's why we have to keep our heart pure because the heart is where our thoughts and actions start. And so thoughts goes from your heart to your mind and then you act on them. If we have the kind of pure heart that the bible speaks of, then our thoughts will be pure, and our actions will be pleasing to God. Get to know God, then learn to know yourself, and he will reveal to you exactly what you should be doing in the kingdom and how to go about doing it. Talk to God, then let him talk to you. He will be your friend and he will save you in the end. **He knows your inmost thoughts.**

Unit 4 Theme: Transforming Your Mind
Lesson Topic: God Is Living Among Us

Lesson Scripture(s): Zephaniah 3:17, 2nd Corinthians 6:16

Key Verse(s): The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you but will rejoice over you with singing”. Zephaniah 3:17

Essential Question: How do we know God is among us?

Lesson Aims: The participants are to understand that:

- Jesus lives among us in our hearts.
- God is not far from any of us.

Introduction

In the Old Testament, the presence of God with His people was most evident when His glory filled the tabernacle, and the temple (1 Kings 8:10-11, but that glory was far surpassed by the personal presence of God the Son, God with us in person. Zephaniah 3:17 reminds us that the Lord rejoices over us with gladness and joy. The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save. He will rejoice over you with gladness. This is how God speaks to his people. He says, “I will rejoice over you with gladness.

Exposition

One of Jesus’ titles is “Immanuel,” which means “God with us” (Matthew 1:23). We ask the question... How do we know that God is living among us? First, God is always present everywhere. One of the ways we are reminded of His presence with us is through the beauty of His creation. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork” as stated in Psalm 19:1. In this way, God is even present with those who have not put their faith in Him. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people’” (2 Corinthians 6:16). The apostle tells us in an undeniable way that God not only lives among us but that we are the house in which He dwells. He accomplishes this by the Holy Spirit. Jesus is not only God *with* us but also God *in* us. God comes to live in us through Jesus Christ when we are born again: “My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So, I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me Galatians 2:20.

Conclusion

From Genesis to Revelation and at countless places in between, the Bible tells us both clearly and completely that God is among us, that God is always with us.

- Romans 8:11 says that “if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then He who raised Christ from the dead will also quicken – or give life – to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” If we are born again, our bodies are the holy temple of the Living God!

- Joshua 3: 9, 10, and 13 say. “And Joshua said to the people of Israel, ‘Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God.’ And Joshua said, ‘Here is how you shall know that the living God is among you and that He will without fail drive out from before you. And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap.’”
- Romans 12,1-2, I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
- When it was time for Jesus to return to the Father, He told His disciples, “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever” (Johns 14:16). Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead, who would continue to bring the presence of God to dwell in the lives of believers. The Holy Spirit carries on the role of Jesus as teacher, revealer of truth, encourager, comforter, intercessor, and God with us.

References

The lessons are based on the Grant Hill Missionary Baptist Church Sunday School Ministry writers understanding of the topics being discussed, and cited references listed and given credit as written.



1. The KJV Bible
2. The Handbook of Bible Application
3. gotquestions.org