

Renew... the Spirit of Your Mind

Several years ago I was hired to remodel and renew an old house. The person who hired me wanted some old wall paper removed and the walls painted. In the kitchen, she wanted old cabinets removed and it renewed with modern fixtures. All of the floors had to be stripped and new floor covering was to be put down. When I started, I was unaware of the fact that the house did not have sheetrock and all the cabinets were built into the framing of the house. Every aspect of the house from foundation to wiring and plumbing was totally ruined.

Often in the Epistles of Paul we are told about a dramatic change that takes place when Jesus Christ becomes our LORD and Savior. We are looking at the change that occurs when we receive this new life and the renewed mind.

Ephesians 4:23-24 NKJV Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Romans 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.

The Apostle Paul was worn out from the myriad of things that had happened to him. Just like you, he was not immune to life's difficulties.

He said he was hard-pressed physically and emotionally.

2 Corinthians 4:7 NKJV But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 NKJV We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—

The word for “*hard-pressed*” means troubled, pressures, and hardship.

Have you found that life has many troubles, pressures, and hardships?

Do you know what it is like to be hard-pressed on every side? This

happens in various ways. When Paul considered his body, on the outside he was “wasting away.” The troubles and pressures had a devastating impact on his body and emotions. Troubles and pressures do that. His words are perplexing to some people.

2 Corinthians 4:16 NIV Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

How can we be renewed on the inside when we are hard-pressed on every side?

He showed us how he did it. He said, *“Inwardly we are being renewed day by day.”* Consider what he said was happening.

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 NKJV We are **hard-pressed** on every side, yet not crushed; we are **perplexed**, but not in despair; **persecuted**, but not forsaken; **struck down**, but not destroyed

Hard-pressed is trouble and hardship. Perplexed is anxiety and uncertainty. Persecuted is harassment and oppression. Struck-down is suffering pain and injury, to hurt badly.

Anyone that goes through all of that needs renewal.

Pay attention to what he said about how he responded to all of those attacks against him. He was hard-pressed, but not crushed. He was perplexed, but not in despair. He was persecuted, but not forsaken. He was struck down, but not destroyed.

How do you do that?

Does anyone know anything about “wasting away?”

How do you face the challenges of *“wasting away”* and keep your spirit up? How do you keep from being crushed when you are hard-pressed on every side? How do you keep from being in despair when you are perplexed, puzzled and uncertain? What can you do when your emotions are out of whack? How can you keep from being destroyed when you are struck down and hard-pressed on every side? Someone said, *“I can handle some things some of the time, but I cannot handle everything in all places at the same time.”*

How did he do it?

There is a secret to making it through when everything comes against you.

2 Corinthians 4:16 NIV Therefore we do not lose heart. Though **outwardly** we are **wasting away**, yet **inwardly** we are being **renewed day by day**.

On the outside, everything was impacting him in a negative way. That word **“wasting away”** describes it. It can happen to any of us. The Bible tells us that Satan comes to steal, kill and to destroy. Not only do we contend with the adversary of our souls, we also contend with the troubles and difficulties of this world.

Here is some help for those who are hard-pressed on every side.

We need to find out how to be renewed on the inside day by day.

Have you ever seen someone whose spirit was always pumped up?

You thought they surely do not have as much pressure on every side as

you did. Then you found out, they were hard-pressed and perplexed on the outside and they were “wasting away,” but their spirit was pumped. When you heard their story you said, they should have been miserable and despondent. They should have been complaining and angry. They should have been in despair, but they had peace and joy. They had hope and faith.

How can you do that?

2 Corinthians 4:16 NLT That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day.

2 Corinthians 4:17 NLT For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!

2 Corinthians 4:18 NLT So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

Tell yourself: “These things will not last!” Tell yourself: “I am headed toward something better.”

Ephesians 4:23 NKJV Be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

Ephesians 4:23-24 NLT Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

There is a process here that we cannot afford to miss.

The New King James Version says, “be renewed in the spirit of your mind.” **The New Living Translation** shows us the power that changes our thoughts and attitudes.

There is more to this than thinking positively. This is the process of the Holy Spirit coming in and renewing and changing our spirit and mind. When the Holy Spirit starts working in us, He starts progressively changing the way that we think about things. He starts giving us the mind of Christ for every situation. Even when we are hard-pressed on every side, we can have hope. Even when our bodies are “wasting away,” our spirit is filled with His joy. When we are perplexed, puzzled and uncertain, the Spirit from within us keeps us from despair. When our emotions are out of whack, the Holy Spirit brings us back on track and fills us with faith. When you are struck down and hard-pressed on every side, we know that God is still working. When everything starts pressing in from all sides, you need to be renewed in the spirit of your mind. There are several areas where God will help you in this.

Isaiah 40:29-30 NLT He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion.

Isaiah 40:31 NLT But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

When you are hard-pressed on every side, you need to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit has a word for you when you are weak, tired, and powerless. Put your trust in the Lord and wait patiently on Him. Renewal of strength is coming into your innermost being. A renewed attitude is coming. God is going to pick you up. You are coming out of this thing. You are going to rise high and soar above this thing.

Romans 12:2 NIV84 Do not conform any longer 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.

To help us with this, the Apostle Peter gives some instruction.

1 Peter 5:6-7 NIV84 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.

1 Peter 5:8 NIV84 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

1 Peter 5:9 NIV84 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

1 Peter 5:10-11 NIV84 And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will **Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast**. To Him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Renewal is coming.

God is going to renew the spirit of your mind.

Did you hear that? He will come in and start renewing the spirit of your mind. He will give you joy and peace and hope. He will make you strong and resilient. He will renew your mind by the power of the Holy Spirit. Will you allow the Holy Spirit to begin renewing the spirit of your mind?