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SERIES



# Renewing Your Mind

SIX BIBLE STUDY LESSONS  
FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP

# Renewing Your Mind

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FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP



**EVERY NATION**  
P R O D U C T I O N S

## **RENEWING YOUR MIND**

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Published by EVERY NATION PRODUCTIONS

P.O. Box 12229 Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Philippines

email: [productions@everynation.org.ph](mailto:productions@everynation.org.ph)

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Printed in the Republic of the Philippines

# How to Use this Material

In Victory, the primary venue for discipleship happens in a small group. It is called a Victory group. We strongly encourage everyone to be involved since these groups are specifically designed to help disciples grow spiritually.

A Victory group meeting has three sections: **Connect**, **Word**, and **Prayer**, and ideally lasts from forty to sixty minutes.

## **CONNECT** (5-10 minutes)

Victory group meetings begin with a time to relate with one another. Depending on the people who comprise the group, this can be done through a variety of ways:

- Fun—such as an icebreaker activity
- Answered prayers—sharing of testimonies and updates
- Questions—such as those provided in the material, learning each other's personal stories, and sharing feedback from the weekly message

### *Effective Questions During the Connect Portion:*

- Are deliberately friendly to first-timers
- Ask for opinion or experiences
- Require no Bible knowledge
- Have no right or wrong answer
- Are not controversial
- Are preferably connected to the meeting's topic

## **WORD** (20-30 minutes)

Teach the truth and relevance of God's Word for life application. The Victory group meeting is not primarily a Bible study. Although teaching and explanation of Scripture is involved, the goal is to minister, not finish a material.

There is no need teach all the points in a material.

Within this section, we look at what the Bible says, its relevance to us today, and its application in our lives.

### **What:** *What does the Bible say?*

Communicate and impart biblical truth clearly and concisely

*<sup>16</sup>All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16,17*

### *Tips for Sharing the Word Effectively*

- Let the Bible speak for itself.
- Use illustrations and tell stories to explain Bible verses.
- When entertaining clarifications, be watchful not to allow the discussion to go off-tangent.
- The primary goal is to minister to the needs of the people, not to finish a Bible lesson.
- Be led by the Spirit when using the material.

### **So What:** *What is the relevance of the Word to my life?*

Give participants the opportunity to discuss how the Word impacts the way they live.

*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.*

ROMANS 12:2

**Now What:** *How do I apply the Word to my life?*

Our primary reason for sharing the Bible is so that people will know who God is and what He has done. In doing so, the participants will begin to discover who they are and what they should do.

If it is a promise, teach them to claim it. If it is a command or a principle, encourage them to put it to action by God's grace. If it is a truth, let them embrace it willingly and not under compulsion. Allow God's grace and love to win them by the way you teach God's Word.

Encourage specific, measurable action steps that are consistent with the life change that the Scripture is bringing about. We do not command people, but we spur them on toward love and good deeds.

*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.* JAMES 1:22

*Tips for Life-Changing Application*

- You may choose one of the "So What" and "Now What" questions or you may add your own.
- An effective standby application question is: "What one action step are you going to take as a result of what you heard today?"
- Designate who will be the first to answer the question asked.
- Do not allow someone to argue or be critical of others.
- Remind everyone to apply the lesson to their own lives, not to someone else's.
- Ask God for wisdom to know when to balance or correct strange or unbiblical applications. Insensitive correction or criticism can kill the group, as can unchecked heresy.
- Remind everyone that transformation is God's work, not ours, and our obedience is a response to who He is and His love for us. It is God's grace that enables us to apply and obey His Word.

## **PRAY** (15-20 minutes)

Prayer is the most important part of the Victory group meeting. Make sure you have plenty of time left so your prayer time is not rushed. This is not a “closing prayer,” but a time for everyone in the group to take specific requests to God. This is where the action is. The goal is to create a venue where people will see God move on their behalf.

*“Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.” MATTHEW 18:19*

### *Tips for Powerful Prayer*

- Listen to the Holy Spirit carefully during the Connect and Word sections for things that may need prayer.
- Spend your time praying for one another, not sharing and discussing prayer requests.
- Keep your prayers simple, sincere, and short. Most non-believers have never heard an ordinary Christian just talk to God and will be touched by the sincerity and simplicity of the prayer.
- Pray, don’t preach. Pray in simple and short sentences, not long “sermon prayers.”
- Use conversational prayer, not complicated or profound, intercessory prayer.
- Expect God to answer your prayers.

## CONTENTS

- 1** Sync or Sink ..... 1
- 2** Right View ..... 5
- 3** Right Posture..... 9
- 4** Guarding Your Heart .....13
- 5** Right Mind.....17
- 6** How to Renew Your Mind .....21





*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.* ROMANS 12:2

## WHAT

Being in sync is crucial for life and work—whichever field you may be in. We often have many choices of what or whom to follow, and these choices will either make us sink or they will keep us in sync. In this lesson, we will look at three wills we can follow and how we can be in sync with God's will for our lives.

### 1

## Self Will

*"... choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve . . . But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."*

JOSHUA 24:15

*"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."* LUKE 22:42

God has given us an amazing gift: free will. Because we have free will, we can either willingly choose to follow God, or we can choose to go about life apart from His will.

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*Have you ever made a decision that was not according to God's will? What was the result?*

## 2 World's Will

*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. . . .*

ROMANS 12:2 (SEE ALSO 1 JOHN 2:15,17.)

It is often enticing to follow what the majority does; yet the majority is not always right. In fact, the world's ideals are often fickle and easily swayed.

What does  
"conform" mean?

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What does  
"transform" mean?

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## 3 God's Will

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* JEREMIAH 29:11 (SEE ALSO ROMANS 12:2.)

We may not understand some of God's ways, but when we put our trust in Him, we will find that His will is good, pleasing, and perfect.

Tell of a time when  
you fully trusted  
God to do His will  
in your situation.

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**SO WHAT**

- Why do you think God gave us free will? What are the advantages and disadvantages of having free will?
- Why does the Bible command us to not conform to the pattern of this world? What are some values upheld in society today that you know are not right?
- How can we be in sync with God's will? Why can we trust God and His will for our lives no matter what?

**NOW WHAT**

- How can you be in sync with God's will for your life? How can you trust God more than your own will?
- Are there things in the world that still entice you apart from God's will? How can you be transformed by the renewing of your mind?
- Is there anything hindering you from trusting God's will fully in your life? How can you grow in your relationship with God this week?

- 
- Thank God for His good, pleasing, and perfect will for your life.
  - Pray that you would seek after God rather than your own plans and ideas, or the patterns of this world.
  - Ask God to transform you by renewing your mind. Pray that you would know and love God more and more every day.



*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.* ROMANS 12:2

## WHAT

Following God's will is easier said than done. Many times, we have a hard time following God because of the way we view God and His will. When we get to know Him more, we will realize that His will is really good, pleasing, and perfect. In this lesson, we will look at three characteristics of God's will that will help us understand His plans for us.

### 1

## God's Sovereign Will

*<sup>8</sup>"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. <sup>9</sup>"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."* ISAIAH 55:8,9

*Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!* ROMANS 11:33

God's wisdom is beyond any person's, and we can trust His ways even if we do not fully understand them. However, sometimes we think that we know better than God.

*Can you tell of a time when you trusted God even if you did not understand what was happening? How did it turn out?*

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## 2 God's Moral Will

*... and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go . . .*

1 KINGS 2:3 (SEE ALSO DEUTERONOMY 29:29.)

Following God's commands leads to blessings, but disobedience leads to negative consequences. When we choose to live according to God's moral standards, we will be able to live life as He intended.

*How have you been blessed recently because you obeyed God?*

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## 3 God's Personal Will

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* JEREMIAH 29:11 (SEE ALSO PSALM 145:17.)

God has a personal will for each of us. And with His good, pleasing, and perfect will, He desires to unfold His unique plans for our lives as we abide in Him.

*What does it mean to have "hope and a future"?*

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**SO WHAT**

- Why do you think some Christians have a hard time trusting God and His will?
- Why is God's will sovereign? What do you think this really means?
- More than His great wisdom, what should make us more confident in trusting God's will?

**NOW WHAT**

- Do you trust God and His will for your life? How can you trust Him more starting today?
- Have you been suffering consequences because of disobedience? How can you begin walking in God's will for you this week?
- Do you want God's will for your life? How can you know God more every day?

- 
- Thank God for His sovereignty and faithfulness. Declare your complete dependence and faith in Him today.
  - Pray that you would follow God and His commands every day, and that you would experience and walk in the blessing of obedience.
  - Ask God for His plans and purposes to prevail in your life. Pray that you would trust Him no matter what.



*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.* ROMANS 12:1

## WHAT

Like in certain sports where a player needs to be in perfect position to score a point, worship is the posture we take if we want to be in sync with God's will. In humility and as an act of surrender, we offer all of ourselves when we worship God. In this lesson, we will look at how we worship God as living sacrifices that are holy and pleasing to Him.

### 1 Living Sacrifice

*"... whoever loses life for my sake will find it."* MATTHEW 10:39

Sacrifices are often dead, but the right way to worship God is by being a living sacrifice or making ourselves ready and yielded to His will.

*What does it mean to lose your life for Christ's sake?*

### 2 Holy Sacrifice

*Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*

ROMANS 6:13

<sup>19</sup>*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup>you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.* 1 CORINTHIANS 6:19,20

Holy simply means “set apart.” God set us apart for His purposes when He cleansed and purified us from our sins through Christ. Thus, we are to live in holiness, following His ways.

Who owns our bodies? What are we to do with our bodies?

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### 3 Pleasing Sacrifice

*<sup>17</sup>For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, <sup>18</sup>because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.* ROMANS 14:17,18

*...“Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.”* 1 SAMUEL 15:22

Jesus’ sacrifice saved us from our sin and from living apart from God. In response, we live to please Him. He is more pleased if we live our lives in obedience to His will and follow His ways, not out of fear or guilt, but out of the desire to honor Him.

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**SO WHAT**

- How do you think we can be living sacrifices?  
Why do you think sometimes living sacrifices crawl out of the altar?
- What are some things that we need to turn away from because we have been set apart to live as a holy sacrifice unto God?
- How can we please God in our lives?

**NOW WHAT**

- Are you living to please God? What areas of your life do you need to surrender to God so you can fully live for Him?
- How can you live a holy life for God this week?
- How can you grow in your love and devotion to God every day?

- 
- Thank God for His unchanging and faithful nature. Surrender yourself to Him as a holy, living, and pleasing sacrifice.
  - Ask God to help you live a pure and holy life before Him. Acknowledge that you can't do this without His mercy and grace.
  - Pray that you would please God in every way and every day of your life.

# 4

# Guarding Your Heart

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CONNECT

- What was the worst part of your week?  
What happened?
- Do you consider yourself to be an emotional person? What types of situations affect you emotionally? Why?
- Recall a time when you did something because you knew in your heart it was right. What happened?

*Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.* PROVERBS 4:23

## WHAT

Our hearts fuel and feed our minds. In our hearts, we have desires, emotions, our will, and motives. Because our hearts powerfully direct our motives, views, posture, thoughts, attitudes, and behavior, the Bible tells us to guard our hearts above all else. In this lesson, we will look at how we can win the battle in our hearts.

### 1 Recognize that our hearts, apart from God, are deceitful.

*The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure.*

*Who can understand it?* JEREMIAH 17:9

Apart from God, we are sinners and desperately wicked. Our hearts are deceitful and misled.

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*Why can we not trust our hearts and follow what it tells us?*

### 2 Understand God's heart and His unconditional love for us.

<sup>38</sup>*They will be my people, and I will be their God. <sup>39</sup>I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me for their own good and the good of their children after them. <sup>40</sup>I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. <sup>41</sup>I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul.* JEREMIAH 32:38-41

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* ROMANS 5:8

We do not deserve God's love, but He loves us anyway. This understanding can secure us and make us whole.

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*What is the greatest expression of His love for us? How has His love changed you?*

### **3** **Continuously seek God with all our hearts.**

<sup>36</sup>Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" <sup>37</sup>Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

MATTHEW 22:36,37

<sup>5</sup>Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; <sup>6</sup>in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

PROVERBS 3:5,6

Jesus taught that the greatest commandment in the Bible is to love God with everything we've got. What does it mean for you to love God with all your heart, soul, and strength?

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*How can you trust God with all your heart?*

**SO WHAT**

- Why do you think the heart is a battleground? How does the Bible's description of our hearts as deceitful challenge our social and cultural views of the heart and following our hearts?
- What do you think we need to guard our hearts from?
- How can we love the Lord and trust Him with 100% of who we are?

**NOW WHAT**

- Do you follow the Lord even when you feel like doing something else? How will you choose to do what's right even when your emotions tell you otherwise?
- Do you think you are guarding your heart? Are there specific things you need to guard your heart from? How can you apply this lesson in your life during the coming week?
- How can you trust in the Lord with all your heart every day? Is there a particular concern you are having a difficulty entrusting to Him? What do you think you should do?

- 
- Thank God for His unconditional love. Pray that His love would fill and secure you always, and that you would be able to share this love with others.
  - Ask God to help you guard your heart, to love, trust and seek Him always.
  - Pray that the fruit of the Spirit would abound in your life.



*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.* ROMANS 12:2

## WHAT

To know God's will, we must first know who God is, live for Him, and have renewed minds. In this lesson, we will look at what it means to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

### 1 Turn away from the patterns of this world.

*<sup>5</sup>Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. <sup>6</sup>The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; <sup>7</sup>the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.* ROMANS 8:5-7

Because we live in this world, we are used to living in its ways. But most of these are opposite to God's ways and Word. We must turn away from the ways of this world if we are to know God's will.

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*What were some things that you chose to stop doing when you started following God?*

### 2 Renew your mind.

*<sup>22</sup>You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its*

*deceitful desires;*<sup>23</sup>*to be made new in the attitude of your minds;*<sup>24</sup>*and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.* EPHESIANS 4:22-24

*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.* HEBREWS 4:12

As we know God more through His Word, we will find that much of our thinking is in need of renewing. This change of mindsets will result in us becoming more and more Christ-like.

*What were the significant changes in your life when you started to learn about God's ways?*

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### **3 Understand and obey God's will.**

*<sup>15</sup>Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup>making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup>Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.* EPHESIANS 5:15-17

Merely knowing about God and His ways is not enough. To fully experience His will in our lives, we must put His Word into practice through obedience. Tell of a time when you obeyed a command from God.

*What could have happened if you had not put the Word into action in your life?*

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**SO WHAT**

- How does the pattern of this world differ from God's pattern?
- How can our minds be renewed?
- Why do you think we should be very careful about how we live? How can we live wisely?

**NOW WHAT**

- In what areas do you think your mind needs to be renewed? How can you let go of some of the patterns of the world beginning this week?
- Do you have a regular time for reading the Word? How can you spend more time with God in His Word every day?
- Are there things God has told you to do that you haven't done yet? How can you begin walking in obedience today?

- 
- Thank God for His Word. Pray that you would know and love God more every day as you meditate on and obey His Word.
  - Pray that you would not conform to the patterns of this world. Ask God to help you renew your mind so you would see things as He does and become more like Christ every day.
  - Ask God to help you obey the Word and live in obedience to Him always.

# 6

# How to Renew Your Mind

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CONNECT

- Do you like buying used things?  
Why or why not?
- For you, what is/was the best part of school? Why?
- Who do you consider to be an intellectual or a profound thinker? Why?

<sup>3</sup>For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup>The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup>We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-5

## WHAT

The Bible tells us that we are in a war—a spiritual war whose victory has already been determined by what Jesus did for us on the cross. However, if we are unaware of this war, we will lose by default. One of the battles we face is in our minds. Though the mind is powerful, it can also be tricked. Wrong thinking can result in wrong actions. In order to win the battle that wages in our minds, our minds need to be renewed. In this lesson, we will look at how Scripture tells us we can renew our minds.

### 1 Demolish strongholds, arguments, and pretensions.

<sup>4</sup> . . . they have divine power to demolish strongholds

<sup>5</sup> . . . arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God . . . 2 CORINTHIANS 10:4,5

(SEE ALSO JEREMIAH 23:29.)

In Christ, we have the power to demolish every unbiblical stronghold, argument, and pretension that gets set up in our minds. Strongholds such as fear, poverty, rejection, and self-pity can be eradicated from our lives by the power of God's Word.

How does God's  
Word help us  
demolish these  
strongholds?

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## 2 Take every thought captive.

... we take captive every thought . . . 2 CORINTHIANS 10:5

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. PHILIPPIANS 4:8*

We should not be passive in letting just any thought enter and take root in our minds. We need to be diligent in actively guarding our mind and taking captive every thought that is not in accordance with God's Word. Instead of allowing thoughts of doubt, lust, fear, and insecurity to fill our minds, the Bible exhorts us to think right and pure thoughts.

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**3**

**Make our thoughts obedient to Christ.**

*... we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.* 2 CORINTHIANS 10:5

*Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."*

MATTHEW 22:37 (SEE ALSO MATTHEW 16:23.)

In our minds, we need to have the things of God, not worldly ideas. Only then can we truly love God with all our minds.

*How have you made your thoughts obedient to Christ?*

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**SO WHAT**

- Why do you think our minds are a battleground? Why do we need to renew our minds?
- How do our thoughts determine our actions? How can we take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ?
- How do you think a Christian with a renewed mind thinks and lives?

**NOW WHAT**

- Are you renewing your mind daily by consistently reading and studying the Bible? How can you continue renewing your mind this week?
- Are there areas in your life that need to be transformed according to God's pattern? What can you do to not conform to the pattern of this world?
- Are your thoughts becoming more and more godly or more and more worldly? How can you think about things that honor and please God every day?

- 
- Thank God for His Word and His power to transform us.
  - Pray that you would grow in your understanding and love for God's Word, and that your mind would continue to be renewed every day.
  - Ask God to help you take every thought you have captive and make it obedient to Christ, so that you would glorify God in everything you think, say, and do.

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. . . .

ROMANS 12:1,2

**Renewing Your Mind** is a series of six materials for group discipleship designed to help disciples be more like Christ every day.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Sync or Sink
- Right View
- Right Posture
- Guarding Your Heart
- Right Mind
- How to Renew Your Mind



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