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SERMON TITLE New in 2022, part 2

SERIES New in 2022

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KEY SCRIPTURE Ephesians 4; Romans 12:1-2

SYNOPSIS Being new in 2022 begins with our minds. We must change our way of thinking.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ New in 2022, part 2

God is already up to something new. It's already budding and springing up. He's doing something new in us, with us and through us. He is pouring out his Spirit and we will see the mighty works of God.

☞ Ephesians 4:17-24

17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the **futility of their thinking**. 18 They are **darkened in their understanding** and separated from the life of God because of the **ignorance that is in them** due to the hardening of their hearts...

☞ 22 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; 23 to **be made new in the attitude of your minds**; 24 and to **put on the new self**, created to **be like God in true righteousness and holiness**...

☞ New in 2022 starts with the mind.

☞ Romans 12:1-2

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. 2 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.

☞ **First, we simply offer ourselves to God**. This is true worship. We give ourselves to his plans and direction. Whatever God wants of us; whenever; wherever – we say “yes” to the Lord. This is being a living sacrifice –no longer driven by our own desires; dead to ourselves, but alive to God. He calls us to be holy and pleasing to him. This means we are set apart for his purposes. It's no longer all about “me, me, me.” It's about him and his desires.

The patterns of this world are working against God's plans and patterns. Therefore, we must be careful to not conform to the world. There should be some distinguishing characteristics for followers of Christ. If strangers would have no idea that we are any different from everyone else, then something is wrong. We are supposed to be different.

2 Corinthians 6:14-17

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." 17 "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord.

Now, this doesn't mean God wants us all to move into a monastery. It means, we are to be different from the patterns of this sinful world. It means, we should not be yoked, or aligned with non-believers. We can live in this world and we can have friends in this world, but we



must not allow this world to influence and drive us. A yoke means that you are in lock-step and moving in the same direction. The world is moving farther and farther away from God, while we should be drawing closer and closer to him. We are supposed to be transformed.

2 Corinthians 3:18 NKJV

we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

We are called to be transformed, changed to be more and more like Jesus. There's a metamorphosis that is supposed to be going on. We aren't supposed to remain as ordinary caterpillars; we are to transform into beautiful butterflies.

All of this separation and this non-conformity to worldly patterns starts with our minds. How we think affects how we live.

“Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The NLT puts it this way: **“let God ☞ transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.”**

As I've said before, we need to think about what we think about. If we don't, we can fall into the same trap as unbelievers whose thinking was futile and darkened, without understanding. We can even become separated from God if we continue on in ignorance.

We must be made new in our thinking. Ephesians says we are to be made new in the attitude of our minds. Attitude is all about whether you are moving up or down. In aviation, airplanes have an attitude indicator. Basically, it shows the airplane's flight path in relation to the horizon. It is either staying level, moving down, or moving up.

We can choose our attitude. Will we choose to focus upward on Godly things or will we focus downward on worldly things? Then, it's all about our way of thinking.

Our minds are powerful, and our thoughts shape who we are and will become. **Dr. Caroline Leaf** says in her book *Switch On Your Brain*, **“As we think, we change the physical nature of our brain.** As we consciously direct our thinking, we can rewire toxic patterns of thinking and replace them with healthy thoughts.” It all starts in the realm of the mind, with our ability to think and choose. In essence, she says, science is proving free will and the relationship between thoughts and reality.

☞ **Proverbs 23:7**
For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.

This is profound. How we think has a real effect on who we are and how we behave. Even science is finding this to be true.



Science shows that our thoughts, with their embedded feelings, turn sets of genes on and off in complex relationships. Research shows that DNA actually changes shape according to our thoughts.

Are you thinking about godliness? Are you aligning your thoughts with God's word? Here are a few examples:

You think: "It's impossible"

But God's Word says: All things are possible (Luke 18:27)

You think: "I can't do it"

But God's Word says: You can do all things (Philippians 4:13)

You think: "It's not worth it"

But God's Word says: It will be worth it (Roman 8:2)

You think: "I'm afraid"

But God's Word says: I have not given you a spirit of fear (2 Timothy 1:7)

You think: "I'm not smart enough"

But God's Word says: I give you wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30)

You think: "I feel all alone"

But God's Word says: I will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5)

What might happen if you started believing all this? Thoughts change us, so think about what you think about. **Table talk. What thoughts do you struggle with? Encourage each other with truth.**

☞ 2 Corinthians 10:5 KJV

Cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

I think we all struggle with our imaginations going wild, especially when they are ignited by fear. We often have a brain that is like an author of fiction. It wakes up in the morning and writes its own novel with situations and scenarios, often with troubling twists and turns.

Sometimes we even imagine things that have no basis in reality. Someone looks at you with a smirk on their face and you are sure they are making fun of you or are upset with you. Even more subtle is when someone passes by without saying hi. "They must be mad at me" or "they really don't like me." These are imaginations. Some are exaggerated truths and some are complete fabrications of our minds and we must deal forcefully with these thoughts.

Demolish/Casting down = The word is in the present tense, meaning it is on-going. This is not a "one and done" event. It is something that continues and happens over and over again. The



word is also in the active voice, meaning it requires effort. This is not something that will “just happen.” You have to be intentional and forceful over and over again in order to demolish ungodly thinking. Remember also, that ungodly thinking is not simply “anti-God” thoughts, which most believers would easily overcome. Rather, ungodly thinking is anything that is not in agreement with God.

☞ All of these ungodly thoughts must come down. And they only come down **with intentional, on-going, strenuous effort**. They must be dethroned and destroyed. We often try to simply divert them. We distract ourselves with something, but the problem is as soon as that distraction wears off, those ungodly thoughts are right back at it. They must be brought down and destroyed.

“Take captive” is also in the present tense with an active voice. Here again, to capture our ungodly thoughts requires on-going, intentional effort on our part. Taking them captive means to restrict them and bring them under control.

New in 2022 starts with our way of thinking. We need to compare our thoughts with Scripture and then cast down our own imaginations whenever they don’t align with God’s Word. We capture our thoughts and allow God’s Word to take precedence over anything that is out of alignment.

Wayne Dyer – If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.

Change the way you think and you will change the way you behave.

In Austin Beveré’s *Keys To Getting Unstuck* he says this:

☞ **Circumstances + beliefs = thoughts, which lead to emotions, which lead to actions, which will eventually lead back to circumstances.**

☞ **You can’t always control your circumstances. But you can control your beliefs.**

Reset your beliefs, the way you think, which will lead to resetting the way you feel, and will ultimately change the actions you respond with. So, when your emotions are getting the better

☞ of you, ask yourself, “What does the Bible say about this? **Replace lies with truth.**

☞ New in 2022 begins with the mind. **Change the way you think and be made new.**

It’s going to take effort and it will be an ongoing process, but let’s begin today and continue tomorrow to change the way we think. Let’s be new in 2022.