

Renewing Our Minds Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Describe a good idea you have had.
2. If you could be an expert at one event in the winter Olympics, what event would you choose?

Read the following passage: Romans 12:1-5

In Romans 12, Paul makes a number of allusions back to and comparisons with Romans 1. Consider the following chart (adapted from *The Mind of the Spirit* by Craig Keener).

Humanity failed to thank God (Romans 1:21) and eventually worshipped idols (Romans 1:23).	Believers worship God, dedicating themselves as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1).
Human beings corrupted their bodies (Romans 1:24).	Believers offer their bodies (Romans 12:1) to serve Christ's body (Romans 12:4-8).
Human beings did not approve knowledge of God, so God allowed their minds to be corrupted (Romans 1:28).	God renews the minds of believers so they may approve His good, pleasing, and perfect will (Romans 12:2).
The corrupted minds of human beings yields selfish vices and broken relationships (Romans 1:28-31).	The renewed mind yields healthy connections and acts of service for the good of others (Romans 12:1-8).
The corrupted mind approves the dysfunctional actions of other people (Romans 1:32).	The renewed mind walks closely with others who are pursuing God's will (Romans 12:3-8).

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. The chart above demonstrates several ways that the renewed mind is different from the mind of this age, and suggests five questions that can help us understand how we may be "conforming to the pattern of this world." What do your answers to these questions reveal about how your life is being shaped by the present age?
 - What is functioning as an idol in my life? (What affects my emotions? What puts me in a rage or leads me to deep despondency? What dominates my thought life? What do I look to for hope or security or identity?)

- What am I doing with my body? (What am I doing sexually? What am I doing with food? Am I obsessed with my body? Am I destroying my body?)
 - How does my behavior compare to what God has said in the Scriptures?
 - What is the character of my relationships?
 - Who is going the same way? (Is everybody in my generation basically pursuing the same things I am pursuing?)
2. Paul makes it clear in a number of places that this life is not the end. Read 1 Corinthians 15:19. What does Paul mean by this statement? How should our understanding of the afterlife affect how we live in the present?
 3. Read Romans 14:10-12. How should the reality of a future judgment affect us in the present? How do you feel about giving an account of yourself to God?
 4. God's intention is to conform us to the image of His Son. What does it mean practically for us to be like Christ? What are some ways you want to be like Christ?
 5. In Romans 12:5, Paul indicates that we belong to one another. What does this mean? How should this impact how we think about our lives?
 6. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20. What does this imply about what Paul valued?
 7. What is one way you would like to see your thinking change?

Pray