

Jesus Christ improves our lives by improving our thinking

Most folks want better lives. The self-help section at the bookstore is one of the busiest departments because people are constantly looking for ways to cope with their problems and increase the quality of their lives. But the amazing thing is the variety of ways that we go about the process of improving our lives. Hardly any two people agree on the approach one should take if he or she wants to get a better life.

The Bible addresses this issue straightforwardly. It teaches that we are spiritual beings — made in God’s image — and that we have an inner, personal character that is at the center of everything we do. Our outward actions and their attendant consequences flow naturally from this inward character. The nature of these external actions is determined by what is going on inside of us, just as surely as a good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree bad fruit (**Mt. 7:17,18**).

Quality of life is the consequence of our words and deeds. If we change our words and deeds, we will get different consequences. But to change our words and deeds, we must change our inner person: the “tree” that produces those “fruits.” And to do that, our thinking must be changed. That is precisely what happens in Christ: ***Jesus Christ improves our lives by improving our thinking.***

Jesus said it simply: “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (**Jn. 8:32**). There is not a single consequence of sin that is not the result (or “fruit”) of erroneous thinking somewhere back up the line. These consequences can be undone only by replacing the untruth that produced them with the truth that can liberate us. There is no effective shortcut, although many people try to find one. We can’t patch our problems by the application of some trick or technique. Real quality-of-life improvement comes from change in our hearts and minds.

Paul wrote, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind” (**Rom. 12:2**). Our lives can be transformed when our minds have been renewed. It’s a simple principle, but one that is extremely important. Throughout the coming week, let’s devote some time to “thinking” about that.

Monday: Ephesians 3:16

Key Idea: True strength and effectiveness are qualities of inward character.

Questions for Family Growth: What does Paul mean when he speaks of being strengthened “in your inner being”? From what source does this kind of strength come? Why is spiritual strength more important than any other kind?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 14:12.**

Tuesday: 2 Corinthians 5:16

Key Idea: As Christians, we are able to view everything from a spiritual viewpoint.

Questions for Family Growth: What does Paul mean when he says that he previously regarded Christ “according to the flesh”? What does he mean when he says, “From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh”?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 14:13](#).

Wednesday: Romans 12:1,2

Key Idea: As Christians, our lives are “transformed” as our thinking is “renewed.”

Questions for Family Growth: What is the “renewal” of our minds spoken of here? Consider [Eph. 4:20-24](#). What does it mean for us to be “transformed”? What produces this transformation? What is said in this text about the will of God?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 14:14](#).

Thursday: Philippians 2:5

Key Idea: We must learn in every situation to think as Christ would think.

Questions for Family Growth: What is the “mind” that is to be characteristic of us? How can we acquire this mind? To what extent are we in control of the way we think? Can we choose to think as Christ would think?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 14:15-19](#).

Friday: John 8:31,32

Key Idea: It is God’s truth that can set us free from the problems caused by sin.

Questions for Family Growth: What are some of the consequences of sin that we need to be “set free” from? How is it that the truth can liberate us from these things? How much difference can be made in our lives by changing our thinking?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 14:20,21](#).

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