



# THE ART OF RENEWING YOUR MIND

A STUDY ON ROMANS 12:2

BY ERICKA CLAY



*The Art of Renewing Your Mind*

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## From the Author

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**F**or a long time, I didn't realize how powerful the minds God created for us were. I mean, I suppose it makes sense seeing that a little germ of evil thought can turn into an entire world war. But for me, I just believed I *was* what I thought—that I had no control over what popped into my mind, and instead of conquering those thoughts and submitting them to Christ, I allowed them to destroy me.

My prayer is that this book shows you how God's Word helps us to conquer evil via our "strongest muscle," removing distractions, actively listening to God's desire for our hearts, and putting aside our human wants in return for a beautiful future with the Creator of the universe.

May your walk with Him become even stronger, my friend.

Yours in Jesus,

Ericka

*"Do not conform 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*

It's taken some deep prayer and quiet listening to write this study. The world is so noisy right now (and to a certain degree, has always been). But it feels more and more like there's a hovering megaphone over the evil in this world that serves to confuse us, dismay us, and more often than not, distract us.

And so just now, as I asked God how I should separate the sections of this study, He very clearly directed me to divide it up based on **Romans 12:2**<sup>1</sup>:

- **Section 1 | The Pattern of This World:** We'll use this section to dissect the world we currently live in, the deceptive tactics Satan uses to trap our attention, and meaningful ways we can combat the noise and keep our eyes on Jesus.
- **Section 2 | Transformed by the Renewing of Your Mind:** We'll look at what "renewing of your mind" actually means from a Biblical perspective and how real, tangible transformation can take place in our lives.
- **Section 3 | Test and Approve God's Will:** Once we learn how to renew our minds, we'll be able to test and approve God's will, finally having the discernment and wisdom God has intended for us all along and using it to live our lives in His freedom and out of reach of Satan's deceptive tactics.

This study won't reveal anything new that isn't already completely mapped out in Scripture. And I believe it's important for you to know

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1. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012%3A2&version=NIV>

that. In a day and age of distractions and "self-help" (a complete oxymoron in my opinion, but I digress), we all need to be turning back to God's pleasing and perfect will that we find outlined in His Word.

So, without further ado, let's dig in!

*Read all of **Romans 12**<sup>2</sup>. Watch **Part I**<sup>3</sup> and **Part II**<sup>4</sup> of the Book of Romans by the Bible Project to get a more complete understanding of the entire book before we move on.*

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2. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012&version=NIV>

3. [https://youtu.be/ej\\_6dVdJSIU](https://youtu.be/ej_6dVdJSIU)

4. <https://youtu.be/0SVTl4Xa5fY>

## Part I: The Pattern of This World

# What is the world like?

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**B**efore we can keep ourselves from conforming to the pattern of this world, we have to be aware of what this world is really like.

There are good and beautiful things (the things God intended in his original creation), and there are dark things too (the sinful things that have sprung forth from the fall).

Both of these categories are easy to spot, but what seems to be harder to see for most of us are the deceptive things of this world—the things that seem good, or at the very least, benign, and yet? They seem to do the most damage.

Those of us in the Western world would probably put "busyness" on that list. It's not a bad thing to have things to do, but when those things blind us to the brokenness in our homes and hearts, we've taken a turn down a road we were never meant to go down.

In that same category, we could probably put "ambition." For those of us who are from the U.S., we're more than well aware of the American Dream, the idea that anyone can be anything, and ultimately, we should strive to make more money, get better jobs, buy more things, because then? We'll be happy.

And when you break it down, those things aren't in and of themselves bad. More money can take care of our basic needs. A better job can bring security for our families. Things can help us function in our daily lives.

But if we're only focused on possessing "more, more, more," then we're missing out on what God has already given us.

We fail to be content.

"I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength." (Philippians 4:11-13)

Paul points out that joy can be had in any and every situation. And so, if we're blinded by what we "should" be doing based on society's terms (which are often aligned with **the adversary's**<sup>1</sup>), then we may be missing out on what God has provided specifically for us.

*In the next lesson, we'll learn more about who runs the world.*

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1. <https://www.gotquestions.org/your-adversary-the-devil.html>

# Who rules the world?

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When it comes to the dark forces of this world (**Ephesians 6:12**<sup>1</sup>), we need to know our enemy.

And it seems that Satan sometimes chooses the least path of resistance. Think of how He fooled Eve. He just needed to quietly whisper in her ear and pose a question that led to the fall of man.

Today, he doesn't even have to ask us anything. He just needs to bombard our online feeds with pictures and videos of things we don't have so we can question God's goodness.

And then he sits back and waits.

The world, then, it seems, is a place where envy and covetousness collide. It's a place where striving for what we want (or better yet, what we think we want) is a common goal, leaving us all depleted, exhausted, and void of Christ's peace.

If we can see the world for what it is—essentially the place where Satan rules (**John 12:31**<sup>2</sup>, **14:30**<sup>3</sup>, **16:11**<sup>4</sup>, and **2 Corinthians 4:4**<sup>5</sup>)—we then know how to keep our eyes open to his deceptive ways within this world.

We no longer need to be afraid of the world because when we know the truth, we'll be able to conquer it through Jesus, our Lord.

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1. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%206%3A12&version=NIV>

2. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2012%3A31&version=NIV>

3. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2014%3A30&version=NIV>

4. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2016%3A11&version=NIV>

5. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%204%3A4&version=NIV>

## So, what do we know about Satan, our adversary?

- **1 Peter 5:8<sup>6</sup>**: *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*
- **2 Corinthians 11:14<sup>7</sup>**: *And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.*
- **1 John 3:8<sup>8</sup>**: *Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.*
- **2 Corinthians 11:3<sup>9</sup>**: *But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*
- **1 John 5:19<sup>10</sup>**: *We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*
- **Genesis 3:1<sup>11</sup>**: *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”*
- **2 Corinthians 2:11<sup>12</sup>**: *So that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for*

6. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Peter%205%3A8&version=NIV>

7. <https://www.biblegateway.com/>

[passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%2011%3A14&version=NIV](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%2011%3A14&version=NIV)

8. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%203%3A8&version=NIV>

9. <https://www.biblegateway.com/>

[passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%2011%3A3&version=NIV](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%2011%3A3&version=NIV)

10. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%205%3A19&version=NIV>

11. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%203%3A1&version=NIV>

*we are not ignorant of his designs.*

He is cunning and is coming straight for the space where belief takes root—our minds. So our job? To protect them wholeheartedly and keep our eyes on Jesus.

***In the next lesson, we'll take a look at several ways Satan tries to influence us in this current generation.***

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12. <https://www.biblegateway.com/>

[passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%20%3A11&cversion=NIV](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%20%3A11&cversion=NIV)

# How does the adversary influence us?

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You know the saying, "You are what you eat"? I think we can all agree that "You are what you think" is much more fitting in this day and age.

We receive information overload through our cell phones, computers, TVs—you name it! And if we're not bombarded online, we're often bombarded in person by somebody who watches Fox News on repeat.

It's...a lot.

**Below are just a few places where Satan may be trying to entrap us.** And let me be clear. I am in NO WAY saying these things are bad or evil in and of themselves. A lot of good can happen online. BUT if we find ourselves feeling depleted, overwhelmed, not good enough, etc., then chances are we're being fed lies through one of the following channels. And it's up to us to find the source and do something about it.

- **Social media:** Social media can be devastating to our self-worth in so many different ways. We can easily compare ourselves to others. We can be bombarded by viewpoints that don't align with our own, and even worse, feel like we're less than for believing what we do. Not to mention, social media is created to keep us scrolling, distracting us from what truly matters, like our families and the purpose God has given us (time flies when you're trapped watching cat videos ad nauseum). It's safe to say social media is often a hindrance to our relationship with Jesus and can leave us feeling exhausted and not good enough when comparing ourselves to an airbrushed world.
- **AI/Search engines:** The thought of going to a non-human entity for advice seems futuristically frightening, but as we're all aware, the future is now.

Blindly relying on information we gather online or through systems like ChatGPT is a major concern because if we're not discerning what we learn against Scripture, then we're falling prey to what could easily become an idol. It's up to us to pray for wisdom and direction when using such tools and not let the tools take precedence in our lives.

- **Videos:** YouTube (or video streaming in general) is a quick and easy way to deliver informational content, regardless of whether or not that information is actually accurate and worthy of our attention. With the rise of YouTube Shorts and TikTok, we're not only vulnerable to mind-numbing content, but we're also constantly in the practice of shortening our attention spans, greatly lessening our ability to be patient and gentle with others.
- **Music:** Music has certainly seemed to devolve over the years. I once came across a preacher who mentioned that Satan was originally the "**angel of music**"<sup>1</sup> and how ironic it is that many are led astray through music (heads up, this is his interpretation of **Ezekiel 28:13**<sup>2</sup>, and many have contested the meaning of "timbrels and pipes" in this verse, but still, an interesting thought). I know I was a big fan of hardcore rap for many years (yes, I know lol), not realizing how it subverted my understanding of sex and male/female power dynamics. It's too easy to say, "Oh, I just like the beat," without realizing how the words could be corrupting our souls.
- **Podcasts:** I'll admit, this form of content-binging seems a little more innocuous than the others. And maybe because it's offered in a slower, long-form type of delivery. But it can be easy to slip out of discernment and into the lull of somebody else's thoughts. It's essential to remain open to diverse viewpoints. But it's also important to be aware of when our defenses might be slipping, and our values are being reshaped without our consent. I personally love listening to podcasts, but I also have to be aware of when it might be a good time to take a brain break from them.

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1. <https://www.gotquestions.org/Satan-music.html>

2. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passages/?search=Ezekiel%2028%3A13&version=NKJV>

- **Commercials:** If you assessed society's current state based on our commercials alone, you'd believe we were nothing but vapid individuals who are only concerned with our looks and making our lives easier. The amount of makeup, skin care, fancy cars, latest medications, and a deluge of other "necessities" that pop up on our screens is more than concerning. Eventually, we can start to believe we truly do *need* these things to survive, replacing our need for Jesus with an empty promise that never delivers. There's no amount of wrinkle cream in the world that can erase our sin, so when we fall victim to what other people try to sell us, we don't remain victorious in the ever-peaceful presence of Christ.
- **TV/Streaming/Movies:** As with other video content, we have to be careful not to fall victim to another person's agenda. A lot of movies and TV shows reflect specific ideologies, whether we're aware or not. And so, it's important to watch with a firm mind in Christ, knowing who we are in Him and not allowing our thoughts to be reshaped by the powers that be at some production company.
- **People we love:** This one may be the most surprising because we automatically assume the people we love (and who presumably love us) should speak nothing but encouraging words. However, often it's the people we're closest to who end up hurting us the most. Like in **Matthew 16:23**<sup>3</sup>, Jesus tells Peter to "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." Peter was not allowing the Spirit to speak when telling Jesus, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you," after Jesus shares that he would be crucified. We have to remember the adversary will use anything and anyone to trip us up, and when we have that in mind, we're able to protect ourselves while still giving grace to those we love.
- **Our own thoughts:** It's evident that Satan knows what buttons to push, and he often does so through our thoughts. There have been a number of

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3. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2016%3A23&version=NIV>

times when I'm "thinking" something I'm not actually thinking—a quick image or memory or whispered phrase that is altogether jarring. And that's why we're to take captive each thought to make it obedient to Christ (**2 Corinthians 10:5**<sup>4</sup>). There was a time in my life when I didn't know I could control my thoughts. I was under the impression that my thoughts controlled me, and if we already know that Satan uses our thoughts to tempt and deceive us, then it's a pretty frightening notion that I never attempted to guard my mind. Peter calls Satan "a prowling lion," bent on looking for someone to devour. And infiltrating our thoughts is a great way to do just that. We need to be vigilant in putting on the mind of Christ and keeping what we think safe from the enemy.

Again, I want to be clear here. I'm in no way demonizing the aforementioned points, and in fact, have personally discerned a number of beneficial things from online platforms, TV shows, podcasts, etc. **It's just a matter of knowing if any of these things are causing undue stress in our lives, and if so, what our next step is.** It may be to take a break or step away from them completely. It may be to instill certain guardrails to keep from hijacking our time.

Like Jesus says, "And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell." (Matthew 5:30). And if what we're consuming is having such an impact that we find ourselves on the precipice of sin, then we need to be mindful of how and what we're consuming.

**This journal exercise**<sup>5</sup> will help you to reflect on the things of this world that may be currently distracting you. Treat this list not as an admonish-

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4. <https://www.biblegateway.com/>

passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%2010%3A5&cversion=NIV

5. [https://1drv.ms/b/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQAQY-luNSTNQbRIGVge3jWhAQso\\_OA4Yi-PIVOTb8Xtl288?e=TSs6vF](https://1drv.ms/b/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQAQY-luNSTNQbRIGVge3jWhAQso_OA4Yi-PIVOTb8Xtl288?e=TSs6vF)

ment but an opportunity to tweak the thoughts and beliefs you're currently letting into your mind and heart.

*Next, I'll share my own story of how Satan has influenced me in the past.*

# Testimony: How the world nearly destroyed me.

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**I**n *this downloadable recording*<sup>1</sup>, I share my personal story of PMDD, depression, suicidal ideation, social media addiction, and comparison—the result of worldly pursuits and being deceived by the adversary.

After listening, reflect on your own relationship with the world. You can download and use **this journal page**<sup>2</sup> to record your thoughts.

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1. [https://1drv.ms/u/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQB6aVjiYjOtRqF0xYyFMbUtAfDae9trk\\_yFP-WDfT4IZGHU?e=Faqtfi](https://1drv.ms/u/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQB6aVjiYjOtRqF0xYyFMbUtAfDae9trk_yFP-WDfT4IZGHU?e=Faqtfi)

2. <https://1drv.ms/b/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQCIW30VuMeASrYMsLWVOfx2AUg7NNcr-RrNjGkN9r6gg89Y?e=rHfYuQ>

Part II: Transformed by the Renewing of Your  
Mind

# What does renewing your mind mean?

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Whether we're aware of it or not, we're all prey to false thinking.

This can typically start in childhood. We can receive false information about ourselves and/or others from family, friends, peers, teachers, etc., and without the life experience to discern what's true and what's not, we often internalize these distortions and they become the lenses through which we see the world as adults.

Renewing our minds is essentially changing out those warped lenses for a pair hand-crafted by God.

When we read Scripture, meditate on it, and (most importantly) *live* it, our worldview begins to change. We become aware of our wrong thinking and replace it with the truth of Scripture.

*Let's next look at how we can renew our minds.*

# How do we renew our minds?



**R**enewing our minds is an *active* thing.

God desires to partner with His children to further His Kingdom on earth, so it makes sense that renewing our minds means we have to *do* something. And the things He asks us to do are to bring us comfort and peace, and Him, the glory He deserves.

## So, what are the things we should do to actively renew our minds?

- **Pray:** Prayer will never stop being powerful. It's an opportunity to seek God's love, guidance, and comfort as well as keep an ongoing conversation with the Creator of the universe. We can first start this process of mind renewal by asking God to show us where our thinking doesn't line up with His will for us. He gladly forgives those who own up to the error of their ways and are willing to change their behavior (**1 John 1:9<sup>1</sup>**). Repentance is a blessing that we shouldn't take for granted and always be willing to exercise to keep our eyes on Christ.
- **Read Scripture:** When we read Scripture, we know what is true. This is pivotal in then being able to compare what we think and believe against what God says. We'll then be able to practice replacing the truth of God's Word against the lies we've always believed, allowing His living and active Word to replace any lie we've clung to.
- **Worship:** God *is* good. He *is* love. He *is* worthy of our time and attention, and through worship, we show Him how we feel about Him. This also becomes a time of connection and great peace, which then shows us how much greater it is to be His child than to run the rat race of this world.

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1. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%201%3A9&version=NIV>

- **Fellowship:** God didn't create man to be alone. He created us for community. And it's in community with fellow believers that we can be held accountable for what's going on in our heads and hearts. God often speaks through those closest to us, so it's important to have a couple of wise and trustworthy friends who know God's Word and follow Jesus's teachings to ensure we're staying on the path He's laid for us.
- **Discern: Solomon<sup>2</sup>,** Israel's third king, had all the wealth in the world, and could have asked God for anything and God would have granted it. But instead of more wealth, women, or wine, Solomon asked for something much, much better: wisdom. As we covered in "The Pattern of the This World" section, sometimes even those closest to us can be used by Satan to throw us off God's path. So, it's important to pray for discernment and use it when weighing what's of God and what isn't. As we walk through life, we'll start to realize that what God allows for others may not be something He intends for us, and therefore, discernment can be our best ally in making sure we're living as God intended.

*Next, I'll share with you how God changed my life once I made renewing my mind an everyday practice.*

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2. <https://www.gotquestions.org/life-Solomon.html>

# What does transformation look like?

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Jesus gives us a clear understanding of when it comes to determining who is really following Jesus and who is just giving Him lip service.

In **Matthew 7:15-20**<sup>1</sup>, He distinguishes between false prophets who produce "bad fruit" and followers (or good trees) that produce "good fruit." If you've been in the Church for a while or have observed Christians from afar, you probably already know what good fruit and bad fruit look like.

When someone is truly living their life for the Lord, they are known by how much they love God and love others. This doesn't mean they're perfect or sinless, but it does mean that they have produced a body of work (for lack of a better term) that points to the Father. *Because* they are forgiven and rooted deeply in Christ, everything they choose to do is for their Creator. And people take note.

As you can imagine, bad fruit looks like quite the opposite. Here you have those who may talk a big "Christian" game, but don't really have the chops to back it up. Their intent is to glorify themselves, not God—living a life bent towards self-preservation and personal success rather than the good of those around them.

So, within ourselves, how can we gauge if we're truly transforming and producing good fruit? **This journal exercise**<sup>2</sup> will help you to reflect on your current thoughts and actions, assisting you in determining if you're allowing the Holy Spirit to sanctify you or if you're caught in bad habits and behaviors you're not entirely proud of. No judgment here. This is just

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1. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%20%3A15-20&version=NIV>

2. [https://1drv.ms/b/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQCEqypdtsdCTavDcYbgJ\\_B\\_AQw2sdfc\\_rF-sLj39V-EtmmI?e=8pgFqZ](https://1drv.ms/b/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQCEqypdtsdCTavDcYbgJ_B_AQw2sdfc_rF-sLj39V-EtmmI?e=8pgFqZ)

a good way to be honest and self-assess—the perfect opportunity to ask God to reveal where you need transformation.

# Testimony: How my life changed when I started to renew my mind.

*In this downloadable recording<sup>1</sup>, I share my personal story of how God has grown and sanctified me by choosing to put off distractions and renewing my mind.*

After listening, reflect on your own life change through renewing your mind. You can download and use **this journal page<sup>2</sup>** to record your thoughts.

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1. <https://1drv.ms/u/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQC1qq4SpMysTLc64DPnkmQXAc-qw4bXWve0al8EUgie8xAo?e=bW5W4V>

2. [https://1drv.ms/b/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQAkwj7Ujt1rQKlhh0L5rxJ6Afxjd20cK4epwe-fLXls6\\_jY?e=fAC1IN](https://1drv.ms/b/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQAkwj7Ujt1rQKlhh0L5rxJ6Afxjd20cK4epwe-fLXls6_jY?e=fAC1IN)

## Part III: Test and Approve God's Will

# What is God's will for us?



Only when our minds are renewed can we truly know what God requires of us.

And really, that makes total sense. If we're still in the throes of a noisy world (and therefore, a noisy mind), we can't sit in God's peace and commune with Him as we were made to do.

Ultimately, we know God's will for us is to love Him, putting Him above all else, and to love others. We're to share the Gospel (the Good News of Christ's life, death, and resurrection) to help free others from the burden of their sin.

But walking with Him to accomplish this is a lot tougher with a million things vying for our attention. We can easily miss the people and opportunities He puts before us if we're seeing life through the world's lenses and not the ones God made for us.

# How do we know God's will is good?



As followers, we know God is the very definition of goodness. He is love (1 John 4:7-12<sup>1</sup>). But often, we believe that our chaotic circumstances and hard parts of life point to a God who *doesn't* love us, who doesn't care.

So, we have to ask ourselves: is He right, or are we?

Jesus assured us that we would have hardships in this life (John 16:33<sup>2</sup>). But He also assured us that He would be with us "until the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20<sup>3</sup>).

As fallen creatures, we have a knack for forgetting this, and instead, listen to Satan's whispers that maybe God doesn't really love us. Maybe he doesn't really care.

But as followers we know the real truth: through our **suffering**<sup>4</sup> and struggles, God sanctifies us like gold refined in fire.

If we always received all the things we *think* we want and "deserve," we'd never grow.

We'd stay stagnant, or even worse—become the dead limb that Jesus removes from the tree and throws into the fire (John 15:5-7<sup>5</sup>).

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1. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John%204%3A7-12&version=NIV>

2. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2016%3A33&version=NIV>

3. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2028%3A19-20&version=NIV>

4. <http://www.relevantbibleteaching.com/site/>

[cpage.asp?cpage\\_id=140025989&sec\\_id=140001239](http://www.relevantbibleteaching.com/site/?cpage_id=140025989&sec_id=140001239)

5. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2015%3A5-7&version=NIV>

So, it's up to us to renew our thinking each day. We must see the storms around us knowing God didn't put them in our way to destroy us but to redeem us, making us whole through our hardships and giving us the opportunity to only depend on Him for our peace (**Mark 4:35-41**<sup>6</sup>).

**This journal exercise**<sup>7</sup> will help you to reflect on how God has been good to you this past year. Use this as a reminder that even through the hard, He is helping and providing you with good, joyful things.

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6. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%204%3A35-41&version=NIV>

7. [https://1drv.ms/b/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQBorgdaxygfTbfLnkPKuHgAd5FpUOR-Jbs\\_Ys13gKEhZU0?e=rfm6g4](https://1drv.ms/b/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQBorgdaxygfTbfLnkPKuHgAd5FpUOR-Jbs_Ys13gKEhZU0?e=rfm6g4)

# How can we tell if we're following God's will?

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**W**e may know God's will, but that doesn't necessarily mean we're following it. Like James says, "even the demons believe," pointing out one can believe in God but not truly be a follower of Christ (**James 2:19<sup>1</sup>**).

So how can we tell if we are truly following God's will for our lives?

This again goes back to assessing if we're producing fruit. And fortunately for us, God gives us a specific list of the "fruit of the Spirit" that help us to know if we're followers or only fans of Jesus:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-33)

This list acts as a mirror we can hold up against ourselves. Have we been loving with others? Do we have patience or do we cut people off while driving out of anger? Do we drink too much? Are we gentle with our children or quick to verbally dress them down?

If you've confessed to any of these things, take heart. God offers us the gift of repentance (turning away from) these sins and walking with Him in His peace. Tell Him you're sorry. Ask Him for the gifts of the Spirit and the constant reminder to keep your thoughts on Him.

And lastly? *Act* on these things. God can lead us and guide us, but unless we actively choose to work with Him (**2 Corinthians 6:1<sup>2</sup>**), then we're essentially giving God lip service and not total access to our hearts.

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1. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James%20%3A19&version=NIV>



# Testimony: How I peacefully test and approve God's will.

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**I**n *this downloadable recording*<sup>1</sup>, I share how I've learned to cut distractions from life, actively listen to God, and take note of when the choices I'm making are of my own will and not God's.

After listening, reflect on how you personally test and approve God's will for your life. You can download and use **this journal page**<sup>2</sup> to record your thoughts.

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1. <https://1drv.ms/u/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQCkoUjV1zKtIqb5d87dNUcNAfGI1SoFYNrVV-MR7VIFLVY?e=yC7Psb>

2. [https://1drv.ms/b/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQASAEvi-A\\_NSbhCILjCipUJAf6hWGj-muuxm4i-AXexvb94?e=9Uljb6](https://1drv.ms/b/c/3e8044110998eb33/IQASAEvi-A_NSbhCILjCipUJAf6hWGj-muuxm4i-AXexvb94?e=9Uljb6)

## A final thought.



If you're new to the faith or have even been a Christian for a while, the thought of changing your entire thought process can be daunting. But that's where God's goodness comes into play. Jesus tells us His "yoke is easy" and His "burden is light," meaning that for those of us who seek Him, He will alleviate our fears and stresses no matter the situation we're facing. (**Matthew 11:28-30**<sup>1</sup>). So, we can rest in the fact that even though renewing our minds will take active work on our part, He will supply the peace and joy we need to sustain us throughout the process.

Thank you, friend, for choosing to read and reflect on this study. You've already taken an important first step in renewing your mind, and therefore, being obedient to our Lord.

Continued prayers on your journey!

Yours in Jesus,

Ericka

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1. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2011%3A28-30&version=NIV>

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