

COLLEGE MINISTRY - SINGLES RETREAT
June 5, 1993

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Gal. 3:28

1 Cor. 12:7,11 - every believer is gifted

Acts 18:24 - Priscilla & Aquilla

1 Cor. 11:5 - They pray and prophesy

1 Tim. 3 - Deaconess - a role of under-shepharding

Rom. 16:1-2 - One who rules and leads many people.

Christianity has done more to liberate women than anything else in history. Women became educated and liberated by the church. No other world religion does this, e.g., Moslem, Hindu, Animism, Taoism, etc.

THE SPIRITUAL WOMAN

I. **The importance of our Mind** (Phil. 4:8)

I cannot over-emphasize the importance of HOW we THINK. There is God's Wisdom, and Our Wisdom.

OUR WISDOM - THE WORLD'S VIEW:

- we think we are the center of the universe, and we reason from ourselves.
- always for our own benefit.
- we always think from a value system that reflects the temporal, temporary, passing through.

GOD'S WISDOM:

- His thinking is always how He can give (zoe) give life, give meaning, give rulership - all eternal qualities. God's thinking is always from the eternal viewpoint.
- God's evaluation of us and things is based on what is of real value, of lasting importance - what is character building and eternally effective.

You can see that God's views are the opposite of ours. We need to rethink our value system, e.g.,

1. Is God's way to resolve our vying for greatness (John 13: serving)?
2. Is God's way to resolve our sin problem (John 3:16: love)?
3. Paul says the Cross of Christ has forever nullified the wisdom of mankind. (1 Cor. 1 & 2). We call the cross foolishness, but in fact, it is the brilliant, unthinkable way God chose to bridge the separation, the alienation between us and God. (1 Cor. 2:8).

The most wonderful part of God's Wisdom (other than salvation) is that He has made it possible for us as believers to think as He does (1 Cor. 2:6-16).

II. But first, the problem - THE WORLD VIEW. (J. B. Phillips, "Don't let the world pour you into its mold.")

That is what the plastic society of the 60's meant.
Then the hippies made their own "mold."

Let me trace your life in the world system:

1. As a 3 year old - cartoons, violence, greed
2. Later on - sexuality is bantered about like a fun "activity" on t.v., magazines, in school. (5th grade - 10 years old.) Peers take over. They demand conformity in dress, values, action, and the values are always anti-Biblical (total depravity), and teaches "don't teach values".
3. High School - This is the worst! Peer pressure is all-pervasive. There is the "in" group, the "scumbags," the "dopes," the "jocks," the "eggheads." There is total "regimen" of clothes and behavior demanded in each group. This engenders a fierce desire to climb the social ladder to your group, no matter what it takes. Kids forsake (a) parents, (b) Christ, and (c) His values - in order to be accepted by their peers.
4. School Curriculum:
 - (a) relativism - anything goes, no absolutes, *post-modernism*
 - (b) materialism - success is money
 - (c) power & prestige - we can be somebody and we are the center of the universe, climb the ladder of success over other's bodies, get to the top, no matter how you do it.
 - (d) sports - winning is the thing - at all costs. (not for fun or good health) "kill" the other team. Competition is the goal of life.
 - (e) humanism - we can solve all our problems. We are the center of the universe, not God, but all are the gods of heaven and earth (Camus, Sartre) - don't impose religious "taboos" on our freedom.
5. College:
 - (a) atheism - under the banner of "secular humanism" is the religion of every area of learning. God, Creation, Absolute Values are anachronisms to be intellectually done away with forever.
6. Music:

Cultic. Its sexual message is total promiscuity. The "new wave" states clearly their message - the opposite of God's values. Despair.
7. Movies, Magazines, Books:

All hawk their religion of hedonism, success, money, things, recreation - all geared to make us feel good, look good, do things to forget troubles, etc. - anesthetics.

8. As Adults:

At work, in neighborhoods - the whole emphasis is on success, money, good looks, thin body, many things, expensive vacations for fun, ways to have pleasure and lots of sex - all kinds with many partners.

→ Q - How do we keep from being conformed to this godless society - keep from being "poured into its mold" which is the exact opposite of God's Wisdom. (Romans 12:1).

Abandoned
to God

The first step is to give ourselves over to God completely and totally. Give our bodies, our Minds, our Wills, our Emotions, our whole life - sacrifice it to God. The words "living and holy sacrifice" refer to the O.T. sacrifice of being placed on the altar and being burned up. There was nothing left. When you give yourself totally and completely up to God as a sacrifice, you don't get off the altar and take back your life and run it selfishly again. You leave it there on the altar to be transformed by Him into a *fragrance of Christ*, acceptable to God.

This may sound frightening to you. It is not. It is like coming home. God created me. He knows me best. He is my loving Father. He protects me, cares for me, provides for me. He gives me love. He fills me with joy. He gives me deep contentment, peace, and a renewed zest for life with clear thinking, true values and goals that are fun to attain.

What is totally frightening is to be subjected to the world system and its values:

- (a) It is like a Roman gladiatorial arena. It tears you to pieces. You run in circles to escape being hurt, or to win over someone else. You exhaust your strength competing for a fleeting moment of recognition, which is snatched away by someone else smarter, or stronger, or prettier.
- (b) Sexual exploitation is a vicious game of one up-man-ship, which is very destructive, physically, psychologically and emotionally.
- (c) Getting rich and buying things burns bitter as soon as you get the things you wanted. Rich people are miserably unhappy and unfulfilled.
- (d) Escapism is rampant to avoid thinking about the emptiness of all your frenzied activity - alcohol, drugs, sex, work, recreation - you do all those things in a frenzied, fragmented way that leaves you exhausted and even more empty.

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→ *Rein*

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- (e) There's no direction in life - even if you attain status and power and education, you climb the corporate ladder to what? Being replaced by someone younger, smarter, prettier, and you are forgotten, pushed aside, rejected, stomped on. For what purpose? To make the corporation grow - to benefit some illusory top management (who are nearly always crooks).

In a word, the world system eats you up and spits you out. It is designed by Satan to do just that - to keep you so busy and fragmented and on the merry-go-round. Why? So you won't have time to think about God, about who you really are, why you are here at all, where you are going - about eternity.

The Spiritual Woman

Doesn't that picture really frighten you? It should! That's much worse in every way than giving yourself up to God and His Good Plans for your life. (Jer. 29:11).

Handwritten notes in blue ink, consisting of several horizontal lines and dots, possibly representing a diagram or a list of points.

Romans 12:1,2

Practically speaking, how can we NOT be conformed to the world? How can we develop resistance? Should we just drop out of society? Should we drop out of school? Quit work? Stop going to movies, reading magazines? (Monk on a pole for 30 years. He was unstained by the world. This is just one more example of mankind's warped way of thinking.)

Christ expressly forbade us to leave the world. We are to reach the world. Paul told us to be all things to all people in order to reach them for Christ.

We are to aggressively take on the world:

INTELLECTUALLY:

- (a) We have to hear what is being said and understand.
- (b) We have to be able to refute it powerfully and persuasively.

We have to do this in every area of our life, as we live in the world system. Christ calls us to be thinking believers. When we can understand and refute the world's wisdom that makes us strong and persuasive (e.g., Paul, Jeremiah, Isaiah).

Let's examine a few areas of our lives as practical examples:

1. What if you feel unloved? "No one loves me, I don't have a man and no one here in the Body is loving me right. I don't feel loved."

(a) World's Wisdom: React by thinking, "I must find someone who does love me," so we go out and look - and maybe end up with someone who makes us feel good (not someone who is good or good for us). Or, we can think, "I'll go tell those people that they aren't loving me right. There's something wrong with them."

(b) Transformed Mind: A different response. "When and how have I been failing to give my love effectively to the relationships in my life. I must not be building into them properly." This is the servant's mind. The servant's transformed mind understands that we feel love when we give love. This is the mind of Christ.

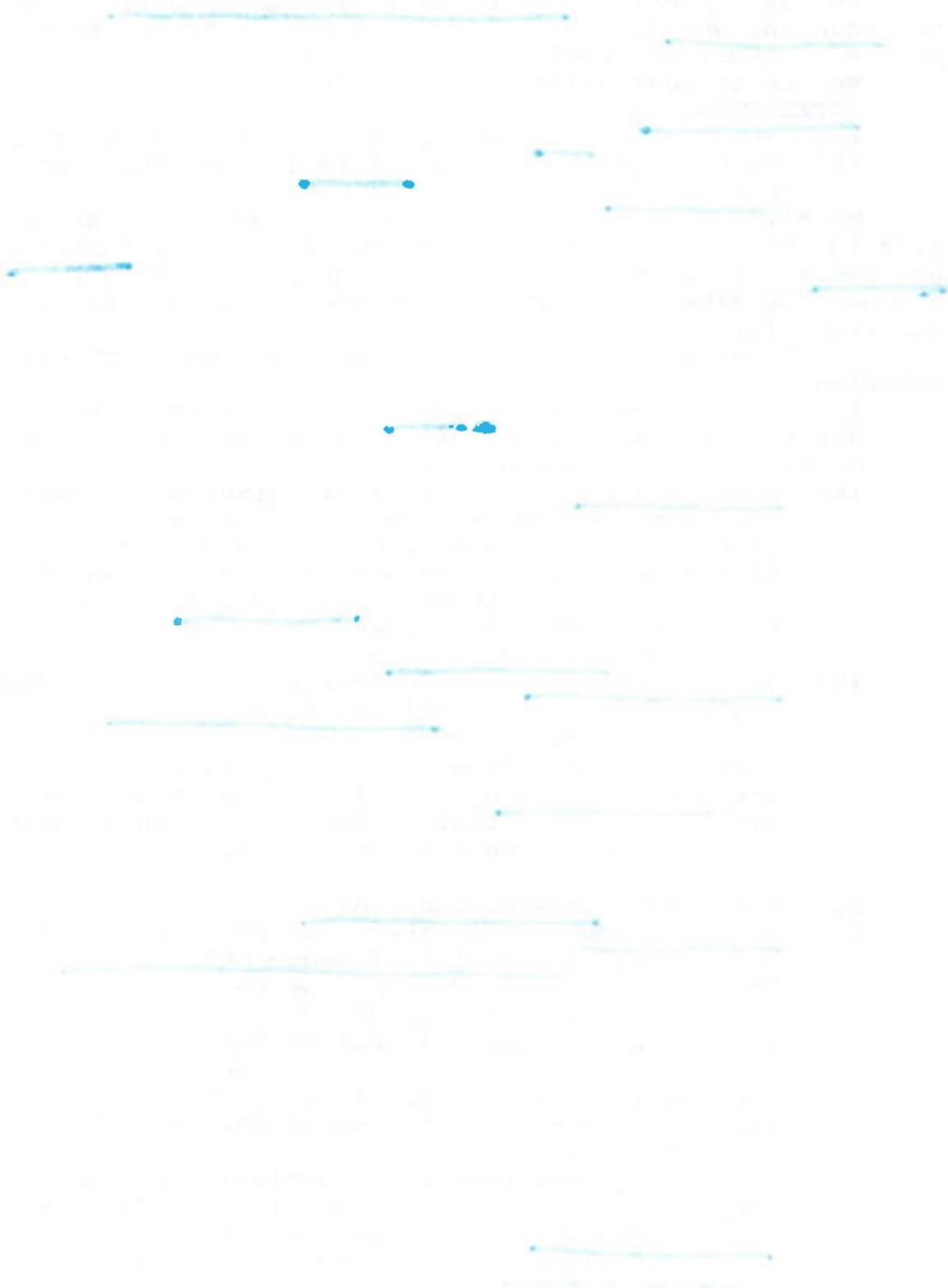
2. What about knowing God's Will?

(a) Un-transformed Mind (the young believer or carnal believer). God's will is vague and nebulous. Cannot be understood. This person is confused trying to find the will of God. May become fatalistic and say, "I believe God is in control of my life, so the decisions I make are, in fact, God's will." This completely denies free will (Eph. 5), "Don't be foolish; understand what the will of God is."

Others may take a thoughtless attitude of, "God doesn't really care what I do." (Matt. 6)

(b) Transformed Mind. Paul says we are able to "discern all things." In most areas we can look

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in the Bible's all too obvious word on what God's will is. This is possible because the mature Christian is acclimated to the Will of God. She knows the word and sees from His point of View. It becomes easier and easier to know God's will and walk in it. (Hebrews 5:12-14)

3. In the area of helping other people:
 - (a) Un-transformed Mind. When someone comes with problems, the response is "I don't know what to say," or counsel or advice is given without understanding the *nature of mankind* or God's solution to the problem.
 - (b) The Transformed Mind. Knows God's solutions and how to bring healing. They are effectual in helping others grow and solve areas of immaturity, e.g. daughter comes in at 7:00 a.m. Why doesn't the mother handle the problem? She may feel embarrassed, hurt, but also not biblically able to deal with daughter, so ignores the problem. This is not love. All she is saying to her daughter is, "You'll get no help from me."

I hope you get the picture that you have the choice of thinking out of one framework or the other, as a believer. A non-believer has to think like the world.

For a new believer, to become a spiritually mature women, you will need to:

- (a) resist the world system. Do not be conformed.
- (b) develop ability to analyze, refute, encounter and understand.

4. In the area of marriage:

Phillip Yancy, "In America a consumer mentality tends to infiltrate relationships as well as commerce. Some people treat marriage partners like automobiles; every few years it is time to upgrade to a newer model."

Marriage - a committed, lifetime relationship is just not understood, nor believed in the western world today.

To have a transformed mind we must see God's view of a healthy marriage:

1. Leave your parents, cleave to one another and you become one flesh.
2. God created marriage and it is reflected in the foundational structure of the church, i.e., Eph. 1-4 where Paul shows that God plans to work within the structure of the church to redeem the world - to love, to save, to mature, to discipline, to teach, on and on.

3. Eph. 5 Paul defines marriage and the role of each member: the male and female. But even in this context, Paul founds the marriage on the understanding of our relationships in the:
- (a) Body of Christ - "submitting to one another in love."
 - (b) Submitting to Christ as the Head is a picture of our submitting to our husbands.
 - (c) The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves us - unconditionally, sacrificially, with an unlimited amount of love - never withdrawn, never conditional.

This is why it is so important before marriage you understand and experience Body Life in the church. It is the basic structure through which God is working. Stated another way - the health and understanding of your marriage is dependent on your healthy relationships in the Body of Christ - not vice versa.

- (a) as you learn to give and receive from one another,
- (b) as you minister together in the Body of Christ,
- (c) As you listen to and accept the counsel of older mature believers.
- (d) as your love relationship with Christ deepens...

you are preparing yourself to experience and build a great Christian marriage - one that will last - one that will express the Body of Christ in a small unit of you, your husband, your children, and all who enter your frame of reference.

AND you will not become tribal - removing yourself from the Body of Christ, becoming self-sufficient and autonomous.

Remember, the health of your marriage depends upon your taking your life from Christ and the Body of Christ, not each other. If you focus entirely on each other, you will be disappointed, start fighting, and your spiritual life will go downhill fast. The result will be you will try to salvage the marriage by getting a new house, having a baby, getting more things, going more places, working outside the home. Then three to five years down the road you will be prime candidates for having an affair, and then divorce - or misery living together.

III. HOW TO TRANSFORM THE MIND

1. INPUT:

The crucial importance of our mental focus cannot be overemphasized. Romans 8:1-8, Col. 3:3, Phil. 4:8) Proverbs 23:7: "As a man/woman thinks in his/her heart, so is he/she." It all begins in the mind. (old tennis shoe)

Is it so hard then to understand that if we fill our minds with (a) filth, or (b) selfish desires, or (c) prideful thoughts, or (d) lusts of all kinds, that those thoughts will flavor very much our attitude and our actions?

→ N.B. We can't always escape the world's input - selfish, lustful, prideful, but we can turn it around because we understand it. We can refute it. It poses no threat to us.

MOE

We need positive input on a regular basis. Means of Growth - Word, Prayer, Fellowship, Ministry, Holy Spirit Discipline. Give the Holy Spirit content as He transforms our mind. (Heb. 5:14, "Not accustomed to the Word of Righteousness." Our minds are amazing computer terminals, so fill with the Word for the Holy Spirit to use.

2. CONTROL.

There needs to be an element of control over our thinking. Many Bible passages illustrate, but the best is 2 Cor. 10:3-5, "every thought captive to Christ." James 1:14,15, "Lusts lead us into sin. We are to reject thoughts, judge thoughts, pray and turn our thoughts over to Christ. As we do this, we will begin to see bad patterns of thinking and acting be replaced. As we do this, we begin to experience a change. The Holy Spirit renews our mind and fills it with the wisdom of God. We can actually think like Christ, having the "mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:24). This takes a period of time, but not too long. We can be substantially transformed in a year or two. Paul was in Ephesus two years and then made those Christians elders. In Corinth and Thessalonica, even less time. He gives us an analogy to illustrate maturity and a transformed mind:

(add Fragrance of Christ teaching from 2/13/93)

OUTPUT

1. Sacrificially love: ^(a) unconditional
not "because you love me" or "if you love me"
^(b) unlimited - not dependent on the other returning your love
^(c) sacrifice selfish demands + expectations
2. Serve others
 - (a) In your family
 - (b) In the BOC
 - (c) In community (at home or work)
3. Broken vessel.
= Fragrance of Christ

Submit to one another
Filled w/ H.S.
Faith/Rest Life



DATE



OUTPUT

1. Productivity is not because you have more and more returns diminishing as it is dependent on the other resources
2. Government is a family unit
3. Government is a family unit
4. Government is a family unit