***Full Knowledge  
RO152-02***

**© Berean Memorial Church of Irving, Texas, Inc. (1988)**

We continue studying Romans 12:1-2. Our subject is "The Basis for Christian Service," and this is segment number four.

**Psychology**

Actually, Romans 12:1-2 is a lesson in biblical psychology. Psychology, as you know (and I am reluctant to call it a science) is a study that deals with mental processes and the resulting behavior in an individual. The mental attitudes and the beliefs of the individual produce emotional and volitional consequences. That's what psychology deals with. People who act crazy do so because they have a chemical disorder physically that causes that disruption, or they have a genetic disability that causes that disability, or they are enslaved to the sin nature.

Today, there are, in the United States, something like 230 distinct techniques of psychotherapy. There are at least 230 ways of dealing with the emotional and mental disruptions that people have. These all try to resolve the mental and emotional disorders, however, without any reference or guidance from the Bible. The founder of modern psychotherapy, Sigmund Freud, was adamantly opposed to religion, and considered it, in large measure, the reason that people have mental and emotional problems. However, it is no secret that psychotherapy has in general been a pathetic failure in helping people resolve their mental and emotional problems. The psychiatric community itself is telling us that.

**Dr. Jay Adams**

One of the Christians who is in the works of psychiatry is a man named Dr. Jay Adams. He has had enormous clinical experience in the field, dealing with people. He came through the same system of education that psychologists and psychiatrists come up through. But he found that the system didn't work. And then he struck upon the problem. He realized that the problem was that there was a solution for these things, but it had to be connected to the Bible, or you couldn't do it. So, I want to quote from an article he has written which was published in the "Fundamentalist Journal," March 1984. The article is entitled "Change Them into What?" And I'm quoting from page 35 and 36 of that article.

Dr. Adams said, "Along with this kind of confusion (that is; that psychotherapy cannot solve the problems that people come to have helped with), an added factor has led to more disappointment and disillusionment. There is a general failure of the psychotherapeutic community to succeed in doing anything significant for people and their problems. This was highlighted perhaps most clearly when one psychiatrist decided to test the ability of his fellows to diagnose problems. Into 12 of the nation's leading mental institutions in 5 states, he sent eight sane persons who told this one falsehood as they entered: "I heard voices." They lied about nothing else, and they did nothing to deceive in any other way.

"Such hallucinations can be caused by any number of factors. For instance, two-and-a-half days of significant sleep loss in some people can lead to every effect that the ingestion of LSD does. So, by saying, "I heard voices," they were not saying anything about causes. They were simply talking about effects. No conclusions about causes should have been made without thorough diagnosis.

"However, in all 12 instances, those individuals were diagnosed as having serious mental illnesses. 11 institutions diagnosed schizophrenia, and one diagnosed manic depression. This news was broadcast throughout the psychiatric community in the important journal "Medical World News," and it caused quite a stir. But the psychiatrist was not yet through. He then announced to one of the 12 institutions that he was going to do it again, but he did not. Then after a period of time, he studied the intake record of this institution, and discovered that, prior to the announcement he had just made, in the history of the institution, there had never been such a record of people turned away as malingerers or fakes until that time.

Of course, it is humorous, but it is also tragic. Karl Menninger, perhaps the oldest and most loved psychiatrist in America, in commenting on this event after the 11 schizophrenic diagnoses, said, "Schizophrenia? That, to me, is just a nice Greek word."

**Neurotics and Psychotics**

So, the psychologist is trying to solve your problems. You're paying him to do it. But whatever the ability that the psychologist may have, by training, to identify certain mental and emotional problems (and I grant them that they do have that), they clearly do not have the ability to solve those problems, because they can only be done in one way, and that is in connection with the Word of God, and to understand that the objective is to transform a person into the image of Jesus Christ. They cannot solve the problems. They have all kinds of analyses, and all kinds of differentiation of classifications. They can tell you what's wrong with you. Some of you people are neurotics. Some of you people are psychotics. A neurotic is a person who's always nervous about everything. He goes to a ball game, and soon as the catcher stops and walks over and has a conversation with the pitcher, he just knows that they're talking about him. And he's all upset about what they're saying about him. The psychotic is the guy who hates the umpire, and proceeds to kill him for the calls he's making.

Another example of differentiation is that the neurotic builds castles in the air. His imagination floats through free. The psychotic goes and lives in the castles in the air. And the psychiatrist collects the rent. That's how the system works. And there are plenty of people standing in line, with money in hand, ready to pay the rent.

**Normality**

One of the problems in the psychiatric community, and in dealing with emotions and volition, is the question of: what is normal? And I discussed this with these professionally trained men. What is normal? This is when you discover that they have a problem. This is when they start fishtailing all around on: what is normal? The secular psychiatrist community simply has no absolute standard by which to judge emotions and behavior patterns. The standard has actually been the shifting sands of majority view in American society – studies which merely show what most people think and do at any particular point in time. But that does not give you a normal standard.

So, a destructive depravity, for example, like homosexuality and lesbianism, was not so long ago classified by the psychologists as a sickness. It was classified as an abnormality. But now that the consensus of the American public has changed it into an alternative lifestyle, when you read the books on psychology, they no longer classify this as abnormal behavior. They no longer classify the homosexual and lesbian as a person who is mentally and emotionally sick. It is clear that there has to be a standard of reality concerning normality which is based outside of the counselor and the counselee. You have to have an objective basis. So, far, the psychologist has had to work only with the shifting sands of changing opinion – a very subjective base. It is clear that they cannot deal with people, because they don't even know what people should be like.

**Biblical Psychology**

Here's where biblical psychology comes in, and that's what we're dealing with here in Romans 12:1-2. Biblical psychology does answer the question of an absolute standard of what a normal human being should. Dr. Jay Adams has written some excellent books, and out of his experience, demonstrated that this is a system of psychology and psychiatry that will work. A normal human being will be like Jesus Christ. That's the norm. Yes, there is a standard of what is normal and what is abnormal. The Lord Jesus Christ is the model of normalcy in thinking. He is the model of normalcy in emotions. He is the model of normalcy in the actions that people take. Furthermore, the Bible is a reliable source of information about Jesus Christ, so that we have reliable information about what a normal human being is like. Psychologists who work from this benchmark (and there are Christian men in the field of psychology and psychiatry who do work from the benchmark of the image of Jesus Christ) – these are the men who are having great success in helping people with their internal conflicts mentally and emotionally. These are the people who do not have their patients simply coming back repeatedly, and making the counselor increasingly richer, because they are paying him to do something he cannot do unless he understands that what he must do is transform the person into the image of Jesus Christ.

I asked one man, one time recently: what do you do when somebody walks into your office, and he's not a Christian? He said, "That's the first thing I deal with. I lead him to the Lord, or we conclude there is nothing we can do for him. If he does not become a Christian, he cannot move to normality. That is the first step. You can see what this does to the thousands and thousands of psychologists and psychiatrists in this country who do not work from that premise. Consequently, what they do is pointless, inane, and downright dishonest.

The kind of psychology that we are talking about (biblical psychology) does really have a name. And I'm going to take the time today to give you a little briefing on that, because I think you should know this. Dr. Adams himself coined the phrase. This is called "Nouthetic counseling." The word "Nouthetic" comes from a Greek word, and that's where he took it from. He did this because he found that there wasn't an English word that conveyed the idea of biblical counseling. It comes from the Greek word new "noutheteo." This, interestingly enough, comes from two Greek words. The first part comes from the Greek word "nous" – the very word that we are now considering here in Romans 12:2, which tells us to be transformed by the renewing of your mind – the renewing of your "nous." And this word, therefore, as you know, means "mind." The last part of this word that comes from the Greek word "tithemi." This means "to place;" "to send;" or, "to invest." So, the word simply means "to put." That's a good translation for "tithemi" – "to put," or "to put in." So, "noutheteo," when you put it together, means "to put in the mind." It's a very interesting word.

This is out of the Bible. It is a word that says that you can do something to the mind: "The renewing of the mind” is what Romans 12:2 says. "To put;" "to instruct;" "to warn;" or, "to admonish" – those are the translations. When you say "to warn," that is translating this same word "noutheteo." It means "to give a person some information." When it is translated as "to instruct," it is giving someone information. When it's translated "to admonish," you're giving somebody information for the mind so that he will change his attitudes; his thinking; and, his conduct.

There is a noun form: "nouthesia." It means the same thing. This word in the Bible then connotes admonitions or warnings that are based upon the instruction of the Word of God. That's how you can get people to get their head screwed on straight. To teach them Bible doctrine information into the mind will enable them to become stable people.

Let's look at a few examples. Notice this 1 Thessalonians 10:11: "Now all these things happened unto them for example," and he's referring to the things that happened to the Jewish people in the Old Testament, in their times of rebellion against God, and in their times of obedience. He said, "For all these things happened unto them for example, and they are written (that is, in the Bible, what happened to these people – this information is written) for our admonition." And it's the word "noutheteo." It's the word that gives information to the mind. The Jewish experience was recorded for Christian instruction to guide us into stable living.

Notice Romans 15:14. This word is used at this point. It says, "And I myself am persuaded of you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge." That word is "gnosis" – the information that comes to the perceptive mind – the learning capacity: "Able also to admonish one another." Isn't that fantastic? Paul says, "I know, my brethren, that you're full of goodness. Why are you such good people? Why are you such stable people? Why are you squared away in your thinking and in your emotions? You're not screaming, yelling, and jumping out of control, and out of your mind in the processes that are operating there. Why are you full of the kind of stable goodness? Because you have knowledge. Knowledge of what? Knowledge of doctrine. And you didn't get this by putting the Bible under your pillow last night, and sleeping on it. You're going to get it because you're sitting in here with your ears open, and your brain connected. Consequently, you are able to admonish one another. You're able to "noutheteo."

Do you realize what that's saying? We have just given every one of you an official degree as a psychologist. You can go into business tomorrow. Mr. Rouch will paint a sign up for you free, for a small donation. Perhaps if you analyze him, he will give it to you without any charge at all. And if there's anyone who needs analyzing, he certainly does. You, as a Christian, with the information of God's Word, have the capacity to help a person. Before the era that Americans went bananas about psychologists and psychiatrists, that's how you did it. You went to your grandfather. You went to your grandmother. You went to your parents. You went to your friends. You went to your pastor. You went to the elder Christians, and you said, "Here's a problem." And they gave you a perspective that you never could have, just because you don't have the experience; the breadth; or, the length. And people were helped, and lives were straightened out. Once the Bible was abandoned as the benchmark, with Jesus Christ as the image of God that we pursue for maturity, we lost it all.

Colossians 1:28 is another example: "Whom we preach (that is; Jesus Christ), warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." "Whom we preach" is a warning (this word "noutheteo." It is warning. What does that mean? He says, "Teaching every man in all wisdom" – the wisdom of doctrine so that you can present every man as mature in Christ Jesus: a perfect, grown-up reproduction of Jesus Christ. Now, that is stability. That is the objective of biblical psychology.

In Colossians 3:6 this word "noutheteo" is used: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly (doctrine); in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing." There it is – "noutheteo:" giving people advisement, admonishing one another. And then he gives various ways in which that can be done. But what is it structured on? Once you have the word of Christ in your mind, you are capable. Because you now have divine viewpoint wisdom, you are capable of giving people the information that they need in order for their emotions and their minds to work right. On the basis of Bible doctrine, the pastor-teacher admonishes the people in the congregation. He gives them the guidance they need to do what? To connect them to reality. That's our problem. Our problem is to connect us to the real world.

We have one more in 1 Thessalonians 5:14: "Now we exhort you, brethren, and warn them that our unruly (there is the word "noutheteo" – warn) – we warn those who are out of line in their emotions and in their thinking. We warn them that unruly; encourage the faint-hearted; support the weak; and, be patient toward all men." So, here again, what do we warn people with? On what basis can you give a portion to somebody? On the basis of what the Bible says – not on the basis of what you think.

**Nouthetic Counseling – Counseling that Works**

Now, I will summarize Nouthetic Counseling. It involves three factors in dealing with psychological problems. Putting all this together, and what the Scriptures have said, we haven't gone into in great detail. But here's what comes out. Counseling that works does this:

1. **The Counselee is Told that he is Responsible**

The counselee (the person who has the problem) is told that he is responsible for his destructive actions. When Dr. Jay Adams came out of his psychiatric and psychological studies, he had not been taught this. He was very discouraged because he was working in hospitals, spending time with people, and nothing was happening. They come in with problems; and, they go out with problems. This was one of the first things that hit him as he began researching the Word of God. It hit him that what we are not doing is pointing our finger at the nose of the individual, and saying, "You are responsible for what is happening to you. You caused it. Don't blame your mother. Don't blame your father. Don't blame your husband or your wife. You caused it. Your destructive conduct is the result of your mental processes, and of your emotional ranging out there without any restraints upon it.

So, what we tell an individual is that he needs to take steps to change his ways. That's what the Bible says. This means a change, however, in mental attitude, so that you will conform to a standard of what is normal; namely, the person of Christ.

1. **The Counselee is Confronted**

The second thing that Nouthetic Counseling involves is that the person is confronted with what he is doing. He's not only told us that he's responsible, but he's then confronted with his destructive actions. He's forced to face up to his sins, because you have a standard to say, "What you are doing is wrong." If you are a homosexual, the Bible says that it's sin. The Bible never calls anything sin of which you don't have control to do or not to do. Therefore, we know that this is something that is not genetic. It is something that you have chosen to do. And you cannot pretend that everything is all right because you use your old sin nature's desires as your standard of comparison. No. You must compare what you are doing to Jesus Christ. Aha, now we have an objective standard to do right and wrong. Jesus Christ is not a liar. Jesus Christ is not a deadbeat. He pays His bills. Jesus Christ is not a deceiver. Jesus Christ is not sexually immoral. Jesus Christ is not covetous. Jesus Christ is not a flake emotionally. Jesus Christ is everything that a perfect human being should be, and can be, in this age of grace.

1. **The Counselee is Treated with Great Personal Concern**

The third thing is that the counselee (the person who has the problem) is treated with great personal concern for his welfare in his fouled-up outlook on life. You do not get impatient with the person who is acting crazy. You try to take him by the hand, and you try to lead him back to normalcy. Whether it's his chemical imbalance, or whether it's his enslavement to his nature, or whatever it is, you lead him back.

It's not easy to have a concern. I have sat with people who were so far over the edge that they were, every now and then, punching me in the shoulder, just really hard. And your reaction was, let's stop this by laying this guy out once and for all. There are a few places where you can strike a human being (that all of you in the military know about), and his zeal for combat is soon dissipated. But you don't do that. Instead, you keep backing off, and you hope he doesn't make too many black and blue marks on you, while you try to get him back to stability.

Those are the three elements: you are responsible; you must be confronted that what you're doing is abnormal; and, we are concerned to bring you back out.

So, the key to biblical counseling, which resolves the problem, is Bible doctrine – transforming the mind from human viewpoint to divine viewpoint. We call that the mind of Christ. The person who is not a born-again believer cannot resolve his problems. If they are chemical problems, they can be treated. Otherwise, your mental and emotional disorders are going to stay this. But doctrine in the mind received with positive volition prevents spiritual insanity. Psychotherapy can't touch this. God Himself is, alone, able to give the counselee what he needs to get his head on straight. Bible doctrine and the Holy Spirit produce lasting results. You solve the problems of the soul.

So, we have seen in Romans 12:1, that Paul has warned us against following externally the world's lifestyle. The way the world lives is demeaning; it's diseased; it's debauched; and, it's destructive. On the other hand, Paul calls for an internal transformation by the renewing of the mind with Bible doctrine truth. Such a mental renovation will protect us from misuse and sinful use of our bodies as Christians. Mental renewal enables the believer to determine what is God's good, and well-pleasing, and perfect will for him. That is normalcy.

**The Grace System of Perception**

So, the transformation of the mind, we have pointed out to you, is accomplished by what is called the grace system of perceptions. This is a grace system of learning spiritual things. It doesn't matter how smart you are or how dumb you are. It only matters how receptive you are. We have already covered two of the steps of this provision. Number one is that we now have a completed, inerrant Bible. Number two is we have provided the local church organization. Number three, there has been provided the pastor-teacher communicator in the local church for conveying what is in the Bible into the minds of the believers.

**Universal Priesthood**

The provision of this grace system of perception is the universal priesthood of believers. In 1 Peter 2:9, we are told, "But you are a chosen generation (speaking to Christians), a real priesthood." Every Christian is his own priest. Therefore, in the age of the church, he is directly responsible to God for his life. There is no separate clergy with God. And any preacher who walks around with his collar around back, or has a sign in his car that says "Clergy" is an insult to the living God, because all of us are on the same ground as sinners lost and saved by grace, with the same access to God. You do not have to go to anybody to get to God. What this does, by each of us being our own priest, is that it gives us maximum freedom, and it preserves the privacy of our decisions before God. We, therefore, do not call for any public pressures or any public embarrassment. I do not ask you to raise your hand whether you agree or disagree with what I teach you. That is totally irrelevant to me.

My concern is that what I teach you is true as per Scripture. What you do with it is your business between you and God as your own priest. I won't lay that load and that burden on myself – that you choose to be negative to something that I teach you here in the Word of God. Yes. You can say you don't agree with me. That is fine. Sometimes there are people who don't understand that you can say that you don't agree with me, but we teach you privately, so, you can, in your mind, say, “That's a bunch of hogwash. I don't care for that. I don't agree with that." Very often it'll be some implication. That's fine. The thing I love about the Christian life is that God never lets it hang fire. He never lets it hang out on the limb. It is always resolved. The thing that Dr. Francis Schaeffer, in the film series, pointed out was the lack of resolution. Man has come to the point where he can't decide on anything. Well, God does decide. And sometime, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, I'm happy to say, that we're going to find out whether you were right, or whether I was right when you thought I was off base on how God's system works.

However, I'm happy to tell you, that He has provided us with the means to be our own access to him as our own priests. We know what our sins are. We don't tell other people about them. We confess them privately to God the Father as per 1 John 1:9. And that means that we name them, and we admit them, and we turn from them. As a Christian priest, we are told that we are a royal priesthood, which means that you're not a priest like Aaron and those gentlemen in the Old Testament were. They were nothing like the kind of priest that you are. You are aristocrats. And you must remember that. Christians are the aristocrats of all the believers of all ages. The Christian priests, functioning in spiritual maturity, offer spiritual sacrifices to God.

**We Sacrifice our Physical Bodies**

The first one, Paul has pointed out here in this passage, is your physical body. God does His work through your body. He always does His work through your body, including your brain. Therefore, that's the first sacrifice you make to Him.

**Other Sacrifices**

We also bring you our substance – our material wealth. We bring Him the praise of our lips. And we bring Him divine good production. All of those are sacrifices that He wants us to perform. And God the Spirit of enables us to do that.

**The Permanent Indwelling of Every Believer by God the Holy Spirit**

We have something else in this grace system. And remember that I'm giving you the details by which now the Word of God comes out of the Bible into your brain, in a system that will work in your soul. But I have to give you the pieces of what comes first. The next thing is that there is the permanent indwelling of every believer by God the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit did not indwell the believers. He would come and go, as He chose. Now, the Holy Spirit never leaves the individual believer from the point of salvation. 1 John 2:27 says, "But the anointing which you have received of him (that is the anointing of the Holy Spirit) abides in you. And you need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him." It is God the Holy Spirit Who indwells you, and Who enables you to sit here and to spot what is not true; to spot what is false doctrine; and, to listen to the TV evangelist, and to stop the con artist.

I have no sympathy for the people who have been milked out of millions and millions of dollars in the charismatic movement, because they have it coming. If they are so disoriented to the Word of God, as indeed they are, that they are sitting ducks and suckers for what those men have put out there, they deserve to be fleeced. That doesn't mean the government should come in. Now we're having the question: should government come in, in order to protect you dumb ones from your inability to discern when your con man is playing on your emotions and on your mind. No, the government should not. I can't think of anybody in the government who's qualified to be the teacher like God the Holy Spirit is. That's all we need. Once you know what God thinks, you'll be able to spot those people. And most of you here have no trouble recognizing that.

In John 14:16-17, this indwelling is also brought before us. This is an important thing to remember – that we have this relationship of power to God: "Jesus said, ‘Now, pray the Father, and He shall give you another comforter (that is, the Holy Spirit), that He may abide with you forever. Even the spirit of truth in the world cannot receive, because it doesn't see Him; neither does it know Him. But you know Him, for He dwells with you, and He shall be in you.’" That was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost.

So, there a great relationship to God the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:19 tells us that God the Holy Spirit has taking up residence in your body. That's one reason you should offer it to God. It's a reasonable and logical thing to do. Your body is now His temple. Treat it accordingly.

We're told that the Holy Spirit teaches Bible doctrine through the believers. John 16:12-15 amplify that. We're told that the Holy Spirit prays for believers (Romans 8:26-27). When believers don't know how to handle prayer, God the Holy Spirit comes in and does it for them. And sometimes you and I don't know how to pray – what we should pray for.

Another thing is that the Holy Spirit convicts of sin when we have broken our temple fellowship with the Father. We never break our eternal fellowship of salvation. But when we sin, we're out of fellowship until we confess.

**The Filling of the Holy Spirit**

The next thing is the filling of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 tells us that, not only are we Christians indwelt, but it is possible for us to be filled. Ephesians 5:18: "And be not drunk with wine, which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." The Greek language there makes that a command. The way you are filled with the Spirit is by confessing your known sins. Being filled with the Spirit means that He has control of your life. He is running the show. When you confess, He returns to control, and you are now again filled with the Spirit.

**Spirituality**

We call that the status of spirituality. Spirituality is not rolling your eyes heavenward, or not shuffling around, and looking down at your feet to show your humility. Spirituality is having your sins confessed. This is the condition which is essential to learning spiritual phenomena, and to be able to teach them to other people. This is a condition where you deny control of your life to the sin nature, and you give it to the Spirit of God. It's a condition where there is power in your living.

**We have a Living Human Spirit**

The next thing is that we have a living human spirit. Job 32:8, Romans 8:16, and 1 Corinthians 2:12 all refer to the fact that we have a living spirit, and God teaches that spirit. That's the wonderful thing about our living human spirit. God teaches our spirit. When your spirit is dead, as it is when you're not a Christian, you cannot learn anything about God. Joe 32:8 says, "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding. How clear Joe was. Job knew a lot of things. And he understood that it was his human spirit brought alive by his faith in the coming Savior that enabled God to teach him. Romans 8:16 puts it this way: "And the Spirit Himself bears witness with our human spirit that we are the children of God." He, the Spirit of God, teaches our spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:12 says, "Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit who is of God." In the Greek language, the word "pneuma" is not capitalized. This could be the human spirit as well as God the Holy Spirit. It may be, and very likely is, that here it should be a small "s." God has given to us the human spirit, which is from God. For what reason? That we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. What our human spirit does is act as a storage reservoir of spiritual truth learned and believe – categories of doctrines. It is the point of our contact with God as our soul is the point of our contact with people, and our body, through the senses, is our point of contact with the world around us.

This Bible doctrine reservoir is also called in the Bible the belt of truth in the Christian soldier's armor. Bible doctrine truth in the human spirit, furthermore, is translated as "full knowledge." It's a distinct Greek word. And it is achieved through believing the instruction of the Word of God and the filling of the Spirit. One more thing is our soul, then, functioning on Bible doctrine guidance from the human spirit reservoir. Divine viewpoint guidance goes to the mind; the emotions; and the will. The soul expresses divine viewpoint thinking toward God and toward man. The soul uses the body, through its divine deepening understanding, in the right way. Bible doctrine in the human spirit creates a frame of reference for a new conscience for divine values for standards.

Here is how the system works. Step number one is basically coming to church, and you receive instruction in the Word of God. The pastor-teacher communicates Bible doctrine to the congregation. He uses the HICEE technique which we've gone over. Obviously, the pastor-teacher cannot teach what he doesn't know. If you have a preacher who is not a student, and doesn't study the Word of God, you're going to get short-changed. No Christian can secure a renewed mind if the pastor is not giving instruction in the public church services. Little informational messages; devotional talk; or, inspirational challenges are not going to cut. Satan has been very successful in neutralizing this whole grace system of developing people's maturity, and bringing them to Christian stability in the image of Christ, by undermining the role of the pastor-teacher. He has prevented Christians from getting the information they need.

Your personal, private Bible study contributes to this step, to the extent that what you study produces true Bible doctrine. When you have built a frame of reference, you can do more on your own. But you need the local church provision of this first step. This gives you understanding. The Greek word "gnosis." You have perception. You have knowledge. That is the way we translate the word "gnosis." Under the filling of the Holy Spirit, you're given understanding of the truth which has been taught by the pastor-teacher. This is the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit clarifying what you have heard. The Bible gained by the teaching of the Holy is "gnosis," or plain knowledge. This "gnosis" knowledge resides in the perceptive function of your mind, and you have come into the possession of some information.

Now, if you are going to get this information, it's obvious that you must attend the local church services taught by your right pastor-teacher. You can see, from Sunday to Sunday, how important that is to some people who never show up here, or who flake in and out like whales. They sit on the bottom, and they come up to the top and they sound occasionally, and they get a big breath and go down again. You must be receptive to the instruction in God's word, apart from what you think of the teacher, and what you think of his technique. You may not like his overhead projector, and you may not like the person sitting next to you. There are quite a few of you that could fall into that category very easily, of not being particularly likable, but you should not let that affect your response to the word that you're being taught. You should sit here and concentrate on the instruction that has been given. And you shouldn't distract the people around you, to rob them of that information that they're getting at this critical point.

So, don't bring your nail flippers to church, and periodically have the resulting boom of a nail that you clipped. And some of you just can't survive without a little energy during the service. So, don't go through a lot of noise unwrapping your little munchies, and your little gums, and other things. Prepare all that ahead of time, so that you're not distracting people from paying attention to what they need to be concentrating on.

Now, at this point, you may agree, then, or not agree with what you have heard. You may have some mental conflict that may conflict with some personal habits; your ambitions; or, what you've always believed. But the instruction should be observed, whether you believe it or not. You may not have the maturity to grasp if it is true. You never heard it before. It's not what's widely held. Some esteemed preacher in your life doesn't teach that. So, you feel there's a conflict with other Scripture, or whatever. You can't believe it. Put it aside on the back burner for a while, and don't be too quick to reject it. "Gnosis" type of knowledge here in your mind is useless. These are the people who go to church all the time, and they go on all their lives, and they have a head full of information about God. But they're zilch when it comes to living for God. Why is that? I'm giving you a lesson in psychology. It's because they've learned it up here; they have the information; they have mental reservations about it; and, they have not accepted it. So, it sits there. From your frame of reference, you will then respond.

So, you are free to be positive or negative toward what you've been taught. And Satan seeks to stop the information by inciting unbelief.

**The Storage of Divine Viewpoint Truth**

We can learn to step three. Step three is the storage of divine viewpoint truth. If you do believe what you've been taught, God the Holy Spirit stores id down in your human spirit. That's called "epignosis" in the Greek Bible, and it's translated "full knowledge." Now, this is information that you can use. This information enables you to become edified as a believer. Your personal faith response toward doctrine in the perceptive mind causes that truth now to be retained in your human spirit. You have accepted the Bible as true. Your faith in the Bible is the authority upon which you are basing your information. Your human spirit becomes a huge reservoir of doctrinal truth, stored in various categories. And, as you need it, it is there to use. "Epignosis" knowledge in the human spirit is usable knowledge.

In James 1:22, you have the statement that Christian people should not only be hearers of the Word ("gnosis" people), but they also should be doers of the Word ("epignosis people). That is exactly what we're talking about. Many Christians know a lot about the Bible, but they don't believe it. That kind of rejected doctrine never leaves the perceptive mind. It goes nowhere. But if you do believe, you have now created this reservoir of information.

Step number four comes now into play. This doctrine in your human spirit, as full knowledge, is cycled up to the director functioning of your mind. There it is building divine viewpoint. There it is building a godly frame of reference. There it is building a new conscience. You, as filled with the Spirit, will find that this information will automatically come. You have learned it. You have a life situation. You have to make a decision. You won't have to think about it. Out of your human spirit (if the information is there) will come the illuminating light. It will pop into your head, and you will know whether this thing is evil, or this thing is all right to do; and whether this is pleasing to God, or just pleasing. The mind is supplied with divine viewpoint, and the result is that your mind guides your emotions on how you deal with temporal things. You are not a victim of your prosperity. Your mind gives you guidance to spiritual things. You don't go off into the charismatic movement or the cults. You are not made a fool of. You know what God thinks. Your mind gives direction to your emotions. It goes positive, and that produces divine good actions.

However, if you have gone negative to this information, then you have a vacuum up here. And we've extensively studied that. When you have a spiritual vacuum, then you start sucking in a human viewpoint; the occult of Eastern mysticism; and, all of the things that operate in the minds of people who are abnormal psychologically, because they do not have the image of Christ functioning in them. Those are people who have bad guidance to how they deal with their money; and, bad guidance on what they think about spiritual things. And the sin nature is in charge here, feeding up false information to your directive mind, making these decisions. It's the sin nature that's feeding up all the fouled-up thinking. And the result is that you are negative toward the Word of God, and you go out there, and you not only do evil, but worse than that, you do the evil that's called human good. You're out there doing all the things that people are patting you on the back for, but which God calls filthy rags righteousness.

So, the lack of divine viewpoint in your mind enables Satan to control your sin nature that poisons your emotions, because it causes your emotions to dominate your mind. Your emotions are kicking up back at the mind. Your emotions are telling your mind what to do. And your will is kicking back up and telling your mind what to do. You're completely reversed. Instead of the right man leading his right woman, the woman has reversed the roles, and she's leading the man around by the nose – the total reversal.

There are certain things that make human viewpoint attractive to us. And we wonder why we would ever follow Satan's thinking. We do it because sometimes it seems the most logical course of action. It may seem the safest thing to do. Human viewpoint may seem the most pleasurable thing to do. It may seem the profitable thing to do. It may even seem, if you're not taught in Scripture, to be the doctrinal thing to do. Be careful taking advice from immature Christians who may reinforce your wrong decisions produced by a mind which is not functioning on the Word of God, cycled up from the human spirit, but a mind which is functioning on old sin nature information.

The result of a believer's mind renewed by Bible doctrine is something very wonderful. We have this in Colossians 1:9-10, and this is our objective: "For this cause, we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will." Guess what the word "knowledge" is there? Yep. "Epignosis." Paul says, "I want your human spirit reservoir just to be loaded with doctrinal information, so that you can live after the pattern of the image of Jesus Christ, so that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will, and in all wisdom in spiritual understanding." For what purpose? "So, that you may walk worthy of the Lord unto all-pleasing, being faithful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God," so that you're cycling down here; you're positive; and, you're producing good works. You've created a frame of reference up here of divine viewpoint, which enables you to understand advanced doctrine. Suddenly, you're understanding the deep things like you wouldn't believe. Anybody who walks into this congregation from scratch, and listens to an every service, is bowled over. I'm sorry for them. Most of them don't have the foggiest notion as to what we're saying, and what we're talking about, because they don't have a frame of reference.

So, the Christian's separation from the world, that Paul is talking about in Romans 12:1-2 – that separation begins with a mind which is governed by divine viewpoint as the result of the grace system of perception functioning in that believer. That is internal separation. Do you want to be separated? You should be. But first internally. Then the Christian's life in his body is to demonstrate to the world a mind which has been renewed by doctrine. That is external separation. The old fundamentalists always emphasize external separation. They said, "Don't smoke; don't chew; and, don't go with girls that do." And when you did that, that was OK. It made some kind of nice people floating around, but it left the internal out. So, as soon as nobody was watching, you started smoking; chewing; and, going with a lot of those girls who do. The point was that there was no internal separation. That only comes when the Word of God, as per this system, is functioning.

So, do you want to teach your sons and your daughters to grow up into something significant, when you have that critical, wonderful time, when they're young, to be able to mold them; and, especially those of you who had been blessed and honored by God with some real bright pennies? And there are quite a few of them in this congregation – children whose minds are just awesome. And I'm around them all the time listening to them. Those kids are going to be a great force for good, or they're going to be a great force for evil. If you want them to be a force for good, this is the system.

This is what we do in Berean Youth Clubs. This is what we do in Berean Christian Academy. This is what we're doing in Sunday school and training union. And this is, obviously, our intention in the public services. May the God who gave you a perfect system to make you psychologically perfect, enable you to appreciate, with a new sense of urgency, getting with it, and not to be sloppy in the Word of God. Those of you who have been around here for a while, and you have learned some of the great doctrines, of your reservoir's kind of full, you're the ones who are in danger. You're the ones that I don't see in church. You're the ones that I see floating in and out erratically. You're the ones that are not on the job for the Lord, because you think you've done it, and you have it made. And that’s a very grave mistake. You don't live on yesterday's food with your body, and you don't live on last week's spiritual food in your spiritual life either.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

[**Back to the Romans index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/romans.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)