

“Be Ye Transformed By The Renewing Of Your Mind.”

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“...be transformed by the renewing of your mind...”.

This verse is found in the Bible, in Romans 12:2 (NKJV).

The statement would indicate, ‘to practice one’s mind’, and would be consistent with Zen.

In Zen, it’s 1) zazen; and 2) consideration of the arising of the world around you and in the present moment.

I wonder what the Scriptural or God’s sense of ‘renewing of your mind’ would be, what that practice would be described as by Christians. [After I made this note, I consulted the actual scripture and context: see below.] What follows are some of my own observations.

It occurs to me that ‘renewing of your mind’ is a process, an unfolding. It indicates impermanence, in that the mind can be made ‘renewing’. The mind is not fixed, and neither is the person.

This gets very interesting, as it is consistent with ‘to insert a thought into thought space, or an idea into idea space’. It also indicates the presence of something new, and may indicate wisdom.

It indicates new (renewing) mental states are possible.

It also indicates the mind as basis -- be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. One’s spirit or being, one’s very self, is transformed. (It does not rule out other ways to be transformed, like take your spirit or be lifted up as on the wings of eagles.)

The statement is open, available to us all.

It is a statement of insight, wisdom, and resonance.

Here is the full scripture, in context:

Romans 12

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

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3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

Look at the overall intent. This would be significant for a Christian. So the interpretation would then be slightly different than for a Buddhist; however, I think it still can be used as a note of 'what it is', and 'potential' – it is possible to renew your mind (and the Christian will then see to it “that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”)

In the mental well-being space, I consider this significant! It points to real ability on the part of the individual to transform himself or herself, and to alter the situation he or she finds himself or herself in, something to work with. As a Buddhist, I'd suggest perception and awareness as being key, and Christians might agree that it is 'what is before one' that can be very important.

An additional note, from Romans 12:3: “to each one, a measure of faith” – that is, the individual matters, and it is the individual that is the recipient and can work actively. This is consistent with my standpoint, spelled out: that the individual is significant – is so significant – in the mental well-being space – and I would argue has so much to work with, just in 'the mind, the mind that is before one'.

The Christian might want to juxtapose Hebrews 4:12:

Hebrews 4

12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

This then becomes cutting, and insightful! I enjoy working with this type of thing as a Zen Buddhist, in Christian thought, even if my interpretation of certain things is different (I believe in neither a creator, time, nor atoms being our cause), because it yields such dynamic and truth-pointing and salient material.

I understand that one interpretation has it that the soul is mind, will, and emotions; and that the spirit is the connection to God; and that it's spirit → soul → body. So this is useful in considering the above.

Note 'thoughts' and 'intentions'. This would, in my view, be consistent with my statements that 'mental states, emotive states, and intentional states' are key; as are 'thought space, energy states, perception, speech and action, and patterns of speech and action'. Yet, these are denied by psych unit psychiatry as being relevant, uncorrected by the field, psychiatry. Staff or followup treatment may or may not be different. The Christian should, I feel, be aware of this; and the psychiatry core theory and praxis is a driving force in our society.

But 'thoughts' and 'intentions' and 'mental states' and so forth are real, and the individual can work with them – for the Zen Buddhist, in contemplation, awareness, zazen, study, or activity; for the Christian, in renewing of the mind, or working with the word of God, or prayer, and endurance and its perfect result, (James 1:4), or the works of faith. These have effect!

Psychiatry should take note!

These factors are there, as meds are! Psychiatry should take note!

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