

CONTROLLING YOUR OWN MIND -- ACCEPTING THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE

By Nino Boezio

We see many examples of human beings seeking to push themselves to physical and mental extremes never achieved before.

Body builders look to display tremendous feats of strength. We have competitions where the participants undergo a series of events testing endurance. Some seek to be the fastest distance runner or the quickest in reaching some pre-established benchmark.

In a mental capacity, persons like to demonstrate a keen sense of memory, an ability to calculate or spell things beyond conceivable limits, or to have a heightened sense of comprehension and intelligence.

But the biggest challenge of all is often overlooked, and that is to truly discipline and control one's own mind. It may seem to be a trivial goal, until someone actually attempts it.

Controlling your own mind involves monitoring every thought and taming your desires to ensure everything you do is profitable. You then throw the rest away. It is one of the aspects Of Christianity that many find very hard to do.

The apostle Paul characterized his mental struggle this way: *Romans 7:15 (NKJV) For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice, but what I hate, that I do.* Paul explains within this chapter, that even though he considered God's principles of life to be good, it was difficult to follow them, because of all the inner pulls that existed within his own mind. Paul later expressed the challenge this way: *Romans 12:2 (NKJV) 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.* Paul was encouraging everyone to aim for something quite high.

This explains why some like to claim God's laws of life aren't in effect, because they simply don't want to engage in this mental fight. They refuse to take the challenge, even when the rewards are great.

Jesus had a number of disciples who had to learn about their own unreliability. Peter denied being associated with Jesus three times (Matthew 26:33-35, 75), even though he expressed strong courage earlier. Other disciples ran away from supporting Jesus Christ due to fear (Matthew 26:56).

It is interesting however, how the character of the disciples later changed. They had to come to the point that they recognized their own frailties, while also conceding that greater goals needed to be achieved. They

understood the value of energizing themselves to keep God's principles while also realizing they needed help to keep it.

The disciples arrived to a point that all Christians have to reach. They had to repent from doing anything wrong, accept God's message and be reconciled to God through Jesus' Christ sacrifice. Subsequently through baptism which symbolized all these steps, they were given the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is not only the power of God, but a measure of His very God essence.

The Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to reach greater heights. Upon becoming apostles, they became amazing. They were able to endure incredible hardship and difficulties. They saw the world and their role within it in a much greater dimension. They were also able to see beyond this life with greater clarity.

Previously, the apostle Peter had misplaced trust and courage in himself, but this had to change. To a group after his conversion to this different mind, his instruction was the following, "Acts 2:38 (NKJV) Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Taming the human mind is a very difficult task indeed. God has very high principles and standards that He wishes we all follow. God knows it will not always be easy. Therefore God provides us access to divine help to meet His high expectations, which also enable us to lead a better and more fulfilling life.

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