



Shine a Light | Doug Wekenman | 11.4.18
LG WEEKLY

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

What is your favorite thing about the month of November?

SHARE

And God said, “Let there be light” and there was light. – Genesis 1:3

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And then God spoke! Now, there are thousands of books filled with exhaustive research and biblical analysis from prestigious scholars about the creation of the world. There are many biblical views on how it all came to be. We love to debate about whether the author is referring to literal days or indefinite periods of time. And those are all interesting questions, but the problem is none of us were there to see it.

What we believe with certainty is that God spoke, and it came to be. Genesis tells us that “God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.” What God creates is good! It is no wonder that throughout scripture, those who follow Jesus are likened to ‘light’ in the midst of darkness. When the people of Jesus are around, they should reflect the light of Jesus.

Most of us grew up being afraid of the dark, but now it’s time the darkness is afraid of us.

As a disciple of Jesus, we have Jesus with us. We have God's Spirit working in and through our lives. Because of that, we don't have to fear the dark; we are not alone.

G R O W

Read Romans 12:1-2

What is the "therefore" there for? In other words, why do you think Paul begin Romans 12:1 with the word "Therefore"?

These two verses sum up so much of what it means to follow Christ. In a world and culture that is often heading in a direction away from Christ, these verses invite us onto a lifelong journey of becoming more and more like Jesus.

What do you think Paul means by "the patterns of this world"? Give a few examples.

This week Doug talked about the importance of allowing God to shine a light on our minds. As humans, we have a natural bent toward negativity. When left unchecked, it is easy to be consumed with worry and only expect the worst-case scenario. It's an easy trap to fall into, but that's not God's design for our lives. Paul offers us another way. Instead of being conformed to the patterns of the world, he says we can be "transformed by the renewing of our minds."

Transformation does not happen overnight. It's not a quick fix. Instead, it is the natural result of a renewed mind. Think about an apple tree. They don't produce apples immediately. But given enough time, proper sunlight, and adequate water they naturally provide us with more than enough apples. According to Paul, our transformation happens the same way. When we take the proper steps to renew our mind every day, we will naturally find ourselves being more loving, joyful, patient, and at peace!

What is one major way your mind needs to be transformed?

What is the biggest thing keeping you from allowing that to happen?

MOVE

Philippians 4:8-9

A few verses earlier, Paul famously writes “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice.” What does that tell us about the correlation between the things we think about and our joy?

Let’s get practical. Making a list of all the things you shouldn’t focus on is not the most profitable way to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. A better strategy is to identify all the things to focus on that are profitable. Imagine starting a new diet. The last thing you want to hear is a list of all the things you can no longer eat. It can leave you feeling depressed while making the new, healthy lifestyle seem like an impossible task to achieve. What you would want to hear is all the foods you can still eat while choosing a healthier you. When you realize there is a ton still on the table, it makes this new healthy lifestyle sound achievable.

In this passage, Paul is giving us a list of the things to focus our mind on. Reading the list makes being transformed by the renewal of your mind possible. It’s an extensive list that essentially covers every good thing. Let’s reread it.

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is *true*, whatever is *noble*, whatever is *right*, whatever is *pure*, whatever is *lovely*, whatever is *admirable*-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things.”

Which of those words sticks out to you the most? Why?

Most scholars believe Paul wrote this letter from prison toward the end of his life. Everything is winding down for him, he is no longer free to roam about the world, and yet it’s clear that he is more joyful and content than ever before. This is what happens when we trust God to shine a light on our mind. Let’s practice that together this week.

Here’s a great exercise to start with:

Take some time on your own to name something in your life for each of these categories.

It can be a memory, a person you love, a place you enjoy going, a thing you own, or whatever else comes to your mind.

Something Honorable:

Something Just:

Something Pure:

Something Lovely:

Something Commendable:

Something Excellent:

Something Praiseworthy:

Now take some time to discuss what you wrote down with your group. Notice how you feel as you are thinking about these things. As Paul reminded us, peace is the natural fruit of this practice!

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying with and for each other. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to share more freely.

TO GO

2 Corinthians 10:5

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

