



## **Talk to Yourself Much?**

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**God's part. Our part.** As we walk through all the crisis, shadows and valleys of life as well as the joys, we are grateful that He is strong and that nothing is hidden from Him. He orchestrates and directs, working all things together for the good of those who love Him. ALL things; not just some things sometimes; but all things all the time! Our triumphs, our regrets: it doesn't matter. All Things! It surely doesn't always SEEM so.

We spend a lifetime learning about ways He has provided for us. Yet, no matter how much He has provided, if we don't walk in what He has directed, we will miss out. He provides us with what we need, but we have to take it up.

*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Romans 12:2

It seems so much easier to pay attention to what we see and hear around us in our daily lives. Common sense tells us that these experiences are somehow more "real" than what we read in the Bible written long ago. The ways people look at us and behave toward us are a part of making us who we are. We may think we don't have much control over that, which is true. We may think we have to believe that what others think of us determines who we are, which is NOT true. In the words of Dennis Jernigan, a Christian musician, "I am who my Father says I am." This in itself often feels impossible to one who is struggling though they may read the Words of Scripture that confirms it! It becomes a discipline, a training to choose to turn to what we know is truth, rather than what our senses tell us.

The Word tells us to be transformed by the renewing of our mind but the meaning of that is often unclear. If He is our Father Who loves us, shouldn't He just make us feel better in some spiritual, supernatural way? How would words printed in a book transform us?

To begin, we acknowledge that He is the Designer and the Creator of who we are. So His Word is His instruction to us. In fact, the word that has usually been translated as "Law" in our Scriptures more accurately comes from the Hebrew word transliterated in English as "Torah" and actually means "instructions" or "teachings."

He knows how He designed us and how best we can function, even in a world filled with darkness. Our souls are not hidden from the One Who has given us breath. It is here that most battles are fought: behind our eyes and between our ears. Whether we win or lose there often determines what plays out.

I view the soul as our mind, will and emotions: three different aspects, yet really one whole.

They are so intertwined it is difficult to "tease" them apart. We might simply think of the **mind** having to do with the words we say to ourselves or others, the **will** being the motivation or tendency we have to go in a particular direction, and of course, the **emotions** represent the way thoughts and direction are colored, with happiness, sadness, fear, shame, or loneliness as the primary list.

How does He transform and renew our minds? Does it require anything of us? I believe it does.

Have you ever noticed how your mind can "run away with you"? Sometimes we find ourselves worrying and imagining all manner of things that could be or might happen. This sort of "self talk" is the kind that leads us away from confidence and quietness in our Messiah and His work in and for us. It expands on the wrongs we have experienced or magnifies the hurt and anger we feel. It imagines all that we might wish to do to set things straight! Sometimes the things that go on in our mind become so real that we begin to reason and act based on what really only happened there. When thoughts go in this direction long enough, we can easily become depressed and despairing without even realizing we are headed downhill.

Sometimes the distraction comes from something outside of ourselves: the pressures of the world and just making a living; the pressures of the wicked, and those who deny our God and want us to become like them. I call it the "go along to get along gang." In the short run, it often **seems** more comfortable or profitable to just go along and not fight upstream with many things. Still, the Word tells us to remember what He has done for us and take courage to stay walking after Him.

Sometimes distractions even come from within our faith group, as is seen in those churches that continue to slide along the slope of making religion more palatable and convenient; more politically correct. It may even just be in the aspect of prayer with fellow believers who fall into

the custom of praying the problem rather than the solution; in effect, praying from a position of weakness and helplessness, instead of remembering the “positional truth” of our standing in the Name and authority of our Messiah King!

Another distraction or hindrance may be found in a common teaching that it is not okay for us to pray for ourselves. Some have taught that it is unscriptural to do so, that caring for yourself is somehow selfish and unspiritual. There has been what is called the **JOY** society: **J**esus First, **O**thers Second, **Y**ourself Last. Although I think I understand the intent of this, being to keep priorities in order and not to think more highly of oneself than is prudent, it has often been perceived as teaching that one must never consider one’s own needs!

*If you really fulfill [the] royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;*

James 2:8

We have it in the 10 Commandments, and directly from Messiah’s mouth, in many similar verses, that we ARE to love our neighbor AS ourselves. Not better than. Not less than. (***Understanding Self Worth*** is another piece that readers may find interesting...found at [www.christian-transitions.com](http://www.christian-transitions.com)) Imagine a group of people who do not love themselves; meaning in brief, that they do not know how to balance a healthy respect for their own needs to be well fed, rested, clothed, and so forth. How well do you imagine such people would be able to do in caring for others? They may extensively care for others, but more subtly begin to develop resentment that the same care doesn’t come their way. If they do not perceive that they have God’s permission to take care of themselves, they have no freedom to express it.

It is only a matter of time before many will then begin to project on others, that they need to just be strong and ignore their own needs, too. Anything less is viewed as unspiritual or being selfish. Whether one agrees with this teaching or is around those who do, it can prove to be a very disturbing thing to cope with and may well hinder the ability to stand firm and confident through difficult circumstances.

I recently found an insightful resource called “Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure” by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. He has some excellent points in his introduction that are elaborated on later. Though the language is more formal, the concepts should be very familiar! He compares common psychological interpretations with a Biblical worldview. While acknowledging the differences in temperament or personality and the reality of some biological or medical concerns, he clearly indicates this has no bearing on salvation. He addresses the underlying presence of our enemy, the adversary of our souls, who will use anything possible as an opening to wreak havoc; whether circumstances, temperament, or illness.

Lloyd-Jones comments on the kind of reaction that can come after a great spiritual victory as one source of despair. He considers the reality of our enemy, the adversary, who wants to rob us of victory in this life, if he can't completely destroy our faith. Though he cannot read our minds, he can infiltrate them with his perspective through the weakness of our flesh.

So the question comes down to how we talk to ourselves. These various forms of our mind "running away with us" will take us to destinations of despair we really don't want to visit! We need to examine ourselves in a healthy way but not fall into morbid introspection.

I really enjoyed Lloyd-Jones descriptive phrases:

*I say that we must talk to ourselves instead of allowing "ourselves" to talk to us! Do you realize what that means? ... Am I just trying to be deliberately paradoxical? Far from it. This is the very essence of wisdom in this matter. Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? ... Now this man's treatment was this; instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" he asks. His soul has been depressing him, crushing him. So he stands up and says: "Self, listen for a moment. I will speak to you." Do you know what I mean? If you do not, you have had but little experience.<sup>1</sup>*

He goes on to describe how important it is to take charge of yourself; to know yourself-- both your strengths and your weaknesses. Relationships, circumstances and under it all, yes, the enemy of our souls, will work through either or both. Meekness taken to an extreme becomes weakness and destructive. Confidence taken to an extreme becomes arrogance and prideful.

Having then begun to take charge of ourselves, we can then choose what we feed ourselves; not just the wise choices of physical food that promote health in every way including our thoughts and emotions, but also the spiritual food which Messiah said is what we are to live by.

*But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'*

Luke 4:4

*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.*

Hebrews 4:12

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<sup>1</sup> Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cures; D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones., Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1965, pp. 20-21

When we spend time immersing ourselves in the Word, the power of the words becomes more evident as they bring comfort and conviction. May we learn to use His Word as a tool, sharper than a two edged sword, to talk TO ourselves rather than let ourselves talk to us. May we cooperate with Him as He transforms and renews our minds. No matter what comes, may we remain unshakeable in our faith!

**Once again we find the psalmists provide such wisdom; not only expressing the depths of their concerns but also showing us how to take hold and talk BACK TO ourselves, challenging those unhealthy or even ungodly thoughts and fears!**

Psalms 42 and 43 include this wonderful coaching suggestion for “self talk”:

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and [why] art thou disquieted in me?  
hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him [for] the help of his countenance.*

Psalm 42:5

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God:  
for I shall yet praise him, [who is] the health of my countenance, and my God.*

Psalm 43:5

An important point of how our relationship with our Abba was changed when sin entered in...

Our Father took away the opportunity to SEE Him but left the opportunity to HEAR Him after the Fall.

*And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.*

Genesis 3:8

Our Model and Messiah, Yeshua/Jesus of Nazareth shows us the correct way to walk.

*And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the*

*LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.*

Isaiah 11:1-4

This tells us that the Righteous Branch will not judge with the sight of His eyes nor reprove after the hearing of his ears, but judge with righteousness. We need to lean into Him and listen for His Spirit so that we, too, may understand and counsel or judge wisely.

How has our ability to see and hear, and thus talk rightly to ourselves, been affected? Here is a small sample of pertinent verses:

*"Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this [very] day.*

Deuteronomy 29:5

*(of idols/idolatry) They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell; They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat. Those who make them are like them; [So is] everyone who trusts in them.*

Psalm 115:5-8

*"Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed."*

Isaiah 6:10

*Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This [is] the way, walk in it," Whenever you turn to the right hand Or whenever you turn to the left.*

Isaiah 30:21

*Moreover He said to me: "Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears.*

Ezekiel 3:10

*"Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, which has eyes to see but does not see, and ears to hear but does not hear; for they [are] a rebellious house.*

Ezekiel 2:12

*"But they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear.*

Zechariah 7:11

*For the hearts of this people have grown dull. [Their] ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with [their] eyes and hear with [their] ears, Lest they should understand with [their] hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.*

*"But blessed [are] your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;*

Matthew 13:15-16

*"Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*

Matthew 13:43

*If any man have an ear, let him hear.*

Revelation 13:9

When we hear correctly and take in His Word, our mind, will and emotions will be well fed. It will affect how we talk **to** ourselves, instead of letting ourselves talk to us.

What we "hear" and say to ourselves is a part of our transformation and maturity as we grow to be more like Him. **God's part. Our part.**

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