

## Influenced: A guide to successful thinking

### Part 1: Introduction

#### Youtube Q for title:

**How do I get out of this rut?** Why do we keep making the same mistakes? Where does our thinking come from? How are your influences?

Romans 12:1-2

**WE:** Why are we so crazy?

**We often experience the same unhealthy/unproductive/destructive cycles over and over.**

#### Societal

- Divisions/Race/Politics/Economics

#### Personally

- Habits can't shake/patterns of broken relationships/ negative thoughts that can't silence...

Think if we just try harder/educate more/pass right laws, find the right answer/partner/church... this time will be different/better...

But same things just keep happening... sometimes with slight variations... **We often experience the same unhealthy cycles over and over... b/c we keep making the same choices thinking we'll get different results.**

How do we get stuck in these ruts in the first place? Why do we keep making the same choices?

Our choices come from how we think... Every choice you've made (keep making) comes from you thinking this is the right choice right now... and those choices affect our lives long-term...

**How we think dictates how we live.**

Now we like to think we are independent thinkers...

But... Dig deeper... Where does our thinking come from?

- Upbringing?
- Education?
- Research?

Yes all- Influences.

**Our thoughts are products of our influences.**

- Western Culture (independence) v. Eastern (honor/shame)
- Husbands love / wives respect ancient v. modern
- Echo chambers... 2 different worlds watching Fox and CNN.

So when we ask... "What should I do in this situation/What does love look like?" Our answer comes from whatever is influencing our thinking.

If keep having same influences... keep making same choices... keep having same results

To break cycle... Need to change our thinking... to do that need to change our influences.

**If we change our influences we can change our lives.**

Paul offers us a way to do just that...

**GOD:**

Paul / Romans 57 AD / Paul's Masterpiece

This is what Jesus' D&R actually accomplished/meant and in light of that here's what a JF's response should be...

These verses are the hinge of the entire letter...

**V. 1** Since God has saved you and freed you... you can now enjoy the life he offers by giving all of yourself to him.

"Living and Holy sacrifice"... culmination and heart of all other sacrifices... New covenant.

- Jesus gave himself for us... we now offer him all of us.

Living- we don't die in this sacrifice... we live our lives for him.

Holy- different/set apart... showing what God is like

In order to live/enjoy this life we need a drastic change of thinking...

**V. 2** "Don't copy behavior and customs World [age]"- beliefs/philosophies/methodologies/strategies of world

- Not saying philosophy bad/etc. "Only book I need is the Bible" won't even pass a drivers test with that theory.

- But talking about way of thinking... rules/power/self interest

**The influences** in this world/ **around us are trying to squeeze us into their mold.**

Telling us to think, act, react, feel their way.

General thinking...

Make yourself as strong as possible(physical/mental/financial/nationally)... often to the detriment of others... so that you can fight for yourself/rely on yourself, control your envirin order for you to be happy.

Leads to continuous cycle of using/abusing people. Breaking relationships, loneliness, emptiness, frustration, even war... Doing same things over again expecting different results.

"But [Instead of world] let **God** transform you into a new person by changing the way you think"

There is another choice... a choice that can break these destructive cycles... a way of thinking that transcends our usual influences...

Let **God** be your influence to truly change [RENEW] your thinking

**To break out of our old cycles we need God's renewed thinking**

So what does this really mean?

Like we need to read the Bible a lot and then we'll have bible verses to answer all of our issues?

No. Not bound by OT... NT does help us understand, get a starting point for Law of Christ (Love) as explained by apostles.

But God transforms us when we allow the HS to continually fill and direct us. Renews our hearts and minds...

**When we allow God to renew our thinking**... he doesn't just offer good advice/Bible verse answers/quick xiany memes... **he starts transforming us from the inside out**... starts writing on our hearts (the source of our being).

"Change how you think = Renewing of your mind" in a usually slow but ongoing/lifelong process...

His "influence" transforms our thoughts to think as Jesus would think if he were living our lives.

...Seeing our world, others, and ourselves through a Jesus lens.

It's a complete/total shift or readjustment in our way of thinking.

A complete readjustment of the answers we find when we ask, "What should I do?" Or "What does love look like?"

Answers that are far beyond what our culture/background/religious traditions can give us.

"Learn to know"- understand and agree with what God wants for us by putting it into practice.

If you're a JF, Since Jesus has freed us from sin and its control... JF's now have a choice... continue old way or allow the HS to renew you and experience new life now.

**A renewed mind comes from a renewed heart.**

It is what God communicated through the prophet Jeremiah when talking about the impact of the savior coming...

**Jeremiah 31:33b**

Result is a mind so renewed that we know from within, almost intrinsically, what love looks like in this situation...

- Much more effective than a set list of rules. Jeremiah (law in hearts)

- Much more effective than fickle and illogical feelings

Based on and guided by the unchanging all-loving God... who created you, knows what is best for you, and longs for you to experience it.

### **YOU:**

Want to invite you... Tired of the same routine? Tried the usual- same results. Want to experience the freedom Jesus offers?

Freedom to choose differently... not just once or twice but daily throughout your life...

Invite you to accept a new way... instead of fighting/struggling for your happiness... give your life to Jesus and his way. Trust him to carry you and renew you.

### Others

Sick of the pattern of thinking that continues to lead to damaging choices? Accepted Jesus but haven't allowed him to renew your thinking?

Missing out on the full life he offers now...

Time to change influences...

**To change our thinking we must change our influences...**

### **List your Influences.**

What influences or has influenced you?

Family/Media/Friends/Books/Education/Experiences... (Don't have to do anything with them... yet.)

**Read Colossians 3:1-17** [I will read **v. 10**]

**Pray**- Renew my mind. Show me which influences need to change. Help me accept the influence(s) you are bringing to me.

Next two episodes... how to find good influences God wants to use to renew you

### **WE:**

We don't have to be stuck in the usual unending destructive cycles.

There is another way offered to us. There is another life offered to all of us starting right now.

A life where we are free from having to fight for and worry about our happiness

A life of continual growth and renewal...

Where we can look back and see the difference God has made in us and the difference he has used us to make for others.

Where the answer to “What does love look like” is so written on our hearts that it becomes second nature to love like Jesus loves.

## **When Jesus renews our thinking he renews our lives**

### Questions

1. How have you seen God working in your life and world this past week?
2. Read Col 3: 12-15. Which of these are typically harder things to “clothe” yourself with? How have you seen that impact your life?
3. What are some key influences in your life? How do you think they’ve formed your thinking?
4. Are there any influences you feel you might need to add or subtract? How can your group pray for you this week?