I CAN RENEW MY MIND
AND FOCUS ON THINGS ABOVE!

Much of the time, our direction in life is based on where we place our focus. Because of this, two people can walk through nearly identical circumstances yet draw very different conclusions. One person sees obstacles as an indicator that all of life is against them while another sees the same obstacles through the eyes of gratitude for the perseverence and refining built in the seeking of their dream. You’ve heard it said that a pessimist sees a glass half empty while an optimist sees the glass half full. We would add that a Christian should see the glass as neither but as always overflowing! We serve a King who reigns undisputed over all of creation. We have been chosen by and are loved by our God. We’ve been adopted into his family, given all of eternity, fueled with unique personality, passion and purpose, and surrounded by a million awe-inspiring sights, experiences and relationships. If we’ve found Jesus and never see another material blessing, goodness gracious, we’ve found Jesus! Forever. We found the treasure in the field. We possess the pearl of great price. We cannot afford to trudge through our days here as the last kid picked for the kickball game when we’ve been given all the treasures of heaven.

The following commonly told story clearly illustrates the power of perspective. Twin boys were raised by an alcoholic father. They both grew up but lived very different lives. One was in prison after committing several alcohol-related offenses. When asked why he turned out the way that he did, he responded, “With the father that I had, how could I help it?”

The other became a successful attorney, committed to fighting for justice. When asked the very same question — why he turned out the way that he did, he also answered, “With the father that I had, how could I help it?”

We will have today what we focus on. Like the twin boys, we can either choose to focus our minds on the broken things here: our trials, frustrations and shortcomings, or we can choose to focus on our true reality and how even trials are forging our destiny as we look to our King. Today, we are more than conquerors over the circumstances of our lives. Our trials are temporary, and they are fading quickly. We will reign with Jesus forever! One way of thinking only leads to fear and stress. The other provides a joy that soars above the turbulent winds of life. Change how you see your “glass” and choose to soar today!

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will” Romans 12:2 – Emphasis added.

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things” Colossians 3:1-2 – Emphasis added.

“Whatsoever is true, whatsoever is noble, whatsoever is right, whatsoever is pure, whatsoever is lovely, whatsoever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things!” Philippians 4:8 – Emphasis added.
QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

1. Read Philippians 4:4-13. The Apostle Paul wrote this while in prison for simply representing Jesus. He’d been beaten, accused, abandoned and slandered yet could only rejoice because of his certainty of God’s love and present provision. What circumstances are weighing you down and opposing you right now? Follow Paul’s example and talk to God about it. Ask for his perspective and for his joy to wash over you.

2. Make a written list of all the blessings in your life that come to mind. Thank God for each one. Ask for the Holy Spirit’s help today to focus on and celebrate these things instead of your trials!

WORSHIP RESOURCE:

“I shouldn’t worry about anything when you’ve got everything in the palm of your hands!”

Listen to “Hands” by Emberlasting. Find more info about their album at the back of the devotional.

PRAYER:

Lord God, I choose today to turn my thoughts to you. I choose to think of the great exchange and victory that Jesus has won for me. I choose to think about the praiseworthy, pure and beautiful things in my life. I thank you for my family and friends and all the blessings that you have poured out on me. Take a moment to specifically thank him for these. I turn away from idols and the things of this world so that I might see you and your glory. Change my perspective and fill my heart and thoughts with gratitude and confidence of your love for me. I choose to focus on my blessings today, believing that even in the furnaces of life, everything you do is for me! I give all of me to you completely!

LISTENING TIME:

Stop for a few minutes and ask the Lord what he wants to say to you. He might bring to mind a picture, a word, a song, an encouragement, a Scripture or an answer to a burden in your heart. Don’t rush or feel pressure to figure out the meaning of your impressions. Just invite him to speak and draw or write down what you sense. Afterward, ask God to help you discern and understand what he is saying to you. You might want to ask other trusted friends in the Kingdom for their input as well.

USE THE FOLLOWING SPACE TO RECORD WHAT GOD IS SAYING

(Additional note space in the back of the book).

TOOLS FOR FAMILY DEVOTIONS:

Ask everyone to make a list of their blessings: the lovely, pure and excellent things in your life! Then, share these with each other. Pray for joyful contentment to be the “language” of your family!

TOOLS FOR PRAYING FOR OTHERS:

Pray for someone in your life to stop seeing the glass as half empty and to instead see their blessings with clarity!