

WELCOME TO THE RESISTANCE

It IS Brain Surgery | Discussion Notes

For the next 5 weeks we're going to be focusing on Romans 12:1-2. Take some time at the start to read through the passage in a few different translations of the Bible.

- What are the big challenges that jump out to you from this passage?
- Are there any parts of it that don't make sense to you?

Philip explained how he struggled with this passage growing up because he didn't understand that living a life of sacrifice starts with understanding God's mercy. This is because "**How you think determines how you live**", so not thinking about God's mercy for us means we're less likely to live lives of sacrifice for him.

- Do you agree with the statement "how you think determines how you live?"
- If so, what are some common examples you see around you?

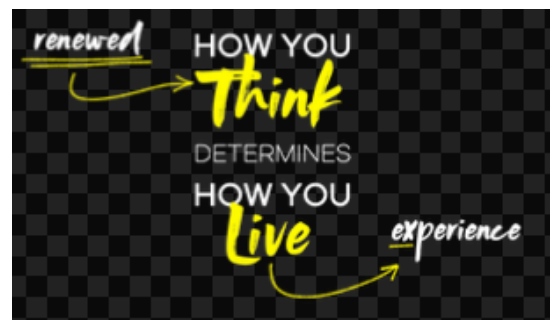
Philip also explained how the neuroscience of this works - that stronger and stronger neural pathways are created when you repeatedly think a thought, so it actually becomes easier to keep thinking that thought. It helps explain things like conspiracy theories and negative patterns of thinking. This links with Romans 12:2: when Paul says "do not conform to the pattern of this world" - the world is constantly bombarding us with messages that can change the way we think about things.

- We can sum this up by saying that the "pattern of the world conditions how we think." Do you agree?
- You might want to ask people to rate out of 10 (with their fingers) how much they are aware of society conditioning how they think in the following areas: social media, work and careers, materialism, sex, alcohol and drugs.
- Or you may want to just ask people to reflect for a few minutes on their own and then come back and share with the group what areas of life they feel their thinking has been conditioned by society.



Romans goes on to say, "but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Paul tells us that we can fight back against this and instead have our minds renewed. Then as we do this we will be able to 'test and approve' God's will in our lives; in other words we will see the proof of changing how we live in a more fulfilled and whole life.

- How can we 'renew our minds'? What does that look like?
- What role can prayer play in this?
- What do you think it would look like to see the proof of a renewed mind in your life? How would an area of your life look different?



It would be great to be able to see real change in our thought patterns over the next few weeks, so try to make lots of time to pray together. Pray especially into areas where you want to see change in this series. Pray about friends that you can invite to engage with church during this series.