

CMCA 2025 SUMMIT
May 2-3, 2025 | Northland Church | Longwood, FL



Criminal Thinking Errors: A Biblical Response

Chaplains Paul Nielsen & Alicia Reeves

Criminal Thinking Errors

- **About us**
- Why?
- About Criminal Thinking Errors
- The Biblical Response

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he
- Proverbs 23:7 KJV

About Alicia

- CMCA, Correctional Ministries Institute, Certified
- Chaplain, Good News Global
- Chaplain, @ La Vista Correctional Facility, Level 3 state women's prison
- 17 years on Young Life staff; 10 years church staff
- Trauma Healing Institute, Training Facilitator
- 6th CMCA Summit, 1st presentation



Stupid Prison Joke #1

“So, how did you end up in prison?”

A cop pulled me over and said he was giving me a ticket for driving alone in the carpool lane.

I told him, “Ha! You’re gonna feel really stupid when you look in the trunk.”

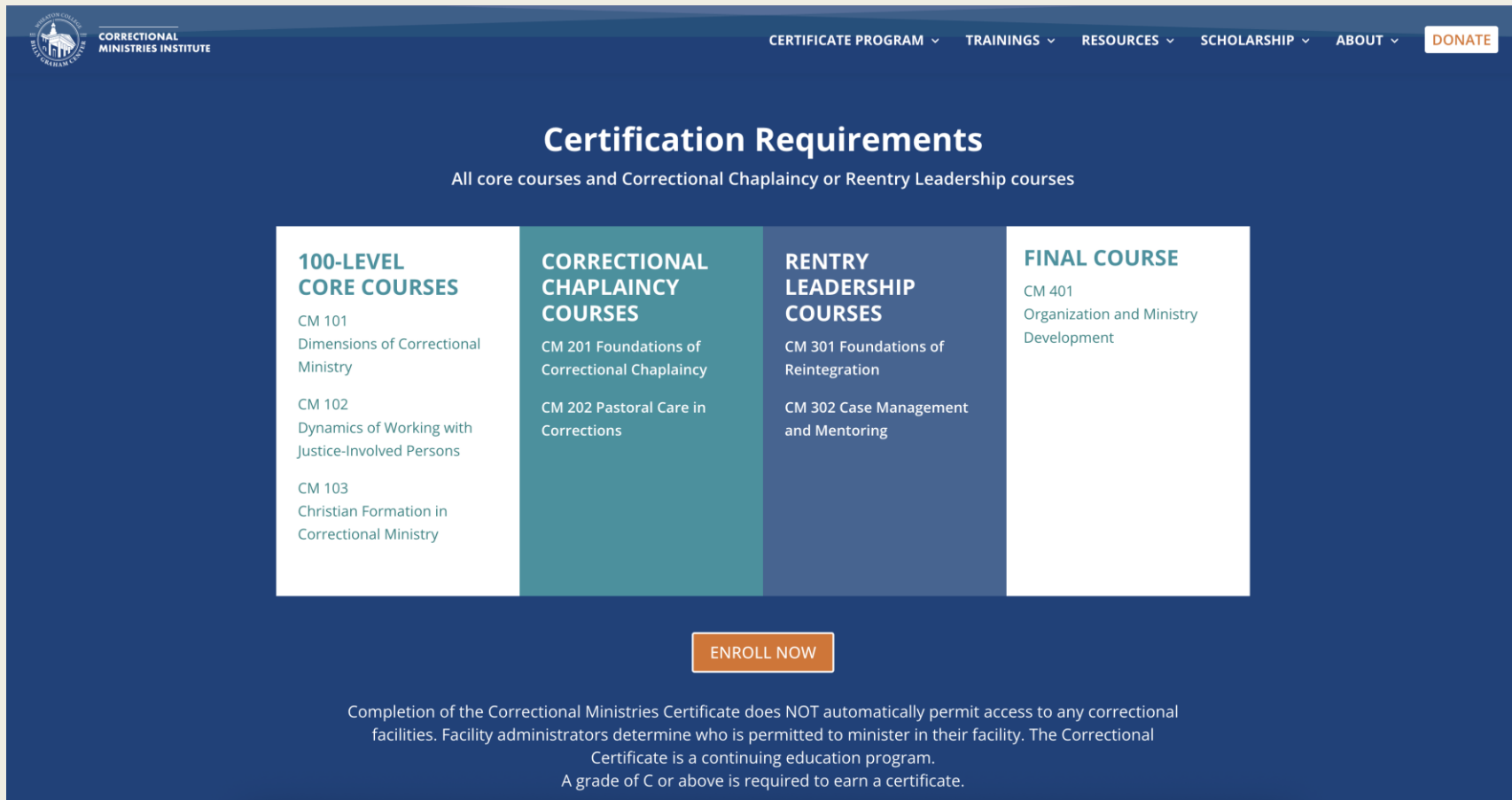
About Paul

- CMCA, Correctional Ministries Institute, Certified
- Chaplain, @Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility, Level 3 state Men's prison, Infirmary, Hospice
- Chaplain, @The Beacon at Skyline, Norwegian-style experimental incentive prison
- Denver Seminary, MA BTS student, Teaching Assistant (OT511 Grader)
- Trauma Healing Institute, Training Facilitator
- 6th CMCA Summit, 3rd presentation



Criminal Thinking Errors

- We first heard about CTEs from the CMCA curriculum.



The screenshot displays the website of the Correctional Ministries Institute. The header includes the institute's logo and name, along with navigation links for the Certificate Program, Trainings, Resources, Scholarship, About, and a Donate button. The main content area is titled "Certification Requirements" and lists all core courses and Correctional Chaplaincy or Reentry Leadership courses. The courses are organized into four columns: 100-Level Core Courses, Correctional Chaplaincy Courses, Reentry Leadership Courses, and a Final Course. An "ENROLL NOW" button is prominently displayed below the course listings. A disclaimer at the bottom states that completing the certificate does not automatically grant access to correctional facilities and that the certificate is a continuing education program requiring a grade of C or above.

CORRECTIONAL MINISTRIES INSTITUTE

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM ▾ TRAININGS ▾ RESOURCES ▾ SCHOLARSHIP ▾ ABOUT ▾ [DONATE](#)

Certification Requirements

All core courses and Correctional Chaplaincy or Reentry Leadership courses

100-LEVEL CORE COURSES CM 101 Dimensions of Correctional Ministry CM 102 Dynamics of Working with Justice-Involved Persons CM 103 Christian Formation in Correctional Ministry	CORRECTIONAL CHAPLAINCY COURSES CM 201 Foundations of Correctional Chaplaincy CM 202 Pastoral Care in Corrections	REENTRY LEADERSHIP COURSES CM 301 Foundations of Reintegration CM 302 Case Management and Mentoring	FINAL COURSE CM 401 Organization and Ministry Development
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[ENROLL NOW](#)

Completion of the Correctional Ministries Certificate does NOT automatically permit access to any correctional facilities. Facility administrators determine who is permitted to minister in their facility. The Correctional Certificate is a continuing education program.
A grade of C or above is required to earn a certificate.



WARNING

We are not clinically trained psychologists. We are day-to-day chaplains dealing with the same issues you are.

Criminal Thinking Errors

- About us
- **Why?**
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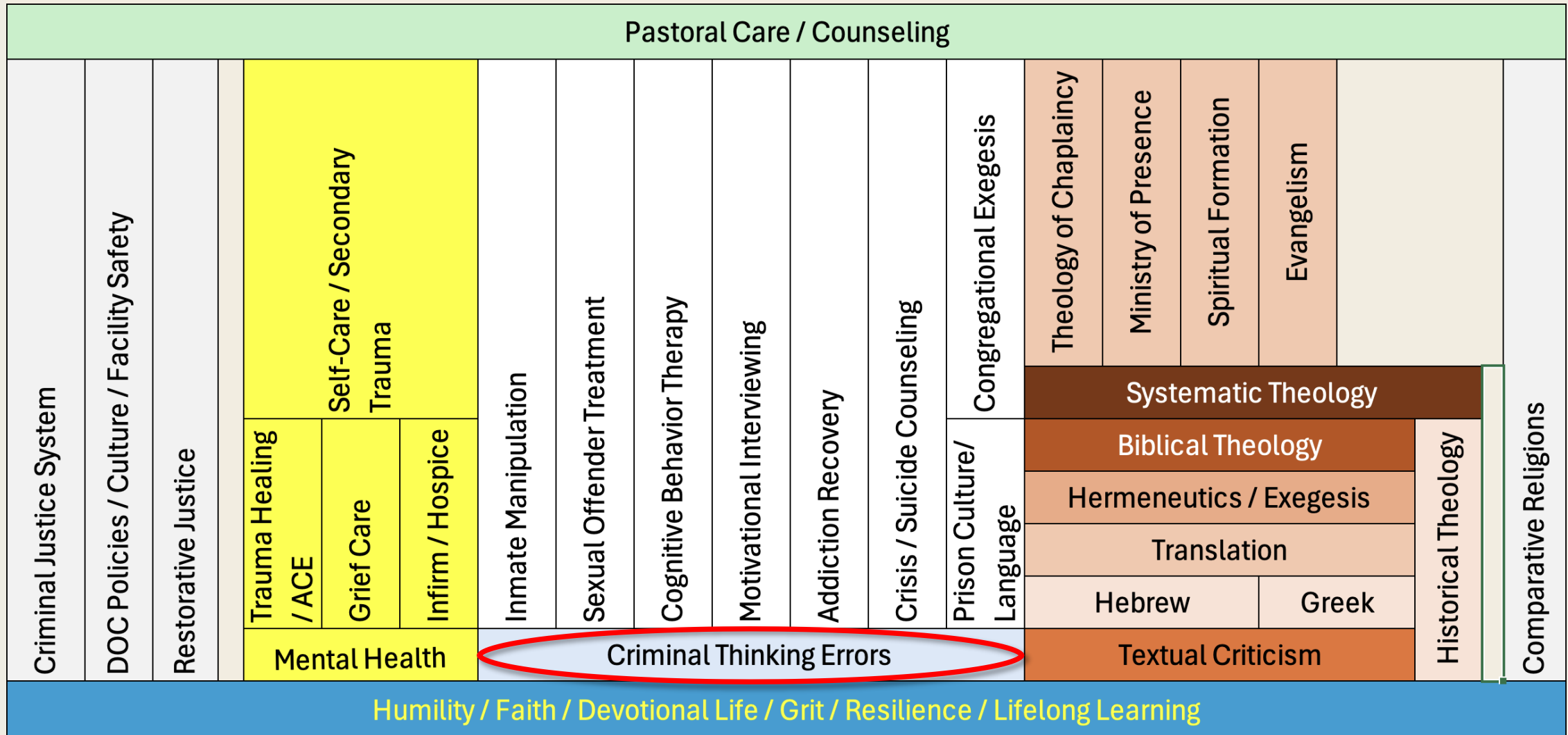
For he is like someone who has calculated the cost in his mind
- Proverbs 23:7 NET Bible

Why study Criminal Thinking Errors?

- Be aware and can detect CTEs in your interactions
- Protect yourself from CTE manipulation
- Help the incarcerated be aware and protected from CTEs
- Be bold and help your men and women be self-aware toward the renewing of their minds
 - *Preach and teach – application directed at correcting CTEs*
 - *“these are ways you might be conforming to the world”*
 - *“these are ways of thinking from your fleshy Old Nature”*

Chaplaincy Skillset Block Diagram

Preaching / Homiletics



But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect

– 1 Peter 3:15

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Restrain yourself!

- Proverbs 23:7 the Message

NORP Thinking \neq Criminal Thinking

Social projection – Psychological tendency of people to expect others to act or think similarly to themselves.

The problem is that our minds are fallen. They have a spirit, a bent, a mindset that is hostile to the absolute supremacy of God. – John Piper

Holistic vs specific Bible verses

Criminal Thinking Errors

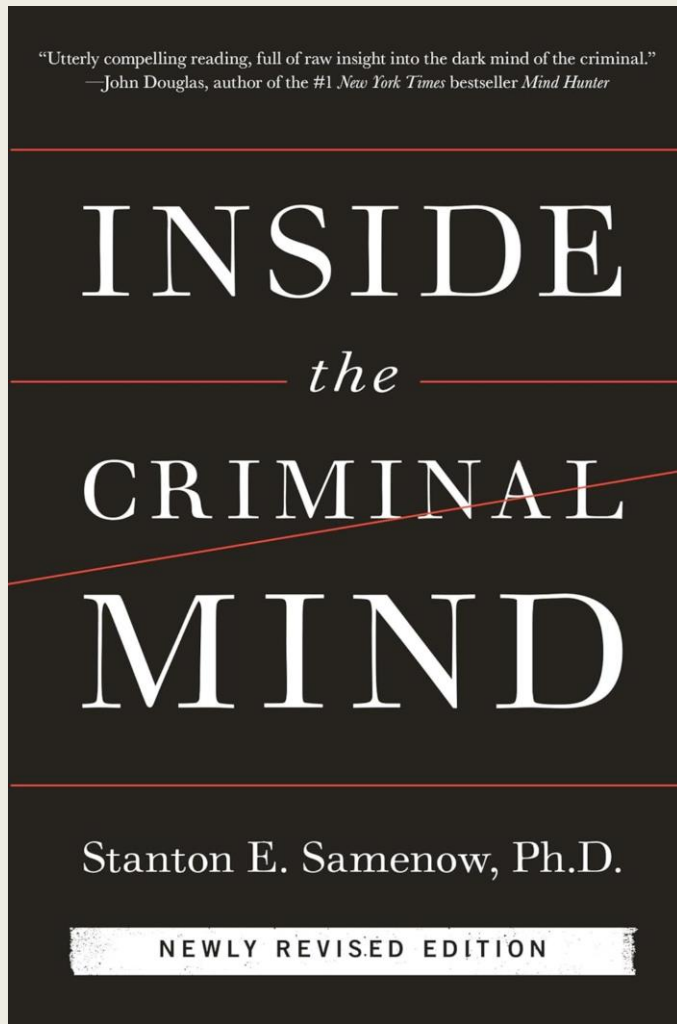
are not:

- Normal (NORP) Thinking
 - *Everyone has some of these errors occasionally*
- Criminological Factors
 - *Risk factors such as poverty, family stress, addiction*
- Behaviors
 - *Manipulation*
 - *Abuse*
 - *Addiction*
 - *Crime*

Criminal Thinking Errors

are:

- Debilitating
 - *Prevent a person from functioning normally in life*
 - *Similar to Sadness & Depression*
- Inconsistent
 - *Not every criminal has every CTE all the time*
- Men and Women can manifest CTEs in different ways
- The prison environment can condition a person to develop CTE
- CTEs intensify or return
 - *When stressed, threatened, or triggered*
 - *Christians can regress into CTE, tend to justify/wrap their CTE in Bible verses.*



Stanton E. Samenow, PhD

Samenow’s premise is that a person’s *thinking*, not the *environment*, is the critical determinant of his *behavior*.

Psychology Today

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Find a Therapist (City or Zip)

Verified by Psychology Today

Stanton E. Samenow Ph.D.

Psychology Today Blog: [Inside the Criminal Mind](#)

Media or public speaking request? [Feedback](#)

Links

- www.samenow.com

Stanton E. Samenow Ph.D.

About

Stanton Samenow, Ph.D., received his B.A. (cum laude) from Yale University in 1963 and his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Michigan in 1968. After working as a clinical psychologist on adolescent inpatient psychiatric services in the Ann Arbor (Michigan) area, he joined the Program for the Investigation of Criminal Behavior at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C. From 1970 until June, 1978, he was clinical research psychologist for that program. With the late Dr. Samuel Yochelson, he participated in the longest in-depth clinical research-treatment study of offenders that has been conducted in North America. The findings of that study are contained in the three volume publication *The Criminal Personality* (Lanham, Md.: Roman and Littlefield) that he co-authored with Dr. Yochelson.

In 1978, Dr. Samenow entered the private practice of clinical psychology in Alexandria, Virginia. His specialty was continued to be the evaluation and treatment of juvenile and adult offenders. Dr. Samenow delivered lectures, training seminars, and workshops in 48 states, Canada, and England. These presentations were made for professional groups including mental health, law enforcement, corrections, education, social services, and the judiciary. He has served as a consultant and expert witness for a variety of courts and agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Dade County (Florida) Public Schools, Federal Bureau of Prisons, and the U.S. Office of Probation. In 1980, he

[Read more](#)

Books by Stanton E. Samenow Ph.D.

Criminal Thinking Errors

Samenow

- Lying
- Victim Stance
- A Quest for Power
- Lack of a concept of injury to others
- Sense of Uniqueness
- Pretentious and a Sense of Ownership
- No Concept of Obligation
- Lack of Responsible Time Perspective
- Shifting Mental States
- Shutting off the Fear of Consequences
- Fear of a Put-Down
- Zero-State Thinking

CriminalThinking.net

- Closed Channel Thinking
- Victim Stance
- Views self as good person
- Lack of effort
- Lack of interest in responsible performance
- Lack of time perspective
- Fear of Fear / put down
- Power Thrust
- Uniqueness
- Ownership Attitude

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Avast, matey! As ye be thinkin' in yer heart so be ye!
- Proverbs 23:7 Pirate Bible

"Utterly compelling reading, full of new insights into the dark mind of the criminal."
John Douglas, author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *Mindhunter*

INSIDE *the* CRIMINAL MIND

Stanton E. Samenow, Ph.D.

NEWLY REVISED EDITION

...or he could learn to live like a civilized human being and become a responsible person. Leroy had ruled out the first two. That left only change, which he thought would be a snap.

Behavior follows in the wake of thought. To eliminate criminal behavior, it is essential first to change the way a man like Leroy thinks. This is by no means a fast or easy process. The task requires demolishing old thinking patterns, laying a new foundation by teaching new concepts, and building a new structure wherein the criminal puts into action what he is taught. All his life, Leroy had heard the word "responsibility" bandied about, a word used so promiscuously that it means everything and nothing. Leroy was used to parroting the word, even though he knew nothing about being responsible. To him, to be responsible meant to erect a façade and appear respectable. He commented, "Once a person is responsible, he..."

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

⁴The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵We 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.**

Romans 12:1-2

A Fresh Translation, translated by N.T. Wright

1 So, my dear family, this is my appeal to you by the mercies of God: offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. That's what is properly thought-out worship looks like.

2 What's more, **don't let yourselves be squeezed into the shape dictated by the present age**. Instead, be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you can work out what God's will is, what is good, acceptable and complete.

Pirate Bible

1 Ahoy, me maties! Arrr, by the mercies of God, I boldly ask ye to submit yer bodies, alive and ready for battle, as a sacred offering to the high seas. 'Tis a fair, just service to the almighty.

2 Avast me ahrties! **Refuse t' be swayed by this cursed world**, but be ye transformed by the reviving' of yer minds, so ye may learn what be that righteous, satisfactory, and flawless will of the almighty.

New Testament, translated by Ronald Knox

1 And now, brethren, I appeal to you by God's mercies to offer up your bodies as a living sacrifice, consecrated to God and worthy of his acceptance; this is the worship due from you as rational creatures.

2 And **you must not fall in with the manners of this world; there must be an inward change, a remaking of your minds**, so that you can satisfy yourselves in what is God's will, the good thing, the desirable thing, the perfect thing.

Romans 12:1-2

The New Testament for Gen Z

1 Yo, I'm begging you my peeps, in the name of God's kindness, to offer yourselves as a living sacrifice that's pure and legit, totally acceptable to God. It's the least you can do, you know what I mean?

2 **Don't be like everyone else, following the trends of this messed-up world, Nah, transform your mind and be a whole new person**, so you can know what God's dope plan is – like , what He thinks is good, pleasing and perfect

The Voice Bible

1 Brothers and sisters, in light of *all I have shared with you about God's mercies*, I urge you to offer your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice to God, a sacred offering that bring Him pleasure; this is your reasonable, essential worship.

2 **Do not allow the world to mold you in its own image**. Instead, **be transformed from the inside out by the renewing of your mind**. As a result, you will be able to discern what God will and whatever God finds good, pleasing and complete.

The Living Bible, 1967

1 And so, dear brothers, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living sacrifice, holy – the kind He can accept. When you think of what He has done for you, is this too much to ask?

2 **Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think**. Then you will learn from your own experience how His ways will really satisfy you.

μεταμορφώω

be transformed GK G3565 μεταμορφώω metamorphoō

[GNT28-T] μεταμορφοῦσθε metamorphousthe Verb 2 plur pres mid impera **to change form**

Mounce Greek Dictionary (William D. Mounce)

AA ⚙

GK G3565 | S G3339 **μεταμορφώω** metamorphoō 4x 🔊

to change the external form, transfigure; mid. to change one's form, be transfigured, Mt. 17:2; Mk. 9:2; to undergo a spiritual transformation Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18* → transfigure; transform.

🔗 MOUNCE | NIV | ESV | CSB | NRSV | NKJV | KJV

BDAG

AA ⚙

μεταμορφώω 1 aor. pass. μετεμορφώθην; pf. pass. ptc. μεταμεμορφωμένος (Diod. S. 4, 81, 5; Castor of Rhodes [50 BC]: 250 fgm. 17 Jac. εἰς ἕτερα μεταμορφοῦσθαι σώματα; Plut., Mor. 52d al.; Athen. 8, 334c; Aelian, VH 1, 1; Ps.-Lucian, Asin. 11; Herm. Wr. 16, 9; PGM 1, 117; 13, 70; Ps 33:1 Sym.; TestSol; Ascls 3:13; Philo, Mos. 1, 57, Leg. ad Gai. 95; Ar.; Tat. 10, 1; Orig., C. Cels. 5, 42, 30; Theoph. Ant. 2, 6 [p. 108, 16]) 'transform, change in form' in our lit. only in pass.

1. to change in a manner visible to others, be transfigured of Jesus, who took on the form of his heavenly glory Mt 17:2; Mk 9:2 (Orig., C. Cels. 2, 65, 17. Simon Magus claims that he came to save the world μεταμορφούμενον καὶ ἑξομοιούμενον ταῖς ἀρχαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἐξουσίαις, καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις Iren. 1, 23, 3 [Harv. I 193, 4]; cp. 1QH 7:24).—RHartstock, Visionsberichte in den syn. Evangelien: JKaftan Festschr. 1920, 130–44; AvHarnack, SBBerIAk 1922, 62–80; ELohmeyer, ZNW 21, 1922, 185–215; UvWilamowitz, Red. u. Vorträge⁴ II 1926, 280–93: D. Verklärung Christi; JBernardin, The Transfiguration: JBL 52, '33, 181–89; JBlinzler, D. ntl. Berichte üb. d. Verklärg. Jesu '37; JHöller, D. Verkl. Jesu '37; EDabrowski, La transfiguration de Jésus '39; GHBoobyer, St. Mark and the Transfiguration Story '42; HRiesenfeld, Jésus transfiguré '47; HBaltensweiler, Die Verklärung Jesu '59; SHirsch (βαπτίζω 2a). Of the transformation of raw material into a statue Dg 2:3.

2. to change inwardly in fundamental character or condition, be changed, be transformed τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφοῦσθαι *be changed* + into the same form 2 Cor 3:18 (i.e. [p. 640] Christians progressively take on the perfection of Jesus Christ through the Spirit's operation; on the acc. s. B-D-F §159, 4; Rob. 486; for the idea Rtzst., Mysterienrel.³ 262–65; cp. Seneca, Ep. 6, 1, esp. 94, 48). μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοός *do not model yourselves after this age, but let yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your minds* Ro 12:2 (in contrast to the process expressed in συσχηματίζω 'model after' and thus superior to what the world displays).—DELG s.v. μορφή. M-M. TW.

Ephesians 4:20-25

²⁰ That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹ when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ **to be made new in the attitude of your minds**; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

How we as Chaplains help renew minds...

- NORP-ification
- Bring Gospel to bear in every moment of our lives
- Bible Memorization
- Ministry of presence is powerful
- Volunteers
- Preaching, teaching, and modeling
- “That’s old-nature thinking, try this way of thinking...”
- Re-entry – caution

The King-First Gospel vs me-first gospel

Creator King

Imago Dei

Humanity

Kingdom

Deserter
From the
kingdom

Rogue

Allegiance Belief in the King

Jesus is the King.

who loves us, is our savior, and friend.

Incarnation - Baptism - Anointing

Death Burial Resurrection

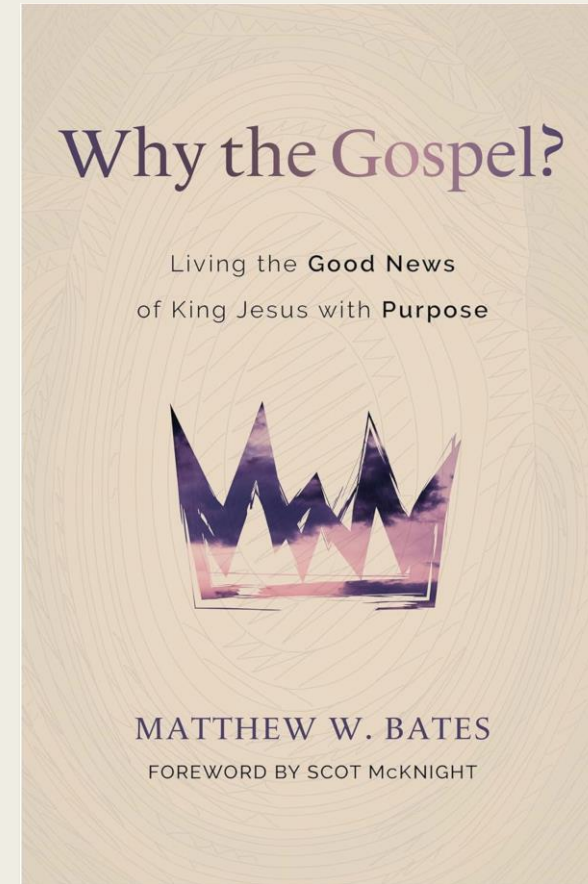
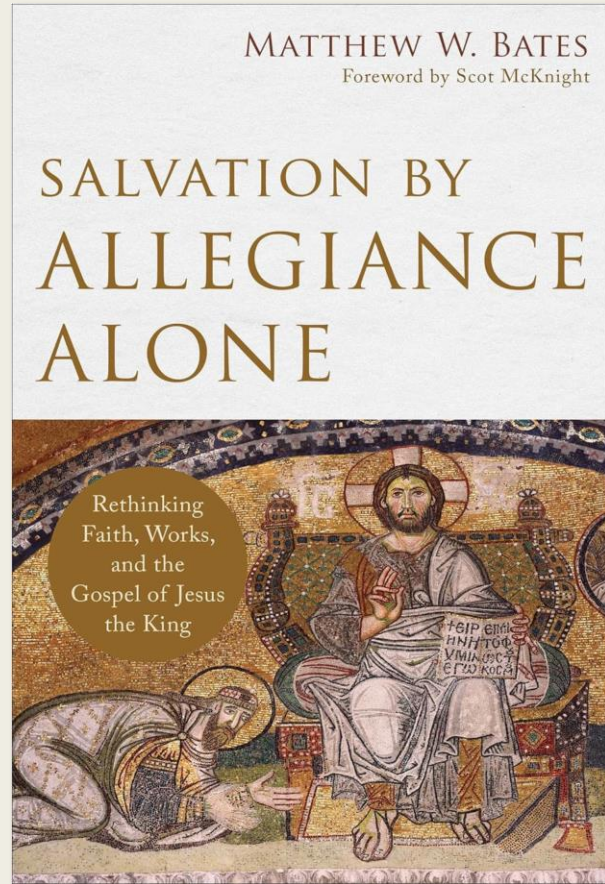
Ascend to the right hand, seated on the throne

-> Sovereign rule as Christ/King

Mark 8:34

³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said:
“Whoever wants to be my disciple must **deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.**”

King-First Gospel



Thank you

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