

Scripture: Renewing The Mind

To begin, I want to transport you back to your freshman or junior year when you were in high school chemistry or physics. Remember the concept of entropy, the laws of thermodynamics? Entropy is this concept in physics, chemistry, and information theory in which an isolated system uninterrupted will tend towards chaos, meaning chaos and disorder are either constant, or they will remain the same, or they will increase over time. Let me give you a more accessible illustration of what this looks like.

This morning, you made your cup of coffee, set it on the table, and probably poured cream into your coffee. I'm a card-carrying coffee snob, so you just ruined your cup of coffee! What happens at that moment, as you pour your cream in, is you begin to see distinct layers and differences. You can tell the difference between the cream and the coffee. But over time, as you pick it up and it swirls or you stir it, the differentiation between the two becomes indecipherable, and it slowly takes on a lighter hue. What happens is the molecules are combining in such a way that there's more chaos. You can't differentiate between the two things. This is entropy. Entropy is this process where chaos is the default setting.

Entropy is true in the physical, material realm, but there's also what psychologists would call psychic entropy. In psychic entropy, it's the same principle, but in your consciousness and mind. Psychic entropy is when those thoughts that you can't quite avoid consume you. In a season of busyness or stress, it's all you can think about. It's what happens when you wake up in the middle of the night, and that deadline is pressing on you. It's when you rise earlier than your alarm because this situation with a friend or a loved one seems to be oppressive and bearing on you. This is psychic entropy.

Psychic entropy, if we understand the concept of entropy itself, is unavoidable. Our mind will naturally drift towards more chaos and more disorder. I'm going to mess it up, but Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, in his book *Flow*, writes, "The unaided mind tends towards chaos." The reality is we live in a time where it is easier than ever to outsource your consciousness. There are more distractions, entertainment streams, and more things that you can let your mind drift to and allow to give shape and structure to your mind. The unaided mind tends towards chaos.

The question before us then is, in that psychic entropy that's just drifting towards chaos, we have the choice of how we deal with it. We can turn our minds over to the algorithmic media that consumes our day, or we can drift it towards a more intentional focus, maybe something along the lines of what Paul in Romans 12 said. We're in the process of this year-long practice of renewing the mind, so let me refresh you on Paul's suggestion when we face psychic entropy.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 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 12:1-2

Paul's theory on how we navigate the world is that there are two choices before us. We can be conformed or transformed. We're going to do a little Greek, which I know it's early, but we'll get there! The Greek word for conform is *suschematizo*. You can almost hear the word schematic in the middle of it. That's intentional because that's where we derive the word from. So when Paul says do not conform to the pattern of this world, what he's getting at is there is a form, a mold in which the world is drifting our minds towards.

Remember that old Play-Doh toy where you had the folding mold, you stick a clump of Play-Doh in there, and you crush it shut, and then it takes that shape? That's what Paul says. There is a mold, a schematic of how the world believes it operates and it is pushing us into that mold. Paul's instructions are to not be conformed to the pattern of this world but be transformed.

The word transform is *metamorphoo*. If you listen closely, you can hear the word metamorphosis. It's where we derive this term. It means to transform. Now, let's go back to science class one more time. You've heard of metamorphosis. This is the process by which a caterpillar becomes a butterfly. It is a radical transformation. Paul's instructions are, do not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be *metamorphoo*, be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

The mind is not just our conscious thoughts. Think more of consciousness. It's the state in which our mind exists, which, as we learned before, the unaided mind tends towards chaos. Paul says to avoid that entropy in which our mind is just devolving into chaos, searching for meaning and purpose, we must be transformed by the renewing of our mind.

Now, the natural question, which I'm glad you asked, is how, then, do we enter into the process of being transformed? How do we renew our minds? This is week four on the habit of scripture series. Scripture is our greatest tool in which we can renew our minds because it is in scripture that we find not a schematic or a pattern of this world but a new story, the true story about who God is and who humans are, and how we relate to one another. So, the process for us as believers is to constantly evaluate what the patterns, the schematics are that we're being conformed to in the world. We need to replace, be transformed by the pattern of scripture, the story of scripture.

Our text is in Psalm 1. It is essentially answering that question. How do we read this Bible? How do we read the scriptures in a way that will bring about the transformation that Paul wrote about? How do we find the way out of psychic entropy, the evolution of your mind that is easier than ever to outsource to other things? What would it look like for us to take on this habit of scripture and allow this to be what shapes and gives shape to our lives?

If you're familiar with the Book of Psalms, it's more of an anthology than a book. It's a collection of poetry, songs, and prayers. It's the prayer book of the Bible. It is what the people of God have gone to for centuries in order to enliven their prayer time with the Lord. For centuries, Christians have been praying these words back to God. Psalm 1 is an introduction to the book. In many ways, it's an introduction to reading the scriptures, as I have talked about before. You'll see this in this first Psalm. You'll begin to understand how the author is inviting us to read scripture.

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. vv. 1-2

The opening line, "Blessed is the one," means more than just prosperity. It means flourishing. The one who flourishes and the one who thrives is what the psalmist will detail to follow. It says, blessed is the one, and the psalmist begins with three negative things, three things that the blessed one doesn't do. "Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked, stand in the way that sinners take, or sit in the company of mockers."

Notice the regression that takes place here. It begins with walking in step with the wicked. The walking one slows down and stands in the way that sinners take. And then it slowly devolves into sitting in the company of mockers. Notice the move from active to passive. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed. The conformity that Paul talked about is quite passive. If you just wake up and exist in the world, the world will begin to shape and form you into a particular mold. The world around us has an agenda in the same way that we have an agenda of who we want to become to change is to be human. There is no neutral positioning. You are always becoming one type of person, and the psalmist here says that blessed is the one who doesn't allow that passivity to just take place. You don't walk in the path of the sinners or, stand in the way they take or sit in the company of mockers. There's a passivity to that in which the psalmist is saying to not fall into; rather, there's a counter formation that's accessible. So blessed is the one who doesn't do those things.

But then, in verse 2, we see it moves from the negative things that we avoid to that which we are to do. "*but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night*" (*v. 2).* This word "law" is the Hebrew word for Torah. We read this as the laws, like the commandments, but that's not fully the case. The Torah is the first five books of the Bible—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. There are laws within those five books, but he isn't talking about those laws here. He's talking about the books of Moses. It would have been the Bible of the day. So he says, blessed is the one who delights and meditates on the Torah, who delights and meditates on the Word of God.

Delight

What you see surface in verse 2 are two goals of all of us as followers of Jesus for reading the Bible. The first goal is that we should delight. Now, that word is a great translation. It means to take delight in, to desire, to want it to be the center point of your life. The first thing that this reader does, the blessed one does, is they delight in the Torah. Listen to the way Dallas Willard talks about the man or the woman of Psalm 1.

The Psalm 1 man delights in the law that God has given. Note he delights in it. He loves it, is thrilled by it, and can't keep his mind off of it. He thinks it is beautiful and strong and wise, an incredible gift of God's mercy and grace. He, therefore, dwells upon it day and night, turning it over and over in his mind and speaking it to himself, and the result is a flourishing life. Dallas Willard

The one who's blessed, who flourishes, is one who delights in the Torah, the word of God, not because it delights God but because you delight in it. Some of us can have a relationship with the Bible where we come to it because we believe God expects us to, and so we delight in it. But really, it's some guilt-laden thing in which we're trying to just get God off our backs. We fall into a dark view of God where it's like, "I'll do this, and then God will do that." But Psalm 1 says that the one who's blessed is the one who delights, who goes to the scriptures because they find delight in it.

This concept is hard for us because, quite honestly, the scriptures, at times, are an acquired taste. Let's return to that example of coffee. My oldest daughter just recently started drinking coffee. She's almost 13, and for all her life coffee has been this weird, disgusting, bitter thing. But then she had a mocha. So now, every morning, my wife makes her coffee, which, by the way, my wife's maiden name is Coffee! So, coffee plays a big part in our lives and is very much in our DNA.

And so my oldest Maddie tasted a mocha, and she said, "Wait a minute, there's something good about that." Now, if I were to give her a black cup of coffee, she'd find it disgusting because it's an acquired taste. She has this mocha and there's a small bit of coffee in it. It's very much chocolate-flavored with a small taste of coffee. But slowly, over time, as she drinks that, the sweetness will go down, the coffee will rise, and she'll discover the beauty of a single-origin coffee from Kenya! But it's an acquired taste. Over time, her taste for coffee will develop. She will develop a palate for coffee. The reality is that for many of us, the reason we don't delight in the scriptures is because we have an underdeveloped palate for the scriptures. We don't delight in it because it seems bitter at first. It's an acquired taste.

I mentioned earlier that we live in a time where it's easier than ever to outsource our consciousness to other things. Well, that's true in the way that we read. Technology and all that we experience are transforming the way we read books. It's changing our attention spans in a way that makes it hard to pick up a book that's over a thousand pages. Most of us don't live in a reading culture. It's just hard to read a book. I get that. But what does it look like to cultivate a palette for the scriptures? In some ways, we have to detach from those cheaper alternatives of consciousness and slowly integrate a richer understanding of text and literature.

There's no judgment here; it's an acquired taste. I love that my daughter is drinking a really sweet mocha, but what I know is that she's missing out on what's really good about coffee. Over time, as her palate develops, she will begin to appreciate that, and the same is true with scripture. It isn't so much that you have to read this to make God happy with you. As your pastor, I'm saying this is a book in which you can grow and delight in, and you're missing out on the gift that is the scriptures. It will take work. It'll be hard. It will be a slow, steady diet of taking in the scriptures. Maybe you begin with a psalm every day, and you sit before the scriptures, and it may not make sense. You'll have all sorts of questions but just keep at it. Over time, your palate for the scriptures will shift. You will begin to delight in the law of the Lord.

Meditate

Then comes this second task. If the first task of reading the Bible is to delight, the second is this word meditate. We have a tough relationship with the idea of meditation, mainly because when we think of the word meditation, we think of Eastern meditation, which is very different from Christian meditation. Eastern meditation, at least the way I understand it, is about an emptying of yourself to enter and clear your entire being of any thoughts to reach some state of nirvana. But Christian meditation is quite different. It is to empty our minds of ourselves so that we can fill our minds with God. It is a way in which we commune with God. It's very different. For us, when we meditate on the scriptures, what we're trying to do is come and chew on the text. The Hebrew word here is the word *hagah*, and it's quite a visceral word. If you were to translate the word meditate literally, which other times in Isaiah they do, it means to moan, growl, utter, speak, or muse. It's somewhere in chapter 60 that Isaiah talks about a lion growling. That's the word meditate. It's hagah, and the imagery that the author is giving you is like your dog who obsesses over a bone. My dog, Winston, when he gets that bone, he looks at you and just growls in delight. He's meditating on that bone.

So when the psalmist says that blessed is the one who delights in the law and meditates on it day and night, it's that visceral response to turn it over, to sit with it. When we give my dog a bone, he doesn't just devour it quickly. He runs off into another room, scared that I'm going to take it from him or something, and he sits over it and delights. You can hear him growling over it. Listen to the way Eugene Peterson writes of the word *hagah*.

The Hebrew ancestors used [*hagah*] frequently for reading the kind of writing that deals with our souls. But 'meditate' is far too tame a word for what is being signified. Meditate seems more suited to what I do in a quiet chapel on my knees with a candle burning at the altar. Reading is an immense gift, but only if the words are assimilated, taken into our soul, eaten, chewed, gnawed, and received in unhurried delight. Eugene Peterson

When we think of meditate, we think of lighting a candle and sitting quietly. I love the way Peter said that this is far too tame for what this word means. To meditate on the Word of God is to chew on it and turn it over and over in your mind. It's more akin to a feast, a rich meal that you taste and see that the Lord is good.

In the Western world, we have a hard time with these metaphors because we're such rational creatures, which is a gift, but it prohibits us from the visceral nature that the scriptures speak about. We, as Christians, feed on the Word of God; it sustains us. We explored this a little bit with the habit of fasting where we asked, what would it look like to allow a bodily response to shape us towards the image of God, something like hunger to be pointed at God? The psalmist said blessed is the one who delights and meditates on the Lord.

And then notice at the end he says, day and night. It becomes the thing in which you view the world through because you're saturating yourself in the Word of God. It's the pattern, the active part in which you are being transformed by the renewing of your mind. You're allowing it to sit and resonate deeply with you. This will require us to read slowly. It will require us not to devour it. Don't eat it like you grab a pop tart on your way out the door. You sit, enjoy, and delight over the meal. If you've had a meal like that, such as at a nice restaurant, or maybe you made one at home and it's one in which you don't want it to end, you want to savor it with all of its richness. This is the imagery. Do you delight and meditate on the word of God?

The psalmist goes on. Look down starting in verse 3 and hear that the psalmist will shift now from what to do or not do to the result of this Bible reading.

That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers. Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous." vv. 3-5

Remember, this is the Middle East. This is a desert, so the imagery of a tree hits differently for us; we take it for granted. We live, at least in the past few years, in a lusher area of the world. Water is abundant, and trees and vegetation are rich. I drive down Highway 280 every morning, and when I see that reservoir there, it's beautiful, with rich trees and water. But this was written in the desert. So, when the author says that a person is like a tree planted by a stream of water, this is a rare site. This is something they wouldn't have been accustomed to. But the imagery is beautiful because it's this tree that is planted and rooted, and you can just envision its roots going deep into the ground to draw that water and sustenance from the river. He says the person who delights and meditates on the word they're like this tree rooted deeply, and it yields its fruit. It's rich, it's producing a life, its leaves don't wither. It says, but not so the wicked; they're like chaff, that the wind blows away.

Notice the contrast between the rootedness and the chaff that gets blown in every direction. The unaided mind tends towards chaos. Paul says, don't be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. The tree is rooted. It can endure all sorts of different seasons because it's there next to the water. But the wicked, they're like the chaff that gets blown to and fro. He is saying that there are two different trajectories. The one rooted or the one that's blown away. The wicked are blown about when judgment day comes; they won't stand. They will be left to their own devices.

Then, in verse 6, he says, "For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction." The psalmist says there are two ways that are before us—the way of the righteous or the way of the wicked. The Lord is watching over the way of the righteous, but the wicked descends into entropy, chaos, and destruction. The psalmist writes this because they allow us to choose. Do you want to be like the one who delights and meditates on the word or like the wicked who are trying to figure it out but keep missing, leaning on their own understanding? These are the two choices that are available.

In 2007, Lindsay and I were engaged at the time and we're in that season in which we were getting to know one another's

extended family. I was getting to know her Grandma Brizzo, Grandma B. Now, for me, all my grandparents passed by the time I was about age nine, so I didn't have a lot of the elderly in my life. Grandma B was quite sick at the time. She was hospitalized and was suffering from cirrhosis of the liver, which was the result of a traumatic upbringing that she had and lots of brokenness in her story.

When we would come to visit her, it was clear that she was towards the end of her life, and the cirrhosis was consuming her body. It was debilitating her, and it was the reason that she was hospitalized. If you've ever been around someone with cirrhosis, it's painful. It's a painful existence and a painful death. So when we'd walk in that room, you could see the pain in her. You could see her shaking, just trying to remain calm. We didn't get to visit many times before her passing, but every time we did, she would ask us to read the scriptures.

I was just getting to know this woman, who I knew was a staple in Lindsay's life. I knew she loved the Lord as best she could and had saturated her mind with the scriptures. She would be shaking in pain, and I'd open up to the Psalms. I usually open up to Psalm 23. *"The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in* green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul." It was so moving because you could see her slowly settle and her body stop shaking. It was almost as if she was transported to that green pasture in those still waters. They were words that were familiar to her, that had given life to her. They were words she'd resonated with for many, many years. And when she heard those familiar words, the space became thin between heaven and earth, and you could sense that she was at rest with God.

She was like a tree planted by streams of water. Her mind might go towards chaos, but when we introduced the scriptures, it reminded her of the goodness of God. It would bring a quiet calm to her body. It was the power of the scriptures. It's not magical. It's not something that we don't quite fully understand. It's not formulaic. She had saturated her mind with the Word of God. Blessed is the one who meditates on scripture day and night. Blessed is the one who delights in the Word of the Lord. It wasn't too many weeks after that she passed. I couldn't help but think that she was now with her good shepherd. She was by the streams of still water. She was in green pastures. There's literal power in the scriptures, and for her, a life that was sought trying to pursue the Lord, it brought comfort.

For many of us, we are convincing ourselves that it's harder than it is to be in the presence of God. I'm more and more convinced that there's a pace to following Jesus, and if we are to be like Grandma B or the blessed one whose tree is by the river, we have to learn to slow down to the pace of the scriptures.

I preach on this a lot, but I speak about it often because I find I'm speaking to myself. Also, for us, it is the biggest obstacle in following Jesus, simply our pace of life. We are too busy to delight and meditate on the Word of God. Again, I'm preaching to myself. I fight for my time in the morning, where I get to return to that chair in our home office where I sit in the presence of God. Some weeks, it's great; other weeks, it's not. But I fight for that time because I recognize I have to come before the scriptures in a slow way.

We're used to everything being quick. Snippets. A tweet here, an Instagram post there, a quick verse of the day here. All of those are good; they're not bad things. But to delight and meditate requires us to slow down. Listen to what Dallas Willard said in The Great Omission.

The first and most basic thing we can and must do is keep God before our minds...This is the fundamental secret of caring for our souls. Our part in thus practicing the presence of God is to constantly direct and redirect our minds to him. In the early times of our 'practicing' we may well be challenged by our burdensome habit of dwelling on things less than God. But these are habits—not the law of gravity—and can be broken. A new gracefilled habit will replace the former ones as we take intentional steps toward keeping God before us. Soon, our minds will return to God as the needle of a compass constantly returns to the north. If God is the great longing of our souls, he will become the pole star of our inward beings." Dallas Willard

We think it's more complicated than it is. I love the way that Willard lays it out. The first and most basic thing is just to keep God before your mind. Keep him in front of you. Does your mind naturally draw back to the presence of God when you're returning emails and dropping kids off at school and running to soccer practice or grabbing coffee with a friend? Does your mind just fill with thoughts of God? It doesn't have to be more than that.

One of the great ways you can do that is just through saturating your mind in scripture, memorizing the text, memorizing Psalm 1 or Psalm 23 or other various parts where the scriptures become available for you so that the unaided mind doesn't have to tend towards chaos, but can be a mind that tends toward the things of God. Slowly, over time, as you keep God before your mind, you'll notice that it becomes a habit in which your mind, instead of drifting to this or that, naturally drifts towards the goodness of God. So that one day, if you're hospitalized by cirrhosis, your mind just comes to stillness. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul.

We live in a world where it's easier than ever to outsource our consciousness. When we come to rest at a grocery aisle or at a stoplight, we pull our phones out and fill our minds and our consciousness with these things. It's a way of distracting ourselves. It's okay. But what would it look like to take a simple practice like

being stuck in traffic, and rather than pulling out your phone, you just say, "The Lord is my shepherd, the Lord is my shepherd." It's that simple. Just keep God before your mind.

Now, it's one thing to teach about this, and I hesitate to just teach about it because there's an easier way for us to do this, and that's to practice it! So, in a moment, I want to lead us through this practice that the church has developed over centuries. It's a practice called Lectio Divina. It's just a Latin phrase for sacred reading. It's a way in which the church, over time, has found a simple process of slowing down and reading the scriptures. Through a little bit of structure, it allows you to commune with God.

I hesitate to even lay out a manner in which it works because that changes it into a formula, and that's not quite it. But there are five basic stages of *Lectio Divina*. The first is *silencio*. They're all in Latin because, again, it sounds smarter. So *silencio*. We simply sit before the text. This first step is where we just be quiet. We turn our phone off, we get into a space where there's less external noise, and we try to quiet the internal noise. You sit in the presence of God silently.

Then, after that, step two is lectio, or we read the text. You take a small section—we're going to take Psalm 1—and we read it slowly. You allow the words to wash over you. It's a way where you, as you are reading it, you're taking a small section, not trying to rush through, not trying to parse it out, but rather you just read the text, and as you read, you're looking for a word or a phrase that the Spirit is highlighting. And when you come across it, you just sit with it. You don't interrogate it. You don't try to investigate it. You just sit with that word or phrase.

That leads us to the third phase, which is *meditatio*, which is we meditate on the text. We read it again in the quiet and that word or phrase, as you return to that, you just sit with it. You begin to chew on it like a dog on a bone. You gnaw on it, turn it over in your mind, over once, over twice; you pull it into its different pieces and explore what it could be there.

That leads to the fourth phase, which is oratio, which is we pray the text. You then take it from turning it over, and you pray it with the Lord. You begin to say, "God, why did you bring this particular phrase or word to mind?" It's what moves reading the text from a dry academic setting to a relational setting in which you remember that God is present in the text.

And lastly, the last phase is *contemplatio*, which is where you contemplate the text. You begin to pray and ask God how he is inviting you to live differently because of this word or phrase that has been highlighted. It could be an action to take, a truth to be lived, a lie to be discarded, or anything of the sort.

Now, this isn't as complicated as Latin makes it sound. Most of you, when you read scripture, have probably done bits and pieces of this. You're constantly reading and praying and encountering God. It's simply a way in which we want to commune with God.

The goal of *Lectio Divina* is not to be good at it. It's not to try and master it. The goal isn't even to study the text. The goal is to commune with God in the text, to learn to read slowly and to take the words of scripture as your own.

So, rather than me talking more about it, I want to invite us into a little five-minute section of *Lectio Divina*. We will read Psalm 1. I'm going to bounce between moments of quiet and moments of the text. I'll prompt you with questions or things to direct your attention towards God. But I want you to experience what it is like to slowly sit and contemplate the text and meet God in the scriptures.

So I invite you into this first *silencio*, to sit quietly in the presence of God. As you do, your mind will tend towards chaos because we don't live in a world that's used to quiet. Your mind is used to filling itself. So when you're distracted, be gracious, your mind's just doing what it's been trained to do. I invite you to not analyze the text but just see where your heart and your mind go. Is there a word or phrase that stands out? If it does, just hold it before the Lord.

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers. Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction. Psalm 1

Spend a moment with that word or phrase that may have stood out, and just hold it before the Lord and don't do much else with it. This time, whether it's the same word or phrase that stands out or a different one, I invite you to begin to commune with God with it and ask God why this particular word or phrase stood out to you. It's about trying to be in tune with God's voice more than it's about understanding the text. You're inviting God to speak to you through the text. I invite you to meditate on the text, to gnaw on it, chew on it before the Lord.

This time, I invite you to pray the text. Now you're not just asking God questions but you're beginning to converse back to God in response to what he's highlighted. Talk to him about the tensions, struggles, disbelief, joy, and the delight. Whatever it is that you feel the Lord highlighting, begin to pray that back to God. Begin to ask the Lord what it is that he is inviting you into—a

This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.

truth to be believed, a lie to be discarded, or an action to take. Whatever it is, begin to invite the Lord to direct what may be different because of your encounter with God. I invite you to spend a moment in gratitude for the Lord's presence. Thank him for his word. Thank him for the scriptures.