



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

All Your Mind

JUNE 30, 2014

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Scripture Passage

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Mark 12:30

Mind in the Old Testament

Jesus tells us that we are to Love our God and one of the ways we do this is to use our minds as we relate to Him.

The Old Testament does not have a particular word that for which we can insert our conception of “mind.” In the last study we considered the word “soul,” and this is the word that the Old Testament often uses for “mind.” Also, the word “heart” is used in such a way that it is translated “mind.”

All of this means that the biblical Hebrew’s idea of mind is more encompassing than ours in English. When we read the Old Testament we should understand that “mind” is thoughts, feelings, interests, and the will.

Perhaps we could understand this usage of “mind” as the totality of man’s inner processes that leads to understanding.

This helps us better understand that the biblical idea of “wisdom” goes beyond how we typically understand wisdom. Biblical wisdom is not merely some knowing cognition but involves our entire way we approach life and then act it out.

Mind and the New Testament

Our word shifts meanings as we read through the New Testament and it is important that the informed Bible student understands this shifting of meaning. In the Gospels we find the idea of mind a continuation of the Old Testament usage. But in the writings of Paul we move from a Hebrew thought pattern to one that is more influenced by Greek patterns.

While remembering that a word’s context is always crucial to its definition, in Paul’s epistles the idea of mind often takes on our Western notion of being the seat of thinking and reasoning. Paul separates the “mind” from the “spirit.”

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

Romans 8:5-6

There are two types of people described in this passage: those who live according to the flesh, and those who live according to the Spirit. There are no other categories of people.

This reminds us that even Jesus spoke of sheep vs. goats, and wheat vs. weeds. The one who lives according to the Spirit has a mind that is set upon the things of the Spirit.

This is not an insignificant point of theological minutiae. The mind that is set on the Spirit is life and peace.

Change Your Mind

The Bible has two ways of looking at the idea of repentance. In the Old Testament repentance is a change of behavior and the Hebrew word literally means to change direction.

In the New Testament repentance is usually attached to the idea of changing your mind. When we combine the Old and the New Testaments we see that repentance is both behavior and a way of mentally processing.

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: THURSDAY MORNINGS, 7:30 AM, LIGHT BREAKFAST SERVED

STAFF: MONDAYS, 12:00 NOON, CHAPEL, 2ND FLOOR LB

North Carolina

All Your Mind

We should not be too quick to separate our behavior from our thinking as we go through the process of repenting. When we read the Romans 8 passage above we can notice this close connection.

Knowing the Will of God

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2

The person who lives according to the flesh is one who is conformed to this world. Paul bluntly commands us not to be conformed to the world. We escape worldly thinking by renewal of our minds. This is a Spirit led process and so the starting point is not mental training, but rather spiritual guidance. We must invite the Spirit of Christ to lead us to a renewed mind. Only then can we discern the will of God.

Minds Born of the Spirit

Changing the way we think is a crucial part of loving God. But we cannot change our minds by mere human effort. We have already seen that the mind must be controlled by the Spirit in order to please and love God, and find peace and life.

Notice what Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:6.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Jesus had just told Nicodemus that man must be “born again.”

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. John 3:3

Having a mind that can love God is the end of a process. First we must be born again, then we must live by the Spirit, then submit our minds to live according to the Spirit, then know how to love God better and find life and peace.

For those who truly have repented and trust Christ through the Spirit of God, have the responsibility to use their minds in ways that glorify God.

The redeemed mind grows by reading and learning the Word of God. This is a “mind” process that is open to those who are alive to God but is close to those who continue to walk according to the principles of the world.

The mind that is seriously committed to knowing God through His revelation in Scripture is one who can separate truth from falsehood. The mind thinks in new ways—in different categories when it is in tune with God.

Loving God with our Minds

We cannot rightly make up our own ways to love God. He tells us how to love Him. So there are things we need to know, there are specific ways our minds must be changed and directed in order to begin loving God.

Our minds are essential for love. Biblical love goes beyond a feeling—it is motivated by thinking God’s thoughts after Him. Our minds must be transformed, we must think spiritual thoughts, and then live them out in godly behavior.