

C. The Battle for the Mind

We often minimize the importance of our minds. We enjoy "Worshipping" God. We value "Experiencing" God. We tend to think of all of these in relation to feelings. Evangelicals have often bounced all over the spectrum regarding a belief in "Blind Faith" and Proofs.

We believe in God. So let's start by considering the history He has recorded about our minds.

a) God's Likeness

In Genesis 1 we are told that God simply spoke a word and creation occurred. God uses the concept of a word to explain this to us. A word obviously is one of the most basic building blocks of communication. It means that God was able to comprehend what He wanted and was able to evaluate several different words. As He considered the Words, He chose the Word that He would communicate. God functioned from a MENTAL POSITION.

(1) God has a MIND.

(2) Man was created in God's Image

Gen 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

29 And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food."

30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.

We clearly see that God decided to make the culmination of His creation to carry His likeness. This time when he creates He doesn't just speak to the Godhead but now carries on a "WORD" based conversation with Man.

(3) Man has a MIND

(4) Man's Mind can be deceived

Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'"

2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,

3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Satan now carries on a conversation with the Woman. She carries on a conversation with her husband. They both were able to consider and think evaluate what God had told them. They took real life actions and attempted to determine if it lined up with God's intent and God's words. Once they made their decision, their eyes were opened and they gained much more understanding to use their reasoning powers on.

As it turns out, their evaluation was wrong. They did not consider exactly what God said but they began to change it slightly. They changed it in ways that made their actions seem true to them.

b) We are responsible for the actions we take based on decisions from our minds.

Gen 3:14 The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life."

15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

16 To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

20 The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

21 And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever--"

23 therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

24 He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

God Judged Adam for "listening" and for "eating". God held Adam responsible for his actions that were the result of conclusions he drew in his mind. He allowed others to effect his mind and faced Judgment as a result.

We have faced this Battle ever since!

THE BATTLE OF THE AGES!

2. New Testament Concern for the Mind

(1) Justification is based on the mind.

Rom 10:10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Heart is another way of talking about the reasoning and understanding part of man. Here it results in justification. And as a result of the man's reasoning, he acts accordingly.

Salvation is much more than just justification. We are justified before God but our salvation is realized experientially when we first "Believe" and then "Act".

You could say that what is already true about us is revealed when we live out what we already believe.

We reveal on the outside what is already true on the inside.

(2) We are transformed through our minds.

*Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Our minds can be "Renewed".

Renewed has the idea of bringing the mind back to a correct or original condition. Remember that Adam's mind was originally created in God's image but his mind was also deceived.

Today, we do not understand everything correctly. But it is possible for our minds to be renewed and we should pursue this.

(3) Our minds need to be directed by more than natural reasoning. We need Divine Intervention!

1 Cor 2:10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

15 The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.

16 "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Some translations use the word "Mind" in place of "thoughts" in this passage. We understand clearly that none of us truly know what each other are thinking without asking each other. Only we know what is in our heads.

If we would like to see our minds restored to the image of God and to think the way He would we need HIS divine assistance.

If we were to divide reality into two parts, we would probably divide it by that which is PHYSICAL and that which is SPIRITUAL. If we ever attempted to operate only from the physical side, then we would become deceived. The "NATURAL" person does not comprehend complete reality. They seem silly and unreasonable.

But if we take a more holistic approach and allow our natural senses to be influenced by God's Spirit, than we would have a right standard of reality to form correct judgments and "reasons".

THANKFULLY we, who have believed, have the spirit of God, we "HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST!"

We have a basis for our minds to be renewed and by which to understand reality.

Eph 1:16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,

18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might

20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,

23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Eph 3:14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,

15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith--that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

(4) Warnings: Renewing of the Mind can be stunted!

*Col 2:6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,
 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
 8 See to it that no one takes you captive by **philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ**
 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,
 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.*

Paul says that in the same way you were saved (by believing in our minds) we should be rooted, built up and established.

(Side note – these all are terms that indicate a time and growth aspect. Roots must go deep to and take years to build a base to hold a tree. Buildings must have strong foundations, solid structures and each addition takes another phase of building. Established only comes when the roots, foundations and protective barriers are in place to keep out the elements.)

It is possible for believers to be “unsound” in the faith and become deceived by those whose minds and consciences are defiled.

*Titus 1:13 This testimony is true. Therefore **rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,**
 14 not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth.
 15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but **both their minds and their consciences are defiled.**
 16 They **profess** to know God, but they **deny** him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.*

(5) Finally, the mind of the body of Christ is one of Unity and Love. It is Christ's own Mind.

*Phil 2:1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy,
 2 complete my **joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.**
 3 Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.
 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.
 5 **Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,**
 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,
 7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.
 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,
 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Paul's ultimate cry and charge was to give your own life if necessary to build each other up. The renewing of the mind can be a community effort. We need to grow to have the same mind, the same love and to serve each other to accomplish it. Remember – We have the mind of Christ!

It is imperative that we recognize the importance of:

- **Renewing our minds**
- **Guarding our minds**
- **Committing to pursue transformation as a body**