

## The Mind

When God gave each of us our mind, He gave us a wonderful and complex tool. With our minds, we have the ability to reason, think, remember, feel, imagine, intend, purpose, agree, disagree, change, and form opinions. Having been created in God's image, we are different from every other creature He made. (See Genesis 1:27). The Lord knows well all the deep recesses and complexities of our minds. Whether we are conscious of them or not, our private inner conversations are no secret to Him. He made us, and He knows all things. The following verses attest to this:

- Psalm 139:1-3: "O Lord, you have searched me [thoroughly] and have known me. You know my down-sitting and my uprising; you understand my thoughts afar off. You sift and search out my path and my lying down, and you are acquainted with all my ways."
- John 2:24-25: "But Jesus [for His part] did not trust Himself to them, because he knew all [men]; and He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man [needed no evidence from anyone about men], for He Himself knew what was in human nature. [He could read men's hearts]."

The mind is also the mechanism where we process and filter everything in life. All that happens to us sifts through the mind. Consequently, we view God, self, and others through that filtering system. In other words, we do not merely live, based on the facts of our past, but we function by our interpretations or memories of these facts.

For example, two children growing up in the same family will have two completely different interpretations of the facts that have occurred within their family. While we cannot change the facts of our pasts, we can allow the Holy Spirit to alter our interpretations; that's how healing comes. The Holy Spirit led Joseph to forgive his brothers' hate crimes. That's how he was able to say in Genesis 50:20; "As for you, you thought evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring about that many people should be kept alive, as they are this day." He can lead you to do the same, if you let Him.

Despite whatever insecurities, injustices, discouragements, or abuses that you may have suffered to your mind or body in the past, God can turn those negative experiences into positive outcomes for you as well as for others. It's up to you to decide whether you will partner with His Spirit and believe what God says about you in His Word. This will lead you into all truth. It will also lead you out of those hidden and buried places within your mind and heart that keep you locked in because of your past experiences.

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In the New Testament, the mind is described as either good or evil. We can have the mind of Christ or the mind of the flesh. The “good” mind is renewed through the Holy Spirit with God’s Word. Romans 12:2 says,  
[set as extract]Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of you mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].[end extract]

The Message Bible says it like this:

[set as extract]So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going to work, and walking around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for Him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what He wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-informed maturity in you.[end extract]

As believers, we have received the mind of Christ! Ponder that thought for a minute! 1 Corinthians 2:16 verifies this: “But we have the mind of Christ and do hold the thoughts (feelings and purposes of His Heart).” The Holy Spirit puts these thoughts and purposes into action in our lives. (See 1 Corinthians 2:11-13.)

Romans 8:6 says, “Now the mind of the flesh [which is sense and reason without the Holy Spirit] is death [death that comprises all the miseries arising from sin, both here and hereafter]. But the mind of the [Holy] Spirit is life and [soul] peace (both now and forever).” Our purpose as Christians is to display the new nature and the fruit of the Spirit that God has given to us. Our renewed mind and new nature gradually becomes our habitual behavior as we choose to worship God regardless of our circumstances. As we do this, we become teachers, leaders, and encouragers to those around us.

The mind of Christ—the positive, life-giving, good mind—directed by God’s Spirit, must be renewed each day with the Word of God. The negative, evil mind of the flesh, which is directed by our physical senses, (what we can see, touch, taste, hear, and smell) is then

slowly put to death. By depriving it of the authority to direct our thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions we starve it to death. Sin has corrupted the evil mind, just as it has the rest of man's nature. If we do not renew our minds with God's Word it is only natural that we will follow the dictates and desires of the flesh, along with our physical senses. That mind pursues what it wants, thinks, and feels with no consideration of the mind of Christ, His Holy Spirit and His Word. The following verses help to clarify this:

- Romans 1:21: "Because when they knew and recognized Him as God they did not honor and glorify Him as God or give Him thanks. But instead they became futile and godless in their thinking (with vain imaginings, foolish reasoning and stupid speculations) their senseless minds were darkened."
- Romans 8:7: "[That is] because the mind of the flesh [with its carnal thoughts and purposes] is hostile to God, for it does not submit itself to God's Law: indeed it cannot."
- 1 Corinthians 2:14: "But the natural, non-spiritual man does not accept or welcome or admit into his heart (mind) the gifts and teachings and revelations of the Spirit of God, for they are folly (meaningless nonsense) to him; and he is incapable of knowing them [of progressively recognizing, understanding and becoming better acquainted with them] because they are spiritually discerned and estimated and appreciated."

The enemy will absolutely seek to devour the unattended, out-of-balance mind as his main meal. This is especially true for Christians. Please understand that our battle does not stop at salvation. In truth, salvation is just the beginning. Our minds are renewed as we dethrone the natural mind, which is led by our physical senses, and replace it with a faith-filled mind, which is led by God's Spirit and His Word. If Satan can control our thoughts, he will control our lives. The mind is his battleground, the place where he wages war against you. To simply acknowledge that fact will not rescue you from him. A fight rages inside each of us right now. Which powerful source will you side with? Christ and His life-giving power? Or Satan and his death-giving power?

Proverbs 4:23 tells us that the wellspring of life flows from our hearts/spirits. If our hearts do not agree with the Word and the Holy Spirit, then neither will our minds. If we choose to remain in this condition, we are rendered powerless. However, embracing, and obeying, the Word of God and the Holy Spirit enlightens and transforms our entire person—spirit, soul, and body (in that order), into the image of Christ. We must learn to align our minds of the flesh by submitting them to the direction of the Holy Spirit which is in agreement with God's Word.

### **Questions for Study**

1. What are some of the things your mind has the ability to do?
2. What does it mean to be created in God's image?
3. Are your private thoughts kept secret from God?
4. We do not live solely according to the facts of our past, but with\_\_\_\_\_.

5. We cannot change the facts of our pasts, but what happens if we team up with the Holy Spirit?
6. According to the New Testament, what is the “good” mind?
7. Even though you are a Christian, if Satan can control your thoughts, he will control your\_\_\_\_\_.

### **Personal Prayer**

Lord, Your Word says that the mind of the flesh with its carnal thoughts and purposes is hostile to God. It does not submit itself to Your laws, and indeed it cannot (Romans 8:7). Forgive me for placing my own sense and reasoning above the truth of Your Word (Romans 8:6). Please deliver me from my carnal mind and my way of thinking apart from You. Thank You for giving me the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). Please empower me through the Holy Spirit to put Your thoughts and purposes into action in my life. Lord, I come against Satan’s attempt to control my life through my thoughts. Help me to keep my heart and mind fixed on You, for as a person thinks in his heart so is he. (Proverbs 4:23).