

Loving God Series Part 3 - Loving God with all your Mind!

Mark 12:28-31

Do you remember the *Newlywed Game*?

A) New husbands were taken off stage while their wives were asked questions.

B) When the husband came back he was asked to guess at how his wife had answered.

1) And the results were hilarious.

C) Now that I've been married for 20 years I have pity on those poor husbands.

1) I've been married **to my wife for 2 decades** and the longer I'm married the more I realize, I have still got a lot to learn.

D) In retrospect **the Newlywed Game** was cruel and unusual punishment.

1) The guy with the questions wasn't fighting fair!

Here's what I do know, the key to a good relationship is learning to think in harmony w/ my spouse.

A) **Getting on the same page** – synchronizing a couple's thoughts and dreams - sharing concerns... is a huge key to a good marriage.

B) **And this is what it means to love God... It means to share His thoughts.**

1) God wants us to love Him not only with heart, soul, strength... but with our minds.

C) As we've said, if the HEART is the seat of the desires – and the SOUL the seat of the emotions –

1) **THE MIND** is the seat of the thoughts, ideas, and imaginations.

The human mind is an amazing instrument. A brain weighs just 3 pounds, yet it's more powerful than the world's largest computer.

A) There was a man who wanted to buy a new brain, so he went to the brain store –

B) **He was taken to the show room. There were hundreds of brains at all different prices.**

The first brain he saw was \$50,000. He told the salesman, "Wow, why is this brain so expensive?" The salesman said, "It belonged to a San Diego Charger Fan."

The second brain he saw was \$500,000. "Wow, this is really expensive. Why is this brain so valuable?" The salesman said, "It belonged to an Indianapolis Colts fan."

Well, the third brain he saw was \$5 million. The guy said, "**Wait a minute**. No brain is worth this much money." The salesman responded, "Oh yea, this brain is worth every penny.

It belonged to an **Oakland Raiders fan**." The fellow said, "This just doesn't make sense. How can that be?"

The salesman told him, “You got to realize, a Raiders fan’s brain cost so much because it’s never been used.”

Hey, even a Raider brain is amazing thing!

A) Our mind is a gift from God, and it was given to us to be used by Him.

B) We can love God with our brains. How – 4-5 ways

#1 By thinking about God!

A) Here is a wonderful thought: I don’t have to make some monumental sacrifice, or spend hours in laborious service to show God that I love Him.

B) An easy way for me to love God is to simply think about Him!

C) Consider Paul’s Exhortation: Colossians 3:2 “Set your mind on things above not on things on the earth.”

D) Consider Isaiah’s Promise Isaiah 26:3 “You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You.”

1) How often do you think about God? Is your mind set on God?

E) If your mind were a radio what stations would it play?

1) On what channels have you fixed the preset buttons?

Some of you Old time Football fans – remember the name Paul Warfield.

A) Paul Warfield is in many experts’ opinions the greatest wide receiver to ever play the game.

B) Paul Warfield scored TDs for the Cleveland Browns. He was the TO or Randy Moss of his day - a superstar.

C) And here’s what Paul Warfield said about catching passes, “I would block out everything else that was occurring. It was just the football, and I had an obsession with catching it.”

D) Guys, we need to be focused and fixated on the Lord.

1) We need to block out every thought that would distract us from setting our minds on Him.

Psalm 63:6

“When I remember You on my bed,
I meditate on You in the night watches.”

Psalm 77:12

“I will also meditate on all Your work,
And talk of Your deeds.”

E) So First of all we Love God with our minds by simply thinking about Him!

#2 We love God with our mind by meditating on the Word!

A) We need to cultivate a heart attitude like Job who declared **Job 23:12** **“I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary food.”**

B) Joshua was told Joshua 1:8

8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

C) Meditating on the word is essential to loving God with our mind.

1) Reading the Bible without meditating on it is like eating without chewing.

A. W. Tozer said:

“Read it much, read it often, brood over it, think over it, meditate over it—meditate on the Word of God day and night. The Holy Ghost wrote the Word, and if you make much of the Word, He will make much of you.”

Vance Havner understood this truth about the power of God's Word to renew our minds:

The storehouse of God's Word was never meant for mere scrutiny, not even primarily for study but for **sustenance**.

It is not simply a collection of fine proverbs and noble teachings for men to admire and quote as they might Shakespeare. It is **ration** for the soul, **resources** of and for the spirit, **treasure** for the inner man. Its goods

exhibited upon every page are ours, and we have no business merely moving respectfully amongst them and coming away none the richer.

D) Meditating on the word – Digging in / Thinking thru

1) Expanding our Knowledge of the things of the Lord – that is how we love God with our mind!

E) Promised Blessing

Psalm 1:1-3

“Blessed is the man

Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,

Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.

3 He shall be like a tree

Planted by the rivers of water,

That brings forth its fruit in its season,

Whose leaf also shall not wither;

And whatever he does shall prosper.”

#3 We also Love God with our mind – by what we think about!

A) Paul tells the Philippians in 4:8, “Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely,

whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – think on these things.”

B) When we focus on items and ideas that are pure, and wholesome, & healthy, we’re loving God.

C) You honor God, and express your love for Him, not only when you think about Him directly,

1) But when you ponder, and enjoy, and relish His many blessing,

D) Flip side – We dishonor and disobey God when we set our minds on the opposite...

*Whatever things **are false**, whatever things are **degrading**, whatever things **are abusive**, whatever things **are lustful**, whatever things **are ugly**, whatever things **are of a bad reputation** – to think on these things is to sin against the God who created your mind in the first place.*

Martin Luther had a famous quote, “Evil thoughts are like birds. You can’t keep them from flying over your head, but you can keep them from nesting in your hair.”

Sometimes a thought enters our mind out of nowhere. We’re not expecting it

A) We have no idea where it came from – but once it enters we don’t have to nurture it, and cultivate it, and let it gain a foothold.

B) We can reject it as quickly as it came.

C) Evil thoughts are just like weeds in your flower beds.
1) Let them hang around, and take root, and they’ll eventually spread out and take over.

I believe our biggest problem is we allow our minds to wander aimlessly.

A) Been said, “Open lots & open minds collect trash.”

B) Not *setting* your mind on Jesus is *letting* your mind get pulled and drawn toward the negative and nasty.

C) Your mind is magnetic, but it locks on to different things at different times,

1) And it’s a mark of maturity to grab the reigns of your mind and determine its direction.

Think about it, we don’t let a toddler wander through the neighborhood, or a hungry dog wander around in a grocery store – there’s too much danger.

Why should we let our minds wander around aimlessly and without any direction?

D) 1 Peter 1:13 tells us what to do every day, “Gird up the loins of your mind.”

1) That’s a fancy way of saying, “Keep your mind on a leash.”

E) Perhaps 2 Corinthians 10:5 says it best, “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...”

1) Couple other translations “We capture every thought and make it give up and obey Christ.” NCV

Or this, “fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ.”

However you put it the basic idea is this - We need to corral our thoughts.

A) Guys your mind is a battlefield. The mind is strategic territory – and there is a war going on over its control.

B) Who wins this battle will ultimately win the war.

C) Proverbs 23:7 puts it, “For as a person thinks in his heart, so is he.”

1) The thoughts you entertain will eventually determine the person you become.

I read of a case in China where a woman came to her doctor with numbness and severe headaches. She’d had these headaches for 20 years, but they were growing worse and worse. A cat scan revealed a rusty pin poking into her brain.

Apparently, it had lodged there while she was baby and her head had formed over the pin.

D) Imagine a rusty object sticking into your brain... yet that’s exactly what some of you have allowed to happen by hanging on to filthy thoughts.

It reminds me of a group of teenagers who wanted to go to the movies.

The ringleader pleaded with his dad, “Come on dad, this movie has only six cuss words. It takes the Lord’s name in vain, just twice. It’s violent, but the good guy wins. And there’s no nudity. Just one mildly suggestive sex scene. It’s really a clean movie.” Even with the recommendation the dad refused to let them go.

Later that night dad got hungry, and went into the kitchen to cook some brownies. Boy, they smelled good, and pretty soon attracted the kids.

That’s when the father told them, “Guys, help yourself to the brownies. I made them with flour, chocolate, sugar, and just a little bit of dog poop. Since, there’s just a little poop in the brownies I’m sure you won’t mind. There’re really good brownies.” Needless to say, the kids didn’t eat the brownies.

Let me ask you, if just a little poop contaminates a pan of brownies and makes them inedible – why doesn’t just a little filth make a movie unviewable?

Let’s avoid subjecting our minds to the slightest bit of pollution and contamination and sin.

#4 We love God with our minds by how we think.

Ephesians 4:17 tells us to “no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their minds...”

The verse literally means, *don't be empty-headed*.

We love God with our minds by choosing what to think about – but also by choosing how to think about it.

A) How we think is going to affect our World View

B) The **Darwinist looks at life as a cosmic accident, and understands reality through that lens.**

C) The **Hindu looks** at life through a lens called Monism, which basically teaches that everything is part of One great entity, that I'm a god, and you're a god, and we're all part of this One divine thing.

D) All of life, at least in theory, is understood through this lens for the Hindu.

There is a Christian worldview—

Os Guinness says that “this Christian worldview involves believers thinking about anything and everything in a manner consistently shaped, directed, and restrained by the truth of God's Word and God's Spirit.”

Such a Christian worldview encompasses core issues and answers such questions as

Who am I?

2. Where did I come from?

3. What is the purpose of my life?

4. Where am I going?

5. As to the universe, where did it come from?

6. Is there a Creator, or are we the products of blind chance?

7. Is there any grand theme to history and human life?

8. If there is a Creator, what, if anything, does He expect of me?

To love God with all our minds means to submit the answering of these questions to the Word of God and the Truth incarnate, Jesus Christ!

But loving God with our minds isn't confined to certain Biblical topics; rather.

A) Having a Christian worldview means my outlook about subjects like Global warming, Bio ethics, the economy, abortion, the Middle East

Are all going to be shaped by considering those subjects thru the filter of God's word.

B) Instead of latching on to what is considered to be the “Christian position” on a subject- I search the scriptures to see what it says

#5 We love God with all our minds when we use our Knowledge for His Glory.

A) What I'm speaking of here is using our minds to advance the Kingdom of God.

B) One criticism of intellectualism is that it can so easily become an ivory tower that is thoroughly unconnected with the place where real people live.

C) This is a valid criticism!

D) Thinking, expanding the mind, for the sake of expanding the mind, is a valid way to worship God.

1) Once a mind is expanded, however, it ought to then be utilized to the building up of God's Kingdom.

“Knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men”, Paul says; in the book of Acts, we find several occasions where the Scripture speaks of Paul “reasoning” with people about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The clear implication is that Paul was loving God with his mind, using that mind to reason with others about Jesus.

Paul's mind was well-grounded in God's truth, so much so that he stood in the midst of the Areopagus, in pagan Athens, and reasoned with the pagans, who were religious men but not followers of Jesus.

You don't stand up and gain a hearing before thinking people without developing the capacity to think yourself!

Peter reminds us that we are to be ready, in the event that someone stops us on the street and says, “why in the world do you follow Jesus?”, to give a reasoned reply as to why we have such hope in us!

This too implies a discipline to love God with one's mind!

Loving God with our minds, involves what we allow our minds to dwell on, the Biblical, Christ-honoring grid through which we view reality, and a commitment to use our minds to advance the Kingdom.