

HAVING A SPIRIT CONTROLLED MIND
1 CORINTHIANS 2:9-16; 2 CORINTHIANS 10:5; PHILIPPIANS 2:5

I trust that we can set forth some truth in this study that will enable each of us to have a better understanding of what it takes to have a mind controlled by the Spirit of God. There is no easy route to take to accomplish it, but there are some things we can practice to make it successful.

But we have the mind of Christ.

What does the Scripture mean when it says, "But we have the mind of Christ?" I believe the simple explanation is that we have been quickened by the Spirit and can now discern spiritual truth which the natural man cannot do. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, . . .," which includes the mind. The spiritual man is one who Christ by His Spirit has taught the truth. Sometime after our conversion (it may be simultaneous with it), we start thinking differently than before. It has nothing to do with outward circumstances or the people around us, but it has to do with the inner persuasion of the Spirit of God dwelling in us. The natural man confuses morality with a new mind, or an outward change without an inward change (Mark 7:1-5).

Mark 7:18-23, reveals to us that nothing which goes into a man defiles that man. Being a drunkard doesn't defile a man, but it is his heart and mind that defiles him. It is not the outward circumstances that affect us, but what we are inwardly that counts. If we are in a miserable condition right now it is because we are miserable inwardly. We would like to blame our circumstances, or someone else, but that will not make us better Christians.

Whatever we are inwardly sooner or later finds its way into outward expression. We do what we are. It cannot be bottled up forever. Two references in Scripture contrast the natural man and the spiritual man. ". . . their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste" (Deut.35:32). Speaking of the righteous, "The law of God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide" (Psalm 37:31).

Bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

As a believer, whenever our mind is not brought into subjection to Christ as it ought to be, it really becomes the source of all our trouble. Paul is using this passage to admonish them to cast down imaginations or opinions of those who set themselves and their own reasonings against the truth of God. The conflict between truth and error, and between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world. The gospel when first proclaimed found itself in conflict with all forms of religion and philosophy then prevalent among men.

What are the practical admonitions we can glean from this truth? We are bombarded today through TV, magazines, newspapers, music, internet, etc., with every kind of filth, lust, immorality, homosexuality, and everything imaginable, trying to contaminate and control our minds. It is not possible to keep these thoughts from entering our minds, but we don't have to entertain them. If we can't get them out of our mind it is because we like them there. We have to dismiss these sinful, lustful, and worldly thoughts as soon as they come to us. What do we do with a mouthful of bad food? We spit it out. We must do the same with unclean and evil thoughts, i.e. get rid of them. Lustful thoughts become a reality only when we think about them. It is impossible for them not to come, but we must be on guard and get rid of them immediately. When did David's sin with Bathsheba begin? Was it not inward? I think he had done this a thousand times before he committed the act. He thought about it instead of dismissing it

from his mind.

We can also think all kinds of evil in our mind, and by dwelling upon it, sin as if we had committed the act. Indolent and lazy minds are the devil's prey. Do you not long for a pure mind? Then we must fill our mind with the Word of God. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: . . ." (Proverbs 23:7). Therefore we must think on these things. "Finally, my brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). If our mind is on Christ and the Word of God is alive in our mind, we should be able to be right in the midst of the worst kind of evil and remain on a high spiritual plane. If our mind is right it can have no effect on us.

A true believer is not going to continue to live in sin, but there is a trap laid called "the wiles of the devil," and if our mind is not fixed on Christ and filled with the Word of God, we will fall into the trap. Whatever evil thoughts we have can only come from not having our mind given over to Christ. Why did I think of this? It came from within. Whenever we come against a situation and we fail, or sin, we did not become weak (that is an excuse), but we simply forgot about Christ. This is the totality of it all. The Christian life is Christ. "For to me to live is Christ, . . ." (Philippians 1:21). "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly . . ." (Colossians 3:16).

Get into the habit of meditating. "O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Psalm 119:97). Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (1 Timothy 4:15). Meditation is not difficult if our mind is filled with the Word of God.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

This is the practical aspect of the mind of Christ. This in the context is a mind of humility and looking on the things of others. We cannot have the mind of Christ without having our mind filled with the Word of God. The mind of Christ and the Word of God are inseparable. God's mind, ways, will, purpose, what He thinks, and what He says, are all in His Word.

Many of our time and day are taught the popular slogan W.W.J.D. The problem with this is that Christ would not be in the places they are and have to ask that question. He wouldn't do it. This makes us think about the emerging church of our day. Dusty stated several years ago that we might be living in the last generation of Biblical Christianity and he may have been right. I know that God has His seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to Baal, but where is the truth for this generation to hear and obey? This church is being fed a steady diet of the perversions, morality, community service, and humanistic views of God. They simply do not know the God of the Bible, the Christ of redemption, or the Spirit of quickening and illuminating. They do not know the mind of Christ.

When we have the mind of Christ, and we see a Biblical truth, we don't have to carry on a debate about it, it is already decided. Preachers spend time trying to shew the sin of abortion, murder, homosexuality, etc., but they are already decided in God's Word. All the moral decisions are made by the Word of God. All and every decision is made by the Word of God. If we know what the Scriptures teach, then we will know the mind of Christ for every given situation. Do we believe this? If so, we will have no problem with any of them.

The will of God is found in His Word. We do not read "go to seventh street and turn left," but faith is one step at a time. Whenever we put ourselves in situations which may cause us to sin, we need to be reminded to stay away from the fire. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as

strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:12). When our mind is not on Christ we can often be led into a mess. The struggle in our life is due to the failure to have the Word live in us. The Bible is just another book until it lives in us! Study and meditation are to get the truth off the printed page into a living principle in our life. We must fill our mind with Christ and the Word.

Also our speech is a mirror of our mind and reveals what we are thinking. We can destroy ourselves, our lives, our marriages, our relationships in the Body of Christ, etc., because we are not thinking of Christ. Has anyone ever started to relate to you the virtues of another believer and then said, but, but? But destroys it all. Genuine charity "thinketh no evil" (1 Corinthians 13:5).

Summary.

How do I have the mind of Christ? As was said at the beginning, there is no easy way. If our mind is filled with Christ and the Word of God, it has **no room** for anything else. We must stay in the Word, meditate, and pray. A spiritual being is to have a spiritual mind. If we have the mind of Christ the physical things will be totally detached from it, and they will have no effect on us. Spending time in prayer and the Word is to do all we can to give our mind to the Lord. We need to write down the thoughts which the Lord gives us and then we can meditate upon them. To meditate is to muse, to chew, to swallow, and to digest the truth. Use the Miles Coverdale statement to help in meditation. Meditate on the incarnation, redemption, justification, forgiveness, the gospel, the Body of Christ, and many other truths from the Scriptures. There is much to think about and chew on.

Sometimes using our imagination helps. We can imagine that we are the kind of Christian we ought to be. If we think that we are, and get to thinking about it, it may help us to be just that.

Get the Word of God in our minds and the Holy Spirit will give the understanding. It is a living book to control our thinking and our living. We cannot understand it or know Christ if we do not read and study the Word. Determine to do so today if it has not been your practice. "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: . . ." (Psalm 57:7). "I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word" (Psalm 119:15,16).