

LOVING GOD WITH ALL OUR MIND (Part 2)

1. LOVING GOD WITH ALL OUR HEART REQUIRES LOVING HIM WITH OUR MIND

Mark 12:30³⁰ *You shall love the LORD your God with all your **heart**, with all your **soul**, with all your **mind**, and with all your **strength**.*

- a. As we saw last week God created us to love Him in four spheres of our life, which are our heart (affections), soul (personality), mind (thoughts), and strength (resources), because He loves us this way. We can only love God with all our heart by seeking to love Him with our mind, soul, and strength in practical ways.
- b. We express love for God with our mind by putting things in our mind that inspire and enlarge our capacity to love Him and by resisting things that diminish our capacity to love Him. What we do with our mind greatly affects our ability to receive and express His love.

Rom. 8:5⁵ *Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.*

Col. 3:2² *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

- c. As we saw last week one way we can choose to love God with our mind is to meditate on the Word as we cry for the spirit of revelation of God's heart and ways, so that we may come into more and more agreement with who He is and how He views us and leads us.
- d. This week I want to look at how we can choose to forget or remember. It takes a process that we must commit to by continually and deliberately feeding our mind on truth.

Phil. 3:13¹³ *One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward.*

Jude 17¹⁷ *Beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles.*

John 8:32³² *You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free [liberate the heart].*

2. LOVING GOD WITH ALL OUR MIND: VIEWING OUR PAST ACCORDING TO TRUTH

- a. Our ability to love God is related to how we view our past (negatively or positively). Negative experiences leave many in bitterness and with wrong paradigms of God and themselves.
- b. Discerning the truth about God's goodness in our past produces gratitude, which is the foundation of loving God. How we feel is dramatically related to how we view our past. It either locks or unlocks our heart in reference to receiving love from God and returning it.
- c. Our capacity to love is shaped by what we think about our past. Many are trapped and controlled by their past. The Spirit wants to reveal the places we are chained to our past by bitterness, shame, and wrong paradigms of God (that subtly accuse Him). The Spirit wants to reveal where we have misinterpreted crisis events and disappointments by lies instead of the truth.
- d. Our thinking about the past can affect us positively if we remember the truth about God's goodness toward us in forgiving, delivering, and providing for us. This awakens gratitude.
- e. What God did in the past gives us insight and faith for what He will do in our future.

- f. Where is the past? It exists in our mind. Nothing negative is just forgotten. It must be confessed, forgiven, and healed if it is to lose its negative power over us.
- g. The judgment seat of Christ is all about evaluating the past

1 Cor. 3:11-15. ¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

- h. Over 99.9 percent of our life is in the past in the form of decisions we have made to love God and His rewards for them. This is not only true now, but our decisions in eternity will continually form who we are in God in the eternal present. Thus, a part of loving God will always be in how we process our past.
- i. Satan's plan is to cause the negative events of our past to remain alive in our memory as a destructive force and the positive realities of God's goodness to be forgotten. The past is not simply a harmless past if it remains alive in our minds in a way contrary to the mind of Christ.
- j. In the case of our sin, the process of being unchained from the past requires acknowledging it and declaring war on it by repentance. What would have been different if Adam would have acknowledged his sin instead of blaming Eve, and what if Eve would have accepted her role in sinning instead of blaming the devil (Gen. 3:1-7)? Things might have been different with Cain.
- k. We must insist on holding the truth of receiving free forgiveness and His affection.

Rev. 12:10-11 ¹⁰ The accuser ... accused them before our God ... ¹¹ They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives.

- l. We cannot just forget the past because the past has a voice. We must triumph over it by the truth. It continually looks for a remedy. Satan uses scenes from our past to accuse us with half-truths. His only grounds for accusation is unconfessed sin. Our prison is made up of things from our past. The construction materials of the prison Satan wants us in are our failures and bitterness.
- m. The accusation of the past must be silenced by submitting it to Jesus' work on the cross. Many close their eyes and live in a museum and prison of their past failures and defeats.
- n. In the case of our being mistreated or enduring disappointments, we must interpret them according to truth as seen through Christ's eyes. Offense from disappointment can paralyze our spiritual life, causing us to blame and accuse others, which hinders our walk with God. The past attacks our confidence and therefore our love for God, as well as our destiny in God. We must face disappointment God's way in order to be free to grow in love for God.
- o. We must entrust our enemies into the hands of Jesus' power and wise and loving leadership.

Psalm. 31:5 Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.

1 Pet. 2:23 When He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him [the Father] who judges righteously.

Rom. 12:19 Do not avenge yourselves ... "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

3. LOVING GOD WITH ALL OUR MIND: VIEWING THE FUTURE ACCORDING TO TRUTH

- a. We love Jesus today, related to thinking right things about our future. What we believe about our future and the commitments we make to it dynamically influence our capacity to love God.

Lam. 1:9 *She [Israel] did not consider her destiny; therefore her collapse was awesome.*

- b. We live carelessly with our time without a clear picture of what we want to be in the future. Without a vision or clear life plan, the people perish or live without restraint in their time.

Prov. 29:18 *Where there is no revelation [life vision], the people cast off restraint [discipline].*

- c. Our commitments define who we are. We have an identity crisis without clearly defined commitments to the future. People embrace discipline much easier with a clear vision of what their future can be in God. What we believe about where we are going forms how we live today.
- d. Our capacity to love is related to where we have been but also where we are going. Hope is to be anchored in the future. What we commit ourselves to in the future affects who we are now. Viktor Frankl (1905-1997), a psychologist who survived Nazi concentration camps, rejected Freud's over-emphasis on the past as being the primary force that forms us. After the war, he analysed Holocaust survivors, categorising them into two broad categories: those who were emotionally stable and those who were not. The predominate factor was not what they experienced during the concentration camps, but rather what they believed about their future.
- e. Our vision for the future includes setting our mind on goals for our spiritual development not just on our future careers and ministries. People with a vision to grow spiritually use their time and money differently. The lack of vision for our spiritual attainment hurts us in the present tense. To be ambivalent about the future has negative effects leading people to passivity and lethargy.
- f. What are your future goals for your spiritual development? Some have no concrete goals. In other words, they lack a clear picture in their mind as to what they are determined to be. Stephen Covey wrote in *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Leaders*: "One habit is to have a clear picture of the end product before you begin to act."¹
- g. What are you determined to be in God? What do you believe about what you can be spiritually? Who are the examples from history that you feed your mind on for inspiration? Paul prayed that the saints would be filled with the knowledge of God's will for them (Col. 1:9-10; 4:12; Eph.1:17-18) because he knew the power of a vision and commitment to their future.

4. THE CALL TO FORGET AND REMEMBER: UNDERSTANDING THE BALANCE

- a. Paul taught us to both forget our past failures that lead to guilt, and past dedication, or our accomplishments that can lead us to pride or lack of gratitude.

Phil. 3:4-13 *4 If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so ...⁵ concerning the law, a Pharisee ...⁶ concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless ...⁸ I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness ... but that which is through faith in Christ ...¹³ One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward.*

- b. God forgets our sin because of the cross. We must forget our failures after we repent and refuse to let shame damage our ability to love God. Guilt is the sense of responsibility we feel when we sin. Do not let guilt become shame. Guilt says our actions are bad. Shame says that we are bad.

Heb. 10:17 *Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.*

2 Cor. 5:17-21 *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new ... ²¹ He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

- c. We forget our noble sacrifices that may tempt us to pride or to feel we deserve better treatment from God in our ministry and circumstances, thus undermining our gratitude for His goodness. We were once lost in the state of darkness (Eph. 2:1-12). Jesus pointed out the danger of relating to Him on the basis of how much we feel we deserve instead looking on Him with gratitude.

Luke 17:7-10 *Which of you, having a servant ploughing ... will say to him when he has come in from the field, "Come at once and sit down to eat"? ⁸ But will he not rather say to him, "Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me ... and afterward you will eat and drink"? ⁹ Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. ¹⁰ So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, "We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do."*

- d. We are to remember God's promises to us and wonderful works on our behalf

1 Chr. 16:12 *Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles and the judgements he uttered*

Deut. 32:7 *Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; your elders, and they will tell you.*

Psalms 107:8 *Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and His wonderful works.*

- e. If we desire to love the Lord our God with all our minds then we need to commit to renewing our mind both in the present, the past and the future. Our mind is probably the most powerful forces in our lives guiding our actions and our emotions. Without the work of the Holy Spirit renewing our minds our thoughts can wreak havoc. However, as we allow God to bring revelation, healing and hope into our thoughts (our minds) we will prosper.

Psalms 1:1-3 *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.*