

# *The Knowledge of Good and Evil*

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Matthew 15:19-20 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

- I. Thoughts are referred to in the Bible in two different forms.
  - A. The Bible talks about our mind, which we know is what we reason and think with, but it also mentions many times the “thoughts of the heart.”
  - B. First, the word “thought” is used to describe the process of perception and conception. We form ideas and opinions based upon what we accept as facts. The mind doubts, considers, debates, discusses in order to establish what is true.
    - 1. This is analytical thinking, that establishes basic principles and separates things into parts.
    - 2. This kind of thought is also synthesis, or the putting together of things established.

Synthesis - In logic, composition, or that process of reasoning in which we advance by a regular chain from principles before established or assumed, and propositions already proved, till we arrive at the conclusion. (Websters 1828 Dictionary)

- C. Secondly, the word “thought” is referred mostly as a scheme, a contrivance, a device, or an invention; a plan or imagination; a plot, or a purpose..
- D. The first type of thought is the mental and mechanical exercise of the mind that investigates and determines what is true and what is not, and then puts together concepts that form the awareness and view of the world and universe around us.
- E. The second type of thought is the heart’s intervention and use of the mind to guide the life and attempt to get its desires.
- F. Thoughts that have a goal in mind are thoughts of the heart; the heart is involved and intervening in the thought process.
- G. This is why the Bible mentions a number of times “the thoughts of the heart,” and usually in a negative light.
- H. Thoughts of the heart are more than just knowledge of facts, they are a scheme and a plan. They are an invention and a strategy to obtain the heart’s desire, or accomplish some purpose.
- I. The thoughts of the heart are not necessarily evil.
  - 1. The general use of the faculty of reason depends upon the state of the soul.

Proverbs 12:5 The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.

Proverbs 15:26 The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.

- J. We are made in the image and likeness of God and so we are constituted in his likeness, also; God has made us to think, reason, and be creative like He is.

- II. All the trouble and struggle we have in this life is a matter of our mind and heart.
- A. It is in our thoughts that we suffer the most pain of this life.
- B. It is in our thoughts that we struggle with what we know and what we feel.

**Romans 7:23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

- C. This trouble and this struggle began when Eve took of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
1. What was passed to us from them and all our ancestors was not a “sinful nature” based in our physical makeup, but the knowledge of good and evil that perplexes and torments our mind.
  2. The knowledge of good and evil is the basis of every person’s struggle in this life.

### **Strong's Hebrew Dictionary**

adversity, affliction, bad, calamity, displeasure(-ure), distress, exceedingly, great, grief(-vous), harm, heavy, hurt(-ful), ill (favoured), mischief(-vous), misery, naught(-ty), noisome, sorrow, trouble, vex, wicked(-ly, -ness, one), worse(-st), wretchedness, wrong.

### **Strong's Greek Dictionary**

hurtful, degeneracy from original virtue); calamitous; ill, diseased; especially (morally) culpable, derelict, vicious, mischief, malice, guilt; the devil, or sinners:—bad, evil, grievous, harm, lewd, malicious, wicked(-ness).

### **Webster's 1828 Dictionary**

E'VIL, a. e'vl. *Heb. to be unjust or injurious, to defraud.*

1. Having bad qualities of a natural kind; mischievous; having qualities which tend to injury, or to produce mischief.
2. Having bad qualities of a moral kind; wicked; corrupt; perverse; wrong; as evil thoughts; evil deeds; evil speaking; an evil generation.
3. Unfortunate; unhappy; producing sorrow, distress, injury or calamity; as evil tidings; evil arrows; evil days.

E'VIL, n. Evil is natural or moral. Natural evil is any thing which produces pain, distress, loss or calamity, or which in any way disturbs the peace, impairs the happiness, or destroys the perfection of natural beings.

Moral evil is any deviation of a moral agent from the rules of conduct prescribed to him by God, or by legitimate human authority; or it is any violation of the plain principles of justice and rectitude.

There are also evils called civil, which affect injuriously the peace or prosperity of a city or state; and political evils, which injure a nation, in its public capacity.

All wickedness, all crimes, all violations of law and right are moral evils. Diseases are natural evils, but they often proceed from moral evils.

2. Misfortune; mischief; injury.
3. Depravity; corruption of heart, or disposition to commit wickedness; malignity.

E'VIL, adv. *generally contracted to ill.*

1. Not well; not with justice or propriety; unsuitable.
2. Not virtuously; not innocently.
3. Injuriously; not kindly.

- D. So what man gained the knowledge of was trouble, sorrow, pain, grief, adversity.

1. He gained the knowledge of what is like to be lied to, betrayed, stolen from, hated, ridiculed, condemned, and guilty.
  2. He gained the unavoidable privilege of watching others do evil to one another, hurting, killing, hating, abusing, using, and wasting others.
  3. The struggle of good and evil is always in the mind, as it is the venue where spiritual powers strive to overcome truth with lies.
  4. The struggle is about the same thing that it was in the Garden of Eden: Satan and his fallen angels are trying to convince us in our mind that good is evil and evil is good.
  5. These evil spiritual powers use our pride and the selfish, carnal lusts of our own heart as their weapons against us.
- E. The devil has lied to every person who has ever been born on this earth by convincing them early in their life that happiness can only be found in having all the desires of their heart fulfilled without regard to the consequences for ourselves, or others.
1. This is the gospel of this ungodly world around us, and they preach it relentlessly in all places and through all the mediums they have.
  2. Most of the religions of the world, including popular Christianity, have adopted that same philosophy and declared that God's goal for us is to be happy by simply having all that we desire here and now.
  3. If we cannot have what we desire, then we are not happy, but miserable.
  4. Thus the struggle between the heart and the mind and an evil conscience.

III. The conscience is that voice you hear in your mind when the heart and the mind are struggling against one another.

Romans 2:14-15 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

- A. The conscience is that voice that agrees with the truth that the mind has certified, but which is being assailed by the lusts of the heart, which are being inflamed by the lies of evil spiritual powers.

Romans 7:21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

1. And we can be sure that evil will always be present with us as long as we live in this present evil world.
- B. However, we can have peace of mind and conscience void of offense if we understand what is going on and put on the spiritual armor and fight the good fight of faith.

Acts 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

2 Corinthians 1:12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

1 Timothy 1:5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

1 Timothy 1:18-19 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

- C. Part of the Atonement provided by Jesus Christ is the ability to have a conscience that is free from offense.

Hebrews 9:13-14 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Hebrews 13:18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

Hebrews 10:14-16 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

Hebrews 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

- D. So when the heart is truly yielded to the truth of God, that is when peace of mind comes.
  - 1. It is when we deny ourselves and truly yield our heart to God that we are born again.
  - 2. Our heart and our mind are reconciled together and working together in truth – not opposing one another any longer.
- E. The voices of Satan and his devils are not silenced, but we now know how to identify them and refuse to listen to them.
  - 1. We are no longer at war within ourselves about the truth, so we are free, and we have inner peace and rest.
- F. This is the only way to have peace of mind and joy in life.

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

- G. We do not escape the knowledge of evil, but we are enabled by the grace of God, through faith in Christ, to keep our spirit, our heart, and our mind in the realm of good, and not let evil have freedom to trouble us to the point of misery.

Philippians 4:6-8 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, 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.