

# With all Your Mind

## Loving God with all your Heart Part 7

Mark 12:28-31 7-24-11

Summary: Thoughts are real deeds, deserving punishment or praise. Failures to love God with the mind include mindless meditation (superstitious mysticism), worship, wisdom (superstitious interpretations of thoughts, coincidences, and impulses), and teaching (failure to study). Every point of sanctification requires the mind. Gain information for the sake of insight for the sake of intimacy. Love involves enjoying the person (use your mind to discover how to experience God's attributes) and bringing joy to the person (please God with the right use of the mind).

### Introduction: Thoughts are Deeds.....

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• Ιντερπρετινγ ρανδομ τηουγητσ ασ Γοδ'σ ωιχε.....

• Ιντερπρετινγ χοινχιδενχεσ ασ Γοδ'σ ωιχε.....

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### Loving God with Your Mind.....

How to please God with your mind.....

How to delight in God with your mind.....

**Mark 12:28-31** One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" 29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

## Introduction: Thoughts are Deeds

When you think, are you doing something? Sitting still in a chair just having thoughts - are you actually performing an action, or is it more like a virtual action? When you do something with your body - that is a real action. But what about when you are just sitting still in a chair - thinking? Is that really doing something, or are you just sort of doing something?

You probably know the answer. If you have read the Bible very long at all you know how God speaks about our thoughts. Thoughts are treated the same as physical actions. There is severe punishment for people who have evil thoughts - even if your body does not act on it. Jesus said lustful thoughts are adultery and angry thoughts are murder. And did you know that the one time the human race became so wicked that God killed every man, woman, and child on the face of the earth with a flood, it was because of ... thoughts?

**Genesis 6:5** The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

Amazing - the most extreme wickedness ever and not one word about any physical actions! God wiped out humanity for their thoughts.

So yes - thoughts are real actions - actions that deserve reward or punishment. Any untrue thought

about God, or any thought that does not give proper honor to God, deserves punishment in hell. Any thought that treasures some created thing above God, any thought that belittles God, any thought that opposes God's Word, any selfish thought, greedy thought, any thought that misrepresents the truth about God - every one of them is a wicked action deserving of severe punishment.

And good thoughts are worthy of praise and eternal reward. If you are discouraged because you do not really have the opportunity to accomplish anything really great - don't be, because you can accomplish something great. You can have great thoughts. Just as God will mete out severe punishment for evil thoughts, He will heap up massive, eternal reward for good thoughts.

So it is no surprise that the enemy has waged an all-out assault on the Christian mind. God requires that you love Him with all your mind, so it is no shock that Satan would work overtime trying to shut that down. So before we get too far into what it means to love God with your mind, I would like to warn you about four ways that Satan has frequently succeeded in shutting down our efforts to love God with all our minds. Satan's goal is to deceive God's people into thinking that there is something unspiritual about using your mind. He wants us to think that rational, logical thought is kind of ordinary and human and fleshy and not very spiritual.

## **Failures to Love God with Our Minds**

### **Mindless Meditation**

One way he has done that is with mindless meditation (or mindless prayer). Empty your mind and pray without thinking. This is the influence of eastern mysticism.

### ***Is this Mysticism?***

But before I expand on that let me just say a few things about mysticism, because there are no doubt some people who have some red flags about this whole series because it sounds kind of mystical. Any time you start talking about fellowship with God, communion with God, drawing near, experiencing the presence of God, listening to God – that kind of language sounds mystical. Is it? Am I teaching mysticism in this series? Well, it depends on what you mean by mysticism. People define that word in different ways. I read one person who said mysticism is “any direct experience of God.” If that is your definition of mysticism then, yes – I am into mysticism big time. Every time the Holy Spirit does something to sanctify me or convict me of sin – that is a direct experience of God, is it not? So by that definition I would certainly hope we are *all* into mysticism. And when you read writers like John Calvin or John Owen and they use the word “mystical” – that is what they mean.

### ***Superstitious Mysticism***

Most people who call themselves Christian mystics, however, take it further than that. According to Webster's New World Dictionary, mysticism is the doctrine that you achieve communion with God through contemplation and love without the medium of human reason. Norman Geisler describes Christian mysticism as a direct experience of God that is noncognitive (not mediated through concepts or ideas). Most people who are into what they call “Christian mysticism” are into that kind - religious experiences that bypass the mind and rational thought.

And if you go by definition then no – I am definitely not promoting that. In fact, I have a word for that – *superstition*. My definition for superstition is very simple – it is any time you believe something for no good reason. If you believe the earth is round that is not superstitious because you have a good reason to believe that. But if you look at the alignment of the planets and conclude that you are going to meet some tall, dark, and handsome prince charming – that is superstition because there is no rational basis for drawing that conclusion. There is no logical process of reasoning from evidence that would validate any connection between the movement of the stars and your love life. So superstition is *irrational belief* – anytime you believe something without adequate evidence. It is not superstitious for

a Christian to believe he will be raised from the dead someday because there is a rational reason for that belief (reliable testimony from Jesus Christ). That is adequate evidence. (In fact, it is compelling evidence.) But where there is not adequate evidence and you believe anyway – that is superstition.

And the main feature of eastern mysticism is a superstitious approach to experiencing God. You see, all people naturally have a built-in craving to experience the presence of God. We all want to have deep, profound, awesome, transcendent, moving, experiences of God. But for most of humanity, that cannot happen because they do not even know God. If they think rationally, they will realize they are not experiencing God's presence - so the solution is to shut down rational thought and come up with a way to have a really powerful, moving experience that does not involve rational thought. That is why hallucinogenic drugs have always been a huge part of pagan religion - even way back in ancient times. Get really high on something and you find it is a lot easier to have moving religious experiences.

### ***The alpha state***

But there is a way to do it without drugs. And this is where the eastern “meditation” techniques come in. It is actually a form of hypnosis. Here is how it works: You focus on some image in your mind, empty your mind of rational thoughts as much as possible, then pick a word or phrase, and repeat it over and over. It is called a mantra, and you keep repeating it until it has a hypnotizing effect, and you go into an altered state of consciousness.

Scientists call it the “alpha” brain wave state. Normally your brain functions at between fourteen and thirty cycles per second on an EEG when you are awake. When you are asleep, it is seven or fewer cycles per second. But we all know what it is like to be in-between – half asleep. You are still awake, if someone talks to you, you can answer, but you are not alert to your surroundings at all. And it is not just when you are falling asleep. When you just zone out into a daydream to the point where you are oblivious to what is going on around you – that is that state between eight and thirteen cycles per second of brain activity. Have you ever gotten so caught up in a daydream that you actually experience the emotions that would go with that daydream? You imagine some loved one getting killed or something, and you get so wrapped up in the daydream that by the time you snap out of it you are on the verge of tears even though you know it is not real. That is the state of mind that a hypnotist brings people to. Eastern meditation techniques are designed to put you in that daydreaming, hypnotic, alpha wave state of mind where your brain functions at eight to thirteen cycles per second.

Now here is the interesting part: When you are in that altered state of consciousness, the part of your brain that is in charge of discernment does not function. It shuts down, so whatever is suggested to you seems real – whether it is suggested by a hypnotist or by your own imagination. During that alpha brain wave state, all the thoughts that come into your mind seem real.

If you read a book on how to do self-hypnosis, or you read a Hindu writing on how to use a mantra to get into a trance, or you read something by Richard Foster or some other Christian mystic – it is all the same. The only difference is the Christian mystics will pick a Christian word for their mantra. They tell you to imagine an image of Jesus or heaven, shut down rational thought and reasoning and especially doubt, get your body extremely relaxed, and repeat a mantra over and over. And the result of that is something that feels a lot like being on drugs, and everything seems so real, it makes people think the image they are focusing on is actually real.

Henri Nouwen is a well-known Christian leader who is into this kind of superstitious mysticism. Here is what he says in his book *The Way of the Heart*: “The quiet repetition of a single word can help us to descend with the mind into the heart ... This ... opens us to God's active presence.<sup>1</sup> Brennen Manning wrote the book *The Ragamuffin Gospel* (which is a false gospel, but sadly it is promoted by many Christian leaders). In that book he takes a phrase out of the book of Psalms and says, “Repeat that for ten minutes while visualizing Jesus. Then he says, “Don't try to feel anything, think anything, or do anything. Simply relax in the presence of ... God ... and ask for a touch of folly”<sup>2</sup> That is a

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<sup>1</sup> *The Way of the Heart* p.62.

<sup>2</sup> P.205-206.

touch of paganism - more than a touch. And some Christian mystics will even admit that it comes from other religions. Thomas Merton said, "I couldn't understand Christian teaching the way I do if it were not in the light of Buddhism." Whenever you hear someone talk about "contemplative prayer" or "centering prayer" – this is usually what they mean - mindless prayer.

But you will not find that in Scripture. When you read about experiences of God in Scripture it is always described by means of words and rational concepts. And biblical meditation always goes hand-in-hand with understanding and knowledge.

**Psalms 77:12 I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds.**

Meditation means to consider - to think. Other translations say "ponder" or "reflect." It does not mean empty your mind; it means fill your mind and think hard and clearly.

Experiences of God in Scripture are always cognitive, and very much in the realm of reason and rational thought. God is a rational being who reveals Himself in a rational way to rational creatures and it is only through rational thought that we can approach Him. Mindless prayer is not prayer.

### **Mindless Worship**

The second pitfall I want to warn you about is mindless worship. There are churches that utilize these techniques in their corporate worship. They will repeat the chorus of some song over and over – sometimes for ten minutes - repeating a single phrase. They do that because they have found that if you repeat a simple phrase long enough - especially in an emotional setting with music - eventually the mind has nothing left to think about and just goes into that alpha brain state. The whole congregation goes into a kind of hypnotic trance. Then when the worship leader starts telling them they are in the presence of God, or they have their own thoughts about the presence of God – they have experiences that seem so powerful and so real, and they think they have experienced God in an awesome way - just like a daydream that becomes so real it makes you cry.

I don't think churches that do that are intentionally using pagan meditation techniques or purposely trying to achieve an altered state of consciousness. They have simply learned from experience that when you repeat a simple phrase enough times, it is amazing how many people will come up afterward and talk about what a life-changing experience they had of God's presence.

But if you ask those people, "What was it about God that you found so delightful?" you get a blank stare, because it was not really an experience of God's presence - it was a really powerful feeling that they superstitiously interpreted as God's presence. This is why some of the songs we sing at Agape are so short compared to what you are used to hearing on the radio. There are some songs that are good, but they do not have enough content to keep the mind busy for five minutes. So instead of repeating the chorus fourteen times like they do on the radio, we cut it short because we never want get to the point where your mind runs out of things to think about, because when your mind disengages, worship stops. The Father seeks worshippers who worship in spirit and in truth - not worshippers like the Samaritans who worshipped that which they did not know.

Glory Fletcher had such a great post on her Facebook the other day. It started with a quotation from John Owen:

"Why do you love Jesus Christ? For so you profess to do. Why do you trust in him? Why do you honour him? Why do you desire to be in heaven with him? Can you give a reason of this hope that is in you — an account why you do all or any of these things? If you cannot, all that you pretend towards him is but fancy and imagination."

That is true. If you want to have a deep and rich worship experience, answer those four questions. All true worship is a response to truth about God. Without understanding of truth, worship is empty - no matter how much emotion you have.

### **Mindless Wisdom**

So watch out for mindless prayer, watch out for mindless meditation, watch out for mindless worship, and one more - watch out for mindless wisdom. And this one is definitely the most common form of superstitious mysticism in the Church. By “mindless wisdom” I mean making decisions by some criterion other than sound reasoning. When you make a decision based on feelings or supposed promptings or coincidences or thoughts that just pop into your mind – that is mindless wisdom. And it is superstitious.

- ***Interpreting random thoughts as God’s voice***

A thought comes unexpectedly into someone’s mind and he says, “Oh, that must be a verbatim message from God.” Why? What rational, logical thought process leads you to that conclusion? “Oh nothing - I just sort of feel it must be true.” In the past when God gave verbatim messages He verified that it was really from Him by a display of miraculous signs. But the superstitious mystics will have a thought and assume it is the voice of God even without any miracles to prove it. Without any proof at all – they just believe it is from God apart from evidence.

- ***Interpreting coincidences as God’s voice***

Other times it might be the interpretation of coincidences as the voice of God. And when I say “coincidence” I mean two things that seem to correspond but really do not. For example, did you know that air travel distance from Bhopal, India to Srinagar, India is 763.46 miles? That is amazing, because 763.46 miles comes out to exactly 1228.67 kilometers. 1228.67 - 12/28/67 – that is my birth date! Should I take that as a message from God? No – it is a coincidence. It is just two numbers that seem to correspond, but there is no meaning that can rationally be drawn from the fact that they are the same digits. That is not a message from God any more than seeing a stop sign that has eight sides means God is telling you that you should have eight children. When you attach meaning to things that cannot be rationally deduced, that is superstition.

- ***Interpreting impulses as God’s Voice***

Another form of this is when a person has a sudden, strong impulse to do or say something so he assumes it must be a prompting from God. Now, if it is an impulse that wakes you up to see the wise course of action, great. But if it has nothing to do with Scripture or wisdom, then it is superstitious to assume it is God’s voice just because it is a really strong impulse.

### ***How Not to Hear God’s Voice***

Superstitious mysticism is a massive problem in the Church. Mark Virkler runs an organization called Communication with God Ministries, and he teaches Four Keys to Hearing God’s Voice.

Key #1 – God’s voice in your heart often sounds like a flow of spontaneous thoughts. (I find that one amazing. Some of the most wicked, vile thoughts I have ever had have been spontaneous flows.)

Key #2 – Become still so you can sense God’s flow of thoughts and emotions within.

Key #3 – As you pray, fix the eyes of your heart upon Jesus, seeing in the Spirit the dreams and visions of Almighty God. (He is not saying you contemplate the glorious truths about Christ revealed in Scripture – he is saying you just use your imagination to picture an image.)

Key #4 – Journaling ... brings great freedom in hearing God’s voice. “I call the process ‘two-way journaling,’ and I have found it to be a fabulous catalyst for clearly discerning God’s inner, spontaneous flow, because as I journal I am able to write in faith for long periods of time, simply believing it is God. I know that what I believe I have received from God must be tested. However, testing involves doubt and doubt blocks divine communication, so I do not want to test while I am

trying to receive.”<sup>3</sup> They do not want you to use reason, discernment, analysis – just empty your mind of all that and let whatever comes in come in. When you try to use reason and discernment it just spoils the process (because it pulls you out of that alpha state).

That is all superstition. And Satan uses it to destroy people and families and churches. Someone gets into this kind of thing, and one day they announce, “God is telling me to move to \_\_\_\_\_” and they go off and ignore biblical wisdom and wise counsel because they are sure it was God who spoke to them. And when their parents try to show them wisdom, they just cut themselves off from their parents because they see them as opposing God.

Pastors of churches fall into this, and one day they announce, “God told me to do this...” and then proceed to lead the church in some foolish direction, but no one can reason with them because they are sure it was the voice of God. We ask every candidate for leadership at Agape if they believe God ever leads in a way that contradicts biblical wisdom. And if their answer is yes, that person cannot serve in leadership.

### **Proverbs 15:33 The fear of the Lord teaches a man wisdom**

### **Proverbs 4:6 Do not forsake wisdom**

And do not ever imagine that the Holy Spirit would forsake wisdom either. God guides us by opening our eyes to wisdom, not by violating wisdom. If you apply the wisdom principles from Scripture, and they point to option A, God will never lead you to option B - ever. When we get to the sermon on receiving guidance from God I will speak in some detail about how to discern God’s guidance, and how to hear His voice on a daily basis. But for now I just want to make it clear that God commands us never to forsake wisdom.

### **Mindless Teaching**

Mindless prayer, mindless worship, mindless wisdom - one more: mindless teaching. These are the people who use the Holy Spirit as an excuse not to study. They do not want to learn Greek or hermeneutics, or do any hard work. They just want God to give them the answers directly. They say things like, “I don’t need commentaries or Bible teachers – all I need is the Holy Spirit.” That sounds great until you realize the Holy Spirit is the one who told us to listen to human teachers! Who was it that ordained preaching and teaching as His chosen method for disseminating His truth? Oh yeah – that was Jesus Christ. He sent the Apostles out to preach and teach and to train up other teachers who would train up other teachers. And where did the gift of teaching come from? Oh yeah – that was from the same Source as all the other spiritual gifts – the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:11 says that the Lord gave teachers to the Church as a gift for the purpose of equipping the saints. These people who seem to have so much faith in the Holy Spirit are actually resisting the Spirit by ignoring the methods He ordained, and then expecting Him to bless that. If the Holy Spirit wants to show you some glorious thing in His Word, and He wants to use a commentary to do it, are you going to say, “No, God. I don’t want You to speak to me that way. You have to speak to me directly, otherwise I don’t want to hear it”?

The Holy Spirit does promise to teach us, but here is the reality we need to face: If we are not careful and disciplined and skilled in our handling of God’s Word, the Holy Spirit will allow us to fall into deadly error. It happens every day. The Holy Spirit allows people’s lives to be destroyed through Bible teachers who do a poor job of interpretation. The Holy Spirit allowed the people in 2 Peter 3:16 to distort the Scriptures to the point where they were destroyed.

**1 Peter 1:13 Therefore, with your minds ready for action, be serious and set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cwgministries.org/Four-Keys-to-Hearing-Gods-Voice.htm>

There is nothing spiritual about loving God with all your heart and all your soul and a tenth of your mind. There is nothing spiritual about failure to study and think hard. You cannot love God without your mind.

## **Loving God with Your Mind**

### **Every point of sanctification requires knowledge**

Scripture constantly calls us to be alert to deception, think clearly, strive for greater understanding – every point of sanctification depends on understanding and clear thinking.

**Ephesians 1:17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you ...**

The path to nearness to God never bypasses knowledge and understanding. There are about 55,000 verses in the Bible. Guess how many are targeted at the mind? All of them. How many verses of the Bible can you understand without using your mind? None. In order to love God you have to take delight in what He is like. But it is only through the mind that you can discover what God is like.

That is why the New Testament emphasizes knowledge and understanding so much.

**1 John 5:20 We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him**

**Colossians 2:2 My purpose is that ... they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, <sup>3</sup>in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

All the various forms of fellowship with God - every one of them requires knowledge. Knowledge by itself is not fellowship, but your fellowship with God can never, ever go any deeper than your knowledge of God. And neither can your sanctification and spiritual growth.

**Colossians 1:9 we have not stopped ... asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.**

Why, Paul? Why are you so focused on praying for their knowledge and understanding?

**10 we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work**

Obedience, holiness, growth, spiritual progress - it all comes through knowledge.

**Philippians 1:9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless ... filled with the fruit of righteousness**

**2 Peter 1:3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him**

What happens if a person does not have knowledge?

**Ephesians 4:19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.**

Pretty wicked, right? Why are those people so evil and sinful? Back up one verse and he tells us.

**Ephesians 4:18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them**

Ignorance and lack of understanding. “But what about infants and people who are so mentally disabled that they can’t understand anything?” How about we let God worry about that and you and I worry about loving God with all our minds? If your brain works well enough to ask that question then you are capable of rational thought, which means all these passages for sure apply to you. So devote yourself to learning.

“But Darrell, I’m a terrible reader.” Fine - don’t read. Listen to the Bible on CD or MP3. Listen to sermons. You can even go to [BiblicalTraining.org](http://BiblicalTraining.org) and listen to lectures and get a seminary education for free. Go to [FoodForYourSoul.net](http://FoodForYourSoul.net) and listen to past sermons. Go to [GTY.org](http://GTY.org) or [DesiringGod.org](http://DesiringGod.org) and you can listen to MacArthur and Piper sermons from now until the Second Coming. Or just hook up with some wise friends who can explain biblical principles to you in day-to-day life as you spend time together. Reading is not the only way to learn. In fact, it is not even the best way – that is why the New Testament speaks so much about preachers and teachers and not much about writers. Whatever method is best for you - just make sure you devote yourself to learning.

There are people who have been stuck in a particular sin for twenty years, and they have tried everything they could think of to escape, but they have not been able to because they have not learned the principles from Scripture that would enable them. There are people who wish they could forgive a past offense, but can not do it because there are some principles about forgiveness that they have never been taught. Everything in the Christian life depends on learning. You cannot even be saved without understanding the gospel enough to believe it. And from there you cannot grow spiritually without constantly increasing in your knowledge. And most importantly, you cannot love a God you do not know. You will not have the joy that comes from delighting in God’s providence until you appreciate what is great about it, and your level of appreciation is limited by your level of knowledge. There is no fellowship with God apart from the mind.

**Information --> Insight --> Intimacy**

Now, this is not to say that information, by itself, is enough. It isn’t. It is only the first of three steps. Step 1 is learning information; step 2 is moving from information to insight. It is possible to have all kinds of information and zero insight. There are New Testament scholars who have more knowledge about the Bible in their pinky finger than I will ever know in my lifetime, but they do not have enough insight to even become a Christian. They are like the guy in Mark 8 who was born blind, so he didn’t know what people looked like or what trees or anything else looked like. So Jesus heals his eyes, but not his ability to understand what he sees, and he said, “I see men like trees walking.” He could see but his eyesight was worthless without understanding. Then Jesus did a second miracle and healed his understanding; then he knew what he was seeing. And Jesus did that miracle in two phases to teach the Disciples about the Pharisees, who seeing, did not see and hearing, did not understand. They knew tons of facts about the Bible - more than anyone else, yet they understood nothing. There are seminary graduates who can cream anyone in a game of Bible trivia, but have no insight. They can easily rattle off all the pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic prophets in chronological order in Hebrew, but if you ask them --> for a biblical principle that will help you overcome anger, or teach you how to prefer



the presence of God over some earthly pleasure, they are clueless. Information is worthless unless it leads to insight.

But insight is not the final goal either. For years I thought it was, but now I have learned that insight - understanding principles is God's Word - is worthless unless it leads to relational intimacy with God. The goal is not education. The goal is not information. The goal is not even insight – it is intimacy. But you can never, ever get to that intimacy without insight, and you cannot have insight without information. So we need to devote ourselves to learning if we are going to love God with all our minds. If anyone ever tries to teach you a form of worship that bypasses the mind, or a way of discovering God's will that bypasses intensive study of God's Word, run!

### **Two parts to love**

OK, so that is the general principle; now let's get specific. How do you love God with your mind? There are two basic parts to loving someone: enjoying that person, and bringing enjoyment to that person. If I really love my kids then I will enjoy their company, and I will want to do what I can to make them happy. Loving God is no different. Loving God involves bringing Him pleasure and enjoying being near Him.

### **Psalms 104:34 May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I am glad in the Lord.**

I want to please God and I want to enjoy God - the two sides of love. I want to bring gladness and pleasure to God's heart, and I want to make my heart glad in God. So how do I do that? Let's start with the first one.

#### ***How to please God with your mind***

If you love God you will want to bring Him pleasure. We are always accepted by God as His children, and there is a certain amount of pleasure He has in us all the time, but it is also true that sometimes we please Him more than other times. Sometimes we grieve the Holy Spirit.

### **Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed**

People who have been sealed (genuine believers) can grieve Him. So our goal is to avoid that, and to try to bring Him pleasure instead.

### **2 Corinthians 5:9 we make it our goal to please him**

God does not always feel the same toward you. It is actually possible to please the Lord - to do things that cause sensations of pleasure in the heart of God! What a staggering thought. There are things that you and I can do that cause stabs of pain in God's heart and things we can do that cause sensations of pleasure in His heart. (And I say "sensations" because pleasure is something you feel.)

We can make God feel pleasure, and the more you love Him the more you will desire to bring Him those sensations of pleasure. Just like if you love your kids you go out of your way to make them happy, and if you love your wife you do whatever you can think of to fill her heart with joy. If you love God you will want to do that which pleases Him, not only with your body, but also with your mind. Remember - thoughts are deeds - important deeds. Bad thoughts can make a person deserve to spend eternity in hell. But good thoughts are just as important on the other end of the scale. On Judgment Day there will be unimaginable, indescribable rewards heaped upon you by God because of righteous thoughts you had during your life. He is going to give you some amazing thing, and when you look at that reward and you finally get up off the floor and catch your breath you will say, "What is this for?" And He will remind you of some righteous thoughts you had. Any time you had thoughts about God that were true, and in agreement with God's Word, anytime you had thoughts that rose out

of humility or love or faith or gratitude, or joy in the Lord, or righteous desires - those are exceedingly good deeds and will be generously and lavishly rewarded.

***How to delight in God with your mind***

The other part of love is enjoying the object of your love.

**Psalms 37:4 Delight yourself in the Lord**

How do you do that? First you use your mind to learn from Scripture what is so wonderful about a particular attribute of God, then you learn from Scripture how to experience that attribute, and then you seek that experience. I honestly do not know of anything that is more important in life than that. That is why I wrote that book, *What's so Great About God?* One hundred eighty devotionals - each one about some attribute of God - how to appreciate it and how to experience it. And then a promise to trust that is related to that attribute. That devotional is available for free on TreasuringGod.com on the Articles page of the resource library<sup>4</sup>, and we are going to go ahead and have some printed up for those of you who would like a hard copy. Hopefully we will have those in the bookstore in the next couple weeks. That is one side of love - enjoying the beloved, and it requires rigorous use of your mind. God has given you an amazing thing by giving you a human mind. With it you can bring delight to and be delighted by the Living God.

**Benediction: Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

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<sup>4</sup> [http://foodforyoursoul.net/abc/?page\\_id=394](http://foodforyoursoul.net/abc/?page_id=394) Scroll down to "What's So Great About God?"