

Loving the Lord with all your Mind

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[0 : 00] my soul, when it's disturbed, when it's joyful, when it's not joyful, and it's taking it before the Lord. That's worshipping Him. Because that takes faith. I could, with my soul, just retreat into myself, right?

That's what I would naturally do. That's what depression does. And here we see the psalmist coming out to the Lord.

So that's one way we love God with our soul, is by taking it to Him, so that He might revive my soul. He might restore my soul. But I love God with my soul when I rejoice.

When I rejoice in the Lord. When I bless the Lord. When I praise the Lord with passion. We sang that last song. I appreciate some of you who are standing.

That's your soul doing that, right? That's all right. That's good. But that doesn't mean everybody does that.

[1 : 06] It doesn't mean everybody has to do that. If your soul isn't there. I don't want to fake that. But I still want to worship Him with my soul. So even if my soul is in distress, I can still worship Him by acknowledging.

I can still sing those words, and those words are true. Even if I don't feel good about them. Those words are still true. I can confess that. And then we have some wonderful songs that have been written for the depressed.

Be still my soul. It is well with my soul. We can't sing. So soul, now we come to mind.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. And this one's curious because Jesus is now adding. If you go back to Deuteronomy, you go back to the Old Testament, you read the original, mind isn't there.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. So why does Jesus add mind?

[2 : 17] It's not just in the Gospel of Mark. He does it in the Gospel of Matthew. He does it in the Gospel of Luke. All three of the synoptic Gospels include Jesus saying the mind.

So Jesus did this. Why is He doing that? Well, we know Jesus is intentional. He's not haphazard. Think of the time. The time is changing. Jesus is not just speaking in the synagogue to Jews. Jesus is speaking out on the highways and byways.

There's Roman centurions out there. There's Greek. There's Syrophenician women out there.

There's all kinds of different Gentile, non-Hebrew people out there. And consider the time.

Shortly before, well, within 300 years before Christ came in 4 BC, who had come through and conquered the world?

[3 : 16] No, before Rome. Alexander the Great. A Greek.

And he made Greek the language of the world. Everything written in the first century is in Greek. Not everything.

I mean, you'll find synagogue writings. Everybody spoke Greek. The Hebrews in the first century had to deal with the Romans. They had to deal with all the people traveling through Israel because Israel was a major trade route.

That's why the tax collectors were making money. Jesus is preaching in Greek. He has a new culture that he's dealing with.

So, the Hebrews would understand heart has the idea of thinking in it. The thoughts and intentions of the heart. But the Greek mind wouldn't necessarily know that.

[4 : 22] The Roman mind wouldn't necessarily know that. They might, like the American mind, impose their idea of heart on that idea. Oh, love God with all my heart.

All that means romance. Right? No, that's not what Jesus meant at all. I emoji God. So, I believe Jesus is doing that in order to clarify that the mind needs to be involved.

That the mind needs to be involved in loving God. Because that idea was there in the Old Testament. But he's making clear now because it's not just about Jews.

Now, it's also about Greeks and Latins and Syrophenicians and Americans. So, mind.

So, what is this? When we're talking about the mind, how do we love God with all our minds? So, we want to do two considerations. First of all, what does he mean by mind?

[5 : 32] What is the distinction of mind? How is it distinct from heart and soul? And then we'll ask the practical question, how, then, do we love God with all our mind?

So, first of all, what is the mind? What's distinct about mind in Scripture? When Jesus talks about mind, when the Old Testament uses that term mind or thinking, what is being described there and emphasized?

So, let's first define it. The word for mind here that Jesus used literally means to think through. To think through. It's an intensive kind of word in the Greek.

It means to think through, to carefully reason. You know, you're thinking through something, you're analyzing, you're reasoning out.

You're considering thoroughly. You're putting things together. Remember how Jesus several times said to the disciples here in the Gospel of Mark as we're going along, Jesus would say, do you not yet understand?

[6 : 44] Do you not yet understand? And he uses that word that means to bring something together, to connect the dots. Are you not yet connecting the dots? Are you not yet thinking this through?

Do you not understand who I am and what I am here to do? Because they're just kind of, oh yeah, we get it. Not really. Right? Upper room, they still aren't getting it.

Right? Why are you so slow to believe that I am who the prophets said I am? So they're not taking what the prophets say, what the scriptures say, and connecting those dots to him.

Okay? Thinking through. And notice, when Jesus quotes this to the scribe here in Mark 12, look down at verse 33 where the scribe is saying, yes, master, you're right, I like how you're thinking to love God with all the heart, with all the understanding.

The scribe picked up on that. The scribe doesn't just repeat the Deuteronomy passage. He says, oh, I hear what you're saying, Jesus. You're a thinker.

[7 : 52] Train's in. I guess. You're a thinker. Remember, he likes Jesus' theology. He has watched Jesus answering the Pharisees.

He's watched him answer the Herodians. He's watched him answer the Sadducees. He can see that Jesus answers their questions with a thinking theology.

And so when he's asking Jesus what is the greatest commandment, he sees that Jesus has really thought this out. He's not just picking one of the ten. He's thought this deeply. He's developed a theology.

And he says, I see what you mean. Yeah, love with all the heart. That's what Deuteronomy says. And the understanding. I'm tracking with you. Even though Deuteronomy doesn't say the understanding.

You with me? This is what this word means. To put together. To think through carefully. In the Old Testament, the word that translates the Greek word in the Old Testament means to think, to plan, to devise, to plot.

[9 : 00] In other words, it's a word that means organized thinking, deliberate planning, formulating. So how is that different from the heart?

Because the heart talks about thoughts and intentions. Well, in Hebrews 4.12, that says the thoughts and intentions of the heart, the word for thoughts in Hebrews 4 is a word that means more of a responsive thinking, a reflective thinking.

In other words, it's not, this word, mind, means a deliberate thinking. Whereas the word for thoughts in Hebrews means kind of, I'm responding to something.

I'm thinking about. And it's usually in a negative sense. I'm questioning what they're saying. It's like when Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, He would see and understand that the scribes and the Pharisees were questioning in their heart.

They were hardening their hearts. In other words, they're developing an attitude against. That's heart. That's will. They're being willful.

[10:14] Whereas this word now, we're talking about loving God with our mind, our thinking through. It's a deliberate planning. It's a formulating. It's a developing my theology.

How do I understand who God is? How do I understand how I walk through this life? It's not just quoting a verse. It's, I'm thinking this through. And that's what Jesus has been teaching all the way through Mark.

He's not just teaching him moral lessons. Not at all. He's asking, are you thinking yet? Are you connecting these dots? Do you see why this lifestyle is the way that I'm living in the way you shall live?

And of course, they're not getting it. They're not going to get it until the upper room. Phew! Over their heads. Because they've already got an attitude that the Messiah is supposed to be, you know, like, fit this box.

And he's throwing that box out. Because that's not what the Old Testament Scripture said. It's just what they thought it said. So, let's look then, not just define it, but let's describe this word from the Old Testament.

[11:26] Genesis 6, 5. This word appears very early in the Scriptures. Genesis 6, 5. God recognized when he sent the flood, when he decided to send the flood because there was so much evil in the world, so much violence, he recognized that the thoughts of the heart of man was only evil continually.

Thoughts of the heart. They're connected. The thoughts of the heart. The reasonings of the heart. The plans of the heart. Genesis 50, verse 20.

When Joseph, at the very end, has reconciled with his brothers. Remember, Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, right? Joseph suffered, suffered, suffered unjustly all this time.

So the brothers, now that they come and discover that their little brother who they trashed is now actually second in command of the world, they're a little trembling.

They're a little, they're, okay, now he's going to kill us. He's going to get us back. And Joseph says, in Genesis 50, 20, you meant it for evil.

[12:46] You intended, you planned, you devised to sell me, to get rid of me, to cause me suffering, hopefully that I might die because you hated me.

You intended it, you planned it, you devised it for evil, but God, uses the same word, meant it, planned it for good.

Joseph at the end, I don't think earlier on he could do this, at the end he can look back and go, okay, yeah, bro, yeah, you meant it for evil, I know, that was your plan, it was intent, it wasn't a mistake, you planned it.

So did God. By the way, God didn't allow it to happen. God's bigger than that, he doesn't just allow things, he intends things, he plans things, he devises things, and that's exactly what Joseph says about God, God meant it, he planned it, he planned for me to suffer for 20 years unjustly, he planned it for good, 20 years later, because that was God's process, he plans for all of his people to suffer first, right, Moses suffers before he's lifted up, David suffers before he's lifted up, everybody suffers, Jesus suffers before he's lifted up, Jesus says, if you follow me, guess what, you suffer before you get lifted up, and that's God's plan, that's God's thinking,

Exodus 31, 4, talking about as they begin to build the tabernacle, and they build, remember all the intricate articles of the tabernacle, not just how they made the tent and the poles, but all the furniture that goes inside, so the table, the lampstand, and all the carvings of the cherubim, and the pomegranates, and all the details, God raised up one man by the name of, I've got to read it, Bezalel, probably saying it wrong, he's up there going, he was so gifted and artistic, and it uses this word of him, that he planned, thought, devised, he knew how to make that table, he knew how to do those cherubim over the ark, he knew how to do the cherubim on the walls, I mean, he was a thinker, an inventor, he thought it through, and you can imagine if you're an architect or you're a builder, you know, you've got to think through how you're going to make that, it's that kind of word,

[15:37] Psalm 33 says, God frustrates the plans, the mind of the people, but God's mind, God's plans, stand forever, Isaiah 55 compares God's thinking to our thinking, in these wonderful words, seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near, let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man forsake his thoughts, his mindset, let him return to the Lord that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon, why?

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, God says, my mind, my thinking, my planning, my devising is not your thinking and planning and devising, because mine are higher, right? Mine are much higher than yours. You're earthly, of course, we're not going to think like God thinks. But in loving God with all our thoughts, we want to raise our thoughts. We want to think more like him. David had a heart like God had. I think Paul had a mind. By the way, talk about differences between heart and soul and mind, I think each of us probably tend to live in one of those areas more than the others. You might be more of a heart person, which means you're a doer. And that can be good and that can be bad. Because you can do it without your heart in it, or you could do it with all genuineness. [17:16] You could be a soul person. That's where I land. You could be the soul person that, you know, you know, you're highs and lows. Like David. I'm standing next to David. He was like that. You might be a mind person. You're a thinker. For you, that comes natural. That comes easy. You're a thinker. But take that, get that soul stuff away from me. Right? Let me just think. Get that heart final answer. Strength. Mode. That's all I'm doing. Okay. So in the New Testament, the mind, this word for mind is used the same way. Before we were saved in Ephesians 2.3, Paul talks about how we indulge the desires, the will of our mind. So we're following the plan of our mind. Colossians 1.21 says, before Christ, we were hostile in mind toward God. 1 Peter 1.13 says, gird up the loins of your mind. [18:17] Gird up the loins. In other words, there's a preparation there where I'm girding, I'm gathering up and I'm girding, I'm preparing my mind to think through carefully how to act by faith. There's an acting and a doing in this world and then there's an acting and a doing that's by faith. Where I trust the Lord with all my heart, I lean not on my understanding, right? In all my ways, I acknowledge Him and then He, what? Gives me that straight path. But I'm not leaning on me, I'm leaning on Him. See? That's my mind has to go there. So let me ask the question, why is the mind so important in loving God? Why does Jesus include this? Why does He want this to be big? Isn't heart the big thing? And then soul, okay, our feelings, okay. Why is mindfulness, why is thinking so important? Well, listen to Ephesians 4 where Paul describes our conversion. [19:27] He describes our before and our after. And notice how He describes our mind before and after. Okay? Ephesians 4, 17. Paul says, Now this I say and testify in the Lord that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do. How do they walk? In the futility of their minds. Futile thinking. They are darkened in their understanding. how they're putting things together. They don't got it. They might be brilliant. They might be on PBS. They might be in all the scientific journals. They might be absolutely brilliant. But they're darkened in their understanding. Because they've denied fact number one that God exists. And that God is sovereign. And then they're going to explain it by their own foolish devices. Okay? We were all there. Okay? We were all there before He opened our eyes and saved us. [20:32] They're darkened in their understanding. They're alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them. And where does this futility of mind darken in understanding this ignorance come from? Due to their hardness of heart. Heart, mind are connected. The heart affects the mind. If the heart is hardened guess what? We're ignorant we're darkened in our understanding and we're futile in our thinking. That's Paul's reasoning. He's following it through it. If I let my heart have its way where's my mind going? We already saw last week if we let our soul have its way if we let our soul have its way without getting hold of that soul we're in the pit. Huh? We're in despair. Now watch how he describes now the transition. He says but that is not the way you learn Christ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him as the truth is in Jesus to do what? [21:42] What's our life now? To put off the old. To put off your old self which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires. So to put off and then to be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

The mind is absolutely central to your daily walk. Putting off renewed in the spirit of your mind in the attitude disposition of your mind and then putting on the new self.

And then from Ephesians 4 on Paul's just going to talk about that's the daily life of the Christian. You're putting stuff off putting off falsehood you're putting off anger putting off all these other silly talk you're putting off all these things and you're putting on you're adopting a whole new lifestyle. You're not just denying something you're not just okay those are the bad things you're no I'm putting off what I used to naturally do now I'm putting on what's normal or no excuse me not normal and natural what is supernatural what takes by faith how I deal with my anger that's I don't want to do that naturally I want to do that by walking with the spirit but in the middle of that see that putting off and putting on is this renewal of your mind if I'm going to control my heart and my soul and my strength I start with my mind and I'm renewed and notice it's I don't renew my mind it's being renewed be renewed which means it happens to me that means I yield to him renew my mind because if I renew my mind where am I going I got this figured out okay start with my mind because then I can grab my heart and I can grab my soul with my mind so the remedy of our heart being hardened and our mind being darkened is following this pattern of putting off the old renewing our mind deliberately thinking putting on the new the mind is key to this process so what do we mean by mind mind is how we think through things loving

God with all my mind is about making a deliberate plan organizing my thoughts reasoning carefully to put it succinctly develop a theology now if you're a soul person you may not like that word theology I just want to feel because that's what you do well that's what comes easier for you that's what God's made you that way I just want to feel I just want to worship bless you great but love God with your heart and your mind so if you're not a thinker that'll come harder if you're the soul person okay if you're used to following your soul work hard at this as a soul person

[25 : 10] I can tell you so let's look then let's get practical then so how do we love God with our mind if that's what our mind is how do we love God how do we apply this let me give you three ways here as I walk through the New Testament references first of all it begins by asking God for a mind of understanding you don't have that ask for that remember even the disciples remember Jesus is constantly and it's not that these guys weren't thinkers it's just that they weren't tracking and they weren't able to think on what what he's presenting them they've come from a tradition and a way of thinking that has blocked out all of that Messiah has got to be this victorious king that takes Rome away and here we go and Jesus didn't do that at all so in the upper room

Luke 24 45 Jesus after the resurrection up in the upper room he's saying why didn't you get it why are you so slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have said from Moses and the Psalms and the prophets it's all there and then it says Luke says he opened their mind to under connect the dots to understand the scriptures and then they go how did I miss that that's right there that was right in the garden I know that story the Exodus I thought that was just about Moses that was about you that was about Jesus wait a minute all those stories are pointing to Jesus you mean all those kings I read about in Samuel and first and second kings and first and second chronicles all those kings are about Jesus because by comparison I can see okay there's the good king every once in a while there's a good king

I was reading through the kings this sabbatical to kind of just it's like okay then he did worse than his father and he was really bad and holes anyway you look at all those and you go even the good guys you're going we need a better king we need a better king we need a better king all these human kings starting with David who was the best of all we need somebody better than David in other words all those stories were saying do you get it yet you want a Messiah you want David good for a while oh I'll give you Solomon you want Solomon really super super wise doesn't follow his own advice but you want that guy that was the beginning of the end oh

I want Josiah he was really cool toward the end oh my gosh see what Josiah did his reformation was intensive still not good enough that's what Jesus is going through in the upper room with him do you see now are you connecting the dots do you see how all of these stories point to me how I'm the fulfillment of it all and how I'm not yet done and now I'm working through you can't we just ride your coattails no I'm leaving and you're on now you deny yourself take up your cross follow me so ask for a mind of understanding God would give you understanding 1st Corinthians 2 talks about God has given us a holy spirit to teach us and give us understanding and and and and he compares it that it's not natural those who are natural in other words those who are not saved who do not have the holy spirit those who think naturally do not get spiritual things they don't get this until they have

the holy spirit to teach them and illumine them and guide them and direct them so how do I love God with all my mind start by here's a verse you all know I'm sure Philippians 4:6 and 7 need a reminder be anxious for nothing but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving don't forget the thanksgiving part with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God and the peace of God which passes all understanding thank you shall guard your hearts and minds anxiety will cripple all of us if you're a heart person or a thinking person he says the solution is don't worry be happy no don't worry but come to

[30:33] God prayer supplication with thanksgiving why is thanksgiving important there if you're anxious and worried and stressed about something why is thanksgiving important when you pray do you feel thankful when you're anxious correct answer is no so how can you thank him by faithNINGNINGNING!

They intended it for evil. God intends it for good. God is faithful. I will never leave you or forsake you. I can be thankful because I know it will get good at some point.

And that's the key to ridding anxiety. I have to put my faith in God. And so I give Him, thank you for this wonderful trial I have right now. Thank you for the pain and the suffering.

Thank you for the loss. I do not understand the loss. The sea billows roll. We're just saying what a friend we have. What a friend for sinners.

Even in sorrow, He's there. Because I'm remembering who He is. Colossians 1 says, before we were Christians, we were hostile in mind.

[31:58] But then we've been saved. And because we're saved, we continue in the faith, not shifting away. See, we guard our mind.

What used to be hostile, we guard now our saved mind by continuing in the faith. And it's not in just general faith. It's in the faith.

The particular truths of the gospel. Which, by the way, when you read Paul, that's why He reminds you of the gospel over and over and over and over.

Didn't He already say this in Ephesians? Here He goes in Colossians. Here He goes in Philippians. Here He goes in Romans. Romans, oh my gosh, He's going crazy. Why He reminds us over and over and over and over and over and over again.

Because our minds stray. We continue in the faith. Not some ambiguous faith. In the faith. Who Christ is.

[32:56] What He has done. How I walk with Him. Finally, so ask God for a mind of understanding.

Guard your mind, which is vulnerable by going to God. And thirdly, actively pursue God by thinking through carefully.

Studying who God is. Learn about Him. Start putting things together.

Develop a theology. By the way, you already have one. Everybody has a theology. It's just how grounded it is.

How deep it is. And I'm not saying just become some theologian where you sit in some dark room and you're irrelevant to life. I'm saying, your theology is really, really important to how you follow Christ.

[33:56] It's really, really important to bolstering my faith. Especially if I'm a soulish person. I need my mind working and my theology working so that when my soul is in distress, I can remind and preach to my soul, hey, remember, put your hope here.

He won't leave you. He won't abandon you. He's doing good. I know you can't see it. I know nothing feels good. But you know how you are. Okay?

Develop. Organize your thinking to deliberately grow in your understanding and appreciation for who God is. So read.

Read the Scriptures. Read good books. You probably won't find them at the Christian bookstore. Ask the elders about good books. The good books aren't the best seller. Okay? Some of them are old.

[35:13] Some of them were written by Puritans. Puritans? Yeah, you know what? Some of those Puritans were very, very godly people. Extremely. Some of them deserve the rap they get, but some of them, no, no, no.

Wonderful, wonderful, soft-hearted, thinking people. Read those guys. Go to a Bible study.

What's the first thing Jesus teaches us to pray every day? Father, hallowed be thy name. Father, Father, cause your name to be hallowed, set apart in my mind.

I can apply that my heart and my soul too, by the way. Cause your name to be set apart in my heart and my soul and my mind. Help me think. Help me connect us.

The key to our mind loving the Lord is that daily renewal to keep our mind in the right place. So, we saw it in Ephesians 4.

[36 : 27] I want you to hear it in Romans 12 too. In Romans 12, Paul says, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Literally, which is your reasonable worship. It makes sense. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed. Be transformed. Not transform yourself. Be transformed by the renewal of your mind that by testing, trial, you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

So, your mind helps you understand the will of God. Then he goes on. For by the grace given to me, I say to everyone among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment.

each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned to you. For, as in one body, we have many members and the members do not all have the same function.

We don't all work the same way. Some of us are weirdly different. Some of us are so different from the others. Be good with that.

[37 : 56] They don't worship like you worship. They don't walk the way you walk. The question is, are they walking with Jesus? That's the only question.

So, we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually members of one another. I want you to notice the process here. One, total surrender. Present your bodies a living sacrifice.

Total surrender. Remember, loving God, remember the definition of love? Self-denying act. Present yourself as a living sacrifice.

I think that might, I think that might apply. I think that's self-denial. Okay? Then what? Then what do we do? Transformation.

Not conformed to this world, so turn from this world to what? Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

[38 : 58] There's that renewal of the mind again. We saw it in Ephesians 4, now we see it again in Romans 12, 2. By the renewal of your mind. Renewed thinking.

So I surrender to God. I be involved in His transforming of myself by cooperating in terms of renewing my thinking.

Deliberately planning, deliberately thinking, reasoning, understanding the gospel, preaching to myself. Psalm 42, He preaches to His soul.

Why are you in despair, O my soul? Hope in God, soul! Instead of listening to your soul, as your soul's going, man, I hate today.

When I was super depressed, I used to sigh a lot. Anybody depressed do that? I mean, everything would be so... I've got to get up to fix lunch.

[39 : 59] You know, when you're depressed, everything's hard. I'm not listening to my soul, I'm preaching to my soul. I question my soul, why are you so despaired?

Hope in God. See, this is renewing my mind. I'm thinking, I'm preaching to myself, I'm reminding myself of truth. And then the outcome, here's what surprises me in Paul's take on Romans 12, 1 through 5.

Loving God by surrendering my whole life, offer myself as a living sacrifice to Him. Then I'm transformed by the ruining of my mind and then what's the next thing?

What's the outcome having done that? It's right thinking about myself. In other words, stop thinking about myself and thinking of others I'm serving.

What are the two greatest commands? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself. There it is, right there in Romans 12. Love. Sacrifice everything to God to worship and serve Him, be transformed, and what?

[41 : 09] Love. I serve the members of this flock. I serve the body of Christ. This is loving God with all my mind to surrender to Him and minister to His people.

Okay, one meddling question, okay? Well, not one, a couple of them together, but just a minute of meddling. So, brace yourself.

Where is your mind? Where is your mind? Where does your mind tend to go on the things of this world? Do you make your own plans and agendas and thoughts and dreams and is that just of your own making?

Or are you thinking and planning in return to, in response to God? By the way, that's the definition of godliness. We did a call to worship this morning about the godly people.

Godly people isn't about, those are the people that have it all together. No, godly people are, they're just oriented toward God. They just want to do it toward God. They might fall and stumble, but they're going toward God.

[42 : 26] That's godly. Do you seek to know him? Do you desire to think more about him?

Okay. You do? Ask. Ask. Seek him. Study him. Pursue him. That you may regard all other things as loss loss for the sake of knowing Jesus Christ, your Lord.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the teaching of Jesus. We thank you that it expands and stretches us to think more carefully.

we recognize through Jesus' teaching in Mark 12 that he over and over again stresses thinking. And so, Father, help us to be good thinkers.

Help us to expand our thinking of you as that is one way that we love you more, by understanding you better. and by understanding your plan, we can overcome the tendencies of our heart and the affections of our soul.

[43 : 48] So, lead us in our thinking to you. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.