

Session 4: Loving God with All Our Mind

LOVING GOD WITH OUR MINDS: TIME, AGREEMENT, AND MEMORY

Turn to Mark 12:30, the main passage that we are looking at. I have been really invigorated by this session personally, in my personal life. In this one, we are focusing on loving God with all of our mind.

Jesus said, in Mark 12, “You shall love the Lord your God,” and named four spheres of our life. He says, “With all the heart, that is, the affections, the emotions; “With all the soul,” that is, the personality of which the main vehicle of expression is our speech; thirdly, with all of our mind, and that is what we’re going to focus on tonight. Then, fourthly, with all of our strength, which is our resources.

The reason that God calls us to love Him in these four ways is because that is how He loves us, with all of His mind. This is just indescribable, the implications of God loving us with all of His mind, all of His strength. Now, we can only love God with all of our heart as we seek to love Him in the other three ways. The reason I’m focusing on “all of your heart” is because the unique part of the human design is affections. There is no record in the Bible that angels have affections. That is one of the glorious, unique distinctives of the human spirit. We can feel love in a supernatural way, a deep way, forever. As a matter of fact, the Bible tells us the capacity of love we will feel will be God’s own love for God. That’s the measuring line of love; that’s where this thing is going. So the unique dimension of the human spirit is affections. Other parts of creation have a mind, strength, and personality.

Now, the difficulty with our affections is, we cannot control them directly, but indirectly. You cannot just will affection and emotion and then, within the hour, you have it. You can choose to have affections and then you can feed your mind accordingly, and later the affections are formed. You can choose them, but within the hour they are not necessarily present, and are usually not. But then, through the engaging of the mind – and that is God’s strategy, loving God with the mind, soul, and strength – but the mind is the primary lead in this transformation process.

Our emotions can be exposed to the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. Now what we want is our emotions alive with love. There is no greater delight, no greater power than having emotions alive with love. The problem with many is that they focus on the emotion instead of setting their emotions and then stirring their emotions through their mind; they just wish their emotions were different. They don’t actually set them in a determined way according to the Word, and they don’t feed their emotions in a Biblical way through the mind. They wish their emotions were red-hot, and they are depressed that they’re not, and they leave it there.

We don't have to. We can follow the biblical pattern and we can see our emotions stirred up in a supernatural way by the power of God. Now the point of this session, the focus, is to define some of what it means to love God with all of our mind. Loving God with all of our mind includes several different expressions of our mind. Number one: We love God with our mind by meditation on the Word. Now, everybody knows that, but beloved, meditation on the Word to our emotions and our mind is what fuel is to the car. It is impossible to do this without meditation, regular meditation, yet it is the common experience of most believers never to get around to this on a consistent basis. It would be like a person having a very expensive car, and never putting gasoline in the car. Honestly, we have this most amazing reality called the human spirit. It is the most expensive designer car, so to speak, in the creative order. Nothing is like it, but it will not work without being refueled by meditation on the Word. The devil will do everything to keep us from that: guilt, "I don't understand the Bible," "It's always boring anyway," "I don't know where to start," "I am too busy," keeping us in a messianic complex solving everybody's problems because we're the only ones who know how to do it. Keeping us busy in a whirlwind of activity so we never put fuel in the car, because he knows the power of it.

Another way that we love God: We take time. It takes humility to do this, actually to ask for revelation. It is not enough just to meditate on the Word, but to ask the Holy Spirit for the supernatural intervention to add to our human effort of meditation, supernatural dynamics. Some people read the Word their whole life like the Pharisees. They're scholars, but they don't have any supernatural activity moving on their heart with the Word of God. I don't want to just know Bible information, and even talk to the Lord about it; I want a supernatural activity, the whisper of God moving on my heart.

Another part of loving God with all of our mind is coming into agreement with God in terms of processing our past. Our past is such a major part of our life and our mind. As a matter of fact, most of your mind is related to the past. Most of what is in your mind is not what is happening in the immediate, ten-second present. As a matter of fact, what I said a minute ago is already in your past. Yet, people don't take seriously the stewarding, the valuing, and the understanding of their past, and how important it is. The miracle of memory is quite an amazing reality. We're going to get into this in a minute: the place of the miracle of memory, how God redemptively uses it, His design for it, and how the devil wants to move in and use this miraculous, fantastic capacity of the human spirit to whip us and to torment us. Many never identify how unique and glorious memory is, and how prevalent it is to their human makeup and its function.

There's another thing I want to point out here. It's not just the miracle of memory, processing our past. There's a good way and a bad way. There are things that we forget and things that we remember. We have to be precise about both of them. We are called to forget and we are called to remember in processing our past. The other issue that I want to point out is the picturing of our future. That is called hope. The Bible calls that hope. Our present, the way we think and feel today, is anchored in how we

deliberately picture our future. Now again, like the past, many people are just ambivalent about their future. They don't think that much about it. They just want to be happy.

"You know, I want to be happy."

"Well, break it down. What do you want? What do you picture ten years from now for your life, a hundred years from now and a million years from now?"

"You know, I don't know. I just want to be happy. I don't want to be in pain. I don't want to be left out. I don't want to be bored. I don't know..."

A lot of folks are very ambivalent about their future, and setting our future, creating a vision from the Word of God for our future is a dynamic part of loving God with our mind. It is using our mind in a biblical way, called hope, to stir up our spirit in the present tense. Now, we have to do this in a deliberate way: the processing of the past and the picturing of the future. Paul the apostle gives this personal, emotional expression. We get insight into his heart; his experience in the Lord. He said in Romans 11:33, "Oh, the depths of the riches of the knowledge of God. Oh, how unsearchable are God's decisions" (paraphrase). His judgments are His decisions. The magnificence of them is that they have so many layers of wisdom and meaning that unfold over time; they are unsearchable, meaning we cannot get to the end of them apart from the aid of the Holy Spirit. Even apart from the ages unfolding, no matter how much we understand of God's ways in this age, a million years from now we will say we barely understood. A million years after, we will confess yet again we had no idea of the levels and dimensions involved in what we knew a million years ago. Our testimony will be continually updated. Paul's heart came alive in this loving fascination with God and God's ways. Beloved, we can live in that adoring fascination now, not just in the age to come. Paul touched it now. It is our portion to have an element of fascination touching our spirit. I don't mean every minute of every day, overwhelmed and awestruck. That's not what I mean, because there's a real dimension of being faithful in the routine and the mundane. There is an element of fascination: a journey we are on of discovery, of adoring discovery of who God is. Paul was on that journey. That is a journey I am on, you are on, and it's a deliberate thing we are on. It's not just that we're trying to get an anointed ministry and make an impact. That is good. We want an anointing in ministry; we will make an impact. It's more than just wanting things to go well. We have the right and the inheritance to have an element of fascination every step of the journey. Not every minute of every day, but as an element of our journey.

Moses cried out for this. He says, "I want to know Your ways. I want to see Your glory. I don't want to just see what Your heart is like. I want to see what Your mind is like. I want to know Your ways, Your strategies, Your thinking." Again, as they unfold, there are levels and dimensions. It is fascinating, this thing called God's leadership over our lives, individually and over all of history, and what He is

orchestrating. We have to go after this supernatural element. It's not enough just to read the data, though the reading of the data is critical, and the turning of the data, the information of the Bible, into prayer and talking to the Lord about it, but we want to ask the Holy Spirit for a supernatural element.

Beloved, "you have not because you ask not" (Js. 4:2). He will give more if we ask Him regularly (Prov. 2). He said, "Apply your heart to get this living understanding" (Prov. 2:3, paraphrase); "Cry out for it" (v. 4); "Seek for it like hidden treasure" (v. 5) and if you do it, you will find it. Proverbs 2 was a passage the Lord marked my life with in a very dramatic way when I was eighteen years old. I have not preached on Proverbs 2 in several years, but I remember from about age 18 through my thirties, I preached on this thing on a regular basis. It was one of my real pillars as a young man. I want to challenge you to find your name on this passage. I said, "Lord, I want to seek for You as treasure, not casually, not on the go and if I get time and a free hour, hey, guess what? I'll sit down and talk to you a little bit." But, rather than grabbing a little free time with God when it appears, you do it the other way around. You are proactive. You form your entire schedule around your quest for treasure. You do it the other way. You don't take some time if it happens to come, but you take some other things in life if they happen to come. I mean this for real. I don't want to put myself forth as a hotshot here, but when I was eighteen years old, I was really serious about this; nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, and I look back these many years later, and beloved, I have no regrets about the time I put. I only wish I would have put more in, but I put substantial time in, in the last thirty years, in the presence of God. I missed lots of opportunities: lots of ministry opportunities, lots of economic opportunities, lots of social opportunities, but when I look back over thirty years, I'm really glad, and wouldn't mind if I would have been even more focused.

My point is, see your name in this passage. Go after it like a hidden treasure. If there were a billion dollars worth of gold hypothetically hidden in the building, and they said, "You can tear every single brick apart, take as much as you want; the first one that finds it, it's theirs, no questions asked," you would probably stay up all night. But for the Word of God, will people shift their schedule and be inconvenienced. Well, the wise man, the wise woman does. Paul said in Ephesians 1, "I do not cease to pray that living understanding, the supernatural element, would attend our mind."

DESTROYING WRONG PARADIGMS THAT HINDER LOVE

Now, in setting the mind on loving God, there are positives and negatives. There's the removing of the wrong. Negative mindsets diminish love. You can be very sincere in your quest to love God with all of your heart and all of your emotions, but if you will not bring your mind into the process in a deliberate way, you will always be frustrated at the emotional level in your capacity to love God. Your capacity to love God, my capacity to love God, is directly related to what I do with my mind. There is a ceiling that you will run into if you sincerely want your emotions on fire and red-hot, but you don't engage your mind in the process of loving God. You will hit a ceiling. The ceiling is really low, by the way. Sincerity

is critical, but it is not enough. We have to mix sincerity with earnest pursuit that is steady. Not that we don't have bad days or bad weeks, but it's steady enough through the years and then there's a supernatural element as well, but the Holy Spirit will give it if we ask for it. There is a setting of the mind to love God.

When I cleanse my mind of wrong thinking, it is an act of love. I do it deliberately as an act of love, not thinking, "Well, I hope You see this as love, God." He says, "Let there be no question about it; I take this as loving, loving Me with your mind."

We remove wrong paradigms that diminish our capacity to love God with our emotions. Shame is a big one. One way we get rid of shame, of course, is breaking our agreement with our compromise, but then holding our confession of the truth of what Jesus did on the cross. Many people think they break their agreement with their compromise, which means they repent but then they just wallow for months in shame and self-induced probation to pay back God for the compromise by suffering for a while.

Beloved, we cannot afford to pay God back for yesterday's sin. We need to confess it, really confess it. We did it; we call it sin. Don't make it something else and use Bible verses to prop it up as something that's OK. Call it sin, repent of it, ask for forgiveness, push delete and get right back into the journey of loving God within the hour with all of your heart as a first-class citizen in the kingdom. The devil wants you to take some journeys for a week or two or a month or two or a year or two into self-imposed spiritual probation called shame. It is a waste of time and it minimizes love. It does not help anything in our relationship with God. Bitterness; lust; ingratitude is one of the biggies.

I have sought, and certainly not to the degree that I need to or want to, but I have sought to stimulate my thinking to produce gratitude, to think about the past in ways where I see God's hand His goodness. There is a verse (Song 2:6) that says, "With [God's] right hand He embraces me," and the allegorical interpretation of the right hand of God is the things we can discern that God does. Then the Bride says, "With Your left hand You hold my head," which means I cannot discern it; it's out of sight; I cannot get my eye or mind around it. That's the activity of God we don't notice. You cannot imagine how many disasters the devil has planned for you spiritually, physically, financially that were cut off by the invisible hand of God. So I want to know His right hand. That is already a volume of material, but I want to know about His left hand, the things I have not seen. So I like to talk before the Lord and say, "Lord, talk to me. I do not need to know the date or the time that You delivered me, but I like to take time to meditate on where I would be in sin, in my physical body, in pain and torment economically if I were not obeying You and the devil had his way."

I tell you, it produces incredible gratitude when you think, "I don't quite know where I would be, but I know it would really not be good." Ingratitude is something we want to war against because ingratitude

means our minds have not been engaged in loving God in a way where we fed our spirit with the information that produces gratitude.

Paul talked in Romans 5 about the setting of the mind on the things of the Spirit. He talked in Colossians 3 about the setting of the mind. Beloved, there is a deliberate choice to put information in your mind on a regular basis. That's critical because it's the doorway to our emotions. Your emotions are what you want alive in power. That is what you feel. You cannot be touched when your emotions are alive in joy and love. I tell you, the devil's commercials have no power. But when our emotions are passive, lethargic, and depressed, the devil's commercials have a lot of power. We cannot just make our emotions red-hot, but we can steer them by what we put in our mind; but we have got to connect the two realities. Our mind is what stirs our emotions. It's the way our emotions get stirred up for good or for evil. This is a subject that absolutely fascinates me: the vastness and the power of the human mind from God's point of view and from the view of eternity. I find that as I understand a little bit, ever so little about the vastness and the power of the human mind in God's design: When God designed the human spirit, what He put in His design when He created the mind, is absolutely magnificent. The point is, He wants love from that glorious reality called the human mind, and the devil wants it. As wise people, we guard the mind because it is such a powerful potential for good or for evil in our experience.

THE MIRACULOUS GIFT OF THE ETERNAL HUMAN MIND

Now, God created us in His own image. One aspect of being created in the image of God is the vastness of the human mind. We will not understand that until eternity unfolds. Although science has studies now, that are remarkable, of how the most brilliant genius is using less than one percent of the capacity of their mind, the real truth is that they are not using a fraction of their eternal potential. That's a subject that is so out there I don't know what to do with it. Science has identified this reality. That's a neat scientific fact. I've seen a documentary or two on that over the years and think, "Wow, that's neat," but the point is not just that it's neat. The point is, if that is true, how important is the mind that we take the reigns of it and employ it in the right way. If that is true, how dear to God is the human mind and how strategic to the devil is the capture of the human mind? One of the reasons that people are pretty ambivalent about their minds is that they don't know the place it has in the human designs; how critical and how powerful it is in its potential. It's like a mysterious internal universe.

Beloved, there is a universe as vast on the inside of your mind as there is in outer space up above. There is a world as vast and complex that is eternal on the inside of you that will last forever and forever. At the very center of this creative genius is what I call the miracle of memory.

The human mind, once it is formed in the mother's womb, never stops forever. I mean billions of years from now; once the human mind is formed, it never, ever, ever stops, for billions and billions and billions of years.

Now the language of the human mind is pictures – images. There's a technology, if you will allow me to use that terminology, on the inside of you, far more sophisticated than the technology that is being developed in the nations right now. It's far more sophisticated because this technology is vast in its capacity and it has emotions attached to it. Trillions and trillions of gigabytes is what the memory of the human mind is. Billions of years from now, you will have experiences day by day, through the billions of years, and you will have recall and remembrance of it because of the vastness of your memory forever.

Now, our memory isn't so great right now, at least our conscious memory. We can remember a certain amount. Some things we like to forget because the devil torments us, but when we get our resurrected body, there will be a recall of events that are in our "hard-drive," so to speak, that are far beyond what we know. Science and medicine tells us now that our memory affects us at a subconscious level in ways we cannot fully grasp. Now once the mind begins, the pictures begin; the movie studio begins and it never goes out of business forever. You have pictures running in your mind from now to eternity and often there is a running dialogue. Not always is there a dialogue and conversation, but often. There is an eternal movie studio inside of you. It's not just true in the resurrection of the righteous: Those in hell, their memory will never go away. They will remember, billions of years from now, not just their decisions on the earth, but their torment in the billions of years as it unfolds. The movie studio in their mind will continue to activate and be processed and the conversations that will often go along with them in their mind. We have conversations that go with these pictures. You go to bed at night and your body sleeps, but your mind still has pictures. It's called dreams.

I've seen studies on this and can't really recall the actual numbers, but you only remember something like a tenth of a percent of your dreams or less. You are dreaming all night long. Everybody is. Pictures are moving. It never stops. Now, in this eternal movie studio, this isn't meant to be humorous, but you are the producer, the main actor, and the main customer. It's really true of your movie studio. You're the producer of it. You've got a lot of help: a lot of people giving advice, demonic commercials, the Word of God, evil people and good people speaking good words and bad words, but you are the ultimate producer. You are the main actor and you are the main customer of your movie studio forever. God says, "I want to be loved by that studio. I want you to create images under My leadership, My Word, and the confession of your mouth that woos your heart in the bond-fire on My goodness, My love, and My beauty." The imagination projects even the future; the imagination is future-oriented, what you want things to be. Memory is past. I believe one of the reasons God created this endless visuals is to help us commune with Him and to have ceaseless prayer forever. That was the highest reason. Undoubtedly there are many levels of reason as to why God has called this. So when we think of the human mind, I think of the glory and the vastness and the dignity of our creative design.

Do you truly know how awesome you are? You think, “Well, that’s funny.” No. David tapped that in Psalm 8. His mind was blown away by how important and how glorious the human spirit is to God. Here is the fantastic opportunity we have in the grace of God that is a wasted opportunity by many people and many believers. It’s fantastic. Here it is: Supernaturally, by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit, we can erase the bad movies and we can replace them with ones that give life and peace. In other words, movies that stir our emotions with such good feelings and pleasure and that please God and that He will reward us with forever. I want to say that again. Because of Jesus going to the cross and the giving of the Holy Spirit, you can erase the bad movies and replace them with new ones if you want to. You can do it to the degree that you want to. There’s a process. There’s a pace to it. Immediately you say, “OK, I agree; I want it all done tonight by ten o’clock.”

The Lord would say, “No. You don’t get to pick the pace of it, but you get to pick ultimately the amount of the re-filming that you want to do in your studio. I’ll let you do that, but you’ve got to do it My way through My procedure.”

It’s the most fantastic opportunity imaginable in this age, but many believers never seize the opportunity. They are just too busy coming, going, chatting, coming, going, working, resting, spending, coming and going. The Lord would say, “You have a fantastic opportunity, if you want it, because if you redo these films they will bring peace to your emotions and power supernaturally.”

Now, it is called in Romans 12 “the renewing of the mind” (Rom. 12:2). It’s by the washing and the renewing of the supernatural activity of the Spirit (Titus 3:5). The painful memories of circumstances that were done to you as a victim, the shameful memories of the circumstances you engaged in as an agent – you chose them, I chose them – they can be washed and renewed if we want them to be. They will not happen automatically, but they will in time if we want it, and their impact on your emotions, we will experience it if we want it. Paul talked about how unbelievers walk in the futility of their minds. He says their understanding is darkened, and therefore their emotions are darkened (Eph. 4:17–18). Many believers have really dark emotions. They love Jesus; they’re on their way to heaven, but between now and the resurrection when they meet the Lord they live in such downcast, dark emotions and they become acclimated to it and decide, “This is how it’s going to be.” They’ve given into it. Beloved, we don’t need to give in to darkened understanding and darkened emotions. God has called us to love Him with our mind and if we do that (Eph. 4:23), we can be renewed in the atmosphere of our mind.

The spirit of our mind is the whole atmosphere, the whole aphis of our inner life. It is a supernatural possibility to love God with our mind. I want this. Of course you want this, but just as I am going a few minutes here, say in your heart, “Lord, I want this. I want to supernaturally love You with my mind. I’m not going to wait for my emotions to be stirred up because I cannot directly make them be stirred up.” Some religious contexts will get everybody going and stir up the fervor. But that is not a supernatural

movement on their heart. That's not necessarily good or bad, but it's not the same as the Holy Spirit's activity. There is a Holy Spirit activity and I want it. Look at what it says in Romans 8:6: "To be spiritually minded is the anointing of life." I love this! It is the anointing of life. It is anointing. In front of life put the word "anointing;" and the word peace put "feels good on the inside." To the spiritually-minded, not every minute of every day, but it could be progressively more, the rule of their emotional life would be peace. That is the supernatural. It is a light on the inside. It's not perfect until the age to come, but beloved, I want more of this.

You cannot fake out the Holy Spirit. It's not the sort of thing you do when everyone is watching. Then later you drink in darkness and hope it balances out as mostly light. It doesn't work that way. You cannot fake the Holy Spirit out. You cannot fake out angels and demons. You can fake out people, but you cannot fake out the Holy Spirit. He says, "I am not punishing you; I am just honoring your free will. If you want darkness, I will let you have it. I don't want you to have darkness, but I will not violate your freewill. I'm here if you want the other" It's not an issue of punishment. It's an issue of the Holy Spirit honoring the free will of the believer. It's not the sort of thing where you invest in light a few hours a week or a few days a week and then on the weekends you do darkness and hope it balances out later.

Light is a twenty-four/seven venture. Beloved, there is nothing like life and peace. Life means anointing of the presence of God on the emotions. It means more than that, but it includes that. This is what I want and this is what you want. This is what Jesus wants. He wants to become our first thought. This is spiritual, romantic language but most of you will follow it. When we first begin to seek the Lord, thinking of Jesus is an effort. "I'm going to think of Jesus if it's the last thing I do, and we're just in darkness, guilt, shame, lust, pride, anger, debating with our enemies, and we're going to get them back. Oh yeah, Jesus. Yeah, that's right. I love You, Jesus," or, "Oh, this is so much effort to love You. I love Jesus. Ah, I am going to get that guy back. I cannot wait to go to that party. I feel so bad about yesterday. I feel so rotten about tomorrow. I'm so afraid about yesterday. Oh, yes. Jesus, I love You. I love You."

It's such an effort for Him to be in our mind. But the time comes where the spiritually-minded life is in peace, and He is the first thought. I don't mean He is the only thought. I don't know that anybody has that until the resurrection, but when they take that deep breath there is an "I love You" in their spirit. There's a feeling of His pleasure looking down upon it as the first thought. They get off-track; they'll get into a bad mindset, but often the first rebound is to think on God and interact with Him. Beloved, that is what it means for the spiritually-minded for their minds to be in life and peace. That is within your reach in this lifetime, for Him to be the holy daydream. You're driving, you're walking down to the shuttle bus, you're coming, you're going, you're waiting at the coffee shop, you're in between something, He is the daydream of your heart. Meaning, "Oh, that I could have an anointing to love Him," you picture yourself, you dream, and you are in the drama. The drama is not that you are the hero

before men, but you are anointed with love and you are captured with Him. That is a holy daydream. He wants to be that. It's possible in this life. I don't mean every minute of every day, but He can be our first thought in our daydream, the sweet escape. That weariness of lust, pride, fear, bitterness, and "Oh, they're going to get me. I know they're going to. It's going to be bad." That fearful, "Oh, I've got so many bad desires, I've got so many fears, and the manipulating, posturing, positioning, conniving, all the ways the human spirit moves, there's a sweet escape from that." That escape is into this thing called the Spirit of life: life and peace.

He is our great getaway. One of the songs that Misty sings in her worship sets: "He is our great escape," our great getaway. It's not a retreat from real life, that's not the point. It's a retreat from fear, lust, and anxiety into presence. You take a deep breath and you're thinking of Him and you have positive thoughts and light about how He is thinking of you.

Beloved, we're going to pray, and then we're going to come back to the notes. Father, we want this now. Lord, we want this lifestyle. This is my inheritance, to love You with all of my mind in this way. I want it; I want it, Lord. This is my inheritance, in Jesus' name.

If we're not pursuing it – none of us do it; we all come short – our love for God with all of our mind is fragile, but if we stay with it, beloved, our mind is so powerful it is very, very dangerous unharnessed by the Holy Spirit, even for a believer. I'm not trying to scare you, but I'm trying to sober you. I've been in ministry for over thirty years, and I have watched many on-fire believers in their twenties, twenty to twenty-five, by the time they're forty-five addicted to immorality, drunkenness and bitterness, and that thing back in their twenties is a faint memory, because they didn't take into serious consideration the power and the danger of their mind unharnessed. They just went along. I've seen this for so many years. I hate this: this false doctrine of grace that makes people feel comfortable in compromise, and makes them feel good about not going hard after God, saying, "Well, it's grace." It's the "chill out, go with the flow, whatever happens, happens, and if I connect with God, I do. Hey, it's grace, grace, grace." I have seen so many in that mindset for so many years; they end up ten and twenty years later not calculating the power of the danger of their human mind, how powerful it is and how powerful demons are. I want to preach the grace of God in a way that gives us power and confidence to forget our shame from yesterday. We have confidence, we repented, and within the hour we have confidence to go full-blast for God. That is grace and we feel motivated to do it, even though we don't necessarily feel a lot, but we're motivated. Beloved, that is the grace of God: the power, the motivation, and the courage to go hard, not the confidence to be comfortable while you're compromising. I've seen that version of grace for years. It is absolutely dark. I want to say that unequivocally. It is dark. People proclaim it thinking of it as cool, and liberty; there is no liberty except on His terms. It is the only liberty that exists.

I have known thousands of believers over the years because for thirty years I have pastured a church of, almost always, several thousand people. So I have always had a large group of folks and watched them over the years. When I look back, I am heartsick over the majority that I have witnessed that were on fire for five years, and didn't stay the course because they got into a deceived concept of what grace was and what it was not. It is about the power of the mind. The mind is so, so powerful. It is criminal. I want to say this as a shepherd. I know that is a little startling, but that's the point. It is criminal, the waste of the human mind that is happening across the earth, especially in the body of Christ, because we have the Holy Spirit and the Word of God and we believe in it. It is criminal, the power of the human mind to be renewed, the Holy Spirit's willingness, the power of the Word of God, and the believers who love Jesus but never get around to stopping the clock, to sit down or put a pause on all that they're doing on a regular basis. Your mind is too powerful. It is too dynamic. It is awesome. The opportunity is too awesome to just let it go by.

The close relationship between knowing truth and loving God: what I want you to know. "It's pretty good." No. It says, actually, truthfully, the same thing I have been saying over and over. (That's my gift, is repetition). It says the same thing, but with a little different angle here or there. Why did I write it? It just felt so good to write. I didn't need to, it's just like I want to say it again. So there it is. So you can read that on your own if that interests you, later.

We're just going to spend a minute on these last two points. One is loving God with all of our mind related to the past, and the next one is loving God with all of our mind related to picturing the future.

Both of them are dimensions of loving God with your mind that don't happen automatically. You have to engage over and over again in love with the mind in these two arenas. They are vast. Now we love God with our mind in the past. We forget. I've got several principles here. They're very simple principles, but I have found that many people live life in a hurry and miss the simplest things. It's quite simple. There are things we're to forget through the grace of God in the past and there are things we're to remember. Our natural response is to remember what we're supposed to forget and to forget what we're supposed to remember. The devil works overtime to see that we're motivated in that way.

So you can read that on your own. With twelve sessions on this, we've got a lot more areas to cover on "Loving God with All of Your Heart and Mind: The First Commandment Restored to First Place." There's so much that I'm leaving out a bit of it for you to study on your own, if you're interested in this.

We're talking about the past: the miracle of memory. Here is what I want to put in your mind, this idea: the past is not just an essential truth about who we are, it is a very dynamic reality about our eternal life. There is this supernatural, eternal miracle of memory. Now, let's look at it on just the righteous side so that I don't confuse you. I'm talking about righteous memory. We will be living for billions of years

from now in the gratitude of events that happened the day before. I hope this isn't too philosophical. I'm not really a philosopher, but you only live in the present for the ten seconds you're in the present and then it is forever in your memory. I am only in this moment for a second, but this moment will forever be part of my testimony with God, where I am agreeing with God and loving His Word, and that is where we are at a billion years from now, another billion and another billion and your memory, your righteous memory, and God's memory of your deeds and your love are very real to Him. They will be a very real part of your entire life. As a matter of fact, the judgment seat of Christ is about your memory. It's about what happened yesterday. Your past is huge. I'm talking about our righteous past. Our unrighteous past – you know the answer – we deal with with the cross. I skipped that part; it needs to be said, but you know the basic truths of confession and applying the blood of Jesus.

What I am trying to grab your mind with is the value and the prominence that the past has meaning and I want to remember it in a right way. I want my mind engaged. I want to take advantage of this dimension of my creative design. For a lot of folks, the past is just the past. Now, negatively that is good, but positively they don't think much about it. They don't love God in context to it. They don't relate to God in it and over and over in the Bible it says, "Remember, remember, remember," talking about the good things that God did, and even our responses to Him. We are not to have prideful confidence because of our past dedication, but we are to have gratitude based on memory. Anyway, I just want to point that out to you. The devil wants to cut across this. He wants our past to be a whip against us.

LOVING GOD WITH OUR MINDS BY ENVISIONING AND COMMITTING TO OUR ETERNAL DESTINY

God created the past to fuel us in gratitude forever. This is the last point, loving God by picturing the future. That is another mental dimension of love. It is a dimension that you choose or you don't choose, meaning it is not done for you. It is not automatic. If you do it a little bit, you get the benefit a little. If you do it a lot, you get a lot of benefit. It is up to you, but it does directly affect your capacity to love at the emotional level with all of your heart.

Loving God with our mind, and picturing the future, is called hope. We love Jesus today related to how we think about our future. Beloved, your feelings about God today are dynamically related to your picture of the future, whether your picture is clear or unclear. I'm not talking about your ability to picture how big your ministry will be, who you will be married to, how life will work. I'm not talking about the circumstantial details. I'm not talking about picturing that. There is a little value in having goals in those areas, but that's not what I'm talking about right now. I am talking about picturing the way you carry your heart with God ten years from now and a hundred years from now, in the resurrection, because you will be alive for billions and billions of years. You will be around in a hundred years, a million years, and a trillion years. Why not have a vision for it? It is you, the same you. It's not going to be a different you in a hundred years – it's the same you.

God gave you the right to rule your own spirit and choose to engage yourself in what you want to be at the heart level with God ten years, twenty years, thirty years from now. In Lam. 1, Israel did not consider her destiny, therefore her collapse was awesome. We need to consider our destiny. My destiny is more than what I will be in ministry, what I will be in relationships, with my family and friends; it is more than what I will be economically. My future, my destiny, is also what I will be in the anointing at the heart-level with God. I am talking about picturing my future of my inner man. Those other dimensions are important, too. You cannot plan quite as precisely on circumstantial issues about the future, though there is a value in planning it. Hold it with an open hand, with confidence in the Word of God; plan your future for your inner man with great confidence that God wants to give you the anointing for love and meekness, if you want it.

What we believe about our future and our commitments to our future dynamically influence our capacity to love God right now, today. What I am doing at fifty-three years old when I'm thinking of 63, 73, 83, the Lord willing, I'm picturing my heart being at a higher place of connectedness. I picture that clearly. Not every day but all day, many, many times. I started doing that when I was eighteen, nineteen. I asked, "When I'm thirty... will I ever make to thirty?" Thirty seemed like so far out there it was never, ever going to happen, but I remember when I was in college they would say, "Thirty, wow, gee whiz, man." I said, "What are you talking about? When I'm thirty I want to love the Word. I want an anointing on my spirit."

So my picture of my heart ten and twenty years from now really affects what I'm going to do tomorrow afternoon and Sunday afternoon and Monday afternoon and Tuesday afternoon. It really does. Your picture of the future will determine how you spend time tomorrow. Without a clear picture of the future, what you want in the inner man, your time tomorrow is easy to waste, but with a clear picture, you're going somewhere. "Tomorrow, for four hours, for eight hours, for twelve hours, whatever... you've got twelve hours." Well, actually, I have got twenty-four hours tomorrow. It matters what you do in your increments of time; it really matters if you've got a vision for the future.

We live carelessly with our time without a clear picture of what we want to be. Now, the famous verse that you all know is, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18, KJV). That is the King James, but the New King James says it like many other translations: "Without a revelation," or without a vision, a life vision, "the people cast off restraint." Now the King James says they perish. What it means is, they live without discipline. If you don't have a vision for tomorrow, you can waste time today. If you have a vision for tomorrow, an hour today matters to you. I don't mean you're panicked over an hour, but you're careful about an hour. I don't want to throw away an hour, ever. That doesn't mean I want to be highly productive in ministry every hour. I want to rest well. I want to exercise. I want to relate

well, but I want to spend all of my hours doing one of those five or ten things with purpose or meaning, even if it's resting.

I want to rest so I have strength to pursue. I don't want to pursue God and have a ministry so I get enough money so I can rest. It's exactly the opposite. I want to rest so I can run hard the majority of my life. I want to rest well. I want to eat well so I have strength to fast and pray later on that week. I want to give you a vision of resting so you can have strength to be focused and alert for the majority of your life, not the other way around. Not, "Let's get into the big time so finally we can siesta the rest of our life." No. It's exactly the opposite. You rest in order to have strength to run hard. It is the very opposite of how the American mindset is in some sectors of our nation.

Our commitments define who we are. Where do you want to be at the heart level? Do you want to know the Word deeper? I mean, specifically. What books of the Bible do you want to know in ten years? You want a spirit of prayer? How much do you want to feel God in ten years? What are you doing today about that? If you don't have a clear picture about tomorrow, you have an identity crisis today, I assure you. There is a great identity crisis, not just in the body of Christ, but in the whole human family: They don't know what they want to be tomorrow. They know that they want to be millionaires, they want to be famous, and they want their lives to be easy. They do know that, but for ninety-nine percent of people it isn't going to happen. So they're thinking, "I don't know what I want to be." I am not doing nothing. Beloved, you don't have to have any type of circumstantial set-up in a unique way for you to succeed in life at the heart level with God.

Our capacity to love God today is related to what is engaged in our mind about tomorrow. Viktor Frankl was a famous psychologist who went through the Nazi concentration camps. Freud was famous and Freud's psychology was this: "The past, the past, the past; everything about you today is formed by the past," and he really overemphasized it. I think that our emotions today are affected by our past, but Freud overdid it. Viktor Frankl had a different idea. After Nazi Germany in World War II he analyzed as a psychologist two different categories of Holocaust survivors. He put them in two categories: those that were emotionally stable and those that were not. His conclusion was that the predominant factor of those that were stable had nothing to do with the amount of torment they walked in. It is not what happened to them in the past. It is what they believed about their future. That was the predominant issue of their stability. That's just purely natural.

My point is that what you believe you will be ten, twenty, thirty years from now at the heart level with God will dynamically focus and hone your life and give you purpose and settle the identity issue regardless of how big your ministry ever. It is not about the size of your ministry. Go for the size of the heart and the ministry will take care of itself. Our vision for the future includes setting our mind on goals for spiritual development. What are your future goals for your spiritual development? Do you have

concrete goals? What are they? Are they written down? Does anybody else know them? Are you accountable to anybody? Can you articulate them, or are they like, “Well, I want to know God the best I can between now and then?” I tell you, that is not a goal. That goal will keep you in ambivalence for ten more years. It needs to be clear; it needs to be concrete: “I want to be a man of the Word. I want a greater anointing for humility. I want to feel your presence. I want to know the book of Psalms. I want to know John. I want to know the life of David. I am going to know these things.” I said these when I was in my twenties: “I’m going to know these by the end of my twenties. I had better get to work!”

What do you believe about yourself tomorrow? Beloved, I will end with that.

These are practical, practical ways you love God with your mind. I say this over and over, but I think it is worth saying. It’s the ninth-year anniversary; it’s twenty-five years ago this year from when the Lord spoke audibly and said, “Twenty-four hour prayer.” We had the sign on the wall for nearly sixteen years: “Twenty-four hour prayer.” People said, “What is that?” I said, “I don’t really know.” Nine years ago we started it. The Lord’s blessing has been on it in various ways, and so I run into people (because I’ve known thousands of people through the years) who say, “This must be your dream come true.”

I tell them, “No. My main dream is not IHOP–KC. That is my assignment. I love my assignment. It is hard, but I love it. My dream is what happens in my heart that nobody can touch.” If IHOP–KC gets really big, or really little, my dream never changes. I say, “No; this is not my dream. If it was my dream it would burn me out, because I would overdo it or under-do it or compensate in weird ways.”

Beloved, our dream, the thing we set our mind on, to love Him with our mind, is the plan in our heart to walk in the first commandment as first place in our life.

Loving God with all your mind. Amen. Let’s stand.



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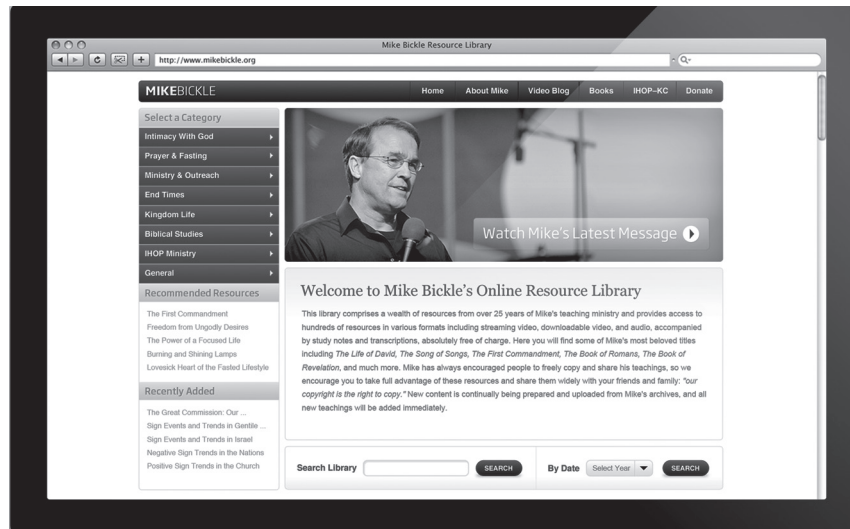
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