

## ***Session 4: Loving God with All Our Mind***

### **I. LOVING GOD WITH ALL OUR HEART REQUIRES LOVING HIM WITH OUR MIND**

- A. God created us to love Him in four spheres of our life, which are our heart (affections), soul (personality), mind (thoughts), and strength (resources), because He loves us this way. We can only love God with all our heart by seeking to love Him with our mind, soul, and strength in practical ways. This session will define some of what it means to love God with our mind.
- <sup>30</sup> ***You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. (Mk. 12:30)***
- B. Loving God with our mind includes meditating on the Word as we cry for the spirit of revelation of God's heart and ways, so that we may come into more and more agreement with who He is and how He views us and leads us. Loving God includes choosing to forget or remember. It takes a process that we must commit to by continually and deliberately feeding our mind on truth.
- <sup>13</sup> ***One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward. (Phil. 3:13)***
- <sup>17</sup> ***Beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles. (Jude 17)***
- <sup>32</sup> ***You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free [liberate the heart]. (Jn. 8:32)***
- C. Paul's heart came alive with loving fascination with God by meditating on Jesus and His plans.
- <sup>33</sup> ***Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments [decisions] and His ways past finding out! (Rom. 11:33)***
- D. Moses cried out to see God's glory to understand God and His ways (Ex. 33:13).
- <sup>18</sup> ***And he [Moses] said, "Please, show me Your glory." (Ex. 33:18)***
- <sup>7</sup> ***He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel. (Ps. 103:5-7)***
- E. When we seek revelation of God as one who seeks hidden treasure, we find delight in Him.
- <sup>2</sup> ***Apply your heart to understanding; <sup>3</sup> yes, if you cry out ... and lift up your voice for understanding, <sup>4</sup> if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; <sup>5</sup> then you will understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. (Prov. 2:2-5)***
- <sup>16</sup> ***I do not cease ... making mention of you in my prayers <sup>17</sup> that the ... Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. (Eph. 1:16-17)***
- F. Setting our mind on loving God includes removing the wrong mindset that diminishes our love, such as shame, bitterness, lust, and ingratitude and filling out mind with truth.
- <sup>5</sup> ***Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. (Rom. 8:5)***
- <sup>2</sup> ***Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. (Col. 3:2)***

## **II. UNDERSTANDING THE VASTNESS AND POWER OF THE HUMAN MIND**

- A. God created us after His own image and likeness (Gen. 1:26). One aspect of this is seen in the vastness of the human mind, which will be seen as eternity unfolds. It is like a mysterious internal universe with a memory more powerful than a computer with trillions of gigabytes.
- B. The language of the mind is images. It is an internal movie screen that provides us with pictures. Our memory is a vast reservoir of near endless visuals. Imagination was given to us by God to visualize His truth and to interact with Him in a deep and continual way throughout eternity.
- C. We are constantly in a movie and conversation in our mind. The Lord created us this way for ceaseless dialogue with Him. So much of our life is lived in our minds, because we can never turn our minds off. It is the continual reality and stream of our life. When our body sleeps, our mind stays active, dreaming through night.
- D. Our mind defines so much of who we are and how we love. We can express ourselves in many ways, but still only a very small percentage of what we think can be expressed and known.
- E. Because of Jesus giving us the Holy Spirit, we can supernaturally erase wrong movies and replace them with new ones that bring us life and peace. This is called renewing our mind.

<sup>2</sup> ***Be transformed [emotionally] by the renewing of your mind. (Rom. 12:2)***

<sup>5</sup> ***He saved [delivered] us, through the washing ... and renewing of the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5)***

<sup>17</sup> ***You should no longer walk as the ... the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,<sup>18</sup> having their understanding darkened ...<sup>23</sup> Be renewed in the spirit of your mind. (Eph. 4:17-23)***

- F. To love God with all our mind is a supernatural possibility. Through meditation, we can take the reins of our mind and write the script of the movie that we continually watch within. We cannot shut down the images in our mind, but we can redirect them.
- G. As our mind is renewed, the Spirit releases supernatural activity in our mind called life and peace. In this, Jesus becomes our first thought—our holy daydream, or our sweet escape from lust, pride, and fear as we retreat into His beauty and love. Jesus desires to be our resting place, or getaway—the one we think about when we take a deep breath or while driving alone.  
<sup>6</sup> ***For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Rom. 8:6)***
- H. To seek to love God with all our mind is glorious. If the mind is not engaging in loving God but seeking to be filled with “truth,” then this vast power and reality within is very dangerous to us.
- I. So much life and time is wasted in our mind. It is tragic how many hours the average person wastes away in dreaming of things not based in truth.

### **III. THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP OF KNOWING TRUTH AND LOVING GOD**

- A. To love God with all our mind involves taking time to fill our mind with God's Word and to agree with biblical paradigms of God. This involves refusing lies about Jesus and the truth, and refusing to put anything in our minds that diminishes love for Jesus and quenches the Spirit.  
*<sup>5</sup> Casting down arguments [against truth] ... that exalt itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor. 10:5)*
- B. Agreement with God is the way in which the Spirit awakens love in us. He who knows much about God loves God more and more. Knowing truth and loving God are deeply connected. Love itself is a deep type of knowledge. Loving God is continually refueled by encountering truth over and over. Jesus is the Truth, so meditating on truth is essential to all growth in light (love).
- C. Our thinking is the fuel from which love or anguish arises. Truth stirs powerful emotions of love for God in us by being set aflame by the Holy Spirit. Thinking and thoughts compels us and opens our emotions to supernatural influences, whether of God or of demons.
- D. What we put in our mind and what we do in our actions forms our memory. Both the Holy Spirit and demons use our memory to form our desires and emotional makeup. Both good and evil begin with thoughts. Evil thinking separates us from the Spirit and good thinking unifies us.
- E. When we think on what the Spirit thinks, then love is awakened in us and makes our emotions feel alive with holy desire. The Spirit uses memory to release the sweetness of God in us.

### **IV. LOVING GOD WITH ALL OUR MIND: VIEWING OUR PAST ACCORDING TO TRUTH**

- A. Our ability to love God is related to how we view our past (negatively or positively). Negative experiences leave many in bitterness and with wrong paradigms of God and themselves.
- B. Discerning the truth about God's goodness in our past produces gratitude, which is the foundation of loving God. How we feel is dramatically related to how we view our past. It either locks or unlocks our heart in reference to receiving love from God and returning it.
- C. Our capacity to love is shaped by what we think about our past. Many are trapped and controlled by their past. The Spirit wants to reveal the places we are chained to our past by bitterness, shame, and wrong paradigms of God (that subtly accuse Him). The Spirit wants to reveal where we have misinterpreted crisis events and disappointments by lies instead of the truth.
- D. Our thinking about the past can affect us positively if we remember the truth about God's goodness toward us in forgiving, delivering, and providing for us. This awakens gratitude.
- E. What God did in the past gives us insight and faith for what He will do in our future (Deut. 32:7).

- F. Where is the past? It exists in our mind. Nothing negative is just forgotten. It must be confessed, forgiven, and healed if it is to lose its negative power over us.
- G. The judgment seat of Christ is all about evaluating the past (1 Cor. 3:11-15). Over 99.9 percent of our life is in the past in the form of decisions we have made to love God and His rewards for them. This is not only true now, but our decisions in eternity will continually form who we are in God in the eternal present. Thus, a part of loving God will always be in how we process our past.
- H. Satan's plan is to cause the negative events of our past to remain alive in our memory as a destructive force and the positive realities of God's goodness to be forgotten. The past is not simply a harmless past if it remains alive in our minds in a way contrary to the mind of Christ.
- I. In the case of our sin, the process of being unchained from the past requires acknowledging it and declaring war on it by repentance. What would have been different if Adam would have acknowledged his sin instead of blaming Eve, and what if Eve would have accepted her role in sinning instead of blaming the devil (Gen. 3:1-7)? Things might have been different with Cain.
- J. We must insist on holding the truth of receiving free forgiveness and His affection.  
*<sup>10</sup> The accuser ... accused them before our God ... <sup>11</sup> They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives. (Rev. 12:10-11)*
- K. We cannot just forget the past because the past has a voice. We must triumph over it by the truth. It continually looks for a remedy. Satan uses scenes from our past to accuse us with half truths. His only grounds for accusation is unconfessed sin. Our prison is made up of things from our past. The construction materials of the prison Satan wants us in are our failures and bitterness.
- L. The accusation of the past must be silenced by submitting it to Jesus' work on the cross. Many close their eyes and live in a museum and prison of their past failures and defeats.
- M. In the case of our being mistreated or enduring disappointments, we must interpret them according to truth as seen through Christ's eyes. Offense from disappointment can paralyze our spiritual life, causing us to blame and accuse others, which hinders our walk with God. The past attacks our confidence and therefore our love for God, as well as our destiny in God. We must face disappointment God's way in order to be free to grow in love for God.
- N. We must entrust our enemies into the hands of Jesus' power and wise and loving leadership.  
*<sup>5</sup> Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth. (Ps. 31:5)*  
*<sup>23</sup> When He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him [the Father] who judges righteously. (1 Pet. 2:23)*  
*<sup>19</sup> Do not avenge yourselves ... "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. (Rom. 12:19)*

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

- A. We love Jesus today, related to thinking right things about our future. What we believe about our future and the commitments we make to it dynamically influence our capacity to love God.  
<sup>9</sup> *She [Israel] did not consider her destiny; therefore her collapse was awesome. (Lam. 1:9)*
- B. We live carelessly with our time without a clear picture of what we want to be in the future. Without a vision or clear life plan, the people perish or live without restraint in their time.  
<sup>18</sup> *Where there is no revelation [life vision], the people cast off restraint [discipline]. (Prov. 29:18)*  
<sup>18</sup> *Where there is no vision [life vision], the people perish. (Prov. 29:18, KJV).*
- C. Our commitments define who we are. We have an identity crisis without clearly defined commitments to the future. People embrace discipline much easier with a clear vision of what their future can be in God. What we believe about where we are going forms how we live today.
- D. Our capacity to love is related to where we have been but also where we are going. Hope is to be anchored in the future. What we commit ourselves to in the future affects who we are now. Viktor Frankl (1905-1997), a psychologist who survived Nazi concentration camps, rejected Freud's over-emphasis on the past as being the primary force that forms us. After the war, he analyzed Holocaust survivors, categorizing them into two broad categories: those who were emotionally stable and those who were not. The predominate factor was not what they experienced during the concentration camps, but rather what they believed about their future.
- E. Our vision for the future includes setting our mind on goals for our spiritual development not just on our future careers and ministries. People with a vision to grow spiritually use their time and money differently. The lack of vision for our spiritual attainment hurts us in the present tense. To be ambivalent about the future has negative effects leading people to passivity and lethargy.
- F. What are your future goals for your spiritual development? Some have no concrete goals. In other words, they lack a clear picture in their mind as to what they are determined to be. Stephen Covey wrote in *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Leaders*: "One habit is to have a clear picture of the end product before you begin to act."<sup>1</sup>
- G. What are you determined to be in God? What do you believe about what you can be spiritually? Who are the examples from history that you feed your mind on for inspiration? Paul prayed that the saints would be filled with the knowledge of God's will for them (Col. 1:9-10; 4:12; Eph. 1:17-18) because he knew the power of a vision and commitment to their future. Our specific action plan to attain these spiritual goals includes time in the Word and prayer with regular fasting. I recommend reading ten chapters of the NT every day (thus, completing the NT once a month), praying in the Spirit one hour a day, and fasting two days a week.

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Covey, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Leaders* ((PUBLISHER'S CITY: PUBLISHER NAME, YEAR), PAGE NUMBER

**VI. THE CALL TO FORGET AND REMEMBER: UNDERSTANDING THE BALANCE**

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

*<sup>4</sup> If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so ... <sup>5</sup> concerning the law, a Pharisee ... <sup>6</sup> concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless ... <sup>8</sup> I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness ... but that which is through faith in Christ ... <sup>13</sup> One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward. (Phil. 3:4-13)*

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

*<sup>17</sup> Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more. (Heb. 10:17)*

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

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

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

- D. We are to remember God's promises to us and wonderful works on our behalf (1 Chr. 16:12).

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

*<sup>8</sup> Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and His wonderful works. (Ps. 107:8)*