

**With All Your Mind  
Matthew 22:34-38  
March 21, 2021**

**Matthew 22:34-38 But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" 37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 "This is the first and great commandment.**

If you were with us during our first service this morning, Pastor Andrew spoke on the topic of loving God with all your Heart - He did a wonderful teaching on how we need to love God with a passion - with a devotion - with all we have.

During this service, we are going to focus our attention on the final phrase of Jesus' instruction - that we are to love God with all of our mind - Often times when we study a passage on Sunday mornings, we dive deep into a single passage and mine it for all that is there.

It is sort of like visiting a city and walking into one museum and spending hours looking at EACH EXHIBIT of that one building - Well, today we are going to do just the opposite - We are going to visit a city like New York - but we are going to climb to the top of the Empire State Building and get the view of the whole city from 1,450 up in the air!

We are going to look at 6 ways the NT teaches us to love God with all our mind - Each of these 6 exhortations shows us a different way we can bring our minds into submission to the Will of God!

In Biblical teaching, there is always a close relationship between OBEDIENCE AND LOVE - Jesus said, in **John 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.** - So to love God with all of our Minds is to bring our mind into a PLACE OF OBEDIENCE!

This morning we want to see just how THE NT WRITERS ENCOURAGE us to just that - Let me also warn you at the outset - When you look at a large city from high above, it is easy to get overwhelmed by the vast development before your eyes - With so much in front of you, IT IS EASY to see nothing in particular.

I want to warn you in advance, we are cover a lot of ground as we peer at this topic from HIGH ABOVE - and this is what I want you to do - As you look on at each one of these 7 COMMANDS, I want you to ask God, “**Is there one or two that are particularly important to my life RIGHT NOW?**” - This will help you to see both the FOREST AND THE TREES - both the CITY & THE BUILDINGS!

So, with this in mind (Pune intended) - Let’s first see where we are going:

**There are 6 Ways to Love God with all our minds:**

- 1. Renew our mind**
- 2. Humble our mind**
- 3. Look Forward with our mind**
- 4. Focus my mind above**
- 5. Think soundly with my mind**
- 6. Protect my mind**

First, we need to **RENEW OUR MIND!** - Romans 12:2 is one of the most important verses in the Bible when it comes to OUR LIVES CHANGING in a way that pleases God - **How does it happen?**

**Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

Renewing our minds is a TWO STEP PROCESS - it starts when we make the decision to stop going with THE FLOW OF THIS WORLD - When we realize that THINKING LIKE THE WORLD THINKS is often contrary to what pleases God!

From our birth, we are influenced to think as the world thinks - TO VALUE what the world values - to SEEK AFTER what the world pursues - TV shows, commercials, radio, billboards, school classrooms, and sadly, sometimes even our parents, TEACH US TO THINK in ways that are in total opposition to the way GOD DESIRES for us to think!

So, I first have to realize that much of **my thinking does not please God** - many of my VALUES AND PRIORITIES have been forged by worldly thought - not Godly thought!

But, second, I then have to TRANSFORM MY MIND - I have to ACTIVELY CHANGE the way I think! - I have to work to get my thinking in line with the Word of God - I have to ALIGN MY PRIORITIES - I have to begin VALUING WHAT GOD VALUES - I have to begin to see life through the prism of Scripture!

This is a process THAT TAKES TIME - I have to learn HOW GOD THINKS - in other words, I have to LEARN HIS WORD - this is why a steady DIET OF SCRIPTURE each Sunday morning is so important - Why we go verse by verse through the Word - BY doing these things, you are learning more than just FACTS & STORIES - You are learning what MATTERS TO GOD!

You are learning HIS PRIORITIES - You are seeing HOW GOD THINKS - this is especially true as we have gone through the Gospels - Each week we are getting a STRONG DOSE of the THOUGHTS & ACTIONS of Jesus - God in the flesh!

But NEXT, you then have to take what you have learned and ALLOW THOSE THOUGHT PROCESSES to become your thought processes - This is the RENEWING of the mind! - This is the TRANSFORMATION that God wants to take place in our lives!

When it does, notice the result - **you will prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God** - You begin to LIVE OUT THE WILL of God - You don't have to SEEK FOR IT - You just live it out as you THINK ABOUT LIFE as God thinks about it - You will live out God's will as you PRIORITIZE YOUR LIFE just as God desires you to do!

So, first, we need to RENEW OUR MIND - but second, we need to **Humble our mind!**

**Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.**

One of the FIRST THINGS that has to change, (if I want to LOVE GOD with all of my mind), is that I must BREAK MY PRIDE & SELFISHNESS - Notice the TWO ENEMIES Paul mentions here: **(1) selfish ambition - this is WANTING WHAT IS BEST for me!**

This usually comes AT THE EXPENSE of everyone else - I'm going to get WHAT I want & WHEN I want it! - and if I have to TRAMPLE over you to get it, then I will - The message is very clear: **You are not as important as I am!** - This is SELFISH AMBITION!

**(2) Conceit - thinking I'm the Best!** - The Greek word could be translated "Self-Esteem" - This is the buzzword of Modern Psychology - the idea is that you have to THINK HIGHLY of yourself if you are going to live a healthy life!

Paul would argue just the opposite - Our problem is not that we think too little of ourselves - it is that we think WAY TO HIGH of ourselves! - Paul advocates that IF WE WANT TO LIVE SPIRITUALLY HEALTHY lives, then we actually need to **"esteem others better than ourselves"**.

His thinking, (inspired by the Holy Spirit), is that we are FAR BETTER OFF from a MENTAL HEALTH standpoint, if we will STOP THINKING we are the smartest, most important person in the room - and we start VALUING OTHERS! - Elevating THEIR WORTH!

This is RADICAL THINKING today - Yet, this is AN IMPORTANT ASPECT to loving God with our mind - God HATES PRIDE - He loves it when we CONSIDER THE NEEDS of others - If we are going to LOVE HIM, He wants us to VALUE & ELEVATE OTHERS above ourselves!

Think about Jesus DYING ON THE CROSS - Who became the FOCAL POINT of His attention as He was suffering and dying? - It was a CONVICTED THIEF dying beside Him - and HIS WEeping MOTHER KNELLING before Him!

This is the HEART OF GOD! - Placing the needs of others AHEAD OF MY OWN! - You want to love God with all your mind? - Lessen your thoughts about yourself and ELEVATE THE NEEDS of others!

The THIRD WAY we can love God with all our mind is to **Look forward with our mind!** - I must keep PRESSING MY MIND FORWARD TOWARDS those things that lie ahead - those things God wants to accomplish in my life - I can't get BOGGED DOWN in the failure or the victories of the past!

**Philippians 3:13-15 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.**

We need to have THIS MIND - What mind? - One that is FOCUSSED ON THE FUTURE - One huge enemy of SPIRITUAL GROWTH is to let our minds and memory stay focussed on the past! - And I see this all the time in Christian circles!

People are always talking about what God DID WHEN THEY WERE TEENAGERS - or what God did 5 years ago when they were REALLY ON FIRE for Him - Well, my question is WHAT HAPPENED? - Why is God not working in your life that way today?

Why are we LIVING ON THE SPIRITUAL VICTORIES of 25 or 30 years ago? - I want to be a person who is EXCITED ABOUT what God is doing today! - What He is doing this morning in the lives of His people!

Past victories are just that - PAST VICTORIES - God is all about the future - and this is where OUR MINDS NEED TO BE FOCUSED!

OTHERS ARE TRAPPED in the past because of their PREVIOUS FAILURES - They just can't move on from a BAD DECISION they made 10 years ago - Yes, THAT DECISION came with a HEAVY COST - maybe you LOST THE RESPECT of your family - maybe you lost that ministry you had at the time - maybe you even LOST YOUR WAY! - But when are you going to LET IT GO and get on with your life?

**God's Forgiveness is all about LETTING GO OF OUR FAILURES & MOVING ON** - And He can't do NEW THINGS in your life until you let go of the old failures!

Sure, there are occasions when we have to SPEND TIME IN THE SPIRITUAL PENALTY BOX - We need time to EXPERIENCE REPENTANCE - And to BARE FRUITS of repentance - but for many of you, that time has passed! - It is time to GET UP - it is time to MOVE ON!

So, we need to LET GO OF THE PAST - both WINS & LOSES! - Paul says he has learned TO PRESS ON - **The implication is that leaving the past behind is difficult** - PRESSING ON is hard work!

But, if we are going to LOVE GOD with all our mind, our mind MUST BE IN A PLACE where God can continue to use us! - And Paul tells us that this TAKES SOME MATURITY - and it does!

Leaving VICTORIES OR FAILURES requires me to see that the ONLY THING I CAN CHANGE TODAY, is the future - I may have blown it with my children in the past, but I can work to HEAL THOSE RELATIONSHIPS TODAY.

I may have SQUANDERED MINISTRY opportunities in the past - but I can ENJOY NEW ONES IN THE FUTURE if I allow myself to GROW AND MOVE ON - I may have been ON FIRE FOR GOD in the past - but now I need to SEEK THAT FIRE of the Holy Spirit again TODAY.

Let's have a mind that is LOOKING TO THE FUTURE - one that is FOCUSED FOWARD to the new experiences God wants to have with me and you! - THIS IS NECESSARY if I want to love God with all my mind!

Fourth, I need to **FOCUS MY MIND ON THE RIGHT THINGS** - On Heavenly things - on things ABOVE, not on the things that are worldly.

**Col 3:2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.**

This is certainly a similar thought to that of RENEWING MY MIND - but it is slightly different in that IT IS MORE OF A MOMENT BY MOMENT ACTIVITY - The context of Colossians 3 is Paul encouraging us to make SOME BIG CHANGES in our daily behavior.

He is exhorting us to PUT OFF SOME SINFUL, UGLY HABITS - and then to PUT IN THERE PLACE some HEALTHY, GODLY habits - and HIS THOUGHT on how this will happen is that we SET OUR MINDS on the RIGHT SET OF CHOICES!

Often we make the WRONG CHOICE because the options we are considering ARE ALL BAD OPTIONS - We have FORMED OLD HABITS that limit the way we look at everything!

We get to FRIDAY NIGHT and we start considering our options of what we will do tonight - The only problem is, when we think of FRIDAY NIGHT OPTIONS, we have a limited list of OLD ACTIVITIES TO CHOOSE FROM - and none of them are GOOD OR GODLY!

This is when we have to SET OUR MINDS of other things - GODLY THINGS that we have not considered - we have to PUT OFF those old choices and we have to GIVE OURSELVES A NEW SET OF OPTIONS!

This is an ACT OF THE WILL - this is a CONSCIOUS ACTION of deciding to do things differently! - to choose from a NEW SET OF ANSWERS!



It is considering a WHOLE DIFFERENT WAY of approaching life - it is FORCING MY MIND to look in a different direction!

Figuratively speaking, **Instead of looking around for something to do, I look up for something NEW!** - I look to THINGS ABOVE!

Remember what Paul wrote in **Rom 14:17** “**for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.**”

For many of you, “**eating and drinking**” are your only choices when it comes to much of life - all your choices CENTER AROUND food and fun - it is all about SATISFYING THE FLESH - THESE ARE your only choices because these were the LIMITS OF YOUR OUTLOOK.

Yet there is a WHOLE SPIRITUAL WORLD that revolves around **righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit** - there is a whole world of choices that we can make that will be SO MUCH MORE FULFILLING - It is just we have NEVER CONSIDERED THEM!

If I want to LOVE GOD with all my mind, I have to FOCUS MY MIND on the things above - the things of God THAT WILL BRING ME to a place of righteousness - a place of peace - and a place of Joy!

MY GUESS is that food and drink have brought TEMPORARY FUN & EXCITEMENT to your life - but they bring very little RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE & JOY.

If you read the rest of Colossians 3, you will find most of THESE CHOICES involve things like: LOVING OTHERS - being KIND - extending FORGIVENESS - BEARING WITH someone who BOTHERS YOU - investing time in WORSHIP - investing time in BIBLE STUDY - Spending time alone with just you and God!

These are all NEW ACTIVITIES & CHOICES that need to become the FOCUS OF MY MIND if I am going to LOVE GOD with all my mind!



Next, I need to **THINK SOUNDLY WITH MY MIND** - Simply put, I need to MAKE DECISIONS with my mind, NOT WITH MY EMOTIONS! - Today, far too many people THINK PRIMARILY WITH THEIR EMOTIONS!

**2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.**

FEAR is an emotion - Like GUILT, like ANGER, like HAPPINESS - these can ALL DOMINATE the way we think about things - they can DICTATE HOW we make decisions - and trust me when I say, these are all BAD CRITERIA FOR MAKING DECISIONS!

God gave us emotions so that WE CAN FEEL THINGS - He wanted us to be ABLE TO SHOW COMPASSION in the presence of a hurting friend - He wanted us to EXPERIENCE JOY at the birth of NEWBORN CHILD - He wanted us to be able TO FEEL ANGER when helpless people were MANIPULATED or TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF!

But, He did not want us to DAILY MAKE LIFE DECISIONS based on the particular emotion we are feeling at the time - Most often those emotions will LEAD ME DOWN THE WRONG PATH of what needs to happen!

Like the mother who FEELS GUILTY for missing a child's game, so she lets them SKIP THEIR HOMEWORK and watch TV that night - or the FATHER WHO FEARS that his child might STRIKE OUT & EXPERIENCE FAILURE, so they don't encourage them to PARTICIPATE in a sport or a game.

GUILT & FEAR are two the worse DECISION-MAKERS we can use - they will both cause us to MAKE TERRIBLE CHOICES - Again, emotions HELP US EXPERIENCE life, but they are not the motivators we use to MAKE LIFE CHOICES!

We need to make DECISIONS WITH A SOUND MIND - This Greek word for **sound mind** carries with it the ideas of **Self-Control & Moderation** - Now these are both GREAT DECISION-MAKERS!

Self-control means I have MY EMOTIONS under control - I am thinking ALMOST WITHOUT EMOTION - I may let my feelings have a SMALL PART to play - but mostly I am OBJECTIVELY LOOKING for what is best in light of the TRUTH I KNOW - not the emotions I feel.

The second meaning there is MODERATION - This too is somewhat the OPPOSITE OF EMOTIONS - Moderation IMPLIES LIMITS to what I will let myself feel - It carries with it BOUNDARIES THAT I WILL LIVE WITHIN - It implies PRINCIPLE, NOT EMOTIONS!

So, if I am making a decision with a SOUND MIND, I will CONTROL THE EMOTIONS I feel in that moment - and I will make that decision WITHIN BOUNDARIES OF TRUTH that I have set - boundaries of PRIORITIES & LIMITS that God's Word has put in place in my life.

So, even though I may feel guilty about missing my child's function, they will still have to DO THEIR HOMEWORK - Why? - because I know this is what IS BEST FOR THEM - Even though my child MAY EXPERIENCE FAILURE, I am going to urge them to TRY NEW THINGS - Why? - because I know FAILURE WILL HELP THEM GROW as a person!

Making CHOICES & DECISIONS with a sound mind will help me to LOVE GOD with all my mind! - It will help me make choices that will HONOR HIM in all I do!

The Sixth thing I need to do is to **PROTECT MY MIND!**

How do I protect my mind? - What am I protecting my mind from? - These are great questions - and THE ONES that NEED ANSWERS if we are going to LOVE GOD with all our mind!

**Let's answer the second question first:** What am I protecting my mind from? - (1) I am protecting my mind from IMAGES THAT WOULD CORRUPT my thinking - these would include **pornography** - they would also include VIOLATE IMAGES that would create a HUNGER FOR MORE violence in my life.

They would include READING TRASH NOVELS that lead my imagination down LUSTFUL PATHS - it would involve AVOIDING ANYTHING that would come through MY EYES and flood my mind with trash!

Remember, YOUR EYES are the GATEKEEPERS for your mind - If you want to protect your mind, you must CONTROL THE GATEWAY - You have to learn to MONITOR WHAT your eyes graze upon - You have to learn TO LOOK AWAY!

(2) I need to protect my mind from WONDERING THOUGHTS that take me to places that are UNHEALTHY OR NEGATIVE - This means not allowing my imagination to go to places that are NOT WHOLESOME!

When I allow LUSTFUL THOUGHTS to go on uninterrupted - when I allow WORRISOME THOUGHTS to continue - When I allow PARANOID THOUGHTS to progress and fester - When I allow THOUGHTS OF DISCONTENTMENT to take root and grow - All of these are HARMFUL to my mind.

All of these PULL MY MIND AWAY from thoughts of FAITH & LOVE towards God - I must protect my mind from these!

So, how do I protect my mind? - **1 Peter 1:13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;**

Peter tells us to “**gird up the loins of our mind**” - the phrase would be similar to our saying, **Pull up your bootstraps! - Roll up your sleeves!** - Both carry the idea of GET READY FOR ACTION!

The thought is that we need to BE PROACTIVE when it comes to protecting our minds - We can't take a PASSIVE APPROACH - We must realize IT IS GOING TO BE A BATTLE to keep our minds IN A GODLY PLACE!

We are going to HAVE TO FIGHT SELFISH THOUGHTS - and LUSTFUL thoughts - and thoughts of DOUBT that continuously creep into our minds.

As Paul says in 2 Cor. 10:5 we must **“bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ!”**.

We must realize that these THOUGHTS ARE DANGEROUS - they are a THREAT TO OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH - they are not JUST THOUGHTS! - They are DEADLY THOUGHTS! - they lead us away from the PRESENCE OF GOD - and from the BLESSINGS OF GOD!

We must PROTECT OUR THOUGHTS if we are going to love God with our minds!

So, if we are going to love God with ALL OUR MIND, then we must:

1. **Renew our mind** - Learn to think as God thinks!
2. **Humble our mind** - To consider others as more important than us!
3. **Look Forward with our mind** - let go of the past (both victories / failures)
4. **Focus my mind above** - Focus on the things that will bring righteousness, peace, and joy to my life - getting free of the flesh!
5. **Think soundly with my mind** - Use Principles, not emotions to make decisions that will please God
6. **Protect my mind** - Guard what goes into my mind!

Let's Pray!