

How to Have the Mind of Christ

Roger Kendall—December 19, 2009

Good afternoon everyone! It's certainly a joy and a pleasure to be here in Phoenix for this Sabbath and being here for the mini-conference that Fred had us come down for. It was really a very profitable and just a very rewarding opportunity.

I really appreciated the messages this morning because it certainly fits in line with what I'm going to be bringing you this afternoon. It's really not amazing, for God knows what we need to hear and He certainly gives it to us in abundance.

Paul said in Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus." What does it mean to have the mind of Jesus Christ? How do you achieve it?

Let's understand that our mind is an incredible, created, entity of our body. It is basically greater than any super computer that's ever been seen. It's an incredible organ—the mind, the brain—however you want to dissect it and take it apart. It's an incredible creation. Let's understand that it's our mind and our thoughts that truly establish who we are.

Proverbs 23:7: "For as he [a man] thinks in his heart, so *is* he." *This is true, because it is the very mind, the very thoughts, which establishes our attitudes, our feelings and emotions!* Our thoughts project the very words that we speak as well as the very conduct that we live by. Also, it establishes our character. So, the mind and the thoughts really are the foundation of your life. Christ had a lot to say about the words that a person spoke and the source of those thoughts and words.

Luke 6:45: "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which *is* good; and the wicked man out of the wicked treasure of his heart brings forth that which *is* wicked; for out of the abundance of the heart... [heart/mind because there is a connection between the heart and the mind] ...his mouth speaks."

This is something that we need to understand. If we can have control over our thought processes, the very way that we think, is this not going to have an effect on who we are and the character that we're able to develop, especially if our thoughts and our thinking is in line with the thoughts in the mind of Jesus Christ? *Indeed, the answer is yes!*

God knows us in a very, very personal manner. In Psa. 139 David understood that God knew his thoughts before they were even formed. God in his all-knowing knew the very thoughts of David. David writes:

Psalm 139:1: "O LORD, You have searched me and have known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thoughts afar off" (vs 1-2). *God can eavesdrop into your thoughts; He can read and understand what you are thinking!*

Verse 3: "You measure my going about and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways."

Again, the thoughts and the ways are connected. The way that we live is connected to our thoughts. David understood that, so therefore, at the end of this Psalm, David asked God to search his mind, to search out his thinking.

Verse 23: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me... [evaluate me, look me over, test me] ...and know my thoughts, and see if any wicked way is in me; and lead me in the way everlasting" (vs 23-24).

David was asking for God to intervene and to help him *to think righteously* so that he could be the righteous person that God would have him be, to be sound-minded and to be following in the way of the Truth.

We will find that when we were first called and came out of this world, our thoughts and our ways were not God's ways or God's thoughts.

Isaiah 55:6: "Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near." *This is a call to repentance; this a call to change the way that we think*, because that is what's going to bring about the change in character.

Verse 7: It says here, God says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts... [forsake, throw away, get rid of] ...and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." *Here we see the call to repentance, which we all have received!*

Verse 8: "'For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts'" (v 8-9). If you look at this Scripture vs what Paul wrote in Philippians, what is your thought at this point?

What God is pointing out to us is, this is where we start. Our thoughts are separated as the east is from the west, as far as God is concerned, but He wants us to narrow the gap. He wants

- our thinking
- our thoughts
- our whole mental attitude

to be like Him! That is why He called us. He is creating sons and daughters, and He wants us to think like He does. Is that possible? *Yes it is!* Not in the way that God thinks today, but the thought process, the focus, the very way that we live can be implanted into our very minds.

Let's understand that there is an important word in this Scripture that I want to focus on:

Philippians 2:5: "**Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.**" Paul was indicating, here, that this is not an automatic pass that you get, to get the mind Christ automatically, even with the receipt of God's Holy Spirit. *It is a process*; it is something that is occurring over time as we grow in conversion, as we grow in the power of the Holy Spirit:

- to obey God
- to love God
- to keep His commandments

so that we can develop more of the very character and the mind of God! This is the way that I believe this could be understood. We'll see this very idea can be expanded and understood.

Romans 12:2: "Do not conform yourselves to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove... [absolutely know with certainty] ...what *is* well-pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God."

We know this morning, we heard both with Marlin's {Fannin} message and with Fred: What is God's will? *That we basically love Him with all of our heart, soul and mind!* Our focus is to obey Him, to love Him, to love one another, to keep His commandments and also to recognize that in doing so, we're growing in the very nature of God.

God is recreating Himself. He's calling us for some very specific purposes:

- to be in His Family forever
- to be in the Kingdom
- to rule under Jesus Christ during the Millennium a
- on into eternity and to be the Bride of Christ

Christ is not going to marry anyone who does not think like He does and work with Him in terms of His plan and His purpose for the future. Husbands and wives know that there is a process by which husbands and wives actually begin to think alike. That's what God wants us to develop.

In the next few minutes, I'm going to go over five key points. These are going to be brief. You're going to need to expand these out as you do your own study. Five key points that if practiced and diligently put into study, that this will be the way that you can develop the thoughts of God and actually have more of the very mind of Jesus Christ.

I. Seek God with all your heart

We heard about that this morning in terms of that we have to be seeking God and we can be found of Him. We need to be found by God and He will grant us, as we just read in Isa. 55, if we seek Him with our whole heart, He will grant us forgiveness upon repentance and He will, if we're called unto salvation, grant us His Holy Spirit. ***When you seek God with a whole heart, you basically make this the key to seeking God and to loving Him!***

Matthew 22:37: "...You shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

- Do your thoughts reflect the mind of Jesus Christ?
- Do your thoughts and your thinking truly will line up with God's commandments, His way of love and the way of giving and serving and doing His will?

Again, we're growing in that. We're not perfected, yet. There are many times we fall far short of this, but the goal is to continue to pursue the remaking of your mind, the renewing of your mind and to truly understand this it is a process that we need to take a very active part in.

Psalms 119:1: "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Law of the LORD." This is a person who basically is seeking God with his whole heart: ***focused on God, focused on His Law!***

Verse 2: "Blessed are they who keep His testimonies and who seek Him with the whole heart." Wholeheartedness is that there is no second choice. It is the primary, the ultimate choice. It is focused and it is on-going.

Verse 3: "They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways." You can see, once you have your thoughts in line with God's laws, you walk in His ways. Thoughts first, the process of thinking and developing attitude: ***you walk in His way, the very way of God!***

Verse 4: "You have commanded us to keep Your **precepts** diligently"—which has to do with *concepts*. It actually can be focused on as being *thoughts*. The very thoughts of God, His precepts and we're to keep them diligently.

What is the basis of God's thoughts and His way of life? ***It's right here! He gave it to us!***

Contained in the Bible are the thoughts of God, the very way of God. That's what we're looking at. To follow God's Word and to obey Him in all things **leads us to have the mind of Christ** and be more like Him.

In fact, that's what it says in Prov. 16:3-4. During this preparation, I found this Scripture and it really was an eye-opener in recognizing that our thoughts can be established upon the way that we live. So, we see the reverse happening. Once you begin to follow a particular way of life, you develop the habits, you develop the consistency, so that now your thoughts are even established.

Proverbs 16:3: "Commit your works unto the LORD, and your thoughts shall be established.... [the way you live, the way you conduct your life] ...The LORD has made all for His own purpose; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (vs 3-4).

What we're seeing is, that if we follow this pattern of putting God first, keeping His commandments and loving God with all of our heart and all of our mind, **then we shall be laying down the very foundation of being able to think more like God does!**

II. Guard the door of your mind

Yes, you've got to be aware; alert that all that's coming into your mind is not of God. All the thoughts that you think are not of God. We have to be *actively guarding the door of our minds* to what we allow in.

You understand the computer idea of 'garbage in, garbage out.' If you allow a lot of 'garbage in,' and it hangs around, you're going to be producing 'garbage out.' Therefore, if you can guard the door of your mind, then you can prevent the stuff from getting in there in the first place.

Proverbs 4:23: "Above all guard the door of your mind with **diligence**..."—meaning *puts in quick, speedy, maximum effort*. In other words, there is no slack of hand here in terms of what this Proverb is saying.

"...for out of it *are* the issues of life.... [out of your mind everything is going to flow, from your mind and from your thoughts] ...Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and devious lips put far from you." (vs 23-24).

In other words, by guarding the door of your mind, you're able to put away the wicked thoughts. You're able to do away with them before they have a chance to actually be formed and to be put forth.

Verse 25: "Let your eyes look right on, and let your eyelids look straight before you." We're talking about our senses and how we look and see

things. Your eyes are now looking straight ahead, not to the left or the right, but **you're focused on God's plan, purpose, and His way of life!** You're not looking out into the ways of the world, the ways of Satan the devil.

Verse 26: "Ponder the path of your feet, and all your ways *will be* established." If we can put totally our mind and focus before we act, before we speak, and get rid of the trash and work on what is right, then we will avoid a lot of problems in our life; a lot of sin is just not going to happen.

That's not easy! It's easy to understand but difficult to put in practice. I've been at it for a long time and I still have not mastered it. I'm not referring that you have either, but the key thing is, you have to keep this in mind:

- Are we going to think the right thoughts?
- Are we going to be focused on God?

Verse 27: "Do not turn to the right hand nor to the left; remove your foot from evil." If we understand this and if we can control our mind, if we can control our thought processes, more and more we will develop the mind of Christ.

Christ lived on the earth for 33½ years. He was in the physical flesh. Yet, He did not sin once. Yes, He had the Holy Spirit without measure, but He still had the same temptations, the same pull of the flesh, **but He never allowed any thought to generate sin!** Again, I don't know the context, but he had temptation; something came into His mind. He had to choose; He chose

- the way of righteousness
- the way of Truth
- the way of God's Word

We need to guard our mind, because not all the thoughts that come into our mind are of God. There are three sources of thought that you have. What are they?

1. your own thoughts

Those that you generate based on memory, based upon your senses: feel/touch, smell, taste, hear and see. All of these can generate thoughts and impressions.

2. thoughts from God

God can speak to you in concept; He puts ideas into your mind and He can speak to you that way.

3. thoughts and ideas from Satan the devil, from the demonic world

Oh yes, they can!

Paul says that Satan is the “...prince of the power of the air...” (Eph. 2:2), and he’s able to transmit thoughts into our brains, into our thought pattern. This can happen to you. You’re going down the street and you’re just having a good day and all of a sudden this thought will pop into your mind; not a pleasant thought, it’s an evil thought.

- Where did it come from?
- Did it come from God? *No!*
- Did it come from you, your own senses and your own memory? *No!*

It came from the enemy.

That’s why it’s important that we must be alert and aware of our thoughts and to always be diligent. If we can truly recognize, capture and cast out wrong thinking before it’s germinated into words and action, then, we’re growing in the mind of Christ.

III. Learn to recognize and capture every evil and wrong thought

Exactly what I’m saying is that if a thought comes into your mind, rather than acting on it emotionally or without a lot of thought pattern, capture it. Recognize it for what it is and cast it aside and do not act upon it. That’s quite a statement because they say that thought travels at the speed of light. You have to be nimble, you have to truly be aware and recognize that we can use the Word of God.

God has given us the tools; He’s given us the means by which we can recognize and capture evil thoughts, evil ideas, evil impressions that might be coming upon our mind.

Hebrews 4:12: “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow...”

The Word of God can pierce though all of the maze of various things. Notice what it does. It cuts to the core.

“...and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart” (v 12). If we study, as we’ve heard this morning, if we focus and understand the Word of God, we can recognize and we can begin to nullify these thoughts that come upon us. If we’re doing that, if we’re practicing this, as we grow in spiritual maturity, that’s what this life process is about. *We are growing in how to live and how to act more like God!*

Hebrews 5:12: “For truly, by this time you ought to be teachers...” In other words, you ought to

be skilled in the Word. You ought to know the basis of those things that you can teach others.

“...*but instead* you need to have *someone* teach you again what *are* the beginning principles of the oracles of God, and have become those in need of milk, and not of solid food” (v 12).

Milk is what you start out with, *the milk of the Word!* It’s very important when we first are called. We have to start with the small things, the ‘milk of the Word,’ but that is to grow. A baby does not continue to live on milk for the rest of its life.

Verse 13: “For everyone who is partaking of milk *is* unskilled in ***the Word of Righteousness...***—*God’s Word!* He’s unskilled in knowing and understanding the deeper doctrines and principles of God’s Word. He’s unskilled in that.

“...because he is an infant.... [a spiritual infant] ...But solid food is for those who are fully grown, who through ***repeated practice*** have had their senses trained to discern between good and evil” (vs 13-14).

Very clearly this is a key Scripture to understand that as we grow spiritually, we’re able to discern right from wrong, clearly, according to God’s Word. ***We’re able to act upon that and to choose the right and to discard the wrong!***

IV. You eliminate it, cast it out, get rid of it

Paul talks about mortifying the flesh. We’re talking about *killing thoughts*. We’re talking about getting rid of those thoughts and temptations that can lead to sin.

2-Corinthians 10:3: “For although we walk in *the* flesh, we do not war according to *the* flesh.” Paul is pointing out that our warfare is not based upon the physical weapons that we have. God has given us some very powerful spiritual weapons that we can use against sin and against the forces of the enemy.

Verse 4: “For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds.”

What are strongholds? *Strongholds are a number of things, but these are areas of embedded sin, bad habits, wrong thinking*—‘stinking thinking’—*emotional elements* in our life, which basically is against the Word of God. If it’s not of God, *it is of evil and of sin!*

So, what he’s saying, here is that with the weapons that God has given to us, we can overthrow those very embedded thought areas of wrong thinking. This can include ***anger, bitterness, self-bitterness, envy, jealousy, unforgiveness, even occult thinking*** that may still be embedded in the

back of your mind. These are strongholds of Satan the devil that, if are present, are going to cause the individual considerable problems, because it's sin.

Verse 5: "Casting down *vain* imaginations..." Imaginations are thought processes; they're *vain, pride, vanity*.

"...and every high thing... [every prideful thing] ...that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ**" (v 5).

If we put these Scriptures together, we can see there is a step-wise process that if we can continue to practice these things, ***we can indeed, begin to acquire the mind of Christ!*** As we put on the mind of Christ, what are we doing? *We're getting rid of the 'old man' and we're putting on the 'new man,' Jesus Christ!*

Ephesians 4:21: "If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, according to *the Truth* in Jesus: That concerning your former conduct... [the conduct of sinful contact of where we were not thinking like God] ...you put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth" (vs 21-24).

In other words, brethren, we're growing in sanctification; we're growing in the very mind of our Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are able to be able to know and understand those things of God, but also, we're preparing for future rulership under Christ.

Once you've eliminated it and cast it out, let's remember that nature has a course of action. If you throw something out—and you don't replace it with something—something is going to come back to overtake that space. Using that concept:

V. Fill your mind with the things of God

Marlin {Fannin} said, 'The key is to spend time thinking about the things that God thinks about.' Go though and read the Scriptures; study His Word, communicate with God. He speaks to you through study and we speak to Him through prayer, meditation. Meditation is where you study the Word of God and apply it to yourself. You can do this throughout the day, when you go for work, continually to arm yourself with the fullness of God and fullness of Christ.

Let's understand the importance of filling our mind with God in the ways of Jesus Christ!

Ephesians 3:17: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *and* that being rooted and

grounded in love, you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so that **you** may be filled with all the fullness of God" (vs 17-19).

The more we put in of God, the less there's going to be room for the enemy Satan to be able to put anything in.

I hope this has stirred you thinking. It certainly has stirred mine, to recognize that 'good effort in' will produce right results. In this case, we are able to understand what it means to have the mind of Christ and we also hope that through this message that we can understand how we can achieve it. ***Let us grow in the mind of Christ!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Philippians 2:5
- 2) Proverbs 23:7
- 3) Luke 6:45
- 4) Psalms 139:1-3, 23-24
- 5) Isaiah 55:6-9
- 6) Philippians 2:5
- 7) Romans 12:2
- 8) Matthew 22:37
- 9) Psalms 119:1-4
- 10) Proverbs 16:3-4
- 11) Proverbs 4:23-27
- 12) Ephesians 2:2
- 13) Hebrews 4:12
- 14) Hebrews 5:12-14
- 15) 2-Corinthians 10:3-5
- 16) Ephesians 4:21-24
- 17) Ephesians 3:17-19

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