

# The need for Spiritual Mind Control

The problem is that our minds are fallen. They have a spirit, a bent, a mindset that is hostile to the absolute supremacy of God. Our minds are bent on not seeing God as infinitely more worthy of praise than we are, or the things we make or achieve.

John Piper

We are to present ourselves, heart, mind and spirit, daily as a living holy sacrifice, so that we may be able to comprehend the love of Christ with a renewed mind that is in conformity with the indwelling Christ, in order that we may be filled to all the fullness of God.

Rom 12:1-2; Eph 3:14-19

This is a holy sacrifice separated into the complete rule of God, being compelled by Christ's love to live for Him.

2 Cor 5:14-15

*And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me."*

Luke 9:23

# The need for spiritual mind control

We are what we think.

*‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind’* Matt 22:37

The earnest Christian will to take control of their mind because they have a need to think the thought of God habitually. *his delight is in the Law of the LORD, And on His Law he meditates day and night.* Psalm 1:2

But without taking control of the mind, we are robots of the flesh. All our pain, all our anxiety, all our controlling behaviour comes from the mindset of the natural person of the flesh which is unable to please God.

The natural mind is like the automatic transmission in a car, it follows a preprogramed course of action without any contribution from the driver. However, if real control is desired in order to have better control of the functions, then a manual transmission needs to be installed. This brings us to the question: We are told that sin will not be master over us. (Rom 6:12-14) Therefore after being born again by the Spirit, what place does the will have because we still sin?

God gives us a new heart, He puts His Spirit in us, but we are naturally habitually conditioned to follow our old way of thinking. We automatically follow what we think, as if our thoughts have the last say. And we are slow to acknowledge we are under new management. We are slow to realise that we have died to the natural person of our habitual thoughts. We think naturally that what we think is in our best interest, and we don't naturally follow the word of God that says we are now to live as slaves of a new Holy master. *But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and after being freed from sin, you became slaves to righteousness.* Rom 6:17-18

However, we are often guilty of acting without thinking about what we are thinking. And if our thoughts have some resemblance to religious beliefs, we are even more dangerous.

It is completely natural, that when our minds are not engaged in a meaningful way, they idle along without choice in a haphazard manner, following the path of least resistance. The way of least resistance is the flesh of the unregenerate life that is ingrained in our minds. And according to the flesh, we look for the cause of our discomfort outside ourselves. If we experience any disturbance, strife and anxiety with us, we may be on the automatic program of last resistance by failing to take responsibility for the way we think.

The way of the believer as a slave of righteousness is the cross of self-denial, (Luke 9:23) a cross which is mandatory in order to live the way of Christ in holiness and truth. And the flesh resists the cross because it wants to live. The solution is to put the flesh to death daily. To this effect the Bible speaks strongly of controlling one's mind. The repentance that results in salvation involves a change of mind from self-will to the will of God. So, Christians are "*to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,*"

Eph 4:23

They are to be likeminded, *being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.* (Phil 2:2) For they have as the body of Christ, been given the mind of Christ.

1 Cor 2:16

The result of the work of God is a new attitude and new behaviour, a whole new creation.

2 Cor 5:17

The change in mind is only possible by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Titus 3:5

But we still need to apprehend what God is working in us. *We work out our salvation in spirit and truth. work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to desire and to work for His good pleasure.*

Phil 2:12-13

## **We need God's Cognitive Behaviour Therapy**

The Bible says that our thought life is an extremely important and vital aspect of being a Christian. What we are is determined largely by what and how we think. Proverbs 23:7 says, "*As a person thinks within himself, so he is.*" The Bible teaches the responsibility of mind control is

to be accepted by all those in Christ. The Bible also gives us definite guidelines to follow, so that our thought life will be controlled and pleasing to God.

*Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Rom 12:1-2

Romans 12:2 commands us to change our worldly viewpoints. It's important to understand that "*the world*" is basically a system of values that is contrary to the biblical set of values. Our thought patterns must be brought under the control of the divine value system. It means '*taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ*'

2 Cor10:5

To do this we must...*gird up your minds for action.*

1 Peter 1:13

Girding up is the same as quickly taking responsibility for what we think so that we don't get caught with our pants down.

In this respect the mind of the Christian should conform to the teaching of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. Those who are in Christ will show evidence of the beatitudes in Matthew 5. Jesus gives a blessing to those who reflect His character by the renewal of mind.

Referring to the great Sermon, C. H. Spurgeon suggests: "He talks about the question, "Who are the saved?" or, "What are the marks and evidences of a work of grace in the soul?" Who should know the saved as well as the Saviour does? The shepherd is the best one to discern his own sheep, and the Lord Himself alone infallibly knows those who are His. We may regard the marks here given of the blessed ones as being the sure witness of truth, for they are given by Him who cannot err, who cannot be deceived, and who, as their Redeemer, knows His own."

And the Beatitudes lay the foundation for the life of the believer in the remainder of the Sermon on the Mount. In order to live for Christ as

described in the Sermon, we have to put the thinking of the self of our past to death. (Col 3:5) When we see ourselves as we are before a Holy God, we will see and acknowledge our spiritual poverty. As those of us who are poor in spirit, will mourn over our weakness so we depend on Christ for our life.

If we are not on guard by girding up our resolve to be faithful to Christ, the flesh will live again in our minds, and work on installing the corruption of sin in our behaviour because we will be deceived into thinking it is for our benefit. For our mind to be renewed we must constantly be challenged in our thinking. We must take charge of the direction of our thoughts. We must turn our habitual thoughts from the world towards the things of heaven. We must set our idle minds on Christ and His glory. (Col 3:1-3) We who are born of the Spirit have a new desire, and new way of thinking. *his delight is in the Law of the Lord, And on His Law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.*

Psalm 1:2-3

### **The new man in Christ follows the way of righteousness**

*that, in reference to your former way of life, you are to rid yourselves of the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you are to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.*

Eph 4:22-24

The old self is a slave to sin, but we are not of the flesh, but born of the Spirit to be slaves of Christ. *For those who are in accord with the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are in accord with the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,*

Rom 8:5-6

The renewing of our mind is not automatic, we don't just let go and God will deal with it. We are responsible for our mindset, we must direct our mind's activity towards the things of the Spirit, otherwise it will gravitate

towards the habitual ways of the flesh and cause all manner of displeasure before God.

A godly mindset will turn to adoration, to worship, to confession, to seeking wisdom from God's written word, and to intercessory prayer. If this is undertaken, there would be no time left for idle minds to entrap us in the devil's deception. If we are to be transformed into the image of Christ, (Rom 8:29) we are not to let our minds run freely wherever they feel comfortable. We must train even our casual thinking to explore the glory of God in all we do, even when we are doing nothing. Our activity follows our thoughts, we never do anything without a thought leading the way. So, we are not to be victims of the thinking of our natural self of the flesh. We have a new existence born of God in the image of Christ. So, we are to direct our will to diligently to create a new habit of thinking the thoughts of the Spirit of God. And as a result, our activity will follow the way of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **We are what we will to think**

If our will allows our heavenly nature to sleep on duty, the habitual ways of the flesh will invade our minds, and our activity will follow, and Divine transformation will go into hibernation. The more we sleep, the more double minded we will be, and the less we can be relied upon to represent our Father as His faithful children.

The fruit of the Spirit must be cultivated in our minds, otherwise the weeds of the flesh will overrun our lives. The soldiers of the Lord must stand alert. "*Gird up your minds for action.*" This girding up requires we will be disciplined in our thinking. Too many side interests can impede and interfere with our priorities as growing Christians. In view of our great salvation, we should discipline our minds to set our priorities properly in the presence of Christ. Our minds are the most critical environment for our testing concerning righteousness. We are to overcome the sinful desires that arise from within ourselves as remnants of our former way of life and thinking, and also, more importantly, the

temptations of satan from without that are ordained and allowed by God for our ultimate good. Rom 8:28

This overcoming of sin in this way is how our Lord God fits us for a life of glory in heaven. We have a war within and a holocaust without. Only by abiding in Christ through obedience are we able to share in the victory He obtained through His personal obedience as our example of how God's children should live.

Our ability to rejoice always is enhanced by the daily commitment we apply to spiritual mind control with our reality soundly grounded in our participation of the Reign of Christ. Without spiritual mind control, our witness to the world that is lost in darkness will instead saying the world is the only reality, where anxiety and fear crowd out any hope of rejoicing in the presence of God. The children of God are overcomers. *And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.* Rev 12:11

Abiding in Christ means we are being led by the Spirit Christ in whom we live, so that we are able to give thanks in all things and rejoice always, knowing God is working all things, good and bad, together for our greatest good, so we can overcome and receive our glory with Christ. So, we pray, "*our Father*" which means we, the people of God, the body of Christ, this is because we need each other who make up His body the Church in order to be built up in Christ. Spiritual mind control recognises that it is only together that we have the mind of Christ. 1 Cor 2:16

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.* (Phil 4:6-7) If we are to do all things as to the Lord, surely His Holy desires must be to the forefront of our mind rather than our earthly desires? "*Just as the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; remain in My love.*" John 15:9

# Living Water Resources

## Come to the River

“When the heart has been made humble and meek, it is enabled to perceive what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God, and approves of it as good for him; and thus we are 'transformed by the renewing of our mind' (Rom. 12:2). As the mould and the thing moulded correspond, as the wax has on it the image by which it was impressed, so the heart which before was enmity to every commandment, now delights in the law of God after the inward man, finding an agreeableness between it and his own disposition. Only as the heart is supernaturally changed and conformed to God is it found that His commandments are not grievous. 1 John 5:3” A.W. Pink

**Contents compiled by**

**Robert C May**

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**[cometotheriver@optusnet.com.au](mailto:cometotheriver@optusnet.com.au)**

**[www.cometothestream.com](http://www.cometothestream.com)**