



Mind Over Emotion

"For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace"

Romans 8:6

Why is it that we identify the chief characteristic separating humans from animals as the mind—the ability to think and reason instead of being solely guided by instinct or emotion—and yet seem to excuse nearly every consequence of bad judgment in the name of one's feelings? The Bible's teaching regarding the path to a relationship with God repeatedly asserts that spirituality begins with the focus of our mind, usually to the exclusion of how we feel.

In Romans 8:6 as cited above, the question of one's spiritual maturity is answered in the object upon which it's set. If on the flesh—obsessed with the pleasures of the self and this life—then leading to hell; if set on the Spirit—not concerned at all with the self and this life—then leading to heaven. We are not a slave to our behavior but have made it a slave to whatever our mind is most set upon.

God repeatedly advises that we must follow Him from the mind, that our very thought life is a key indicator of the quality of our walk with Him. David—the author of over half of the Psalms—in his final admonition to Solomon didn't say it was enough to have emotional desire for God but stated,

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*“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father and serve Him with a whole heart and **a willing mind**; for the LORD searches all hearts, and **understands every intent of the thoughts**. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.”*

1 Chronicles 28:9

Through His prophets, God repeatedly spoke of the condition of man's spiritual relationship as a direct result of the mind to choose.

*“**The steadfast mind** You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You.”*

—Isaiah 26:3

*“...You are near to their lips but **far from their mind**.”*

—Jeremiah 12:2b

*“I, the Lord, search the heart, **I test the mind**, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds.”*

—Jeremiah 17:10

When Jesus rebuked Satan through Peter, it was an issue of where the mind was set.

*“But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for **you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's**.’”*

—Matthew 16:23

Jesus summarized the foremost commandment of God as requiring the undivided devotion of the mind.

*“Jesus answered, ‘The foremost is, “Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, **and with all your mind**, and with all your strength.”’”*

—Mark 12:29-30

Paul repeatedly taught that the life devoted for or against Christ is identified by the conscience focus of the mind.

*“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.”*

Romans 12:2

*“So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you **walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind.**”*

Ephesians 4:17

*“**Set your mind** on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”*

Colossians 3:2

What has hold of your mind? On what do you fix your thoughts, dreams, imagination? If you're struggling in your walk, a strong possibility is that rather than choosing to seek God and focus on Him, you're spending most of the time thinking about yourself, this life, what *you* want instead of what *He* wants.

This is why daily immersion in prayer and God's Word is so important; it focuses the mind and thoughts and leads to changes not just in thinking but spiritually. Our emotions come under the control and direction of our thoughts, shaped by our mind's focus. What are *you* thinking about?

In His Love,

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