

Series: Crucial Commandment

Title: The Mind's Eye

Text: Matthew 6:22-23

Time: 2/19/2012 (a.m.)

Intro

1. The mind is probably the most powerful instrument that God has given us; it is through our minds that we see life. In fact it has been said "We don't see with our eyes. We see with our minds."

2. Our mind determines how we hear and see. The apostle Paul addresses this in many places because what we see and hear is filtered through our mind for interpretation and understanding which is why he challenges us to transform our thinking in Romans 12:2 because our minds before Christ had been immersed in distorted and very corrupt thinking patterns.

Ephesians 4:17-22, 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**,¹⁸ being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;¹⁹ and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.²⁰ But you did not learn Christ in this way,²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,²² that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, **which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit**.

3. Paul understood that transformation into Christlikeness is in the mind, **Romans 12:2**, 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.

4. This verse has two key words: **world**, which in Greek is literally *age* (*aiôn*, meaning this present age, in contrast to "the age to come"), and **do not conform**, which is a compound having at its root the word **scheme**. So the verse means "Do not let the age in which you live force you into its scheme of thinking and behaving." Best known of all is the paraphrase of J. B. Phillips, which states, "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold."

5. Paul says we are to be: not *conformed* but *transformed* by the renewing of our minds. There is a deliberate distinction between those two words. Conformity is something that happens to you outwardly. Transformation happens inwardly.

6. The Greek word translated *transformed* is *metamorphoô*, from which we get *metamorphosis*. It is what happens to the caterpillar when it turns into a butterfly.

7. I want us to see something in **2 Corinthians 3:18**, But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

8. In 2 Corinthians Paul says, "It is happening." In Romans 12 he says, "Let it happen," thus putting the responsibility, though not the power to accomplish this necessary transformation, upon us.

9. If we are to learn to love God with all our mind we need to see what a transformed mind looks like and Paul gives us that example. Paul made the same transformation that we must. Paul went from his mind to the mind of Christ. **1 Corinthians 2:16**, For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him? **But we have the mind of Christ.**

The secret of Contentment

Philippians 4:12–13 (NIV84), I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. **I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation**, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

1. In Philippians 4:4-13 Paul states that contentment transcends every changing external circumstance. Understand, he is writing this while under house arrest and chained to a Roman guard.

- (v.4) "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I will say, rejoice!"
- (v.6) "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."
- (v.13) "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

2. Paul learned the secret of contentment in all the variables of life, he transformed his thinking.

1. Paul knew that there were no barriers to God's love.

1. Paul understood that you cannot erect a prison wall high enough to keep the love of God out.

Romans 5:5, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

2. One of our greatest fears is that we will be abandoned in our greatest times of need.

3. A Christian is one who has Christ dwelling in them, one who is in Christ.

John 14:16–18, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; ¹⁷ *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him **because He abides with you and will be in you.** ¹⁸ **"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.**

4. Difficult circumstances are the test of our faith; if our faith can't be tested then it cannot be trusted. Paul knew that his circumstances were not the proof of God's love.

2. Paul knew that we are the favored, graced children of God

1. Did you know that God is crazy about His children?

2. When Jesus was baptized by John, God speaks directly to His Son,

Mark 1:11, and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

3. The Father knew where He was sending His Son, the cross. There would be no greater challenge and no moment that would produce more doubt than when Jesus would fall before His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane and cry to His Father, **Mark 14:36**, And He was

saying, "Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will."

4. What Jesus needed to know in this time of extreme crisis was that His Father loved Him and was well-pleased with Him. Jesus didn't say, "If you love Me don't let this happen." He knew the cross was His Father's expression of love toward us.

5. Paul didn't complain about his circumstances because he knew that to be in Christ is to be able to say **Romans 8:15-16**, For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

3. Paul knew the difference between resignation and relinquishment

1. Paul knew there are no circumstances through which God cannot work to bring about His good.

2. Accepting our circumstances does not mean adopting an attitude of resignation or Christian fatalism. Philippians 4:6 doesn't say "Thank God for everything" but to "Be thankful in everything."

3. Many Christians think that we have no right to inquire into the ways of God but that we must quietly submit and surrender, just resign.

4. Kathryn Marshall, wife of the well-known preacher Peter Marshall writes of resignation, "Resignation lies down quietly in the dust of the universe from which God seems to have fled, and the door of hope swings shut."

5. Scripture does not teach that we are pawns to some impersonal force which cannot be changed but rather emphasizes that we are in a relationship with a loving Father who is good and has our best interest at heart.

6. Relinquishment is wanting God more than anything else and regardless of anything else.

7. The prayer of relinquishment is rooted in the belief that we have personal relationship with a loving God who can be trusted to bring good out of any circumstance of life.

8. The spirit of resignation focuses on the obstacles of loss while the spirit of relinquishment focuses on the opportunities for gain. While in prison Paul did not lose the opportunity to preach the gospel, he gained the opportunity to write it down.

Conclusion

1. Paul's mind filtered everything through the love of God.

Romans 8:38-39, For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.