

MIND IN LOVE WITH GOD 05

THE MIND IN LOVE WITH GOD DISCUSSION LEADERS NOTES

Matthew 22:36-38

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" 37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

QUESTIONS:

Q. *What does it mean to love God with all of your heart, soul and mind?*

A. Just allow them to voice some ideas at this point – right or wrong)

Q. *If taken separately (heart, soul, mind), which of these is generally taken the least seriously?*

A. Definitely the mind

Q. *Why?*

A. Lack of teaching / Belief that faith does not involve the intellect (kierkegaards "leap of faith theory)

The point is that we are commanded to love and obey God by loving him with our minds. Dorothy L. Sayers termed this simply the "mind in love" with God.

The mind in love with God defined: Thinking about anything and everything in a consistently Christian way— in a manner that is shaped, directed, and restrained by (1) the truth of God's Word and (2) God's Spirit. More simply put - in any situation - What does Jesus think?

“WHAT’S THE BIG DEAL?” AND TRUE SPIRITUALITY

We want to look now at “What difference does it make how I think?”

- Francis Schaeffer, in his book True Spirituality, states:

True spirituality in the Christian life is basically a matter of our thoughts. True spirituality always begins on the inside, in our thought world. The external is just the expression, or the result of the internal. Those things seen outwardly in our lives are always the product of what was first thought. Therefore, thoughts are primary, they are central.

Let us understand how important is the world of thoughts. It is this that distinguishes me as a man, in contrast to machines. The spiritual battle, the loss or the victory, is always in the thought world. Ideas are the stock of the thought world, and from ideas burst forth all the external things: painting, music, buildings, the love and the hating of men in practice, and equally the results of loving God or rebellion against God, in the external world. So, the battle for people is centrally in the world of thought and ideas.

Matthew 5:21-22

"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.

QUESTIONS:

Q. Do you agree with Schaeffer's statement that true spirituality begins, not with "acting" rightly, but with "thinking" rightly?

A. Let them voice their ideas. Try to show reinforce that what we produce always reflects what we thought first. Example: The Ferrari was in the designers mind before it was ever actually made.

Q. In Matt 5 does Jesus support this idea – that the internal is the most important?

A. Yes, Jesus asserted that sin's gravity lay in the idea itself, not just the act.

-See also Matt 15:17-19 Evil thoughts that come from a man's heart are what makes him unclean, not the outward acts.

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

A. My Walk With God

- Being mindful of Him will increase my communion with Him – I will pray more.
- Keeping my mind on God will decrease the grip this world has on me.

B. True Fellowship With Other Christians

Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

Q. How will our minds being "sharp" help other Christians?

A. I cannot give away what I do not have.

I will be able to encourage others with what I have learned. [Ephesians 4:29, Hebrews 10:25, Titus 1:9]

We have a responsibility to each other – to be sharp! Dull minds lead to dull fellowship!

At this point emphasize your own personal commitment to them- you will stay “stirred-up” for their sakes! Make a promise to have something of greater consequence to talk about than sports, television, etc...

C. My Witness

1 Peter 3:15

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have...

- a. Many people abandon their faith in college when assaulted with worldly ideas. Their faith was never grounded – therefore it fell.
- b. People deserve honest answers to honest questions.
- c. We may be afraid of hard questions, but God is not.

QUESTIONS:

Q. Have you known of any one who has abandoned Christianity for intellectual reasons?

SO WHAT DO WE DO?

A. Offer Our Minds to God

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- Pray and Thank God - He has given us an education, beyond that of most people in human history, but we have used it for our own ends.
- Make A Real Commitment – If God has given us brains, we will use them for His glory.

QUESTIONS:

Q. What does it mean to have a “renewed mind?”

A. A renewed mind is the mind of Christ [1 Cor 2:16] (Discuss what the mind of Christ is)

B. Be READERS!

Colossians 3:2

“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

- The Bible

Ravi Zacharias: “Nothing ranks higher for mental discipline than a planned and systematic study of God's Word, from whence life's parameters and values are planted in the mind.”

- Good Books

Winkie Pratney gives the following insights on reading good books:

Reading develops the structuring, analyzing side of your mind. Good readers also become good writers and speakers. The same disciplines that help you read well also train you to share with others well.

Reading for many young people is almost forgotten. Too often we rely on TV for information and enjoyment as a substitute for reading. All useful resources are welcome, but without reading you cut down many vast learning opportunities, including expanding your vocabulary and creativity. If you are a leader you need to read.

QUESTIONS:

Q. Have you ever read any Christian book or article that really helped you?

A. Share some of your personal testimonies about books that greatly impacted your life, etc...

Q. What are some of your favorite authors and/or books?

C. Challenge and Stretch Our Minds

- Force yourself to think deeply
- Read authors or books that stir you and stretch you

QUESTIONS:

Q. Have you ever wrestled with a difficult issue until you were able to resolve it in your mind?

CONCLUSION

Put it into practice: Be willing as the small group leader to “loan out” some of your books, or at least to give them copies of articles or sermons. They need a place to get started – keep it generally short and simple. After they start getting the idea, you can help them dive into deeper, more difficult readings.

Hold them accountable to what they have read. Ask them to come prepared next week to share something from their reading.

Here’s an appendix on building a library by Winkie Pratney. We want to challenge students to make investments of eternal consequence. Challenge your small group to spend more money on books that can impact them forever, than on music or movies that might entertain them for a moment!

BUILDING A LIBRARY

Every Christian needs to build a good library. Choose books that will teach, encourage and equip you to do the task you feel God is calling you to. Some of the sections you might have on your bookshelves:

(1) Biography: the lives of men and women of God. Read these to see what God did through consecrated people. See what they were given and what they accomplished in their time. Learn from their mistakes and victories. Challenge yourself by what they were doing at your age.

(2) Study: You will need the best books you can afford that will help you understand what God says in His word. Lexicons, dictionaries, a thesaurus, atlases, concordances are all significant investments that you will use for the rest of your life. Bibles, translations and paraphrases of different kinds will give you wider insight into God's Word.

(3) Research: Encyclopedias and reference sets. See if you can pick up a second-hand set cheaply; perhaps you will come across some that are slightly damaged or out-of-date.

(4) Apologetics: Clarify the Gospel by "evidence that demands a verdict". You will meet many people who want or need answers to some of the most basic questions they have about God. Build your library with books that meet this need.

(5) Sets: As you grow in Jesus you will come across the writings of some Christians that have particular appeal to you and your ministry. Collect all they wrote whenever you can. We all have our heroes. If you read what they wrote, some of it will rub off on you.

(6) Technical and cultural: You will also collect books and studies particular to the work you do and the world you live in. To learn to be the best you can in a world that needs Jesus, keep your eye out for books that can help in this area. Now, to cover them...

The website abebooks.com is the best place to find used, rare, or out-of-print books. This is where most of the leadership of Chi Alpha do all of our shopping. Amazon.com and Christianbooks.com are both excellent places to find new and in-print books.