

Battle for the Mind – Lesson 6

Thinking as God Thinks

Introduction:

1 Corinthians 2:9-10, 16:

“But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”--these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God...For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.”

1. We Have the Mind of Christ

To become Christ-like we must think like Christ for as a man ‘thinks within himself, so he is’ (Proverbs 23:7). How then, can we think like God? How can a finite mind tap into the infinite wisdom of God? The very concept seems inconceivable! Yet God tells us:

1 Corinthians 2:16:

“For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.”

This fact means that we can think God’s thoughts. We can react and speak as he would and be a party to the deep mysteries of God.

2. The Old and the New

Under the old covenant, people came to know the mind of God by observing a written code. The law expressed the heart and mind of God and by keeping it they came to understand something of his heart and mind. It taught them the rights and wrongs of God’s standard and helped them to live godly lives – yet it was merely external. Nothing from within them prompted or guided them into God’s way or gave them insight into the mind of God.

This all changed with the coming of Christ and the establishing of the new covenant between God and man.

Jeremiah 31:31,33:

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah... But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

God's law is no longer written on stone tablets or in a textbook merely to be learned – it is written in your mind and on your heart. It is an ever present internal resource to teach and guide you in every situation of life.

3. God's Spirit in You

At the point of your salvation the Holy Spirit took up residence in your life. You were 'born of the Spirit' (John 3:5) and this is what now marks you out as a Christian:

Ephesians 1:13:

"In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit..."

Understanding the work of the Holy Spirit within you will help you see that you do have the mind of Christ.

a. The Spirit knows the mind of God

1 Corinthians 2:10-12:

"These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God."

The same Spirit who knows 'even the deep things of God' now lives in you! This gives you access to these same 'deep things'. By the Spirit in you, you have the mind of Christ. That is why Paul can also say:

1 Corinthians 2:9-10:

"But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"-- these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God."

Things that no natural mind can comprehend or understand are shown to us by the Spirit. Why? So that we might:

1 Corinthians 2:12:

"Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God."

b. The Spirit leads us into truth

Jesus said: 'I am...the truth' (John 14:6). Then, in speaking of the work of the Spirit in the lives of his followers, he said:

John 16:13, 15:

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

The Spirit takes of Christ’s heart and mind and reveals it to us. So within us we have a directional force guiding us into the ways of Christ and revealing his heart to us concerning every matter we face in life. The apostle John also equated our knowledge of God’s truth with the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit:

1 John 2:20:

“But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.”

Because of the Holy Spirit living in us, we have the mind of Christ. Now we’ll look at how this principle works in our daily living.

4. The Inner Witness

The directive work of the Holy Spirit is often described as the ‘inner witness’ or ‘inner prompting’. I recently spoke to a new Christian who understood little of God’s ways yet somehow felt it was wrong to sleep with his girlfriend now that he was a Christian. Consequently, he stopped. I was able to confirm to him from God’s Word that this was God’s will. What had happened? He had been guided into God’s way by the inner prompting of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit had led him into the truth.

Probably the best way to describe this inner feeling is as a peace or unrest about any specific issue. In writing to the church at Colossae, Paul said:

Colossians 3:15:

“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.”

Paul is describing the work of the Spirit within us. When an issue arises about which we are uncertain and a battle rages in our mind, we can use the Spirit to help guide that decision, using the peace of God in our hearts as a compass to what might be the better decision.

5. Safety Factor

Whether the Spirit prompts you positively or negatively, you can expect his direction to be confirmed by the Bible, because God’s Word is ‘the word of truth’ (Ephesians 1:13; Colossians 1:5). Thus the Spirit and the Word together are inseparable and constitute God’s safety factor for us.

When we hear God’s Word, the Spirit confirms it with his peace. When the Spirit prompts us to act, the Word of God will confirm it.

Acting without the assurance that God's Spirit and the Bible agree on an issue can lead us into error. Swayed by emotion rather than the Spirit, some have become involved in wrong practices because they felt that God was telling them to do a certain thing. If you feel it, check it with the Word.

6. Conscience

In conjunction with the peace of God that rules in our hearts and guides us into God's ways, the Spirit also uses our conscience. This is the inner witness to our conduct which proceeds out of our knowledge of what is right and wrong. Conscience literally means 'with knowledge', and our conscience comes into action the moment we step out of God's right ways.

Our conscience has been likened to the red warning light on a car dashboard. It comes on to warn us that we are about to run into trouble if we don't stop and remedy the fault.

To keep you walking in God's truth, the Spirit confirms that an action is wrong by giving you pangs of conscience. Equally, as right decisions are made, you have a good or clear conscience – an inner knowledge that you are doing right.

- a. The conscience confirms God's law written in your heart.

Romans 2:15: *"They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them"*

- b. The conscience confirms the words you speak.

Romans 9:1: *"I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying. My conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit."*

- c. The conscience confirms the way you conduct yourself.

2 Corinthians 1:12: *"For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you."*

It is the grace of God that he gave us his Spirit to lead us into his ways. Through the operation of the inner prompting of the Spirit, your conscience and God's Word, you will think in a more Christ-like manner. You will know his mind on certain matters and think, speak, and act as he would, for you have 'the mind of Christ' (1 Corinthians 2:16).

7. Know Him to Think Like Him

Philippians 3:10:

"that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death..."

The more you get to know God the more you will understand why his Spirit leads you as he does. A growing knowledge of his nature and character is vital as a foundation to understanding his ways and thus his thoughts. Sometimes our natural reasoning seems good – but the mind of Christ in us tells us otherwise!

We will now look at just one facet of God's nature to see how radically it affects the way he thinks. Knowing the nature of your God will help you to see things through his eyes.

8. God's Plumb-line

Psalm 11:7:

"For the LORD is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face."

God is righteous. He always thinks and speaks what is right and just. No error or untruth is found in him; he is without sin and abhors it. In his dealings with men he is therefore totally righteous.

At a time when God was speaking strongly to the proud, complacent and rebellious in Israel, he prophetically stated that he was establishing a standard among them so that in the future they would have no excuse for their sins:

Amos 7:7-8:

"This is what he showed me: behold, the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said, "Behold, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will never again pass by them..."

God was establishing a plumb-line, a clear standard for men to see:

Isaiah 28:16-17:

"Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be in haste.' And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plumb line; and hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter.'"

Righteousness is God's plumb-line. In the above scripture God is speaking prophetically about the church. Christ is the 'cornerstone' (1 Peter 2:4-6), and the building composed of living stones, representing the church, will only be constructed properly if it is built true to plumb, in other words, in righteousness.

We are the church. Our lives must therefore be built in accordance with God's righteous plumb-line. Understanding this helps us to understand how God thinks about all that we do with our lives. Through believing in Christ we have been made righteous.

Romans 3:22:

“This righteousness comes from God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.”

2 Corinthians 5:21:

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

This is the condition God sees us in and the position from which his Spirit in us views all things. Therefore, in thinking about all we do, God’s Spirit and his Word will guide us along the righteous path. It will not include sin of any description. It will cause us to speak righteously to all men; relate righteously with our families, friends, employers and even our enemies; act righteously in every situation we face; and have a righteous attitude in all that we do.

9. Conclusion

What a privilege it is to be able to think as God thinks! Determine to make time to meditate on God’s nature and character. Then let it fill your mind and invade your whole being, because the way you think is the way you’ll become.