

Developing a Christian Mind

by Danny Bond

The sermon emphasizes the importance of developing a Christian mind to foster a deeper relationship with God and live a life aligned with His truth.

Duration: 51:25

Scripture: Psalm 119:103-105, Matthew 6:33, Philippians 4:8

Topics: "Mind of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the short attention span of viewers and how it affects their ability to engage with biblical sermons. He emphasizes the negative impact of television on linguistic abilities and encourages viewers to develop a Christian mind. The speaker suggests that a key way to do this is through continual immersion in the Word of God. He also urges married couples to have an honest conversation about the role of television in their lives and how it is affecting them.

Transcript

Lord, as we bow our heads, we open our hearts and we ask for you by your Holy Spirit to take control of this time. We are worshipping you, Lord, as we open up our Bibles and we have been singing to you and now we want to worship you through the study of your Word and Lord, we offer up our minds to you. That place of often confusion and temptation and things that go on that we wish would not go on and yet that place designed by you to bring us into intimate fellowship with you, that place within our body between our two ears that you have designed to be a storehouse of the treasures of your Kingdom and your Word, may this message bring us to that end.

May our minds belong to you and be filled and programmed with and inhabited by your truth. That we might know the freedom and the grace and the richness that you have in store for us as your children and we ask these things in the name of Jesus, Amen. As I said, I want to talk about developing a Christian mind.

There's so much we could say on this. I've alluded to it in the past and in fact, one time in the past when we were in Philippians 4.8 and did what you could call an exegetical message. An exegetical message would be one where you exegete the passage.

You take the key words and talk about each one of them. This is not going to be a message like that. I want to use Philippians 4.8 as a launching point and then we'll go on and in general talk about the mind

and what we can do to develop a Christian mind.

So if you would turn to Philippians 4.8, if you'd like to take a look at this passage with all the key words developed, you could get that tape. It's available in the tape catalog. Many years ago, a great Christian thinker by the name of Thomas Goodwin said, our greatest sins are those of the mind.

It doesn't take too long to figure out that is true. Francis Schaeffer, gifted by God to reach those in this world who are the super intellects and have an intellectual sort of cognitive bent in their life. He was gifted to reach them, those intellectual people and bring them to Christ.

So his study of the mind was consistent throughout his great ministry and he said, the spiritual battle, the loss of victory is always in the thought world. He's right. C.H. Spurgeon many years ago in England said, God will not manifest himself in the living room of our hearts if we entertain the devil in the basement of our thoughts.

Think about that one. Often our minds are just filled with evil and yet we are anticipating a great infilling in our hearts of God's spirit and God's love. What Spurgeon is saying there is it doesn't work that way.

You get your mind fixed on God. You get your mind filled with God and his truth and you'll find your heart filled with God. And further, the truth is that our hearts and our minds are inseparably connected because the heart in a Christian sense is not that thing pumping within your chest.

It is the very center of your being. And so in the very center of your being, there is activity that's linked to the physical brain that you have between your ears. And all of that comes down to be ultimately the heart.

They're mingled together. And the Bible has terms that in the original can be translated either way, mind or heart. So we come to Philippians 4.8 and Paul says, finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever are pure, whatever things are lovely of good report, if there is any virtue, if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate or think on these things.

This is Paul's own particular system. You might say it's his own program that he uses to keep a godly Christian mind. Don't forget, it was out of this mind that came much of the New Testament.

So when Paul tells us what to do with our minds, we must understand he's he is the voice of experience. He knows what he's talking about. If you've ever read the writings of Paul and said, oh, God, that I could become a man like this and take Paul's advice.

It's all right here. You see, he tells you what to do with your mind to become that kind of individual. I want to talk about basically three things as it relates to developing a Christian mind.

First of all, the potential that God has given us with these great brains that we have inside of our heads. Secondly, the pollution that is going into many Christians minds today and robbing them of all that God has for them. And third, the programming that is necessary to develop a Christian mind.

Let's begin by talking about the potential of the mind. I don't know how much research you've done on this, but the human brain is unparalleled in its potential. If you look around and see what man has done with the animals, for example, I mean, it's wonderful, isn't it? To go to SeaWorld and to go out and get yourself seated in there playing the music.

And then the Shamu show starts. How many have ever been to SeaWorld and seen the Shamu? Well, look at this. Well, you know, then what a wonderful thing that is.

And Shamu comes up and he opens his mouth and there's a big gigantic tongue and they rub the tongue. You're going, well, that's just so neat. He's such a big whale and they're rubbing his tongue.

And you see him do all these tricks and that's fabulous. And then you see the dolphins and how they've been trained. And then you go over to that other show where that little otter runs around, you know, and they've got the big walrus and the seal and all of that.

Oh, that's so cute. Those little brains, how that otter would know how to go up on the fireplace and knock the bucket over like that. It's just so cute, that little tiny brain, how he could do that and how the seal would know to come and squirt the water on the otter and how the water and the otter get together and, you know, anyway.

But having said all of that and having seen all of that, when you talk about the human brain, you're talking about unparalleled potential. It goes far beyond what any of the animals can do. And that is because God created us that way.

And yet the average human being uses less than 10 percent of their brain power. And think of what man has done. Look at the technology of today.

Look at what man has done with 10 percent. You begin to understand the potential of the human brain. Nobel Laureate Roger Sperry once said, in the human head, there are forces within forces within forces as in no other cubic half foot of the universe that we know.

Speaking of the wonders of the human brain, physiologically, listen to this, the whole process in the brain comes down to about 14 billion cells that are sending out chemicals to each other all the time across these gaps that are called synapses. The web of nerve cells in the brain actually describe defies description. For example, one cubic millimeter, that would be the size of a pinpoint.

Just get the size of a pinpoint. One cubic millimeter, the size of a pinpoint, contains one billion connections of brain cells. A mere gram of brain tissue may contain as many as 400 billion synaptic junctions.

Just a gram of brain tissue could contain that many junctions. As a result, each cell can communicate with every other cell at lightning speed. It would be as if you had a population that was larger than the earth's population and everybody was able to talk to each other at once through this system.

That's what the brain does. It is just phenomenal, the potential that you have there. And yet, there within the brain, which is just a few pounds that sit between your ears, some of us have more air in there than others, of course, but there within the brain, it's just a few pounds, you have an entire life.

You have the morality, the sensuality, the mathematics, the memory, the humor, the experiences, the judgment, the religion, you could go on and on. And there's a catalog of all those things and they're all fixed in there in memory. In fact, in brain surgery, they've actually touched certain points of the brain and with the individual awake during the surgery, that individually suddenly sees and smells and relives whole experiences that may have happened 40 years before in their life.

It's all recorded there. The brain is an incredible thing. And with all those memories, it even then has the common sense to assign priorities to all those different things that are cataloged there.

Our minds were created with far-reaching capabilities. But understanding all of that, you have to realize that ultimately our minds were created for fellowship with God. Man is full of woody inventions, isn't he? I mean, the technology, as I said, of today is a demonstration of that, but God did not create man just to sit around and invent little things.

He created man to fellowship with him, so that the incredible and parallel potential of the human brain was really designed for an unlimited fellowship with an unlimited God. And we must come to see that as Christians, because it is through our brains that we transmit messages to God in prayer and worship, that we articulate those messages. And it's through our minds, our brains, that we ultimately articulate anything we receive from God and come to understand.

If the brain is not impacted, the heart never will be. That is why God designed His Word to speak to the brain that He might get to the heart, you see. So the mind was designed for fellowship with God.

So yes, the brain is like a computer, but it's far much more than that. No computer will ever know the heart of God, will ever sense the feeling of God's heart. No computer will ever think God's thoughts after Him as we do when we read the Bible and the Holy Spirit quickens the passion and the pathos and the feeling of God's Word to us.

And so the human brain goes far beyond any computer, though it is so much like one. And of course, the reason it's like one is because man designed the computer after the model of his brain. Now there is so much potential there in the brain that is tragically, though the brain is unparalleled in its potential, it is tragically so much of it is unused potential, what I sometimes call permanent potential.

It just stays around there being potential all the time, but not being tapped into. And what I want to talk to you right now about for the moment is the unused potential in the Christian minds today in God's church. And by that I mean people who call themselves Christians, because they don't necessarily have a Christian mind on the inside, just because they take the name of the Lord.

In fact, it seems to me that we have a great scandal in God's church today. And from God's point of view, I'm certain of this, that God will look down at his people and see those that have been converted, but their minds haven't been converted. Their hearts, yes, have been touched by the gospel and they've surrendered to Christ and they've come and been forgiven and been saved and washed in the blood and they're bound for heaven.

But the question is, having been bathed in the blood and bound for heaven, has your mind been washed? Have you allowed God's word to wash your mind and to take up residency there? Have you become preoccupied with the things of the kingdom rather than the things that you used to be preoccupied before you made that commitment to Christ? See, the scandal of today is many, quote, Christians who are truly bound for heaven that do not have real Christian minds. And that's why we have so many of the problems we have today in the church. Now, there are a few people who are seeking to warn God's children about this.

One man has mentioned in his writings, he said, the Christian mind has succumbed to the secular drift with a degree of weakness and nervelessness unmatched in Christian history. Let me say that to you

again. The Christian mind today has succumbed to the secular drift, the influence of the world around us, with a degree of weakness and nervelessness unmatched in Christian history.

All of that is simply to say this, never has there been a time in the church when God's people had so much available materials to them to build strong, godly Christian minds and never have there been so few real Christian minds. That's what the writer is saying. It is almost as though in our generation we have come to the point where we have what you could call widespread religious anorexia, sort of an anorexia religiosa, mispronounced it, religiosa.

Anorexia religiosa, it's as though there is a widespread loss of appetite for God's food, for spiritual food, for the things of God's kingdom. Now there are a few that are heeding the warnings and then there are others that are just simply ignoring them. I am appalled at how many Christians I meet who have unguarded, undisciplined, unthinking minds.

I am appalled at what I call adolescent Christianity. It just never gets beyond the adolescent teenage point in a spiritual way. And so few are going on to sink their roots deep, so few are making the effort to develop a real godly Christian mind.

But you see, in contrast to that, if you open your Bible, you find statements like this from the biblical writers. They were so concerned with these issues. In Proverbs 4.23, it says, Above all else, guard your heart.

Why? Because it's the wellspring of life. Everything about you comes out of your heart, the essence of your being, and that's inseparably connected to your mind. Proverbs 23.7, for example, says, As a man thinks in his heart, so he is.

And that word heart translated their heart in the English as the Hebrew nefesh, and it could also be translated mind. The point is, you think about it long enough and you will become it. You think about it long enough and you will do it.

Our minds are the center of the whole thing in our life. Someone said years ago, In company you should guard your tongue, but in private you should guard your mind. I wonder how many of us really do guard our minds in private.

I wonder how many of us are so concerned when we're alone that our minds are godly. Marcus Aurelius said years ago that a man's thoughts will die his soul. Have you ever seen a piece of cloth get dyed? It can be one color one minute, and a few minutes later with the proper dye it can look totally different.

It will take on, the cloth will take on all the characteristics of that, the color of that dye. What Marcus Aurelius was saying is that you think about it long enough and it'll stain your soul to be the color of your thoughts, whatever it is. And that's true.

And you can meet people who have lived a wicked life all their days and thought nothing but wicked thoughts, and you can see it in their countenance. You talk to people who are given over to wicked lifestyles, look into their eyes, look into their face, and you'll see it there because a man's thoughts dye his soul. On the other hand, look into the face of a godly Christian who reads the Word of God, who seeks God, and walks with God, and has God as the center of his thoughts, and guess what you're going to see in their eyes? God.

What will you see in their face? A man's countenance lit up by the Lord. That's what you'll see. In fact, that was a great drawing influence for me before I was a Christian.

I remember looking into the faces of some godly Christians and thinking, I have never seen what I'm seeing there anywhere else. I have never seen that light that I see in those eyes anywhere else. I have never seen that kind of a shining countenance anywhere else except in these people who follow Jesus Christ.

And that told me that they had the light I was looking for. You see, a man's thoughts dye his soul. And so we see the potential of the mind.

It's very, very great. Now let's go on and talk about the second thing here we are discussing today, and that is the pollution of the mind among Christians today. The pollution of the mind.

How does it happen that someone would be saved by Jesus on their way to heaven but not have a Christian mind? Well, it's because their mind is polluted. But how does that come to be? Well, number one, from a lack of understanding. A lack of understanding of our Christian freedom.

I think that many people fail to realize that bad theology can do this, bad teaching, lack of teaching can do this. Many just fail to realize that they're free now, that you are free to cultivate a Christian mind if you want to. In fact, nobody understood this better than the Apostle Paul.

He prescribed his own personal program to us, and we read it in Philippians 4.8, right? But turn in your Bible to 2 Corinthians 5.17. Paul writes down here something that he believed, something that influenced his life constantly, something he would not negotiate on. Paul says here in 2 Corinthians 5.17, Therefore, if any man be in Christ, you notice he doesn't say if some men be in Christ or if this person or that. He says any.

That includes every single truly born-again person. If any man be in Christ, he is a what? New creature. Old things are passed away.

And so that is a statement addressed to your faith because sometimes you don't feel like old things are passed away, right? If any man be in Christ, that includes everybody, in case you don't feel like you would get to have everything that all the other Christians have, that you're some exception, you're not, he's saying. He says if any man is in Christ, whether you feel like it or not, all the old things are passed away. All of that is to say your old man is dead and you are a new creature in Christ.

Well, when the old man dies and the new man is born, launched into God's kingdom by the power that created the heavens and the universe coming to live within you, at that moment in time you are set free and given the choice to develop a Christian mind. You have the freedom to do it. But many Christians don't understand this, again, because of lack of teaching, bad theology, or simply because they don't read their Bibles and don't go to church, so they don't understand.

So if you were to say why are so many Christian minds polluted today, the first answer would be a lack of understanding of our freedom in Christ. If you read Paul's list in Philippians 4.8, remember all the things we read there, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is noble, all these things. You realize that it becomes a matter of personal choice.

That if you are going to have those things dominating your mind, you must make a choice to make the effort. You must make a personal choice to meditate on these things. You must get involved.

Now somebody's going to say, okay, but wait, aren't my present choices hindered by my past choices? Well, let me answer that. If you have lived an evil life habitually, know this, even though you're born again and you've come to know Jesus and you're indwelt by the Holy Spirit, not everything is going to change overnight. And so the answer to that question, aren't my present decisions going to be hindered by my past bad decisions? The answer to that is there will be, yes, an influence there.

And to say otherwise would be to ignore reality. But if you're thinking that it's impossible to have a Christian mind, and if you're thinking, well, you just don't know my problem, you don't know my past, then my answer to that is, it doesn't matter what your problem is, and it doesn't matter what your past is. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, and old things are passed away, you have the potential to cultivate a Christian mind.

Now yes, it might be a little harder for you than the person who grew up as a quote, goody two-shoes. You know, I don't know anyone left like that, but you know, if you did grow up without much evil in your life, it might be a little easier for you than the person who had habitual evil. But this is what I want you to see.

Please don't allow yourself to rationalize a lack of effort and a habitual indifference just because you had a bad or a dark past. Don't allow yourself to rationalize your way into an ongoing emptiness. You see, even worldly people can make a decision to change their thinking.

Did you know that? I mean, just think of all the self-help seminars that are out there. Think of Tony Robbins, you know, with his TV advertisements that go on and on. And they get all these celebrities on there, you know, Fran Tarkington, Casey Kasem, and they're just all these stars on there, and they're all saying, if my life, I would be nowhere if it wasn't for Tony.

You know, and it's almost like they're talking about the Messiah or something. Well, Tony Robbins is just one of many. We could, I'm just using him as an example, and the only reason I'm pointing him out is to say this.

His program is not a Christian program. It is just a program that says, hey, use the mind that God gave you. And with the capabilities of your mind, you have the power to change.

You don't want to be a drunk anymore? Don't be one! You know, that kind of a message. And you want to get your life right? Then get it right. Don't put up with not having a right life.

And so all these people get on there and they give their testimonies. I didn't have a right life. Now I do.

You know, I'm a millionaire. Well, hey, if those people can make a choice in their mind to change, and they're following Tony Robbins, how much more can you and I, who are following Jesus and are in Christ and have become new creatures and the old things have passed away, and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who has brought to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, how much more can we make a decision to change? Not even by our strength, but by his. So I'm telling you, you and I can, with the effort and the submission to the Spirit of God, develop a Christian mind.

So for any of you that were out there making your excuses, we've diffused that little bomb. Your excuses are done. It's over.

It's finished. We'll all go on together now, won't we? Because there's always those out there saying, I can't do it. I've never done anything.

I just can't. I'm not capable of anything. Well, you are.

And today is the day of reckoning to begin to move forward. You've been robbed if you've been living like that. The pollution of the mind, then, is coming from a lack of understanding.

Further, another thing is it's coming from a lack of refusal. We must get involved in refusal as Christians. You cannot go forward without refusal.

It is a discipline. It is the act and the art of saying no. If you're going through your life and you're just taking it all into your mind, then know this, you'll never have a Christian mind.

There must come a point where you say, that's not coming into my mind. Neither is that. These people that have been dragging me down and been a bad influence on my life, they're not going to do it anymore.

This thing I've been watching on TV, I'm not going to watch it anymore. This thing I've been reading, I'm not going to read it anymore. You see? You have to refuse some things.

You've got to take control of the situation. Your mind is a place that you must take control of and you must keep it clean or it will be dirty. How many here have ever owned a bird? I've had several of them.

I've switched over to dogs. But how many, again, have had a bird in your life? How many were married to a bird person? Listen, do you know what happens to your bird and his cage if you don't keep it clean? Remember what happens? Some of you got rid of your bird for that very reason, right? You see, birds, they like to eat little snacks and seeds and things and you know what happens. If you leave them alone, their cage becomes filthy.

In fact, we had a couple of birds and it's, you know, the person who buys the bird says, I promise I'll take care of it, you know, I'll change the paper, I'll keep it clean. And the next thing you know, there's stuff everywhere around the edge and it's piled up and along the little, you know, wire things and the next thing you know, the bird's gone. Because a cage with a bird in it that is left to itself will become a dirty bird cage, right? And guess what? There'll be a dirty bird living inside of it.

Well, if you just leave your mind alone and you don't make an effort to keep it clean, it will become like a dirty bird cage. Just a dirty mind. Our thoughts left to themselves are like a cage of unclean birds.

Indifferent mind pollution today among Christians, I think, is possibly pandemic. It's global. The major portion of this is coming through television.

Let me give you an example. Many heard of Charles Coulson, read his books, seen his books, heard his name. He tells of sitting at dinner with the president of one of the three major television networks and he felt he had a tremendous opportunity to influence the man, so he told him how millions of Christians were offended by the major network's programming.

Knowing that TV executives have an intense interest in profit, Coulson suggested that it would be good business if they would begin to air wholesome family entertainment. After all, added Coulson, there are 50 million born-again Christians out there. The gauntlet was down and as Coulson tells it, he looked at me quizzically.

I assured him this was Gallup's latest figure. What you are suggesting, Mr. Coulson, he said, is that we run more programs like, say, Chariots of Fire? Exactly, Coulson said. That's a great movie with a marvelous Christian message.

Well, he said, CBS ran it as a primetime movie just a few months ago and are you aware of the ratings that it had? Coulson said, all at once I knew I was in trouble. He then explained, the night NBC showed On Golden Pond, it was number one in the ratings with 25.2% of all TV sets in America tuned in. Close Behind was My Mother's Secret Life, a show about a mother hiding her past as a prostitute.

It was number two, very close behind at 25.1%. A Distant Third and A Big Money Loser was CBS with Chariots of Fire 11.8% in the ratings. In fact, of the 65 shows rated that entire week, Dallas was number one, Chariots of Fire was 57 in the ratings for the week. So my companion concluded, where are your 50 million born-again Christians, Mr. Coulson? What are they watching? Good question.

If even half of Gallup's 50 million born-again Christians had watched the show with the Christian message, Chariots of Fire would have topped the ratings. But the disturbing truth, as studies by the secular networks as well as the Christian Broadcasting Network show, is that the viewing habit of Christians are no different than those of non-Christians. Since TV is a business, it gives its customers, the public, what they want, and thus it becomes a mirror of what the public wants.

And we see from the research that Christian viewing habits are no different than the rest of the public's viewing habits. So what we see on TV is a mirror of what the public at large, including Christians, want to see on TV. That's the point.

The Christian community put into its collective computer our minds as the rest of the world. According to A.C. Nielsen, the TV set in the average home is on seven hours and seven minutes a day. The average viewer watches four and one-half hours of TV a day.

The statistics for religious homes is only one-half hour less. A renowned media expert, Professor Neil Postman of the New York University, says that between the ages of six and 18, the average child spends some 15,000 to 16,000 hours in front of the TV set, whereas he spends only 13,000 hours in school. Postman says that during the first 20 years of an American child's life, he will see some one million commercials at the rate of about 1,000 of them a week.

Folks, what's in the commercials? You and I know what's in the commercials. So TV is a major influence in the world today. It's not just America, but in the world today.

And we are learning that the Christian viewer is basically, on the average, no different in what he likes to watch than the non-Christian viewer. Why is that? Christians have allowed their minds to become ungodly and polluted. They're doing nothing about it.

They're not refusing to allow ungodliness to come in. What you then have is a Christianity that's a body of believers, a body of Christ that is just about like the world, and you're right back to 1 Corinthians, where the Corinthians were being programmed by the world around them. You may not know this, but TV is not that good for you in general.

For example, if you watch TV a lot, what will happen to you is that you will cultivate a short attention span. You ever wonder why, on all the action shows, all the things go like this from, oh man, you should see this movie, it's so full of action, held my interest. Okay, go see it, and you'll find out it's doink, doink, doink,

doink, doink, doink, doink, doink, one thing after the next, because short attention span, you can't stand anything too long.

That's why on the news, you turn on the news, and they get on one thing, and they're on it for just a very brief time, and suddenly they're on to something else, and on to something else, and on to something else. Why? Because viewers have a short attention span. If you leave it on one issue too long, they'll just tune out and turn you off.

That's why people today, by the way, have a low tolerance for sermons, biblical sermons, long ones like mine, short attention span from TV. TV further decreases your linguistic powers. It retards your ability to communicate with your mouth.

You'd be better off to sit and play poker than to sit every week and watch TV, because at least you'd be talking to each other. What do you have? You've been peeking at mine. You're cheating.

I mean, at least you're talking to each other. Pastor Danny's advocating poker. He said it in the message today.

No, I just said you'd be better off. I didn't say to do it. Not only does TV shorten your attention span, decrease your ability to communicate with your mouth linguistically, but it reduces your capacity for abstraction.

And listen, much of the Christian life goes beyond the level of the shallow and the basic. You understand that? I mean, some of our experiences are so deep and so rich the love of Christ is beyond our attaining in its height and its depth and its breadth and its width, the Bible says. What TV does is it reduces your capacity for abstraction.

To put that in simple words, it makes you shallow and basic, and that's it as a person. We could go on and on. Messes up children.

It blends psychologically adulthood with being a children. They don't know where they lie in the middle because they're experiencing all this stuff they see on TV that they have no business even watching. They don't know where they fit into all that.

Messes up the kids. Think about this. The main themes of TV today.

Think about this. What are the main themes of TV today? They are in fact the main sins forbidden in the Bible. Did you ever stop and think about that? The very things that God in the Old Testament under the Mosaic Law prescribed capital punishment for are the main themes on TV.

Adultery, homosexuality, incest, rape, murder. All these things, the main things forbidden in the Bible are the main diet of TV. And the people love to have it so.

And that's why it's like that. As a result for the Christian, the lowest of activities, the most shocking, the most evil become commonplace. Think of how bad that is.

That you would come to the place where you're no longer shocked by evil and thus in your own life you will not flee from it because you're just used to living with it. You mean after all you live with it in your living room every day. You're with it more than you are all the other things in your life.

That is what TV does to you. It turns the shocking into the commonplace and the accepted. And we accept it, we then reject it in a way, in the Christian sense, and we pay no attention to it and thus we don't deal with it.

But you see that then leaves you a long, long, long way from Ephesians chapter 5 verse 3 when it said, but fornication and uncleanness and this kind of wickedness, let it not even be named among you, let alone studied and watched and with vicarious pleasure, which is getting pleasure from watching something without doing it, let it not even be named among you. Listen very closely to what I'm going to say. It is impossible for any Christian who spends the bulk of his or her evenings, month after month, day in day out, week in week out, watching TV, the major networks and the different cable, contemporary videos, it is impossible for an individual like that, impossible to cultivate a Christian mind.

And the reason for that is this, a biblical mental program cannot coexist with worldly programming. You have to have one or the other. Somebody's saying, well, what should I do? This is heavy.

I'll tell you what you should do. You should selectively watch TV and do it with great control over what you watch if you want to watch TV. Watch it selectively with great control over what you watch.

That's one suggestion. Let me take you to a second. Second suggestion would be this, spend less time watching TV.

Even if you do it selectively with great control over it, spend less time. And well, you're spending less time with the TV, spend more time with your children, talking to them, getting into the Bible with them. For example, on a local station, you can turn on the word transfer from 7.30 to 8 o'clock at night, Monday through Friday.

That's a good suggestion. I'm, of course, biased. But we do that with our family.

We listen to the word, and then we get together and talk about it. And after our program, Skip Heitzik comes on now, and on you go on the word. That is a good alternative to TV, filling your mind with the Bible.

In the time that you would regain by watching less TV, you could get a book by Kenneth Taylor called Devotions for the Children Hour, which will take you through a systematic theology on a child's level. And it's all contained in these little chapters with questions and songs and prayers. And you could take your children through the Bible and talk to them in that time that you would regain from TV.

So one suggestion, selectively watch TV with great control over what you watch. Another suggestion, spend less time watching TV, even if your viewing is controlled. A third suggestion would be stop watching TV altogether.

If, I'm not advocating a new legalism here, no TV to have a Christian mind. That's not what I'm advocating. I am saying, if you cannot control what you watch, if you are being polluted by garbage from TV, if you live every evening with the remote in your hand, and you don't communicate with your family, and you're having a hard time living a godly life, and your mind is like a garbage pail because it's full of garbage all the time, and the main source of that garbage is TV, then just quit watching it.

Do you know that some of the nicest TVs we have here at the church are from people like that? Show up at the church, back in, unload it, say, get it out of my life. Here, you take it. I don't care what you do with it.

Well, we take it and we plug it in. We hook up little good Christian videos to it and show them to the children, see? Programmed with godly stuff, nice godly stuff flowing through it. Listen, if you can't control it, get rid of it.

What is more important to you? Sitting around becoming an unspiritual carnal couch potato, watching the tube all the time, or developing a Christian mind and enjoying the freedom that comes with it? You see, we've got to come to the point where we absolutely refuse to allow ourselves to indifferently be programmed by the world. Somewhere along the line, we have to make that decision. We're not going to allow TV to rob us and pollute us.

Jesus said in Matthew 5 29, if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. Was he saying actually take your right eye out? No, you're saying take measures, your drastic ones if necessary, so you'll stop sinning with your eyes. The psalmist said in 102 verse 2, I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

I will set nothing wicked before my eyes and I hate the work of those who fall away. It shall not cling to me. It all comes down to this.

Jesus wants to be lord of your prime time. Are you going to let him be or not? It's a good question, isn't it? And I want to encourage those of you that are married to sit down with your spouse after today's message and have a good heart-to-heart honest talk about the TV in your life and what you need to do about it and how it's affecting you. Finally, having talked about these different issues, let's talk about now, I've seen the potential of the mind, the pollution of the mind.

Let's talk about as we finish up the programming of the Christian mind. John R. W. Stott has said that the secret of holy living is in the mind. It's true.

It's all in the mind. I want to give you a couple of helpful things you can do to program your mind to make it a Christian mind. Here is the cardinal thing that must be done.

A continual immersion in the Word of God. A continual immersion in the Word of God. You see, the Bible has been designed by God to the end that if you immerse yourself in it, it will cultivate a Christian mind within you.

Paul said, brethren, think on whatever is true or noble or pure or lovely. These things are found where? In the Bible. They're not found on TV.

Very rarely are they found on TV. Now, you could see a good whale show or, you know, a little tennis match or this or that. But by and large, TV does not program you with what is pure and lovely and noble and all of this.

It's just the opposite. You've got to go to the Bible to find it. Now, somebody's going to say, oh, but that's such good advice.

I just don't have time to read the Bible regularly. Did you just say that to yourself? I heard you over here. Someone said.

Did you just say that to yourself? If you did, let me ask you very directly. Are you being honest? Is that really the truth? Or do you just have so many other things going on that you have between you and God

that now you don't have time because you're wasting your time on things that will not matter eternally, nor will they help you in your walk with God now? Listen, I could give you so many examples of people that were far busier than you and I will ever be that found the time. The time is there.

The question is, what are you putting into that slot? That's the question. You've got to immerse yourself in the Word of God. And if you don't, you know what you will do? You will edit God out of your life.

There is no other way. If you do not systematically, regularly immerse yourself in the Word of God, you will edit God out of your life. There's no way around that.

And yet, if you give yourself to the Word, it will begin to dominate your thinking. You'll find it getting in there. It will engage your thinking.

In Psalm 119, 103, the psalmist said, How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Can you say that today? Or have you been watching so much TV that your Bible is so dusty, you don't even remember what his words taste like? You see, the psalmist didn't have a TV set, so he read his Bible. How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.

Through your precepts, I get understanding, and because of that, I hate every evil way. Psalm 119, 105, Then your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. The person you see with a Bible-saturated mind has a light that shines in their path.

They have a sweetness in their mouth, a sweetness in their heart, a sweetness in their soul that can only come from the Word of God. You want to know why it's so important to read the Bible regularly? Because you cannot be influenced by what you don't know. And I'll go a step further.

You cannot be influenced by what is not fresh to you right now. Sure, you may have read the Bible all last week. Did you read it this week? If you didn't, it's not fresh to you, and thus, it's losing its grip on you and on your mind.

And if you can't read the Bible well, someone else is saying, Well, hey, you know, I would love to take this advice, but I'm a very poor reader. All my life, I've hardly read it. You would be amazed the arguments people come up with.

They come in for counseling. You say, Do you read your Bible? Well, not much, but I'm pretty sure you can help me. Oh, no, no, no.

It doesn't work that way. The full counsel of God can help you, and I can't read your Bible for you. You see, you may not be able to read well.

Well, then here's what you need to do. Then you buy yourself a set of cassette tapes where the Bible is read by someone who can read well with all kinds of enthusiasm and color in their voice, and they'll read the Bible to you while you listen. If you can't read well, then you start listening well.

Get yourself a set of tapes. You can get them in our bookstore or order them if they don't have them there, but you've got to saturate yourself with the Word of God. I so often think about those people who understood this that had handicaps that would have gotten in their way if they weren't so hungry for God.

Like the individual who went through an accident, a disaster, and could no longer read the Bible and didn't even have any feeling in their fingers, and so they discovered they could read a Braille Bible with their lips.

And so they spent the rest of their life reading the Braille Bible with their lips. Then there was another individual who lost their sight and read about the person who read the Bible with their lips and got so inspired, but found that they had almost no feeling at all in their lips left because of their accident and discovered they could read the Bible with their tongue, the Braille Bible with their tongue, and read through the whole Bible.

So many of us have Bibles all over everywhere. What version do you have? Oh, I've got them all. Which version do you read? Too busy.

Oh, I see. You see, continual immersion in the Word of God is the way to cultivate a Christian mind and further, let me give you a second thought and we'll close here, classic Christian literature will make a major contribution to a Christian mind. Every single person I quote up here in the messages, you know those little zinger quotes, ooh, that was a good one.

Who was that? You know those good ones that really get you? Every single one of them were people who were given to immersing themselves in the Bible and then reading good Christian literature. Very often you find through the years they all read the same people. Read Amy Carmichael's writings, you'll find the same people she's quoting that Spurgeon quotes and Tozer quotes and J.C. Ryle quotes.

You see, you can track it all the way along and Lloyd Jones quotes. They all read the same people but they all read the classic Christian literature that engaged them in their thinking. They didn't read the garbage that floods the bestseller stands today in Christian bookstores.

I'm not saying Chuck Swindoll or Hank Canegraff or John MacArthur, those people have garbage. But I'm saying people like Benny Hinn and people like that, that's garbage. If you don't know it yet, find out.

It's full of nonsense. So I want to give you some helpful books. People say at a time like this, well what do I read? I go in the bookstore, there's all these books.

What do I read? Can I give you a few suggestions? No? You're stuck. Captive audience. I'll give them to you anyway.

There's a book I'm reading right now. It's called Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret. That book is phenomenal.

21 years old, he went alone to China. Finally he went back to England, brought some people back to China with him and they went out with nobody financing them but God. And they laid the groundwork for the revivals that have gone on in China until this day.

You read Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor and I guarantee it'll just tear your heart out. It'll make you weep before God and it'll put faith into you as you see God work in the life of real flesh and blood people just like yourselves. George Whitfield, great biography by Arnold Dalimore, great man of God.

The Pursuit of God by A.W. Tozer, a classic. Tozer will take you into the depths of Christian experience of experiencing God. The Pursuit of God by Tozer.

Pilgrim's Progress, my son Daniel was reading it on the plane to Idaho the other day, the child's version. Kept showing me the pictures. Wow, look at this one, Dad.

He's laying this giant right here. This is heavy. You know, I'm giving you a list of books that are on the list of the greatest men and women of God in our day have all said that these are their favorite books.

This is kind of a potpourri. My Utmost for His Highest by Oswald Sanders, Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis, Spiritual Depression by D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, Great Christian Leaders of the 18th Century by J.C. Ryle, Holiness by J.C. Ryle. We have a paper on the counter in our bookstore that has all these books listed on it and I would encourage you to begin to read, to begin to cultivate a Christian mind and these are some good starting points, but brethren, God has given us a great gift in our minds.

You know that old saying, God gave you a mind, you ought to use it. Yes, we should and we should use it to turn it into a Christian mind, a place where God dwells, a place where his word dwells, a clean place, a tidy place, a bright and shining place where the light of God is flooding us. You see, we have the freedom to cultivate a Christian mind.

I pray in the name of Jesus that you will make some changes in your life necessary to bring this about, that you will no longer allow yourself to be robbed of the richness and the freedom and the power that God has for you. And some of you have already discovered this goodness and you've got Christian minds and you're nodding your heads and you're hoping those people around you will get on to it too because you want them to know the fullness too. May God help us all to become a thinking church, a church that thinks in terms of Bible and the goodness and the love of God, a church with Christian minds.

Let's bow for a word of prayer. Father, thank you Lord for this time together. Forgive us God for all of the wasted hours, hours and hours and hours wasted, vegetating instead of meditating.

Help us Lord, the television, video is such a big part of our society today and it's much good that can be done with these tools but there's so much damage as well. Help us Lord to have a balance as individuals to not be legalistic with each other but to seek our own place of balance and edification. God, we're asking that you would by your spirit cultivate within us the desire to make the effort, the refusals and the necessary efforts to go on to know a Christian mind, to have one.

We want to be Christian people with Christian minds and we ask these things for your glory in Jesus' name. Amen.

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