

The Life of the Mind and the Love of God

by John Piper

The greatest commandment in the Bible is to love God with all your mind, and this means using your mind as a means to treasure and adore God above all things.

Duration: 58:05

Scripture: Proverbs 26:4-5, 1 Corinthians 8:1-3, 1 Corinthians 14:20, 2 Timothy 2:7

Topics: "Mind"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of loving God with all our minds. He lists seven or eight things that we should avoid in order to cultivate a love for God. The main focus is on engaging our minds to know God fully and treasure Him completely. The speaker encourages us to use our minds as a gift from God to deepen our affection for Him, and emphasizes the need for prayerful trust in God's gift of understanding.

Transcript

Whom have I in heaven but you, and on earth there is nothing that I desire beside you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but you are the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Would you grant, Father, that all of us in this room would be able to say that with our dying breath, in Jesus' name, amen.

You may be seated. There are negative reasons for this conference, and there are positive ones. There are things that my prayer is that this conference would help prevent, and there are things that I pray this conference will promote.

And the way I would like to structure the message today is by beginning with seven or eight of those negative ones, the things that I hope we will help not happen in your mind, in your life, and then turn mainly to the positive one, what we hope this conference has and will promote. I'll tell you what the main one is, namely that you would make your thinking, your mind, a means of loving. And the great commandment and the second commandment are that we love God and that we love people.

And Francis has discharged me of my responsibility to talk about the second one, because last night's message could not have done it better. So my focus is going to be on how the mind is meant by God to serve our love of him. But before I get there, there are the seven or eight things that I hope the conference will help you not do.

So let me list them off. They're pretty short and may take up about half of our time, and then we'll turn to the main positive one. Number one, we hope that through this conference you will not be naive about the depravity of the human mind, especially after Al's talk where he opened it for us so fully.

Second Corinthians 3.14, Paul says the mind is hardened. 1 Timothy 6.5, he calls the mind depraved. Ephesians 4.18, he says that men are darkened in their understanding and alienated from the life of God.

Romans 1.21, he says that our thinking has become futile and foolish because we suppress truth in unrighteousness. Colossians 2.8, he warns us not to be taken captive by philosophy. First Corinthians 1.21, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom.

God thought it wise not to let us find him through wisdom. And so my first negative aim is that you would not be naive about what you're up against. If there is a holy place for thinking in the Christian life, something really drastic has to happen, namely you must be born again by the Holy Spirit and you must be ever renewed by the Holy Spirit.

That's number one. Number two, we hope that your mind will not be complicit in spiritual adultery. Matthew chapter 16, verses 1 to 4, the Pharisees and Sadducees come to Jesus to test him.

They ask for a sign from heaven and he answers them in a way that makes you realize he knows that they are involved in spiritual adultery. Let me read you what he said. They came asking for a sign and he said, when it is evening, you say, it will be fair weather for the sky is red, and in the morning it will be stormy today because the sky is red and threatening.

You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign. So, when it came to weather, their minds functioned with Aristotelian accuracy.

Premise number one, whenever the sky is red at night, it's going to be good weather tomorrow. Premise number two, the sky is red tonight, conclusion, it's going to be fair tomorrow, perfect. That's perfect logic.

And Jesus commended them for it, and you should cultivate that. Aristotelian logic was on the planet thousands of years before Aristotle because it's God's. But, he said to them, you cannot interpret the signs of the times.

You're looking at me and you don't make any bright conclusions. The Messiah is here. The kingdom of God is breaking in.

These are the last days, and your minds are incapable of grasping this. You can't. You are so good at using your mind for weather, for natural things, and so incapable of dealing with me.

Good mind for the weather, blind mind for the bridegroom. Israel was the wife of God. He has come to get her in Jesus Christ.

Surely, she will know her husband. Surely, her mental facilities will work well at recognizing her beloved, won't they? And what do they say when their husband is standing in front of them, prove it. Why do they say that? Why does Jesus say, that's the way adulterers talk? Because they said prove it because what they saw, they didn't want.

They didn't like what they saw. They wanted another kind of husband. There were adulterers, spiritual adulterers, and their minds were so good at everything they wanted, like fair weather on the sea because I don't want to drown.

But this bridegroom is not what I was expecting, so my mind now is shut down. And we don't want that to happen for you. So this conference exists to help you not become complicit in spiritual adultery.

Number three, we hope that you will not be cagey or slippery with your mind. Few things get my back up more than this. And it's very prevalent in our day and I feel very, very in good company because Jesus really got his back up about this.

He won't tolerate it. He will not deal with people who use their minds this way. So in Matthew 21, verses 23 to 27, the chief priests ask him, by what authority do you do these things? Because they don't like what he's doing.

He knows the deviousness of their hearts and he asked them a question. He said, I will ask you a question and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. So there's a kind of person I share that information with and there's a kind of person I don't.

I feel like a pearls before swine issue. The baptism of John, he says, where did it come from? From heaven or from man? Now, instead of being forthright, clear, honest, upfront, they become cagey, slippery, shifty. Here's what they say, if we say from heaven, he will say to us, well, why then didn't you believe him, John the Baptist? But if we say he's from man, we're afraid of the crowd because they hold John to be a prophet.

So they answered, we don't know. I wish I could have seen Jesus' face. Because what he said was, neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

This is over. I'm not talking to people like that. So spin is not attractive to Jesus.

You know what's attractive to Jesus? I'll just use the words of Paul. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth, we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. We don't want you to leave here using your God-given brain to become cagey and slippery and shifty, because it does take quite a mental power to be as slippery and cagey and shifty as so many people are.

Number four, we hope that you will not be romantic about the benefits of ignorance. There is an odd notion that if we use our minds to grow in our knowledge of God, mystery will diminish, and with it, wonder and reverence. You ever run into that? It's weird.

I think that's one of the oddest notions in the universe when you're talking about an infinite God. For two reasons. Number one, no matter how many millions of ages I use my mind to know more of God's majesty, his glories will never be in danger of being exhausted.

Infinite is not subtracted from. Don't worry that you will limit him if you know something about him. Don't buy that insane popular notion that mystery goes down when knowledge goes up.

That's insane. That's insane when you're talking about an infinite God. The other reason it's odd is that thinking about God and knowing more and more of God doesn't jeopardize worship of God.

It grounds worship of God. God is not honored by ignorance of him as though the less you know, the more you can stand in awe of the unknown. He's not honored because he has no reality, no being, no contour, no identity.

It could be a doorknob. God is not honored when people get excited about how little they know of him. Ignorance of God has never been the ground of true worship.

While we don't know everything, and we'll never know everything, we know something because wonder of wonders. You want to wonder? God has spoken. God has come in Christ.

God has revealed himself, and God has preserved a book, and there are in it over 1,200 pages. You want to wonder? God has revealed himself, and he means to be loved, worshipped, treasured, cherished, prized, adored, obeyed for what he is, not what he isn't. Don't become romantic about the benefits of ignorance.

Be more enthralled by the God you know than the God you don't. Number five, we hope that you will not be children. We hope that the conference will help you not be children in your thinking, but mature.

First Corinthians 14:20, brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking, be mature. There is a kind of thinking that children do that you shouldn't.

There is a growing up and a maturity for the mind. Now, let me give you number six, because five and six go together, because number six is not a negative and shouldn't be in the list, but it's in the list because it is a negative if I flip it upside down and I'm putting it here to make number five stand in stark relief. So number five was we don't want you to be children in your thinking, and number six is we want you to be children in your thinking, okay, which is made negative by saying we don't want you to be wise and understanding and to be children.

Those of you who know your Bible can hear the text I'm quoting, right? It's Luke 10:21, and it goes like this, I thank you, Father, this Jesus, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding. So by all means, we don't want you to be wise and understanding, because otherwise you're going to get everything hidden from you. Father, I thank you that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and have revealed them to little children.

So we want you to be little children. Whatever Paul says, we want you to be children and not wise and understanding. The wise and understanding in this text, I don't have time to prove it, I'm just going to say it, are proud, self-sufficient in their knowledge.

They use their minds not to know God, not to submit to God, not to love God. They use their minds to exalt themselves, seek praise of man, escape God. But the children in this text are childlike and humble and dependent and trusting and loving, and they're looking away from themselves for what they need.

And God talks to people like that. So five and six, we don't want you to be children because Paul says, do not be children in your thinking. And we do want you to be children because Jesus said, I talk to children.

Now, the reason I put it in that stark of a paradoxical manner is to draw out this lesson. The Bible is full of such things, and they are there to make you think. What do you do when you read in one verse, don't be a child, and you read in another verse, be a child, what do you do? Some people throw their Bible away.

Well, that's sad. What God is saying, think over. There is a sense in which this is true.

There is a sense in which this is true. I'm not speaking out of both sides of my mouth. I'm talking in paradoxes to wake you up.

Now, if you think I'm bringing that to the Bible in a kind of rhetorical device, I would say, okay, fine, but I'm not. If I were, I'd be okay. G.K. Chesterton was a master at it.

I'm not bringing it to the Bible. It's in the Bible, and sometimes the Bible puts the paradoxical statements back to back to let us know, I do that sometimes. For example, you may remember this from your trek through Proverbs, chapter 26, verses 4 and 5. Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him.

That's verse 4. Verse 5, answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in himself. You think he didn't know what he had written in verse 4 when he wrote verse 5? The point of Proverbs is think. Proverbs don't solve problems.

They create problems, really. More often, they create problems. I've got to figure this out.

When does this apply? When doesn't it apply? Doesn't seem to work here. Oh, it works here. That's where he meant it to work.

You can't live the Christian life without this kind of spiritual wisdom that takes contradictory Proverbs and know when one is to be applied. That's why the Proverbs say, a proverb in the mouth of a fool is like leaning on a thorn. It goes right through your hand.

Fools can't handle the Proverbs. Only wise people can handle the Proverbs. Because wise people have learned how to be children and not be children.

How to be wise in understanding and not be wise in understanding. They're not put off by the Bible's paradoxes. They're drawn into them and said, oh God, make me deep.

Please, I don't want to apply this proverb when that one should be applied. And I don't want to be a child when I should be a grown up. And I don't want to be a grown up when I should be a child.

Oh God, please, I can't do this on my own. I need your number. Where am I? Seven? Number seven.

Two more and then we shift over. We do not want you to view thinking as unnecessary to knowing God or as decisive in knowing God. We don't want you to view thinking as unnecessary in knowing God.

It is necessary. Or view it as decisive in gaining a knowledge of God. It isn't decisive.

The main text, perhaps second main in my mind that produced most of my thinking about thinking is 2 Timothy 2, verse 7, which goes like this. Think over what I say. Timothy, this is Paul to his son in the faith.

Think over what I say for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. So here's a command. Think over what I say.

This is, I think generally, that would be think over the Bible. Think over the apostolic word, the prophetic word, the Jesus word. Think over what I say.

It's a command. And then he says because, and he gives the ground, the Lord will give you understanding in everything. So, those two sentences keep together what it seems to me historically so many separate.

So we don't want you to separate them. We want you not to undervalue the necessity of thinking because he says, think, and Paul ten times, I've got the text listed right here, ten times in the book of Acts says he reasons to try to bring people to a knowledge of the Messiah and see them put their faith in him. But it's not decisive.

The reasoning, the thinking is not decisive. It says, think over what I say for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. And so many people swerve off the road on one side or the other.

In some stress, think over what I say. And others say, the Lord gives understanding and illumination. It's not your mind.

It's not your brain. And Paul won't have it like that. He will not be divided like that.

Both human thinking and divine illumination, not either or. Think over what I say. Now notice this word for.

Think over what I say for, because the Lord will give you understanding. So there's a promise made and that promise is the ground of the effort. You make the effort to think, I promise you, I'm going to do the decisive giving.

Paul does not say. God gives you understanding, so you don't need to waste your time thinking. And he does not say, think hard, because there is no such thing as divine illumination.

It's your brain that makes all the difference. You're decisive. He doesn't say either of those.

He says, think over what I say for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. God's gift of illumination is the ground of our effort to understand, not the substitute for it. Anybody who thinks without prayerful trust in God's gift of understanding will not likely get it.

And anybody who tries to lay hold in run around thinking on divine illumination without applying their mind to what is written will not get it. Number eight, and here I can keep it short because it's a restatement of Francis Chan's embodiment of it last evening. Number eight is we don't want you to leave here with a proud and loveless mind.

That's a thing we hope has been, will be prevented as much as humans can be a part of that prevention. And I will read Francis' text again, 1 Corinthians 8, 1 to 3. Now concerning food offered to idols, we know that all of us possess knowledge. This knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

If anyone imagines that he knows something, he doesn't yet know as he ought to know. But if we love God, if anyone loves God, he is known by God. So one thing is clear from that text.

Knowledge that is loveless is imaginary knowledge. It's not real. Okay, how factual it is.

Knowledge that doesn't serve love is false knowledge. It doesn't matter how factual it is. Knowing as we ought to know is a knowing for the sake of loving or it isn't true knowing.

So thank you Francis for that word. Now we turn to the last and one main point. Namely that there is a great commandment before the second commandment.

They are like each other. The second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself, which was unpacked for us so powerfully. And it comes from somewhere.

And the first commandment is to love God. So let me read from Matthew 22. You can go there if you want.

Matthew 22, a few verses. 22, 36th following. You shall love the Lord your God with all your mind.

A Pharisee asked Jesus, Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? And he answered, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. The second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

So the greatest commandment in the Bible, you should just take a deep breath when you hear that. This is our Lord Jesus telling us the greatest commandment in the Bible. That's amazing.

That's clear. The greatest commandment in the Bible is to love God. Love God.

Love God. That's the greatest commandment in the Bible. And it is not evidently altogether clear what he means by loving God with, with.

It's an ambiguous word. It causes you to think. With the mind.

So heart, soul, mind. Sometimes strength. Heart, soul, mind.

What does with the mind mean? I'm going to give you my answer and then spend the rest of the time proving it. Trying to prove it. Show it.

Demonstrate it from the Bible. What I think he means when he says the first and great commandment is to love God with the mind. Just focusing on the mind part.

Is this. He means that all of our thinking. I think that's the main function of the mind.

Not the only one. Our thinking should be wholly engaged to do all it can to awaken and express the heartfelt fullness of treasuring God above all things. Let me try to say that shorter.

Loving God with your mind means using your mind as a means of treasuring God. And means is a key word. Because I'm going to argue that using your mind that way is not what love is.

Love is treasuring God and thinking is a means to it. They're not the same. That's what I'm going to argue for.

Because I think that is huge and I seldom hear this text opened that way. So you think now. Because I'm going to commend arguments to you that that's in fact the case.

Let me stress two things about this understanding. First. I am construing loving God to mean treasuring God.

That's huge. Think about that. I am construing loving God to mean treasuring God.

Or you want to use some other words. Cherishing God. Delighting in God.

Admiring God. Valuing God. And, of course, above everything.

I saw a singing that song. Every time I sing it, I like it. I love it.

And I wonder, do they know what they're saying? Loving kindness is better than life. Really? Give me a gun. Give me a gun.

Better? You can have it all in just a second. Make my day. Make my day.

You believe that? I do. At least in my best moments. Better than life.

That's a quote from Psalm 63. You know that, don't you? The steadfast love of the Lord is better than life. That's the Bible.

That's the way psalmists talk when they were full of the Holy Spirit. Treasuring Him. Delighting in Him.

Being so satisfied with God that He is felt to be better than wife. Sex. Food.

Festrifts. Conferences. Friends.

Health. Running. Jogging.

Tweeting. Videos. Favorite games.

Sunshine. Fall colors. Everything is a dim shadow compared to this.

So bring it on, death. Right? That's what it says. So that's what I think loving God means.

It means treasuring Him. It is the sort of thing that Paul meant when he said, I count everything as loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, who is, of course, my God. That's what loving Jesus means.

I count everything as loss. Why? Because there is a surpassing worth. So I use treasure.

Pick your word. I'm always groping for new words to say this because it gets so old and so useless in our mouths. Words just kind of fall flat because they've been said so often.

Loving God is treasuring God. Cherishing God. Delighting in God.

Being satisfied in God. Valuing God. That's what love of God is.

The other thing, I said there were two clarifications here of what I mean by this interpretation. The other is that thinking then is not loving. It's a means to loving.

It's meant by Jesus when he says, love God, treasure God with the mind. He means mind, serve that. Do use this thing for that.

Get it? I mean, that's not hard. It's simple. But so many people construe with heart, with soul, with mind to be the loving.

Like what I do with my mind is the loving. I'm going to give you about three or four reasons why I don't think that's the case. Number one, when Jesus said, for example, if you love me, you will keep my commandments.

How many times have you heard a message on that that says loving Jesus means keeping his commandments? It doesn't. It says the opposite almost. If you love me, that's one thing.

It will produce another thing. Obedience. But if you turn obedience into that, where will that come from? You become a legalist.

That's what you do. Christian hedonism is meant to keep people from becoming legalists by defining the stuff we do as what God expects of us first. And he doesn't.

He expects us to be happy first in him totally so that if we lose everything, we've got everything. So that's my first argument. That's John 14, verse 15.

Won't let obedience be equated with love of God or Jesus. Obedience flows from love. It isn't what love is.

Number two, another piece of evidence. There is a second commandment. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

And it is emphatically not the first commandment. It is like it. And you've got to think how.

But it isn't it. So if you try to translate love of God, just translate it. Equate it.

Make them identical. Loving God with loving people, you lose loving people. Because you can't love people if this thing doesn't come first.

What are you going to give them? What treasure? What treasure that your heart hasn't first become satisfied by? How are you going to go to anybody and offer them anything but yourself and their ego? Oh, how many people call that love? It isn't. What's love is when you give these people, you give that grandmama cod. She's got to have cod.

Not me. We've got one thing to give. We've got one treasure, God, through Christ, paid for by blood.

That's love. And if we don't love this, if we don't delight in this, if we're not treasuring this and satisfied with this, we're fake. We're fake as we try to love people.

So the fact that there is a first and a second, and the first is loving God and the second is loving people, means they're not the same. And first comes first. Number three argument.

I'm giving you arguments here for why I see it this way. Jesus said one time, This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. In vain do they worship me.

Think about that. Okay, they're worshipping, not worshipping. They're worshipping in their vein.

It's empty. What are they doing? They're doing the stuff. They're going to church.

They're reading their Bibles. They're going to conferences. They're just doing stuff, good stuff.

And he says, that's not worship. That's empty. What's missing? This is missing.

Because this is it. That's stuff. That's skin.

This is wine. If you want your lifting of hands, your singing of songs, your reading of the Bible, you're preaching a sermon, you're praying a prayer, To be worshiped, it is rooted elsewhere. Namely in

treasuring God.

That's why it's first. Last argument. Matthew 6, 24.

Jesus says, I draw this out because listen to the emotional laden language of Matthew 6, 24. No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other.

Or he will be devoted to the one who despise the other. You can't serve God and money. What kind of talk is that? That's explosive emotional talk is what it is.

The issue is money versus God. Love and hate. Devoted, despising.

That's the kind of language that comes out of Jesus' mouth when he's thinking about how we should relate to God. Loving, devotion. Alternative, hatred and despising.

These are not deeds. These are delights and despisings. So, I conclude.

Loving God in the great commandment means, most essentially, Treasuring God. Valuing God. Cherishing God.

Admiring God. Desiring God. Being satisfied in God.

Resting delightfully in God. And my thesis, point of my life, is thinking is intended by God to serve that. It's all I do.

That's all I do. Except when I'm sinning, which is lots of times. But at least my aim is to just do that.

Do it all day. Do it in everything. Make my thinking that comes out of my fingers or my mouth serve treasuring God.

It's all. It's all we all should do in various ways. Loving God with the mind means our mind does all it can to awaken and express treasuring God above all things.

Now, why does it matter to stress that distinction between loving God and the means to that end, the mind or thinking? Why does that matter? Because if we don't make that distinction, that is if we equate loving God and thinking rightly about God, and I've heard many people say, this text is a call to think about God, that's what love is. It's not. If we go that direction, we jeopardize the very reality of love.

If you say that fire and fuel are the same, you might forget to order the wood. Then the fire goes out. The fire in our affections for God is not the wood of knowledge that the mind puts in the furnace of our heart.

And I'm jealous for the fire. And therefore, I'm distinguishing it from the wood and from the mental effort to put the wood on the fire. So loving God with all your mind means engaging all your powers of thought to know God as fully as possible in order to treasure him for all he's worth.

We close like this. Now, where do we focus our minds? And here's what I have in mind when I use the word focus. You go to these little cameras, little Canon, teeny-weeny camera, and there's a little green box that comes up when you push the button halfway down.

That's where it's focused. You can see the rest of it, and you'd be really sad if the picture came out with only the little green dot on the nose. So don't hear me minimizing the rest of the picture when I say,

where's your focus? Got that? So what should you focus on in your life with your mind to maximize your knowledge of God in order to maximize your treasuring of God? Should you put it on nature? Because the heavens are telling the glory of God.

And if you don't ever look at nature, you won't know God as well, and you won't love him as much. But the answer is no. That's not where the green square is landing.

Should you focus on the human soul? Because we are created in the image of God, and if you don't know people, you won't know God so well, and you won't love him so dearly. It's good to know people. Know them well.

Know your own soul well. The Bible is filled with the knowledge of human beings and what they really are, and we should know that it should be in the picture. And some of you should devote large efforts in psychology, for example, to knowing people well.

But no, no, I'm not going to say the human soul is the place where the little green square is landing. Should it be moving towards the Bible to the history of Israel? Because God says, Israel is my glory. So if you follow the history of Israel, you're watching God defend and display his glory in history for a couple thousand years.

What a wonderful place to devote your mental energies. And some of you should become Old Testament scholars like that. But no, no, that's not where the green square in the camera frame is going to land.

If you want to focus on where you will know God best and love him most. So should it be on the life of Christ? Because he is the radiance of the glory of God in the exact imprint of his nature. We ought to watch him.

My, how we should spend many hours with that little section of our Bible right there. Four portraits of our King. We should know him so well.

Everything he said should stir us. We should be asking questions about all the things that he says. Just pondering them all the time.

What a wonderful revelation of God he is in his life. And my answer is no. It's pretty close to the green square in the camera, but it's not the green square.

All the other revelations of God in Christ are like rays of sun breaking through the clouds. But the death of Jesus for our sins is a lightning bolt. If we want to spend our minds to the fullest, knowing God to the fullest that we may treasure him to the fullest, this is where we will focus.

And when our thinking begins to focus on the event of the death of Jesus on the cross, something very strange happens to our minds. The light of God's glory that shines through the cross is so bright that it exposes like nothing else in the universe the self-exalting thinking of the mind and makes it look foolish. God has made foolish the wisdom of this world for in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom.

The human wisdom that cannot know God, the human thinking that can't fathom the cross is self-exalting, man-centered, sin-denying wisdom. And of that wisdom, Paul says, God has made foolish the wisdom of the world. God will destroy the wisdom of the wise.

The foolishness of God is wiser than men. The word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. But none of that means we shouldn't think about the cross, does it? We shouldn't use our minds to think about the cross.

There's a right thinking about the cross. There is a true wisdom in the cross. Paul said, among the mature we do impart wisdom.

The difference between the wisdom that the cross destroys and the wisdom that the cross awakens is the difference between self-exalting wisdom and Christ-exalting wisdom. If you come with self-exalting wisdom to the cross, it's consumed, it's revealed as folly. If you come with Christ-exalting wisdom to the cross, your thought is shown to be the very mind of Christ.

True wisdom. True wisdom sees the glory of God in the cross. False wisdom sees the cross as foolishness because the cross is threatening its pride.

There is no other object of knowledge in the universe. Say that again carefully, slowly. I thought about that sentence.

There is no other object of knowledge in the universe that exposes proud, man-exalting thinking like the cross does. Only humble, Christ-exalting thinking can survive in the presence of the cross. The effect of the cross on our thinking is not to cut off thinking about God, but to cut off and confound boasting in the presence of God.

The cross does not nullify thinking, it purifies thinking. So, in summary, as you go on your way, a few minutes, we hope that you will not be naive about the depravity of your mind, but that you will be born again and ever renewed in your mind by the Holy Spirit. Second, we hope that you will not be mentally complicit in spiritual adultery.

Third, we hope that you will not be cagey or slippery or shifty. With your mind. Fourth, we hope that you will have no romantic notions about the benefits of being ignorant.

Fifth, we hope that you will not be children in your thinking, but that you will be children in your think. And six and seven is that. I mean five and six, now here's seven.

We hope that you will not make the mistake of thinking knowing is unnecessary or that it is decisive. Thinking is unnecessary or that it is decisive in knowing God. Thinking is necessary, divine illumination is decisive.

He gives, he takes. You can't make yourself know anything. And finally, number eight, on the negative side, we hope and pray that as we so saw and heard last night, that yours will not be a loveless mind in relation to the people that you're looking at all day long.

But rather now, the positive conclusion, rather I pray that you will love God with all your mind. That is that you will engage with all your mind. You will think with all your mind that you may know him fully, that you may treasure him fully.

Employ your mind to provide your heart with as much fuel for the affections of your heart for God as you can. Treat your mind as a gift that God has given you to find kindling to throw on the fires of your affection for God. This is the best resource for that kindling.

There are tens of thousands of sticks in here. They are very combustible. And if the Holy Spirit is pleased to touch that fire, you will love him so deeply.

And to that end, the cross of Christ, the deepest, highest, clearest revelation of God in history, may it be the focus of your thinking. There is no other place where you can see him more clearly or love him more dearly. Here's the place where your thinking will be most purified and he will be most magnified.

Let's pray. Oh, Father in heaven, now we're in need of the second half of 2 Timothy 2.7. Think over what I say for, here's the second half, God will give you understanding. Why? That we might know you, Father.

Why? That we might treasure you as we ought and then spill over with the greatest gift in the world to the people we love. So, Father, miracle worker, supernatural God, please do this for us. I ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/20/SID20923.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-piper/the-life-of-the-mind-and-the-love-of-god/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net