

Session 5 Loving God with Our Mind: Viewing the Past

I. BE TRANSFORMED BY RENEWING OUR MIND

- A. The Lord created us to love Him in four spheres of our life—our heart, soul, mind, and strength.
³⁰“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” (Mk. 12:30)
- B. We express love for God with our mind by putting things into our minds that inspire and enlarge our capacity to love Him and by resisting anything that diminishes our capacity to love Him. This session is called loving God with all of our minds by viewing our past in the grace of God.
- C. As we change our mind, the Spirit changes our emotions, enabling us to receive and give love more. I greatly delight in “feeling” the Lord’s love for me and then in “feeling” deep love for Him.
²“...but be transformed [emotionally] by the renewing of your mind.” (Rom. 12:2)
- D. Our heart is freed as we align our mind with the truth of how He loves, views, and leads us. We express love for Jesus with our mind when we make the emotional and mental effort to align our minds with the truth, then we have a greater capacity to love and receive love from Jesus.
³²You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (liberate the heart). (Jn. 8:32)
- E. We are energized to love Jesus more as we experience His grace related to our past and future. Loving God with our mind includes processing our past and picturing our future through the lens of His grace, including ***forgetting*** certain things and ***remembering*** His promises. When we picture our past and future through the truths of God’s word, it leads us to make commitments in the present.
- F. Both memory and imagination were created by God to enhance our ability to interact with Him. Our memory and imagination impact our emotions—and can be influenced by the Spirit or by demons.
1. Our memory includes our reflections on the past as we remember God’s goodness to us.
 2. Our imagination includes our projections of the future as we anticipate God’s goodness.

II. LOVING GOD WITH OUR MIND: REMEMBERING GRACE AND RESISTING LIES

- A. How we view our past dramatically affects how we feel emotionally. Our ability to mature in our love for Jesus is impacted by how we process our past and to what measure we see His goodness in our past—that is, trusting His leadership that He causes all things to work together for our good (Rom. 8:28)
²⁸And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God... (Rom. 8:28)
- B. Where is the past? So much of it exists in our mind and in the minds of others. Over 99.9% of our life will always be in the past. Therefore, we must be careful and diligent to process the past rightly.

- C. One of Satan's most common lies is that we wasted our past. Satan seeks to convince us that our life is wasted because of our failures or because the small things that we have done do not seem memorable, dynamic, or important to us or others. Jesus will forever remember, esteem, and reward even our small acts of obedience in seeking to love and serve Him and people (1 Cor. 3:11-15). He will even remember every cup of water that we give to others in His name (Mt. 10:42).
- D. **Thinking about God's leadership in our past:** Remembering events in our life through the lens of God's grace impacts our hearts as we see and recall God's goodness in the many times that He forgave, directed, provided, protected, delivered or corrected us. (We would be in much more trouble if He ever stopped correcting us!) Seeing and recalling this awakens gratitude in our heart.
1. How many times has He forgiven you? How many times has He directed, protected, or provided for you without you even being aware of it?
 2. By taking the time and mental effort to recall the truth about how much His goodness has been shown to us in these ways, we position ourselves to love Him more and more.
- E. **Memory:** When we interpret past events in our life in agreement with God—it results in increasing our love, gratitude, and humility and causes darkness, shame, rejection, and fear to decrease.
- F. Remembering God's promises and goodness often results in gratitude and faith growing in us.
- ¹²**Remember His marvelous works which He has done... (1 Chr. 16:12)**
- G. What God did in the past gives us insight and faith for what He will do in our future (Deut. 32:7).
- ⁷**Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; your elders, and they will tell you... (Deut. 32:7)**
1. When we remember what God did for us in the past—how He forgave, directed, provided, delivered us—we gain more confidence to experience His goodness in our future.
 2. This frees up our “emotional bandwidth” to receive and return love more and more. When our “bandwidth” is filled with dark emotions like fear and shame, it hinders our ability to love.
 3. He wants us to love Him more, not because He has rejection complex, but because He knows that loving Him is the only way that our hearts are satisfied and liberated from dark emotions. John Piper has said, “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”
- H. The call to “remember” is one of the most emphasized exhortations in the Scripture with over 80 references—over 60 in the OT and over 20 in the NT (Ex. 13:3; 20:8; 32:13; Num. 15:40; Deut. 5:15; 7:18; 8:2, 18; 9:7; 15:15; 16:3, 12; 24:9, 18, 22; 25:17; 32:7; Josh. 1:13; Judg. 8:34; 2 Sam. 14:11; 1 Chr. 16:12, 15; Neh. 4:14; Job 36:24; Ps. 20:7; 22:27; 42:4, 6; 63:6; 77:10-11; 78:42; 103:18; 105:5; 106:7; 109:16; 119:49, 55; 137:6; 143:5; Ecc. 12:1, 6; Song 1:4; Isa. 43:18; 46:8-9; 47:7; Jer. 51:50; Ezek. 6:9; 16:22, 43, 61, 63; 20:43; 36:31; Amos 1:9; Mic. 6:5; Zech. 10:9; Mal. 4:4; Mt. 5:23; 16:9; Mk. 8:18; Lk. 1:72; 17:32; 24:6; Jn. 15:20; 16:4; Acts 20:31; 20:35; Rom. 11:18; Gal. 2:10; Eph. 2:11; 2 Thes. 2:5; 2 Tim. 2:8; Heb. 13:3, 7; Jude 17; Rev. 2:5; 3:3).

- I. Our tendency is to forget God's goodness. If we do not intentionally "remember," we drift from aspects of the truth about what God called to us be and do—this results in a diminished perspective in our spiritual life with a change in our priorities from the time when we were zealous for God.
- J. We often remember *what the Lord exhorts us to forget*, and we forget *what we must remember*. However, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, we can reverse this.
- K. **Thinking about negative events in our past:** Satan's plan is to cause the negative events of our past to be a destructive force that results in bitterness, fear, and wrong paradigms of God and ourselves. We resist bitterness and lies that are anchored in negative thoughts about the past.
- L. It is important to understand that our interpretation and responses to past experiences contribute to shaping us to be who we are today. It depends on how we interpret and respond to them
- M. Some who are trained in the social sciences emphasize that *what we are today* is mostly the result of *how we have been conditioned from our past*. Some say that we are all trapped and controlled by negative events in our past since they determine who we are and what we will be in the future. As we interpret and respond to negative events rightly (Rom. 8:28), then the pain we feel from our past does not have to be the primary conditioning factor that dominates and entraps our heart.
- N. We are both **victims** who have been mistreated and **agents** who have contributed to our ongoing pain by wrong responses. We are agents of our ongoing pain by interpreting and responding to mistreatment wrongly—this continually puts "gas on the bonfire" of our past pain and trauma.
1. We interpret the past wrongly by concluding that the Lord abandoned us in those hard times, that we will never be free from our pain, and that things will not work out for our good.
 2. We do not easily see the goodness there, and the negativity seems more than we can bear. We reinterpret it. Healing of dark emotions is like peeling an onion layer by layer; you cry a lot. Layer by layer and layer. That is how forgiveness is.
- O. It is true that we are partially the product of what has happened to us. But taken to an extreme, this relieves us of the responsibility of our negative responses. The process of being unchained from the past includes acknowledging our sinful action and our sinful responses.
- P. The Spirit will reveal the places where we are "chained" to the past by *bitterness* and *shame*, by our *wrong paradigms* of God, ourselves and others, and by *misinterpreting* events based on some lies.
- Q. God forgets our sin because of the cross. We must forget our failures after we repent and must refuse to let shame damage our ability to love God. Guilt is the sense of responsibility we feel when we sin. Do not let guilt turn into shame. *Guilt says our actions are bad. Shame says that we are bad.*

17"Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more..." (Heb. 10:17)

17If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new...²¹that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)

1. After we repent, then we “push delete” on guilt and shame, while still seeking to learn from our failures by identifying the triggers, establishing proper boundaries, and taking responsibility for our attitudes, actions, and more.
 2. To bear our guilt means to take responsibly for our sinful action. Shame says you are bad (a hopeless hypocrite, a rebellious liar). To bear guilt is to bear responsibility for the sin by confessing it, bearing the discipline related to it, and making make restitution when it applies.
6...When a man or woman commits any sin...that person is guilty, 7then he shall confess the sin...he shall make restitution for his trespass...and give it to the one he has wronged. (Num. 5:6-7)
4...because he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore what he has stolen... (Lev. 6:4)
27...whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord...²⁹For he...eats and drinks judgment to himself... (1 Cor. 11:27-29)
- R. Satan uses scenes from our past sins to accuse us and to accuse others who hurt us.
¹⁰The accuser [Satan]...accused them before our God...¹¹They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives... (Rev. 12:10-11)
- S. Paul taught us to forget our past failures, sacrifices, opportunities, and accomplishments that can lead to us to pride, shame, or lack of gratitude (Phil. 3:8-13). We are to “forget” our noble sacrifices and dedication that tempt us to pride or to feel that we deserve a better treatment from God. Paul did not appeal to his dedication or accomplishments nor to the opportunities that he lost related to diligently seeking and obeying the Lord to make a case for why the Lord should bless him more.
⁸I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness...but that which is through faith in Christ...¹³One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward... (Phil. 3:8-13)
- T. Jesus pointed out the danger of relating to God on the basis of feeling that we deserve a better treatment from Him instead relating to Him with gratitude and humility (Lk. 17:7-10).
⁷“Which of you, having a servant plowing...will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat’? ⁸But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me...and afterward you will eat and drink’? ⁹Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. ¹⁰So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’” (Lk. 17:7-10)
- U. We must entrust and release our past and present enemies into the hands of Jesus’ loving leadership. We naturally want to be delivered from those who mistreat us and then vindicated in the areas where we were attacked. David trusted the Lord’s leadership to do this in His way and in His time.
⁵Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth. (Ps. 31:5)

23When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him [the Father] who judges righteously... (1 Pet. 2:23)