

The Mind of Christ — Using Philippians as a reference point

For years I have acknowledged that there was such a thing as the mind of Christ. I have further taught that we believers have this mind within us. What I've failed to observe is this mind consistently at work in my life and the life of many of my fellow servants.

1 Cor 2.16

¹⁶ "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. ESV

¹⁶ For who has known *or* understood the mind (the counsels and purposes) of the Lord so as to guide *and* instruct Him *and* give Him knowledge? But we have the mind of Christ (the Messiah) *and* do hold the thoughts (feelings and purposes) of His heart. Amplified

Paul precedes this with

1 Cor 2.5-16

³ I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling,

⁴ and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

⁵ so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

⁶ Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;

⁷ but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God *predestined before the ages* to our glory;

⁸ *the wisdom* which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;

⁹ but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND *which* HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

¹⁰ For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

¹¹ For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

¹³ which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining **spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual words**.

¹⁴ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

¹⁵ But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.

¹⁶ For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.

Therefore the mind of the Christ is the mind of the Spirit. It cannot be purchased. Study alone will not achieve it. I receive this mind by grace through faith the same as my salvation. I must decide to follow and walk in the spirit in order for this mind to guide me. Biblical revelation, understanding of hidden mystery comes from the Holy Spirit and causes this mind to grow within me.

Greek NASB Number: 5426 MIND

Greek Word: φρονέω

Transliterated Word: *phroneô*

Root: from [5424](#); heart, mind, thought

Definition: to have understanding, to think:--

Philippians 1:27 (NASB) Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

What is this one mind? Obviously I have a mind and so do you. How is it that we can have one mind?

Philippians 2:2-4 (NASB) ² make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. ³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with **humility of mind** regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Here is a further description of the attributes of this one mind. It is united in love, spirit and purpose. It's main concern is for others, our fellow travelers on this earth. It is clothed in humility

1 Peter 5:5-7 NKJV

⁵ Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

"God resists the proud,

But gives grace to the humble."

⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Phil 2.5 (NKJV) Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves *NASB*

⁵ Let this same attitude *and purpose and* [humble] mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus: [Let Him be your example in humility *Amplified*

Suppose a body of believers all walked in humility. Each was deeply concerned for the welfare of others. Imagine that that body desired to be submissive to one another in Christ that each member's concern was to grow in grace and in the word of God. What would that look like?

Colossians 3:1-4 (NKJV) ¹ If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Where does my eye focus downward or upward? Do I watch my feet while I am walking, and stumble, or do my eyes look straight ahead?

Prov 4:25-27(NKJV)

Let your eyes look straight ahead,
And your eyelids look right before you.

26 Ponder the path of your feet,
And let all your ways be established.

27 Do not turn to the right or the left;
Remove your foot from evil

As people of **the Way**, people called to the Ancient Path our eyes look straight ahead and our minds concentrate on the path not our feet.

I read a story once of a child trying to ride a bike, as long as he concentrated on the handlebars and staying on the bike he crashed. As soon as learned to look ahead he began to go somewhere.

The men that God chose for Gideon scooped up the water with their hands keeping alert. We must set our minds on things above. Our vision is focused on heavenly places so that we can do the work we are called to on earth, the work of ministry.

Paul who wrote much of what we are examining was once called Saul. He was looking downward attempting to destroy the work of God.

Acts 9:1-5 (NKJV)

Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest **2** and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of **the Way**, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. **4** Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?"

Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. NKJV

People of the Way are committed to the journey of transformation. When Saul persecuted them he was persecuting Christ himself. He did not yet have the mind of Christ but was consumed in his sinful nature by what he believed to be the will of God but in fact was not. He was not yet converted and filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul alludes to this in Galatians 4 when speaking of Ishmael and Isaac.

Galatians 4:28-29 (NASB)

²⁸ And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.

²⁹ But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, so it is now also.

Not only are those who are carnal in their pursuit of religion opposed to the Holy Spirit, but they persecute and try to destroy those who walk in the spirit. Therefore they oppose the anointed one, Christ, having more confidence in their own concepts and their own

sinful nature. They refuse to yield to the unity found in the mind of Christ within.

Phil 2.5-11. NASB

⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father

Notice that Christ's humility eventually led to his exaltation. There is a reward for service and the Holy Spirit shows it to those who are walking with the mind of Christ.

After Paul was converted he referred to himself as a bond servant of Christ and the chief of sinners. He understood what he had been and that his new life was a call to servant hood, to humility, to love. The old Saul aspired to leadership in Israel being more zealous for the law than his contemporaries, afterward his zeal is for the Gospel of Christ.

Paul goes on to show us that what we say affects how we think and what we do. Those who are submitted to the Spirit are concerned about their lips and what comes out of them.

Phil 2.14-16 (NKJV)

¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing;

¹⁵ so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

¹⁶ holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

Next Paul speaks of how few really walk in this mind. It reminds me of Jesus statement about the Way .

Mt.7.13-14 (NKJV)

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴ "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Phil 2.19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.

²⁰ For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.

²¹ For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.

²² But you know his proven character, that as a son with *his* father he served with me in the gospel.

All seek their own. What an indictment of the vast majority of believers. No one else has the same mind set Paul has but Timothy. Timothy put himself in relationship to Paul as a son to a Father just as I am to place myself in relationship to my Father in Heaven through the Holy Spirit.

This is where I need help. I must yield to the Spirit by cooperating and nurturing the life of Christ within.

Phil 3. 10-16 (NKJV)

that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Therefore let us, as many as are mature, **have this mind**; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

¹⁶ Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

What is this mind that he speaks of? This mind is not looking to the past. The primary concern is to change to become like the Master. This way of thinking is not looking over its shoulder in the race while being passed up by the next runner. This one runs the race with all diligence looking unto Jesus. The mind of Christ calls me to maturity.

Heb 12:1-2 (NKJV)

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2** looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. NKJV

As we age in years the majority of our life experience is in the past. We are to build on those lessons of life. We must not focus on memories to the point we drift into the past. I am convinced that this happens to many people. The past becomes more real than the present.. The future for them is something to be dreaded. Their conversation continually turns to what happened back then rather than a joyful expectancy.

Because of illness or sorrow the present can be unpleasant. Yet, even then, the Holy Spirit strengthens us. The mind of Christ begins to make us aware of things to come.

For a believer, the future is bright. The hope of heaven calls. The New Jerusalem awaits and the desire to be like Jesus, transformed into his image by the Spirit of God, increases.

Will I have the discipline to step out of the past, out of loneliness or sorrow into the vision of God which He has set before me?

David writes,

Ps. 25.7

⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; According to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O LORD.

⁸ Good and upright *is* the LORD; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way.

⁹ The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way.

¹⁰ All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth, To such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.

My goal is to follow him on the way. Let him lead me into the future. Put my focus on the resurrected Christ and his return. I must never forget what he has done for me on the cross in order to give me this bright future.

Phil 3.20 – 4.1(NKJV)

²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will **transform** our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

This expectation is part of the mind of Christ. And by this expectancy we are changed from glory to glory

2 Cor 3.17-18(NKJV)

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image** from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The Will of God is that we be changed. We must continue to abide and mature. We are given the mind of Christ in order to do this. We must encourage one another to this mind set by the Holy Spirit.

After encouraging two sisters to be of one mind Paul writes

Phil 4.4 (NKJV)

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!
⁵ Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand.
⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;
⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Now we see the importance of prayer for this mind to be in us. Prayer subdues fear and enables us to have a thankful heart. We know our Father hears us and we leave our burdens with Him as his peace fills us and guards our hearts and minds through Christ. We then find Rest for our souls.

In order to stay in that rest, that contentment, that mind we are to do the following

Phil 4.8

⁸ For the rest, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of reverence *and* is honorable *and* seemly, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely *and* lovable, whatever is kind *and* winsome *and* gracious, if there is any virtue *and* excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think on *and* weigh *and* take account of these things [fix your minds on them].

⁹ Practice what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, *and* model your way of living on it, and the God of peace (of untroubled, undisturbed well-being) will be with you. Amplified

Fix your mind on these things.

Philippians 4:8 (NKJV)

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy--**meditate on these things.**

This meditating, this focusing of the mind on these things is what encourages the transformation process. My will and thinking agree that this is a better way. As I keep these truths in mind my thinking becomes more like the Masters.

Paul concludes Philippians with this thought

Philippians 4:11-13 (NKJV)

¹¹ Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: ¹² I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

I now see that being led and taught of the Holy Spirit and surrendering to the Lord's way of thinking in the end brings contentment. I have the satisfaction of knowing in my inward person that all things are possible with God.

Charles Ellsworth Smith

2010