

Loving God in the Real World (Part 4)  
Loving God With All your Mind  
Philippians 4:8-9  
(GCF – October 4, 2009)

## I. Introduction

Is there a testimony from last week's Scripture? Ephesians 1:17-18

Scripture for this week: Philippians 4:8-9

*"The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. 30 And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, **all your mind**, and all your strength.' 31 The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these." (Mark 12:28-31, NLT)*

## II. Demolishing the Strongholds of the Mind

### A. What is the mind?

The mind is what gives us the capacity to **think** – these thoughts consist of all the ways we are conscious of things, and includes our memories, perceptions, and beliefs about ourselves and the world around us.

It is where we take in ideas, images, and information and process them in such a way as to come to our own conclusions about God, ourselves, others, etc.

The problem is that because of the influences around us and/or the pain that we have experienced in our past we are often not coming to the proper conclusions about God, ourselves, and the world around us.

*"With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. 18 Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. 19 They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity. But that isn't what you learned about Christ. 21 Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, 22 throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. 23 Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. 24 Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy." (Ephesians 4:17-24, NLT)*

*"Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God." (2 Corinthians 4:4, NLT)*

So, in the same sense that I spoke of the ruined soul we also come to God with ruined minds.

We are hopelessly confused and our minds are full of darkness.

B. How do these strongholds get established?

*“Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. 6 So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.” (Romans 8:5-6, NLT)*

Before we come to Christ we are dominated by the sinful nature. We may pick up some “good” ways of thinking in the course of our upbringing, but we are still going to be warped in comparison to the truths of God’s Word.

In other words, we may (even without Christ) grow up with a good work ethic, a sense that we should treat others as we want to be treated, care for the well-being of our environment, and a belief that we are basically OK (not dealing with major self-image issues).

But there are still major ideas in our thinking that are not healthy.

The primary one would be that we do not need to submit to God in the day-to-day areas of our life, even if we believe in Him.

Or we may be a good person, but flatly deny that Jesus was the Son of God and necessary for salvation.

So, the question remains: How do these strongholds become established in our minds?

The primary building of ideas, images, and information comes through our **families** as we are growing up.

This is why it is so critical for parents to invest time into instilling biblical ideas into their children.

*“So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. 19 Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. 20 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, 21 so that as long as the sky remains above the earth, you and your children may flourish in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors.” (Deuteronomy 11:18-21, NLT)*

But there are others ways we receive ideas, images and information – can you help me name them? [TV, movies, music, culture, ethnicity, etc.]

We need to be very **careful** about what we pump into our minds.

We need to ask ourselves, “Does this music, movie, or even some of my cultural ideas line up with the truth of Scripture?”

*“And those who make idols are just like them, as are all who trust in them.”* (Psalms 135:18, NLT)

You see, we become like the things we look and think upon. [My teenage years and music]

This works for us as well: *“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.”* (2 Corinthians 3:18, NKJV)

What do you want to become like?

*“...letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.”* (Romans 8:6, NLT)

III. Application – What is the Remedy?

*“I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. 3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”* (2 Corinthians 10:2-5, NIV)

We need to **demolish** the strongholds that have been established in our minds and take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ.

How do we do that?

*“Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”* (Romans 12:2, NLT)

We need to **change** the way we think! We need to learn to love God with our entire mind – laying down our own ideas about what life is all about and allowing God to transform the way we think about everything.

First, we need to allow God to **identify** those places where we are not thinking right.

How do this happen?

It happens as we prayerfully read the word of God and as we allow others to point out areas in our lives where we may not be thinking right.

Once we have identified those areas, we need to see what the Scriptures have to say about them and begin to **align** our thinking with the Word of God.

[Talk about being out of alignment]

So, this is what I am going to do – I am going to ask you to help me with next week’s sermon by identifying some of the strongholds you struggle with.

I am going to make a list and then we are going to look at what God’s word says about these things.

For example, you may not be convinced that sin is that big of a deal and that there really are not any consequences for your actions – well, let’s look at that.

You may be convinced that God does not love you – we can look at that too.

You may not see your need to come under authority, whether in the church or in any part of your life (this is a huge one in our culture today) – let’s see what God says.

There are so many ways that our thinking does not line up with God’s thinking that I want to know the ones you would like to address.

Are there others?

God wants to lead you into right thinking:

*“This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. ‘I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.’” (Jeremiah 31:33, NIV)*

*“And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. 9 Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me— everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.” (Philippians 4:8-9, NLT)*