



Choose C.A.L.M.

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MAIN POINT

Loving God with our mind means we focus on His ways, which includes taking time to know what we believe and why we believe it.

INTRODUCTION

How would you define the mind? What's the difference between the brain and the mind?

The human mind is a curious thing—it's rather hard to pin down and define, but we all know what it is through experience. In one sense, the mind is the lens by which we perceive the world around us. As you read or hear the subject matter of this Bible study, your mind is the dashboard through which you experience this time; it also holds within it all of your past experiences that inform how you process the present and act within it.

How would you say our mind figures into our love for someone?

**Can you love someone apart from a mind to do so?
Why or why not?**

Our mind is a central part of who we are and what we do. Even instinct and feelings are related to the processes of the mind. Our love for someone else—whether parents, siblings, friends, a spouse, or children—is not just a feeling devoid of rational thought; rather, our love is an intentional commitment of the mind to connect with another person. The Bible says to love the Lord with all your mind, among other facets of ourselves, and to love your neighbor as yourself. Obedience to these commands doesn't just happen but comes about through a focused mind. This study will help us focus on the right things in order to love God with our mind.

UNDERSTANDING

READ [PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7](#).

What are some actions we should take to demonstrate a mind centered on our heavenly Father?

Why do you think our minds need to be guarded in Christ Jesus? What can result from an unguarded mind?

Philippians 4 begins with Paul urging two women in the church to agree together in the Lord. It seems they were at odds with one another, and this caused tension and strife within the church. Their disagreement was at odds with their gospel unity. In light of this, Paul commanded some actions that all have their focus on God. First, rejoice in the Lord. Second, show grace to everyone, knowing the Lord is near. And third, don't worry but take everything to the Lord in prayer with thanksgiving. The result of these actions stemming from a mind centered on the Lord will be the mind-blowing peace of God, which protects our hearts and

minds in Christ Jesus from the divisions and distractions that prevent unity within the church.

READ [PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9](#).

What do you think will be the result of someone intentionally dwelling on things that line up with Paul's list of commendable qualities?

What are some benefits of having the God of peace with you?

Paul's filter of qualities by which we should decide what to think about and dwell on is all-encompassing. And as the saying goes, what you put into your mind is what is going to come out of it. If we are to love God with our minds, then we should focus our minds on the things that are pleasing to God. In doing this, we can know that the God of peace will be with us. God has filled His creation with His truth and beauty. Much of our world, however, has been marred by sin, including our own minds. By sinful nature, now, our first instinct will not be to focus on the lovely but on the dark and dirty mess of this world. So rather than be conformed to this world, we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds ([Romans 12:2](#)). This occurs through dwelling on what is good. The Word of God aligns with Paul's instruction, and we know that the Word of God points us to Christ ([Luke 24:27](#)). There is some good in this creation worth dwelling on, but chiefly we should dwell on the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This will transform our minds to know what God's good will is for us to follow.

READ [1 PETER 3:15-16](#).

How can we prepare ourselves to give a defense for the hope that we have in us regarding our faith in Christ?

Why is the tone and method of our defense so important?

Loving the Lord with all of our mind means knowing what we believe about the Lord we profess to love. If we love someone, then we want to know them more and more. It is a joy to hear from those we love about what is going on in their own lives and minds; it is then that we can better support them and care for them. To love the Lord, we want to listen to what He has said, and He has given us His Word to tell us the truth we need to know about Himself, ourselves, and our world. His Word teaches us why we should set apart Christ as holy in our minds and look to Him for salvation from our sin and strength for our walk in the faith. And as we get to know Jesus more in the Word of God, we see that our words and actions are to honor Him. Our knowledge of the faith fuels our defense of the faith and determines how we should represent God, with gentleness and respect, as Peter said in verse 16. To love the Lord is to know Him, and to know Him is to love Him even more.

APPLICATION

What are some steps we can take to love the Lord even more with our minds?

How can we open ourselves up to the accountability of others in thinking about what is true, just, lovely, commendable, and praiseworthy?

What opportunities can we take advantage of to grow in our knowledge of the Christian faith that we can more readily defend the reason for the hope within us?

PRAYER

Ask the Holy Spirit to transform you by the renewing of your mind. Ask that He help you focus on what is lovely and true, namely, your Savior Jesus. Thank Jesus for His beautiful

sacrifice on your behalf, and pray that you would love Him all the more with your mind as you grow in the knowledge of Himself.

COMMENTARY

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-9

4:4. Again Paul returns to the key theme of this letter: joy. He calls believers to rejoice at all times and repeats the call for emphasis. This includes the bad times as well as the good (compare [James 1:2-5](#)). Christians should be known as joyful people. Such joy resides not in circumstances or positive attitudes toward life. Joy reigns in the heart only when Christ is Lord of life. Joy is always in the Lord.

4:5. A practical way to have joy is by exhibiting gentleness to all. This lets the church and world see that you belong to the Lord. The Greek word *epieikeus* means “yielding, gentle, kind.” It includes the ability to go beyond the letter of the law in treating others, to provide something beside strict justice. It does not insist on personal rights or privileges. Christ embodied such gentleness in his dealing with all people ([2 Corinthians 10:1](#); compare [1 Timothy 3:3](#); [Titus 3:2](#); [James 3:17](#); [1 Peter 2:18](#)). Why should we surrender personal rights for others? The Lord is near. In both time and space, God is available to us. He is not far removed in heaven but present in our hearts to hear and relate to us. His nearness also means he knows us and what we are. In time, God is near, for he is coming again. Then we will receive our rewards for living like Christ rather than like the world.

4:6. Joy replaces anxiety in life, so Paul advises the Philippians not to be anxious about anything. The cure for anxiety? Prayer! Worry and anxiety come from focusing on your circumstances such as imprisonment or persecution which Paul and the Philippians faced. Anxiety or worry doesn’t accomplish anything, but prayer does ([James 5:16](#)). Jesus warned against worry which demonstrates a lack of trust in God ([Matthew 6:25-34](#)).

4:7. The peace of God comes from prayer involving both asking God for earthly needs and thanking God for his presence and provision. The expression appears only here in the New Testament. God’s peace reflects the divine character, which lives in serenity, totally separate from all anxiety and worry. Such peace is like a squad of Roman soldiers standing guard and protecting you from worry and fret. Such peace is not a dream of the human mind. The human mind cannot even comprehend this kind of peace, wholeness, and quiet confidence. Such peace protects the two organs of worry— heart and mind that produce feelings and thoughts. Such protection is real, available in Christ Jesus. Those who do not trust and commit their life to Christ have no hope for peace.

4:8. Continuing his strong imperative style, Paul suggested what should occupy our minds rather than anxiety and worry. Paul understood the influence of one’s thoughts on one’s life. Right thinking is the first step toward righteous living. What is right thinking? It is thinking devoted to life’s higher goods and virtues. Thus Paul picked up a practice from secular writers of his day and listed a catalog of virtues that should occupy the mind. Such virtues are not limited to the Christian community but are recognized even by pagan cultures.

True is that which corresponds to reality. Anxiety comes when false ideas and unreal circumstances occupy the mind instead of truth. Ultimately, thinking on the truth is thinking on Jesus, who is the truth ([John 14:6](#); [Ephesians 4:21](#)). Noble refers to lofty, majestic, awesome things, things that lift the mind above the world’s dirt and scandal. Right refers to that which is fair to all parties involved, that which fulfills all obligations and debts. Thinking right thoughts steers one away from quarrels and dissensions to think of the needs and rights

of the other party. Pure casts its net of meaning over all of life from sexual acts to noble thoughts to moral and ritual readiness for worship. Thinking on the pure leads one away from sin and shame and toward God and worship. Lovely is a rare word referring to things that attract, please, and win other people's admiration and affection. Such thoughts bring people together in peace rather than separating them in fighting and feuding. Admirable is something worthy of praise or approval, that which deserves a good reputation. Pondering ways to protect one's moral and spiritual image in the community leads away from worries about circumstances and possessions that project a different image to the community and which thinking cannot change.

The catalog of virtues Paul sums up in two words: excellent and praiseworthy. The first encompasses what is best in every area of life, the philosophical good for which every person should strive. Here it is especially the ethical best a person can achieve. The second term refers to that which deserves human praise. The catalog of virtues thus reflects the best life a person can live and the best reputation a person can thereby achieve in the community.

Finally, in this verse, Paul gets to his point: think on these things. That, joined with prayer will relieve all anxieties and lead one to praise God and live life the way he desires.

4:9. Is such noble thinking possible. Paul says, "Yes, it is. Look at my example." This is not braggadocio or pride. It is the state every Christian should live in, a state of being an example for all who observe you. The example includes Paul's teaching, the tradition he received from the apostles and passed on, his reputation for Christian living, and the Christian lifestyle they saw him practice. If they obey Paul, God will bless them with his peace (see [v. 7](#); [John 14:27](#); [16:33](#)).

[1 PETER 3:15-16](#)

3:15. Instead of running away, Christians need a renewed allegiance. Set apart Christ as Lord means "to treat as holy or to regard with reverence." Christians are to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Holy One and also as Lord. "Lord" is the New Testament term for the Old Testament personal name for God (see [Exodus 3:14-15](#); [6:2-3](#)), often transcribed as "Jehovah" but more properly as "Yahweh." The New Testament applies the Old Testament title for God the Father to Jesus Christ, thus celebrating the deity of Christ.

The believer is to view Christ as holy, as worthy of reverence because of who he is. To reverence Christ as Lord means to believe that Jesus Christ is in control and that those who come against the believer are not. To have such reverence is to maintain a deep-seated confidence in Jesus Christ as the reigning Lord of the universe (see [3:22](#)). When our lives are centered on Christ, who is in control of the universe, then we are able to respond properly to the uncertainties and inconsistencies of life.

When we have made this commitment, we can respond to harm by communicating a positive word regarding our hope in Christ rather than running away. Even while suffering unjustly, Christians are able to go on because of their hope in the future.

From the opening words of chapter 1, Peter has emphasized the living hope of the believer (see [1:3](#)). The unbeliever does not enjoy this hope but is connected only to an empty way of life, and a life of spiritual darkness (see [1:18](#); [2:9](#)). One of the distinguishing marks of believers in Christ is their possession of hope. Christian hope is to be so real and distinctive that non-Christians will be puzzled by it and ask for an explanation. We should seize the opportunities of witness presented in these kinds of situations. Our response should be characterized not

by smugness or vindictiveness but by gentleness and respect.

These words suggest that the believer should approach others carefully and kindly. A Christian should not attempt to ram the truth down someone's throat or to speak patronizingly or critically to them. According to Grudem, "Such witness must be given with gentleness and (respect), not attempting to overpower the person with the force of human personality or aggressiveness, but trusting the Holy Spirit himself to quietly persuade the listener" (Grudem, 153).

3:16. If we maintain our testimony with gentleness and respect, we can be confident of operating with a clear conscience. This means that we should live in such a way that we won't have to keep looking over our shoulder, hoping that the wrong we have done isn't about to catch up to us.

By operating this way, our behavior and words will speak volumes to those who come against us. Peter promised that truth will prevail. What is not clear is whether the reference to the slanderers being ashamed refers to their present life or to the future day of God's judgment. Most likely the text looks to a change of heart by the persecutors in this life as they are confronted by the gracious responses of the people they are persecuting.