



DEVOTIONAL

DETERMINE | JANUARY 24, 2021

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discussion Starter: What do you think “love God with all your mind” means?

Key Passage: “*And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.*” (Mark 12:30)

Your mind matters! The Bible has much to say about the importance of the mind. It is part of loving God with our total being.

Why Loving God with All Your Mind Matters

1. Loving God with your mind equips you to identify false teaching so you can think correctly about God.

“*Test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.*” (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22) Every idea should be subject to critical analysis (testing), which helps us identify those ideas that are biblical and thus good (v.21) and those that are contrary to what is taught in the Bible and thus evil (v.22). Then we are to “*hold fast what is good*” (v.21) and “*abstain from every form of evil*” (v.22).

The mind helps us think clearly and correctly about God, which includes recognizing and rejecting lies about Him that could lead us astray. Loving God with our mind is about testing all ideas first by comparing them with what God already says is true in the Bible, like the Bereans did in Acts 17:11: “[The Bereans] *were more noble [because] they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.*”

2 Corinthians 10:5 says, “*We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ.*” This instructs us not to gullibly believe all thoughts that enter our minds, but rather to use our minds to take each thought captive, examine it for truthfulness, and obey Christ.

As we love God with all our mind, our minds become protected against the deceptions and traps the enemy lays for us. We understand more clearly what and why we believe and how to develop strong moral convictions about living for Christ, thus reducing the chances we will abandon our faith when our faith is attacked.

Discuss: What are some popular lies that Satan tries to spread about God?

Discuss: Take another look at the example of the Bereans in Acts 17:11. What are some specific things mentioned that they did to love God with all their mind?

Discuss: How would you advise a new Christian to love God with all his/her mind?

2. Loving God with all your mind equips you to share your faith persuasively.

“Paul reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead...Some mocked...others said, ‘We will hear you again about this’...but some men joined him and believed.” (Acts 17:2-4) Notice in verses 2-4 how Paul relied on thinking skills to share his faith, indicated by the words “*reasoned*,” “*explaining*,” and “*proving*.” God can use our persuasive presentation of Christianity to bring people to Himself.

Discuss: Why is it important that we Christians be able to reason, explain, and prove what we believe (like Paul did in Athens) in our culture today?

3. Loving God with all your mind equips you to defend your faith confidently.

In Christianity, apologetics means using sound reasoning to defend what you believe.

Why is apologetics important in Christianity?

- **Apologetics helps you to defend your faith.** Paul wrote in Philippians 1:16: *“I am set for the defense of the gospel.”* Just as a football team relies on good defense to stop the other team from scoring, apologetics prepares us to defend Christianity against questions and attacks.
- **Apologetics helps you to advance your faith.** Just as a football team can’t win if they don’t advance the ball and score, apologetics helps us to advance the truth of Christianity by providing sound reasons and persuasive arguments so non-believers can see the truthfulness of Christianity. Jesus provided reasons and evidence for His resurrection from the dead: *“He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.”* (Acts 1:3)
- **Apologetics helps you to give hope to others.** 1 Peter 3:15 says, *“In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.”* We use apologetics for the purpose of sharing “*the hope that is in [us]*” (1 Peter 3:15). Ultimately, apologetics points people to our hope: Jesus Himself! Objections raised against Jesus must be destroyed, but we do not destroy people—we destroy their arguments (2 Corinthians 10:5). We are to treat people with “*gentleness and respect*” (v.15).

Discuss: What are some arguments you’ve heard against Jesus, Christianity, the gospel, etc., that apologetics could help us defeat?

For Further Study

Loving God with All Your Mind by J.P. Moreland

On Guard by William Lane Craig

www.crossexamined.org

www.coldcasechristianity.org