

# Discipleship

## Part 3: God-Referenced vs. Man-Referenced Thinking

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### Full Text (for reading on your own)

#### *Change Your Minds . . . God's Great Plans are at Hand!*

Jesus said *"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins."* (Mark 2:22) We have to shed old thought patterns in order to be able to grow - in order to make way for God to do something new in our lives!

Proverbs 1:23 says *"Turn at my rebuke; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you."* What a powerful scripture about how to receive revelation! If we will "turn at his rebuke," if we will repent, if we will change our minds, He will be able to make His Words known to us!

God sent John the Baptist (whose ministry was a call for repentance) in order that He could make His Word (Jesus) known to the Jews. *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"* (Mt. 3:1-2) John's ministry was to bring a baptism of repentance so that God's people would be ready to change their minds and receive their Savior. The Pharisees and the lawyers said "we don't need to change our minds . . . I don't know if you've met us yet; we know everything!" But when you become a know-it-all, you become a learn-nothing!

*"But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him."* (Luke 7:30) The Pharisees and the lawyers did not repent at the preaching of John and they thereby rejected the purposes of God for their lives! Wow. In every one of our lives today, God wants to do exceedingly, abundantly more than we could ask, seek, or imagine. But God's great plans are going to require me (and you) to change! Our old ways of thinking need to be shed in order to experience new growth.

#### *Discipleship is about Changing Our Minds According to The Word*

Changing our mind is the process of discipleship. *"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* (Jn. 8:31-32) Discipleship is always about His Word. It's abiding in His Word - that's what transforms our hearts.

Changing our minds can either be easy or hard. Sometimes realizing we need to change our thinking about something is like re-arranging our living room - an exciting change that we cannot wait to experience the benefits of! Other times, having to change our mind can feel like personality suicide. We can end up being paralyzed by position. We think that we really know something, but as soon as we think we know, we don't know! We get stuck in a rut.

Paul shows us in Philippians 3:13 that he did not think like that. *“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended.”* So how did Paul think of himself? Paul had a deliberate thought pattern in which he considered himself to have “not apprehended” - to have not arrived. But one thing Paul did was to keep pressing forward. We have to be careful when we experience breakthrough with God that we don't turn breakthrough into a plateau that becomes a stagnation point.

*The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold, And each is tested by the praise accorded him.* (Prov. 27:21, NASB) This series is about how to keep your growth curve through the roof. How to go from breakthrough to breakthrough - not breakthrough to plateau. We tend to think “been there, done that.” But we've not actually “been there” and we've not actually “done that.” And if we have truly “been there,” we've only scratched the surface actually.

This is about how to get yourself out of a rut when it's not your first time around the block with the Lord. We think we've arrived, we've built a whole identity around being spiritually mature as a disciple, and then we can't change! When “a messenger” comes and shows us our need to change we aren't able to readily change because acknowledging our need for change disrupts our entire self-constructed identity. It's pride, and another way to say pride is “self-righteousness.”

### *Self-Righteousness Paralyzes the Process of Discipleship*

All discipleship hinges on not having any righteousness of your own. Phil. 3:8-10 says *“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, **not having my own righteousness**, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; **that I may know Him** and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death . . .”*

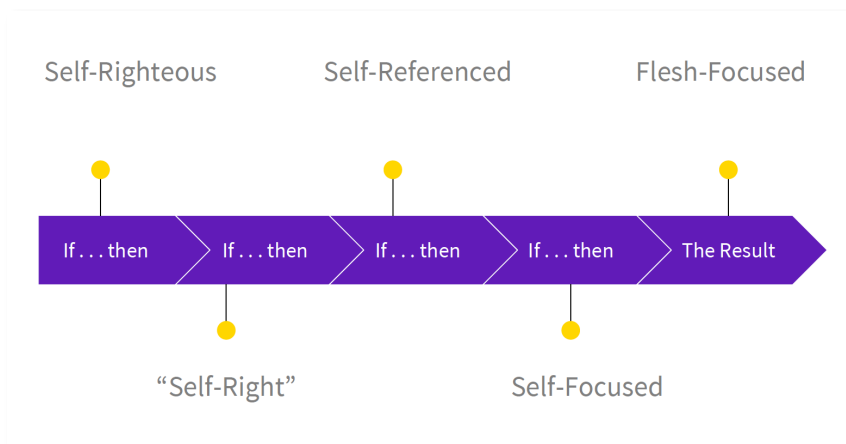
A few weeks ago Brad taught on the importance of asking God “why did you include that in The Word?” We know He has chosen His words very carefully so we can really dig into what He says to learn from Him. “What am I supposed to get out of this God? There are probably many things for me to get out of this verse. What am I supposed to get out of this?” When you see connections like the one in Phil. 3 in The Word, know that they are powerful sources of revelation! Paul says that he did not want to have a righteousness of his own . . . so that he may know Christ! Our ability to know Christ hinges on not having any self-righteousness.

This is a powerfully applicable truth because the corollary to that is that if you are finding yourself less able to know Christ than you used to know Him - or less able to know Christ than you

want to know Him . . . if you find that your growth trajectory in the things of God is lower than it used to be - or lower than you want it to be . . . If any of these situations rings true for you or someone else you are mentoring, self-righteousness (or, in other words, pride) is at the core of the hinderance. If you are thinking “I don’t have the fire that I used to have,” self-righteousness is at the root of the issue. So, now you can say “I see a problem and I know where to focus my efforts for the solution.”

### *Self-Righteousness = Mind that is Set on the Flesh*

We use the phrase “self-righteousness” but Paul used the phrase “a righteousness of my own.” If you have a righteousness of your own, another way to communicate the same principle is that you are “self-right.” It follows that if the right answer is in yourself then when faced with points of decision, you will reference inside of yourself to figure out what to do. If you are the reference point for your life, you obviously have to look somewhere to have some answers, so you will be self-focused. A self-focused person by nature has set their mind on the flesh. You can see this progression linearly below:



Getting self-righteousness out of the way is the key to all discipleship - the key to being able to change our minds according to the Word of God. Self-righteous means that you’re the one that’s right. If you are the one that’s right then you reference yourself for your answers. And if you reference yourself for your answers that means you are going to look to yourself a lot for your answers. You become self-focused, focused on your flesh. Your mind is set on your flesh.

For all of human thinking, there are 2 different reference frames that people can choose from to go through life with. the first reference frame starts with God and ends with wisdom. The second one starts with man and ends with folly. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” True wisdom in our thinking always starts with God. If you start your thinking with “man” you end up with folly and lots of other things that steal, kill, and destroy. *“There is a way that seems right to a*

*man, But its end is the way of death.” (Prov. 14:12 & 16:25) If you start your thinking with God, you end up with wisdom and lots of other things pertaining to life and peace! Rom. 8:5-8 describes the flesh-focused reference frame and the Spirit-focused reference frame:*

*For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because **the carnal mind is enmity against God**; for it is not subject to the law of God, **nor indeed can be.** So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

If you want to have progress in your ability to change your mind according to the Word of God, you have to get self-righteousness (pride) out of the way! Watch what happens to the mind that is set on the flesh: the carnal mind is actually at war with God! Jesus said that His Words will abide (rest, dwell) in the heart of His disciples. But the carnally minded are actually at war with God in their thinking. The Word of God does not sit well in the carnal mind. The carnal mind is hostile territory to the Word of God. The carnal mind has not subjected itself (made itself subject to) the law (Word) of God. When you have a mind that is set on the flesh, you can want to grow in the Lord, but you are not able to. “*Nor indeed can be.*” Your heart is actually at war with The Word when your mind is flesh-referenced. The Word comes to you and it bounces out. It is like mixing oil and water; they don’t mix. You try to pour the Word into your heart and it bounces out because your heart is set on yourself.

Many years ago, I heard the Lord tell me “your mind is on the throne of your heart and I want to be.” The amount of revelation I received from the Word after that transition is multiplied times what which I received prior to making the ultimate commitment to the Word being the authority in my heart and mind. “God you, and your ways, are on the throne of my heart - not my own thoughts!”

We tend to think that self-righteousness as being very “religious looking.” The phrase makes us think of the Pharisees - a very religious looking and acting people. But, self-righteousness, in its truest sense is actually just being “flesh-referenced” in our thinking. The Pharisees were focused on what they did in their flesh (they were self-normed), but, sorry to say, there is a portion of the Body of Christ today that is anti-religious. The Pharisees represent to them everything they don’t want to be. They are against religiosity. Their whole doctrine is based on “not being a Pharisee.” Think about that . . . what is the core of their doctrine if their doctrine is based on not being a Pharisee? Flesh! The Pharisees were doing everything they were doing based on the flesh and now we have a group of people that are anti-Pharisee, but in so being are also basing their actions and doctrines on the flesh! Their mind is still set on the flesh. There are 2 reference frames for all the thoughts of man. One is God-centered and the other is flesh-centered.

*Mind that is Set on the Flesh = a “Natural Man”*

*But **the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.** (1 Cor. 2:14) 1 Corinthians 2:1-16 is*

such a powerful section of scriptures about having the mind of Christ - about being spiritually minded! The natural-minded man is a man with his mind focused on (set on) the flesh, and the man with his mind flesh-focused is a self-righteous or self-referenced man. The self-referenced man is both proud and foolish. The natural man does not receive! 2 Peter 1 tells us that is through knowing God that we partake of the divine nature. The natural man does not receive! Self-righteousness makes us Spiritually stupid.

We have to become NOT WISE in our own eyes in order to become wise in HIS! (see Prov. 3:7) Don't be wise! Don't arrive. Don't think you know it all! You'll start to learn nothing and act foolishly! When you think that you've arrived, you're right.

*“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. (1 Cor. 2:9-10a) God wants to reveal His Great Plans to YOU!!! Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, **that we might know** the things that have been freely given to us by God. (1 Cor 2:12) We have the Holy Spirit on the inside of us so that we can know what God has deposited in us! Every born-again believer has the capability to be completely spiritually minded - just like Jesus. *But he who is spiritual judges (discerns) all things . . . But we have the mind of Christ.* (1 Cor. 2:15-16)*

When you were born again, you received the Spirit of God on the inside of you. The mind of Christ is fully resident in the Holy Spirit who dwells in you as a born-again believer. So, we received the mind of Christ when we were born again, but we also have a natural mind. With our free will, our thinking, we get to choose if we are going to submit to the mind of Christ that is on the inside of us and that we see clearly in the Word of God . . . or if you are going to let your mind rule the day. That is exactly what James 1 said *“if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God . . . a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”* (James 1:5-8) As born-again believers, we have 2 minds, but we are not called to be double-minded. We are called to be single-minded. The way you do that, as a born-again believer, is you bring your mind under the authority of the Word of God.

It may seem plain, but THIS IS THE STUFF OF DISCIPLESHIP - to bring our mind under the authority of the Word of God. This is not just about what to do right after you get saved. The same process keeps working if we will stay in it!

So long as we have our own thoughts, we won't have His. The natural man does not know the things of God which makes him or her spiritually impoverished.

### *Paul: A Case-study in Discipleship*

A quick case-study. Look at Paul. Before Paul was born again, he killed Christians. Not by accident. On purpose. *Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 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.* (Acts 9:1-2) That's before being born again. What spirit would you say Paul was operating under when he was trying to have Christians killed? It was an Anti-Christ spirit in the most literal sense! (see 1 Jn. 4:3) Think about that, before Paul was born again his actions were deliberately and substantively anti-Christ. Do you think he may have needed some heavy-duty discipleship after his conversion? Do you think he may have needed to change his mind about a few matters?!?

I would propose that Paul is actually one of the greatest discipleship stories we see in all the Word of God! Look at Paul after he had engaged in the discipleship process - the process of being subject to the Word of God. *"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory."* (1 Cor. 2:7) After Paul submitted his thinking to God, he received "hidden wisdom" from God. The Apostle Peter even said that in all of his epistles, some things are hard to understand! (2 Pe. 3:15-16a) This is coming from Peter who walked with Jesus for 3 years, was a main leader in the early church, and wrote 2 books of the Bible himself - he was saying "some of that stuff Paul writes is pretty tough to understand!"

Paul was a Christian-killer who was willing to change his mind to the point that God chose to deliver tremendous revelation through him to the Body of Christ - having him write 2/3rds of the books of the New Testament. There is something for us to learn from his discipleship process!

What was Paul's mindset?

- Mindset 1: Paul did not think he was wise. *"And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God."* (1 Cor. 2:1)
- Mindset 2: Paul's revelation came through seeking to know Christ and His sacrifice for us. All revelation comes from THE revelation of our righteousness in Him! *"For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."* (1 Cor. 2:2)
- Mindset 3: Paul was meek and weak in his own eyes before the Lord. *"I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling."* (1 Cor. 2:3)

In short, Paul's mindset was one of HUMILITY! "Blessed are the poor in Spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven!" (Mt. 5:3) Everything up there comes here through poorness in Spirit. Through humility. Through meekness.

What was the result of Paul's mindset? *"And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."* (1 Cor. 2:4-5) The Power of God rested on Paul and His ministry!

## Our Perspective about The Word

Colossians 2:18-19 says “*Let no one cheat you of your reward . . . vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.*” Who would be able to cheat you of your reward? Either you or someone else who is “vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.” If you have a fleshly mind, you will cheat yourself of your reward. If you listen to fleshly-minded people and take what their fleshly minds are saying to heart, they’ll cheat you of your reward! But, let no one cheat you of your reward - including yourself!

All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ! (Col. 2:3) The carnal mind is “*not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.*” All increase in the Body of Christ will come from submitting to the Head. Where is the mind in a body? In the Head! We are not called to be double-minded. We’re to submit to what we have as a Body - the mind of Christ!

The Word (Heb. 4:12) is what will separate out the flesh from the Spirit. In fact Heb. 4:12 says the Word will clearly divide even soul from Spirit. Even when it may be a bit tricky to tell if a thought we were having was our emotions or the leadership of the Lord, the Word will slice right through it and make it very clear - good from evil. (see also Heb. 5:13-14)

If we want to experience growth in being spiritually-minded, we can study 1 Cor. 2:1-16 and Rom. 8:5-8. Some of us though may also need to work on changing our thinking about the whole process with which we approach the Word of God. Try this . . . When you are reading the Word this week, pay attention to your thoughts. For instance, if we find ourselves having some of the following thoughts, they actually can have some profound impact on our whole perspective with which we approach the Word (and therefore discipleship). These are some thoughts that “raise themselves up against the knowledge of God” that we will want to take captive of because they will steal our ability to be disciplined.

- Common Thought 1: “I’ve read this, seen this, known this before.” If we are not careful (read, “deliberate”) we will be more focused on what we have learned from God before than what He is wanting to teach us now. But He has daily bread for us! Again the goal here is to simply watch your thoughts as you read the Word so you can remove hinderances to your discipleship process.
- Common Thought 2: “My circumstance is different than that.” If you ever find yourself resistant to what you are seeing in the Word because somehow “your circumstance is different” than what you are seeing in the Word, you’re wrong. We (me included) can tend to overly contextualize the perfect Word of God in order to brush off the places it confronts us uncomfortably. Someone may think “sure I see tithing in the scriptures but it’s a bit different when you are trying to support your child through college.” What’s at stake there, with that thought, if left un

challenged, is their ability to be subject to the Word of God as it relates to finances or not. This is powerful to realize and address in our lives. There's a war being waged in the spiritual realms to keep the Word out of your heart. Don't be party to it.

- Common Thought 3: As you read the Word, you find yourself somehow “doubting that it's possible.” James 1 talks about this. We are to ask in faith, not doubting, for wisdom from God. By doubting the possibility of His Word, by not approaching it with faith, we ended up as a double-minded man not approaching the Lord believing that He is and that He is the rewarder of those who seek Him! You are not believing that “*all things are possible to him who believes.*” You are not believing “*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*” So we read about Peter's shadow and if we are not careful we will have an evil and unbelieving heart that keeps us from the purposes of God.
- Common Thought 4: We figure that the Word is not applicable to us. We probably are not even consciously thinking about it, but we want to “breeze past the boring chapters of Leviticus.” But there is so much for us to learn there! *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,* (2 Tim. 3:16) When we figure some sections of scriptures are just not applicable to us, it is no longer useful to us and we will ignore it. If we come to the Word already having decided that some things are not applicable to us (for instance only wanting to hear about finances), we will miss so much that God wants to show us! Everything in the Word is profitable for teaching! We need to come to the Word with a humble heart that says “get ready! This next verse is very likely going to change my life!” This doesn't mean that we can't just read through the Bible to get coverage (that's a good thing to do), but the the heart stance should be expectant for the power of every verse.
- Common Thought 5: “Times were different then.” We are not smarter than people 2000 or 6000 years ago! Noah built the ark with his bare hands! I work with wood and have to try hard to build a table (that does not need to float)! We swim in the world's system and one of the main things that the anti-christ is doing in this age is to inflate the reputation of scientific breakthrough to get people to assume that everyone before us was something “just short of an idiot.” We're not smarter than before and humans haven't changed in the last 6000 years either. The issues are the same 6000 years after Adam and Eve. *There is nothing new under the sun.* (Eccl. 1:9) There is nothing in the Word of God that you read that is not applicable to you - because times have not changed! We may not now live an agrarian society, so we do sometimes need to work to picture the context in certain parables, but times have not changed. Everything in the Word is still applicable to us!



- Common Thought 6: “People would think I’m ‘the oddest duck on the block’ if I actually acted on what’s clearly in the Word.” “My friends would think I’m crazy if they knew that I gave offerings like I give, or pray for the sick like I do.” “If my neighbor saw me praying in tongues they would wonder about me.” We can read the Word with that sort of fear overlaid. But there are two types of thoughts that man has ever had and will ever have. There are the thoughts that are referenced off of man and there are the thoughts that are referenced off of God. And the natural man cannot submit to the things of God because they are foolishness to him. We have to be spiritually minded and not let the sway of the world make us think that what God has to say is foolishness! The wisdom of man is foolishness in the eyes of God.

Take these sorts of thoughts captive. Catch yourself. Watch your thoughts as you read the Word because they will give you a clue into areas where you are not receiving the things of the Spirit (the revelation from the Word) in the way that you could. We can change our mind about that - and what a great OPPORTUNITY that is!!!

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## Text Summary (for reading as a group)

Jesus said *“And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins.”* (Mark 2:22) We have to shed old thought patterns in order to be able to grow - in order to make way for God to do something new in our lives! In every one of our lives today, God wants to do exceedingly, abundantly more than we could ask, seek, or imagine. But God’s great plans are going to require me (and you) to change! Our old ways of thinking need to be shed in order to experience new growth.

Changing our mind is the process of discipleship. *“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* (Jn. 8:31-32) Discipleship is always about His Word. It’s abiding in His Word - that’s what transforms our hearts. Throughout our discipleship process, we have to be careful that when we experience breakthrough with God that we don’t turn breakthrough into a plateau that becomes a stagnation point. Paul had a deliberate thought pattern in which he considered himself to have “not apprehended” - to have not arrived. This perspective allowed Paul to “press forward.” We tend to think “been there, done that.” But we’ve not actually “been there” and we’ve not actually “done that.” And if we have truly “been there,” we’ve only scratched the surface actually.

All discipleship hinges on not having any righteousness of your own. Phil. 3:8-10 says *“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, **not having my own righteousness**, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; **that I may know Him** and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death . . .”*

Paul says that he did not want to have a righteousness of his own . . . so that he may know Christ! Our ability to know Christ hinges on not having any self-righteousness. If you are thinking “I don’t have the fire for God that I used to have,” self-righteousness is at the root of the issue. Getting self-righteousness out of the way is the key to all discipleship - the key to being able to change our minds according to the Word of God. Self-righteous means that you’re the one that’s right. And if you are the one that’s right then you reference yourself for your answers. And if you reference yourself for your answers that means you are going to look to yourself a lot for your answers. You become self-focused, focused on your flesh. Your mind is set on your flesh.

For all of human thinking, there are 2 different reference frames that people can choose from to go through life with. the first reference frame starts with God and ends with wisdom. Rom. 8:5-8 describes the flesh-focused reference frame and the Spirit-focused reference frame:

*For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually*

*mind is life and peace. Because **the carnal mind is enmity against God**; for it is not subject to the law of God, **nor indeed can be.** So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

Jesus said that His Words will abide (rest, dwell) in the heart of His disciples. But the carnally minded are actually at war with God in their thinking. The Word of God does not sit well in the carnal mind. We tend to think that self-righteousness as being very “religious looking.” The phrase makes us think of the Pharisees - a very religious looking and acting people. But, self-righteousness, in its truest sense is actually just being “flesh-referenced” in our thinking. There are 2 reference frames for all the thoughts of man. One is God-centered and the other is flesh-centered. The mind that is focused on the Spirit produces life and peace. Focusing on the flesh produces death.

*But **the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.** (1 Cor. 2:14) The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit! Self-righteousness makes us Spiritually stupid. We have to become NOT WISE in our own eyes in order to become wise in HIS! God wants to reveal His Great Plans to YOU!!! We have the Holy Spirit on the inside of us so that we can know what God has deposited in us! Every born-again believer has the capability to be completely spiritually minded - just like Jesus! (all from 1 Cor. 2:9-16)*

When you were born again, you received the mind of Christ, but we also have a natural mind. With our free will, our thinking, we get to choose if we are going to submit to the mind of Christ that is on the inside of us and that we see clearly in the Word of God . . . or if you are going to let your mind rule the day. That is exactly what James 1 said “*if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God . . . a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*” (James 1:5-8) As born-again believers, we have 2 minds, but we are not called to be double-minded. We are called to be single-minded. The way you do that, as a born-again believer, is you bring your mind under the authority of the Word of God. It may seem plain, but THIS IS THE STUFF OF DISCIPLESHIP - to bring our mind under the authority of the Word of God. This is not just about what to do right after you get saved. The same process keeps working if we will stay in it!

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Colossians 2:18-19 says “*Let no one cheat you of your reward . . . vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.*” If we have a fleshly mind, we will cheat ourselves of our reward. But, let no one cheat you of your reward - including yourself!

The Word (Heb. 4:12) is what will separate out the flesh from the Spirit. If we want to experience growth in all of this, study 1 Cor. 2:1-16 and Rom. 8:5-8. As we read the Word, if we find ourselves having some of the following thoughts, they actually can have some profound impact on our whole perspective with which we approach the Word (and therefore discipleship).

- Common Thought 1: “I’ve read this, seen this, known this before.”
- Common Thought 2: “My circumstance is different than that.” Someone may think “sure I see tithing in the scriptures but it’s a bit different when you are trying to support your child through college.” What’s at stake there, with that thought, if left unchallenged, is their ability to be subject to the Word of God as it relates to finances or not.
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- Common Thought 5: “Times were different then.” Remember that “*there is nothing new under the sun.*” (Eccl. 1:9) People and the real issues we face are still the same as they were 2000 and 6000 years ago.
- Common Thought 6: “People would think I’m ‘the oddest duck on the block’ if I actually acted on what’s clearly in the Word.” The natural man cannot submit to the things of God because they are foolishness to him. We have to be spiritually minded and not let the sway of the world make us think that what God has to say is foolishness! The wisdom of man is foolishness in the eyes of God.

Take these sorts of thoughts captive. Catch yourself. Watch your thoughts as you read the Word because they will give you a clue into areas where you are not receiving the things of the Spirit (the revelation from the Word) in the way that you could. We can change our mind about that - and what a great OPPORTUNITY that is!!!

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## Points to Ponder . . .

- Describe some differences between being flesh-focused (carnally-minded) vs. being Spiritually-minded. What are the effects of both types of thinking? (As a group, try to use multiple scriptures to describe your thoughts).
- Look at the list of 6 “Common Thoughts” that “cheat us of our reward.” Which one speaks to you the most for one reason or another? Explain.
- Consider Paul’s mindset and ministry. Respond to one of these two questions:
  - What can you learn from him? - OR -
  - How could you use his life as an example to teach a young believer about how to approach learning from the Lord?