

# THE REAL YOU

HEART, SOUL, MIND, AND STRENGTH

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

## Anatomy of the Soul

The brain is the material apparatus of the immaterial mind, and it is truly an awe-inspiring work of God. The human brain is said to have as many as 120 billion neurons and over 1,000 connections per neuron. The interconnectivity of this arrangement is nothing shy of breath-taking. It has been suggested that the human brain with its constant exchange of data impulses through approximately 100 trillion nerve cell connections features more than the electronic equivalent amassed in all the radio and television stations of the entire world—and all of this bundled in a forty-six ounce organ. It is no wonder why this stupendous part of our body is said to be the most complex arrangement of matter in the universe. The brain “controls body temperature, blood flow, and digestion; it monitors every sensation, each breath and heartbeat, every blink and swallow. Much of its work is in directing movement—walk this way, take the hand off the stove, lift the arm to catch the ball, smile. Even speech is movement—the tongue, the lungs, the mouth, and the pharynx all must be directed to move in certain ways to produce speech.” The brain receives and processes millions of signals of information per second, and yet “the human brain’s most celebrated achievement is thought.”<sup>1</sup> If the brain is such an awe-inspiring work of God, *how much more the mind?* “The mind of man, not the brain as a physical organism, is what produces thought.”<sup>2</sup> Certainly the *instrument* is no more marvelous than the *instrumenter*. Even in its fallen state, the mind is a marvel to consider.

Most would agree that the mind is marvelous and is more than the brain, but exactly what is it? Is it, for instance, separate from the heart? What about the soul? How does it relate to our spirit? Is the conscience a part of the mind or the mind a part of the conscience, or are they independent of each other? What about the will? Where does memory and intellect come in? Before we can better understand the significance of the mind and the importance of its discipline, we must look to God’s Word in order to understand what God has revealed concerning one of His most astonishing creations—*your mind*.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Ornstein, *The Amazing Brain* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986), 38.

<sup>2</sup> Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, vol. 5 (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999), 390.

## THE MIND AS THE HEART

The heart signifies the center of personhood. While nuances of meaning may sometimes be gleaned from context, the root conception of the heart is essentially synonymous with the mind. The Hebrew perspective “considered the intellectual and emotional dimensions of human life from the perspective of the whole person: heart, soul, and spirit are not separate parts of the inner person, but each is a reference to the whole inner person and is to be viewed in relation to the body.”<sup>3</sup>

1. **Genesis 6:5:** The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ of his heart was only evil continually.
2. **Deuteronomy 15:9:** “Take care lest there be an unworthy \_\_\_\_\_ in your heart...”
3. **1 Chronicles 28:9:** “And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole \_\_\_\_\_ and with a willing \_\_\_\_\_, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.”
4. **Exodus 36:2:** And Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whose **mind** [\_\_\_\_\_] the LORD had put skill, everyone whose **heart** [\_\_\_\_\_] stirred **him** [\_\_\_\_\_] up to come to do the work.
5. The Lord “sees the **heart** and the **mind**” (Jeremiah 20:12), “tests the **heart** and the **mind**” (Jeremiah 11:20), and does “search the **heart** and test the **mind**” (Jeremiah 17:10). David cries out, “Prove me, O LORD, and try me; test my **heart** and my **mind**” (Psalms 26:2). Solomon testifies that moral repentance is a function of the **heart-mind**: “if they repent with all their **mind** and with all their **heart**” (1 Kings 8:48). The unity of the heart and mind is made plain in David’s declaration that “the inward **mind** and **heart** of a man are deep” (Psalms 64:6). Here mind and heart are parallel, describing the same inward aspect of man’s being. When reiterated like this, it typically suggests an emphasis on personal determination or resolve. For instance, the Lord’s resolved determination is expressed in His promise, “And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind” (1 Samuel 2:35). With such an analogy, we may safely maintain that God does not have different spiritual organs but is rather emphasizing His personal resolve.

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<sup>3</sup> Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), s.v. “mind/reason.”

**6. 2 Corinthians 4:16:**

So we do not lose \_\_\_\_\_.

Though our outer self is wasting away,

our \_\_\_\_\_ is being renewed day by day.

**7. Hebrews 8:10:** For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel

after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their \_\_\_\_\_,

and write them on their \_\_\_\_\_, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

**8. 1 Peter 3:8:** Finally, all of you, have unity of \_\_\_\_\_, sympathy, brotherly

love, a tender \_\_\_\_\_, and a humble \_\_\_\_\_.

**9. Revelation 2:23:** ... all the churches will know that I am he who searches

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ ...

**10. Revelation 17:17:** God has put it into their \_\_\_\_\_ to carry out his purpose

by being of one \_\_\_\_\_ ...

**THE HEART:**

Isaiah 10:7 \_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 14:10 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 33:18 \_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 16:1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Corinthians 9:7 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Kings 3:12 \_\_\_\_\_

Deuteronomy 29:4 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 46:8 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalms 10:13 \_\_\_\_\_

**THE HEART IS COMMANDED**

When asked, “which commandment is the most important of all,” Jesus replied, “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). Does this suggest that the heart, mind, soul, and strength are separate entities within the human being? Are we to perceive

distinct, albeit connected, members within? Are these to be likened to different spiritual organs? No, these different terms nuance the very same inner self differently.

The command to love God with all one's heart, soul, and mind does not divide the human person into three parts. The Bible consistently recognizes only a material and immaterial dimension to humanity, if one must speak of dividing the person at all. Rather, as with similar formulations elsewhere (e.g., 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12), the listing of various aspects of the human person makes the point vividly and emphatically that one's whole being must be involved.<sup>4</sup>

Without ignoring varying emphases, compounding 'heart', 'soul', 'mind', and 'strength' together serves to amplify the call to a whole-hearted and undivided devotion. In other words, "The wholeness, or oneness, of Yahweh (v. 4) is to be met with a response involving the wholeness of the human person."<sup>5</sup> Rather than reflecting multiple, divisible interior parts, "this is intended as an emphatic reinforcement of the absolute and singular devotion to Yahweh."<sup>6</sup>

For the purpose of our study, it is noteworthy that no one term occupies an exclusive meaning. Biblically speaking, the heart thinks (Luke 1:51; Matthew 15:19) and the mind loves (Mark 12:30). On the whole, the biblical meaning of the mind and heart are conceptually interchangeable.

The danger of separating the heart and mind in our assumptions leads to separation of:

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

The key is that the heart is more than just feelings and appetites. It is the essential you and includes the seat of thought. So when we talk about the Christian life as being a matter of the heart, we assume the inclusion of our thinking—we assume the inclusion of our mind.

## THE MIND AS THE INNER PERSON

A truly biblical psychology focuses attention on the person as a whole, not denying functional distinctions (i.e. intellect versus desire) but insisting on the importance of being; holistically and relationally. In this light, the range of words relating to the mind trace back to who we are. A person's inner thoughts expose their true identity (Proverbs 23:7). "As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man" (Proverbs 27:19). To speak in your mind (Genesis 24:45) is equivalent to speaking to yourself (Genesis 17:17), because the mind is the essential you. We cannot overstate the importance of perceiving one's mind as one's inner person. We all tend to judge by appearances—for better or worse—but must

<sup>4</sup> Craig L. Blomberg, "Matthew," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 80.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *Deuteronomy*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 98.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel I. Block, *The NIV Application Commentary: Deuteronomy*, ed. Terry Muck (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 183.

remember that “the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

The Bible does not present a divided anatomy of the human soul. It does not, for instance, separate our intellect from our desires. The fullest reference to the mind therefore embodies the spectrum of perception, cognition, recollection, volition, emotion, and affection. The biblical identity of the mind makes reference to the immaterial grasping, thinking, recalling, deciding, feeling, and desiring person. It represents the invisible self in all its glory. Therefore, when ‘mind’ is used in this study it is not necessarily to the exclusion of the Western notion of the heart (i.e. seat of affection); nor when heart is referenced is it to be taken in exclusion of the mind (i.e. seat of cognition). Both terms will be used interchangeably in what follows and, unless otherwise noted, the use of ‘mind’ will signal the encompassing spectrum of interior life—the true inner person (see Romans 7:22 and Ephesians 3:16).

## THE MIND AS THE DECISIVE YOU

Understanding our metaphysical anatomy is only the beginning to understanding how the human being can exercise love to God. We must approach this subject with the perspective of the mind as the decisive you. By this we mean that the

Our situation is not first a matter of material; it is preeminently a matter of the mind. This is an obvious and yet stunning reality. All physical suffering, every tragedy, every calamity, every deformity, every act of violence, every destructive word, and in short, every evil that has ever been perpetrated is preeminently a matter of the mind. All physical evils are consequences of choice—either immediate or remote in origin. The Fall of humanity and the consequent Curse against creation unashamedly points to a singular act of rebellion—a misuse of the mind in its most fundamental sense. Our perspective of life must be large enough to appropriate this intersection of what we often label the physical and spiritual realms. Our situation is one that manifests a cause and effect relationship between the mind of man and the material universe.

Also, we should not miss the link this has to human nature. The Bible speaks of the “natural man” as being liable to God’s judgment. But surely it is not our physical constitution that makes us guilty. It is not human nature in its physical dimension that is worthy of God’s wrath. The body, apart from the mind, neither condemns nor commends a man to God. It is his mind that is determinative. His mind presents him guilty. His mind may cast himself on Christ by faith and thus stand in an entirely new relation to the Holy One. The decisive factor is the mind, not the matter of flesh and bones.

## The Deep Things of Self

**Hebrews 4:12-13** - For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

The mind cannot be observed under a microscope, but under the Word of God it is “naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13). It is our immaterial thoughts and intentions that are accountable to God, not merely the matter and motion of our bodies. This is enormously important, and the very beginning of much suppression of truth in the world and confusion concerning the role of the mind in the Christian life.

### GOD KNOWS OUR HEARTS

1. **2 Chronicles 6:30** - for you, you only, \_\_\_\_\_ of the children of mankind
2. **Psalms 44:20-21** - If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign god, would not God discover this? For he knows the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. **Jeremiah 20:12** - O LORD of hosts, who tests the righteous, who \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause.
4. **Romans 2:16** - on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the \_\_\_\_\_ by Christ Jesus.

## GOD CHANGES OUR HEARTS

1. **Ezekiel 36:26** - And I will \_\_\_\_\_, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.
2. **Acts 16:14** - One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord \_\_\_\_\_ to pay attention to what was said by Paul.
3. **Romans 5:5** - God's love has been \_\_\_\_\_ through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
4. **2 Corinthians 4:6** - For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has \_\_\_\_\_ to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
5. **Ephesians 3:17** - so that Christ may \_\_\_\_\_ through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

## WE MUST KNOW OUR HEARTS

1. **Proverbs 20:5** - The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will \_\_\_\_\_.
2. **Proverbs 27:19** - As in water face reflects face, so the \_\_\_\_\_ reflects the man.

Many low and carnal considerations may work men to watch their words, their lives, their actions; as hope of gain, or to please friends, or to get a name in the world, and many other such like considerations. Oh! but to watch our thoughts, to weep and lament over them, &c., this must needs be from some noble, spiritual, and internal principle, as love to God, a holy fear of God, a holy care and delight to please the Lord. — Charles Spurgeon

Thoughts are the first-born, the blossoms of the soul, the beginning of our strength, whether for good or evil, and they are the greatest evidences for or against a man that can be. — Thomas Brooks

It is the heart that defiles and it is the heart that sanctifies the man.

## WE MUST DISCIPLINE OUR MINDS IN THE GOSPEL

*The gospel chiefly addresses the mind.* ‘Repentance’ and ‘conversion’ are *metanoia*, meaning ‘change of mind’ (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38; Romans 2:4). A radical ‘change of mind’, therefore, characterizes and adorns regeneration. At conversion, the mind of the redeemed is regenerated—made alive, created anew, endowed with new abilities, inclinations, and appetites.

*The gospel is the battle cry for Christ-centered thinking.* A mind with any other center is frankly unchristian. When we think of the gospel we usually think only of the effect that trusting in Christ will have on one’s eternal destiny. While this is paramount in light of eternity, it is nonetheless essential to keep the gospel at the center of our moment-by-moment thought-life.

More than only a means of salvation, the gospel is a battle cry—a resounding shout of God penetrating the darkness of this fallen world and laying claim to redeemed minds, calling them to think according to a new principle, a new order, a new center (Col 1:13).

*So that we may love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength!*

Discipline of mind is discipline of self—centrally and organically, and that this is essential to loving God.

We are not transformed until our thinking is transformed!