

According to James, one of the marks of spiritual maturity is an aversion to sin that actually leads us to do something about it.

Greek scholar Spiros Zodhiates told of a Christian who attended prayer meeting every week at his little church, and every week he would confess the same sins, closing with the same prayer: "O Lord, the cobwebs have come between You and me; please clear them away." Finally an older Christian grew tired of hearing the same thing week in and week out, so he prayed immediately afterwards, "Lord, would you have him kill the spider?!"

This is exactly what James is telling us to do. Deal with sin. Don't expect to allow a spider to roam free in your mind and not become entangled in the web it weaves.

Whatever analogy says it best, do something about it today: get rid of the wax in your ears, the weeds in your heart, and the spiders in your mind.

Growing old in the faith is not nearly as rewarding as growing up in the faith. And those who are growing up will clear away the cobwebs . . . and kill the spider! Excerpted from Wisdom for the Heart

GADSBY'S CATECHISM – William Gadsby about 1800

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

Question XXXIII. How does Christ execute the office of a priest?

Answer. Christ executes the office of a priest in His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and to reconcile the elect unto God, and in making continual intercession for them.

Isa. 53.6-11; Rom. 8.34; 2 Cor. 5.19-21; Heb. 2.17 & 7.25 & 9.28.

Question XXXIV. How does Christ execute the office of a king?

Answer. Christ executes the office of a king by subduing the elect to Himself, ruling and defending them, and conquering all His and their enemies.

Psa. 110.1-3; 1 Cor. 15.25; Phil. 2.9-11; Heb. 1.8.

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THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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THIS MIND IN YOU

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Philippians 2:5

We hear many expressions with regard to the mind. We may ask someone “what is on your mind,” as a way of asking about what they are thinking. Some are said to have a good mind while others have an evil mind. Individual determination is sometimes referred to as “mindset.” The idea of “minding” has to do with understanding leading to addressing need. Parents often press their children to “mind them.” That is they are to take note of what is required and to act accordingly. The reference is perhaps more common than we imagine, but there is a common idea. The mind is the place where information is received, processed, evaluated and stored. It is, also the place where expressions are designed before uttering them. We are often re-minded to “think before we speak.”

The scriptures direct us regarding the mind. This text is a prime example. And, we learn from this that character is registered in the mind. We are told that we (believers have the mind of Christ). This does not mean that we possess either His intelligence or His infinite knowledge. The scriptures are referring to the way He thought and processed information and points us to Him as the ultimate example. There are many and varied thoughts with regard to the definition and relationship to mind, heart, soul and Spirit. There is no thought here to resolving all such issues. It is rather that attention be given to that which would render us more Christ-like. In any event, it is all engaged in loving God: *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God*

with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. Mark 12:30 The mind accumulates knowledge. The heart evaluates and approves or disapproves what comes to mind. Truth is witnessed in our soul – our being and identity, and our spirit directs accordingly. Paul identified certain people in this way: *Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) Philippians 3:19.* But, to believers the admonition is toward the things of God. *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Colossians 3:2.* The KJV margin has “mind” for affection. The word “affection” is good because of the tie to the new heart given us in Christ. Remember *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Matthew 6:21.*

Peter echoes the thoughts of Paul. *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 1 Peter 4:1.* Thus, it is not enough that we merely know what Christ was/is thinking. It is that we are to possess Him and His thoughts in the way. We need not wonder as to the intent of this directive. Paul had previously in this chapter addressed the issue of selflessness with others. Compare: *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Philippians 2:4.* Rather than engage in some methodology as to how to be humble we should witness the utmost

humility in Christ as He pursued the will of the Father in obtaining salvation. In the verses that follow we are reminded of Who Christ is. He is God manifest in the flesh. He is the Son of God and God the Son. He offers no apology for claiming to be equal with God for indeed He is God. The amazing thing is that He relinquished the place of dignity and honor in order to be like those He came to save. There was nothing found in Him that He should be so treated. Yet, we see Him forego any right He may have claimed because He stood in the stead of those who had no righteousness of their own and would be the recipients of His righteousness. He came as the servant of God in all things in order to save. He declared that He came not to be ministered to but to minister (or serve).

We further note that He was made in the likeness of men in order that He might take their sin upon Him. He was “made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.” He humbled Himself before the Father and was fully obedient to the will of the Father. There could be no other way to deliver men from judgment and death but that Christ should die. He did always that which pleased the Father and it pleased the Father to bruise Him. He humbly

submitted to death. We would not miss Paul’s emphasis –“even the death of the cross.” This is the mind that is to be in His people. This is the way they are to think with regard to others. We cannot question either the precept or the example. And, we remember: *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13.*

While we are no man’s judge, we fail to detect such a mind with many professed Christians. Men tend to look at the example of Christ and think they could never be capable of such. But, there is no exception offered. “Let this mind be in you!” How can it be? We would note first that “ye must be born again” since we cannot self-generate the mind of Christ. We then study the life and ministry of our Lord and learn that He is “meek and lowly” in heart. We must “mind” the things that are set before us in the Word of God as to both mandate and promise. It is in this manner that such grace is measured to us and we find God-given ability to be in imitation of Christ. That is His design and aim and He will not be frustrated. *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Philippians 2:13. bhs*

If asked to point out the specific and prevailing sin of the church in the present day, we cannot hesitate in replying, a pervading worldliness of mind, heart, and conduct. She is fearfully secularized in the spirit and temper of her members. The love of the world is become the master passion, before which other and holier affections grow dim and weak.

In this commercial country, it is difficult even for the professors of religion to escape the contagious spirit of speculation, eager competition, and over-trading. The determination, as well as the anxiety, to be rich, will, without great watchfulness, rush into the church: it has done so, and those who profess to have overcome the world by faith, appear almost as eager as others in all the schemes for getting wealth in haste, and by almost any means. But it is not only in the way of doing business that this secular spirit is seen, but in the general habits and tastes of professing Christians. Their style of living, their entertainments, their associations, their amusements, their conversation, evince a conformity to the world, a minding of earthly things, a disposition to conform themselves to the world around, and an apparent desire to seek their happiness from objects of sense, rather than from those of faith, which prove the extent to which a secular spirit is bearing down the spirit of piety.

~~John Angell James 1857 ~~

Quoted by Ron Rumburg from a book once owned by a Confederate Soldier

You know, many of us as Christians don't think much about the devil. We are very aware he's there and is at work in the world; we acknowledge that he's a powerful enemy, but we really don't think he's that much at work in our lives. We feel that once we've gotten a little Christian experience under our belts, you know, a little maturity, we minimize his influence on our hearts, or in our thoughts or attitudes or actions. I mean after all we're on the winning side against Satan; we're involved in church and Bible study; we're not tempted to smoke, have an affair, curse, flirt with our coworker, drink too much or party 'til 2:00 a.m. That's beneath us. Other less mature Christians may struggle with those things, but not us. We're aware of the devil's schemes; we know what he's up to; we've got his number. Well guess what: the devil is very aware that you think that way about him. He's the one who has your number.

This is why the strongest Christians are the ones who are aware they are a huge target for everything and anything — and they know it. They are alert to the evil of which they are capable. For instance, I remember when I was first married, Ken and I would have a blow-up and I would say some really awful things. Sometimes, as I was saying them I couldn't believe the words were coming out of my mouth! Later on, I would say to Ken, "Sweetheart, I just don't know what happened there, but that just wasn't me. I'm not like that. That's not in my nature to blow-off like that."

Well, you know what? It was me. I am like that. It is in my nature. And for me to be constantly aware of what I'm capable of ... It's humbling to confess what I know lurks in the deepest, unknown recesses of my heart, but acknowledging the sin I know I'm capable of is my best defense against the devil; for it is humility that characterizes those who are, indeed, strong and mature in the Lord. Humility is your most powerful defense against temptation. When your friend falls into sin, humility is quick to say, "Man, that could so easily be me." Humility recognizes that we are susceptible to any temptation; it acknowledges that we are so weak, so inept and so powerless to stave off the schemes of the devil, that we must every day utterly cast ourselves at all times on God for help. It is then in God's strength — and God's alone — that we become victorious.

Question 127 in The Heidelberg Catechism states — now listen to this:

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' And what that means is, since we Christians are so feeble that we cannot stand by ourselves for one moment, and since our sworn enemies, the devil, the world, and our own sin, ceaselessly assail us, we must constantly pray 'Lord, please preserve and strengthen us through the power of the Holy Spirit so that we may stand firm against the world the flesh and the devil, and not be defeated in spiritual warfare, until at last we obtain complete victory.'" So friend remember, when you pray the Lord's Prayer and ask God, "Lead me not into temptation," you are asking Him to strengthen you through the Holy Spirit. You are asking Him for guidance as you tiptoe through the minefield the devil lays for you every day. You are asking Him to cause you to stand firm against every trap and snare. You are asking Him for humility; and friend, that means victory over the evil one every single time. Joni Eareckson Tada.



Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. James 4:7-8