



Building Wholehearted Disciples of Jesus

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## **Wholeheart Disciple, Part 5**

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**Series:** Outlier University

## Wholeheart Disciple part 5

### Loving God with all your mind part 1

Turn in your Bibles to Mark 12:30

#### We are living in fascinating times

- Never has supernatural Christianity been under so much attack in the “Christian” west.
- Never have the elite intellectuals of our western universities been so aligned against the historical vision and values that formed our nation.
- Never in our history has the divisiveness of different viewpoints even permeated one of our cherished sports, the NFL.
- But simultaneously, never in our nation, has there been such a robust Christian faith, both emotionally and intellectually, especially among the millennial generation.
- It is a time for the church to get engaged with the culture, not in accommodating it, but in challenging the intellectual world views of our time.
- This is why we established **Outlier University**.
  - We desire to train and equip a new breed of Jesus disciples who are wholehearted and whole minded.
  - This is why Mark 12:29-31 is the basis of our university
  - **Read Mark 12:30**
  - Over the next 3 years we endeavor to equip you to love God with:
    - ♣ ALL your heart—emotionally,
    - ♣ ALL your soul—identity,
    - ♣ ALL your mind—intellectually,
    - ♣ ALL your strength,
    - ♣ Every class we offer will challenge you this way.

In these past few weeks I have talked about loving God with all your heart and soul. Today I want to tackle loving God with all your mind.

**My Thesis: You cannot truly love God with all your heart without first loving God with all your mind. Your heart follows your mind.**

**I am advocating an intellectually robust faith based on facts, based on God's existence, based on His character, based on the supernatural and based on Who God is as found in the scriptures!**

- You cannot know God intimately at the heart level without knowing Who He is—His character, His attributes, His personality.

But let's begin with how Paul sets up the book of Romans, arguably the most doctrinal book of the entire Bible.

**Romans 1:19-26, 28**

***<sup>19</sup>because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup>For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, <sup>21</sup>because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup>Professing to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man- and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. <sup>24</sup>Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lust of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup>who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. <sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.***

***<sup>28</sup>And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.***

- In the book, *Classical Apologetics* published 30 years ago there was a mistake made by the publisher. Spell check kept catching and then printing “poetic effects of sin.” Maybe no rhyme or reason? (joke)
- The term that the spell check kept tripping over was a theological one. The author wrote of the “Noetic effects of sin.”
- The “Noetic effects of sin”—which is a theological term for “the effect and impact of sin upon the mind—the faculty of thinking in our reasoning.”
- There is something seriously wrong with our minds. Naturally, we can not think correctly about God
- I believe that the average person who calls himself/herself an “Atheist” knows that God exists. The problem is not whether God exists, but rather it is with the God who does exist. 95% of the time, the problem is moral, not intellectual.
- The New Testament says that we have a natural hostility toward God. We do everything possible to regress and subvert everything we know about God. It is our natural state. The Bible says we have no excuse. God is clearly perceived by everyone.
  - Claiming to be wise, they become fools.
  - God gives them over to their sin.
  - In verse 28, God gave them over to a debased mind. The “noetic effect of sin.” A mind in its fallen condition does not have any desire to love God. In our natural fallen condition there is nothing more repugnant to our minds than the love of God.
  - Thus, naturally, when we are told to love God with our minds, we have an allergy to this thought.
  - How can such smart people, such great people, have such a hatred toward God? John-Paul Sartre, Rawls, Chalmers, Marx? How does that relate to this noetic effect? The damage done to

our mind in our corrupt sinful place does not affect our mental ability. You do not have to be born again to get a PhD in mathematics.

- It is a moral issue of the heart, not the intellect of one's IQ.
- It takes humility and this is difficult for the prideful.
- What is the relationship of thinking and faith? Augustine said there is a symbiotic relationship between faith and reason. You cannot have faith without reason. Faith without reason is not faith but credulity. A silliness like believing little green men live on the moon.
- He summarized this fact in the famous dictum, "I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe" (Sermo 43:9).

**Faith and reason go together. Faith, “the substance of things unseen,” is not a leap into the darkness. Rather, faith is a leap out of the darkness!**

**You cannot love God with all your mind if you are still in the unregenerate state. If you have not given your heart and mind to Christ, you cannot love Him.**

**In Romans 1:19, you can “know about” God but not really “know” Him.**

- “To know” in the New Testament can have two meanings. One is a cognitive awareness of something. This is what Paul is saying here. They know about God, but they don't know God.
- For example, someone might ask me, “since you live in Colorado, do you know John Elway? I would say I know of John Elway, but I don't know him, I'm not friends with John Elway. It's a cognitive awareness. Yes, I know him that way.”
- Many in our churches today fill the pews with only a knowledge of God based on a distant understanding. They know about God but they do not know Him. Thus, they cannot love Him.

- But the Bible says “Adam knew Eve and she became pregnant”. It’s not saying that Adam simply was introduced to Eve and she became pregnant. Rather, this meaning of “know,” is one of intimacy and love. A deep tender relationship.
- By nature, the mind does not love God, unless God, through the Holy Spirit, regenerates our mind supernaturally.
- **This is the necessary condition for loving God with your mind!**
  - The natural man does not seek after God.
  - Thomas Aquinas: “They [unbelievers] are not seeking God, they are seeking for the benefits that God can bring.”
  - You must be born again by the Spirit of God at work in your life.
  - But when you are truly born again, you are not instantly healed in your mind. The residual effects, all that baggage, comes with you when you get saved. It is a pilgrimage.

**Jonathan Edwards said: “The seeking after God is not the business of the sinner but it’s the MAIN business of the Christian...Of all the knowledge that we can ever obtain, the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves, are the most important.”**

- You must have a new mind. You do not get the love of God through a hip replacement or heart transplant.
- You are only transformed through a new mind. You must seek the knowledge of God.

### **How do you love God with your mind?**

- We do not think of love this way. We make it passive. “I fell in love!” Like you had nothing to do with it. It was something that passively happened to you, almost accidental. Like I fell down the stairs.

- This is a modern misconception of love. You don't "fall in love" with anyone—you grow into love.
- So, it is with Christ. We grow to love Him as we understand His love for us, Who He is, and why He came to this earth.

**The heart follows the mind. You cannot love what you do not know. Yes, you can have a feeling about something, but it's not real love. Mindless Christianity is no true Christianity at all.**

**The more I focus on Who God is and what He does, the more I understand, through reading the Scriptures, the more my heart and soul is revived. When you have your mind and heart engaged in love with Jesus, that is true revival! That is true love! That is true worship.**

- When we start loving God with all our heart and mind, then we want to honor Him more.
- The more we love Him with our mind—to hold in high esteem, to think about God with reverence and adoration—the more we will want to worship Him.
- This becomes real worship! Outlier worship is worshipping God with our heart AND our mind.
  - This is why the lyrics to our songs matter.
  - This is revival worship when our minds are engaged with robust deep level lyrics which inflame our mind, but also matched up with beautiful instrumentation and voices, which engages our heart emotions.
- There are two basic problems in evangelical worship today. One is emotionalism based on just engaging our emotions and the other are those who cannot connect emotionally and base their faith primarily in the intellectual—intellectualism.
- But to love God with your mind is to esteem Him through your knowledge of Him, both the intellect and emotional.

More and more Christians are desiring to know why they believe. It is a growing movement.

- Not too long ago a professor in an Ivy League school said, “Let me summarize my views loudly and clearly. There are no gods, there are no purposes, there are no goal directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I’m absolutely certain I will be dead. That will be the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics. No ultimate meaning in life. And no will for human beings either.”
- What an odd statement. If nothing matters then why make a matter of it? If nothings important then why make an important statement about it? Interesting isn’t it?
- This statement explains the intellectual elite in our universities in North America.

**But then a number of other Ivy League professors published an open letter with this: “open-mindedness, critical thinking, and debate” are “our best antidotes to bigotry;” that a bigot is a person “who is obstinately or intolerantly devoted to his or her own opinions and prejudices;” and that the only people who need fear open-minded inquiry and robust debate “are the actual bigots, including those on campuses or in the broader society who seek to protect the hegemony of their opinions by claiming that to question those opinions is itself bigotry.”**

- Wow!! Even among the intellectually elite, there is a growing desire for robust debate!
- We are a divided nation. We are in the most divided time in our country since the Civil War. The fundamental division is not political, is not racial, is not gender; it’s not even moral. It is worldview.
- We need a rigorous thoughtful robust Christianity.

**Let’s begin with talking about apologetics. What is apologetics?**

- First of all, It is not apologizing for something.



- Apologetics comes from the Greek word *apologia* which means “to defend” as in a court of law.
- Giving reasons for believing and responding to objections against it.
- Fundamentally it means helping people, to love people, not being angry or being argumentative. Helping a person eliminate obstacles to faith in Christ.
- **1 Peter 3:15 “Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.”**
- **Loving God with all our mind means to love Him with our reasoning powers, as Augustine said. It is engaging our mind in knowing God and even being able to share with others this faith we have received.**
- Examples of great books coming out recently:
  - A new Kind of Apologist* edited by Sean McDowell;
  - my good friend Jeff Myers new book, *The Secret Battle of Ideas About God*;
  - Timothy Kellers’ books are National Bestsellers: *The Reason for God* and *Making Sense of God*;
  - One of the best little books I’ve read and given away is *More Than a Carpenter* by Josh McDowell.

## Why must we Love God with our Minds?

**1<sup>st</sup> Reason: We are in a Spiritual War for the Hearts and Minds of People**

**2 Corinthians 10:3-5**

***<sup>3</sup>For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup>For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, <sup>5</sup>casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.***

- A “stronghold” is an idea or theory that undermines the knowledge of God.
- There are strongholds and ideas in western culture that work against the knowledge of God. You provide an argument against that idea.
- This is primarily a local church function because it is a part of engaging the culture around us. It is about spiritual warfare.
  - If I can control how you think, I can control you!
  - The universities know this; demons know this.
  - Demons are involved in trying to control culture.
  - The ideas of the dominant culture, what the Scriptures are calling “strongholds” of thinking, are controlling people unless we as a church can be conversant in what the issues are.
- People live largely through ideas, worldview. We are to be winsome and joyful in sharing our ideas with the culture. This is about spiritual warfare.

### 3 Worldviews Today

#### 1. **The dominant view in western culture and on the university is Scientific Naturalism.**

- To understand Naturalism we must grasp its Epistemology and Ontology .
- **Epistemology** is one’s view of knowledge.
- The epistemology of this view is the idea that you can only gain knowledge through testing it with your 5 senses.
- What about demons? What about love? What about something like forgiveness? What about kindness? Knowledge is limited. You cannot test those things.
- It is limited to the hard sciences. The only way to define reality is through physics, chemistry, geology and neuroscience.
- The problem is that it is self-refuting, which means the statement refutes itself: just the statement that you cannot believe anything that cannot be tested and proved scientifically

is self-refuting. You cannot prove that statement scientifically!  
You cannot quantify and test in a lab that statement!

- Conscience and thoughts cannot be proved scientifically. Love cannot be proved scientifically. Feelings cannot be proved scientifically.
- The epistemology of naturalism is in trouble.
- The **oncology** (the view of what's real) of naturalism—the physical world is all there is. Everything is matter; everything is physical.
  - i. Not everything is physical. There is a spiritual world outside of our physical world.
  - ii. The knowledge of the soul, of self are not physical.
  - iii. Naturalism is the dominant worldview of western civilization.

## 2. Post Modern Relativism

- All truth is relative to your culture. There is no reality.
- There is no such thing as masculinity. It is whatever the culture says it is.
- Social construction of reality.
- There is no such thing as truth. It is what your culture says is truth.
- Again it is self-refuting. Postmodernists cannot say there are no absolutes, because that statement alone is presented as an absolute.
- No one really believes them! Absolutes are self evident. Torturing little babies is wrong. Kindness is a virtue. These are universal truths. These are obvious truths.

## 3. Supernatural Christianity

- A Vibrant faith based in love and reasoning.
- Gaining ground in the university like never before.
- Christianity celebrates science. Science is not the problem; worldview is the problem.

- Christianity celebrates philosophy. Again philosophy is not the problem, worldview is.
- We are called to love God with all of our mind—to be aware and ready in a winsome loving way, to share our faith.

**In my next message, I will share more reasons why it's important to love God with all your mind.**