

CULTIVATING THE MIND OF CHRIST



A Study of Philippians 2:5-11

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (v. 5)

Based on the study guide, “The Mind of Christ”, by T.W. Hunt and Claude V. King

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS GUIDE

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CULTIVATING THE MIND OF CHRIST

BACKGROUND INFO On The Book Of Philippians (Jensen's Survey of the New Testament)

**SCRIPTURE: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"
Philippians 2:5**

The book of Philippians is the last of the four prison epistles written by Paul around A.D. 61-62.

It was written to the church at Philippi, which was about 10 yrs. old at the time Paul wrote this letter. Philippi was the first church of Europe (commonly referred to as the birthplace of European Christianity).

The book of Philippians has been called Paul's love letter to the saints because of its personal and informal style. One of its ministries is to rejuvenate the spiritual life of multitudes of Christians. It was written as an

- a. **Encouragement** to put Christ first in everyday living
- b. **Appeal** to beware and to correct spiritual problems
- c. **Instruction** in Christian doctrine

The passage of scripture in Philippians 2:5-11 teaches truths about the Person and work of Christ. It is considered to be a *handbook of Christian living*, summing up Christian behavior in one opening appeal.

The book of Philippians is referred to as the "kenosis" passage, **named after the key Greek word "ekenosen" (emptied)**. The unstated question of the text is "of what did Christ empty Himself when He came to earth

- deity
- privileges
- independent exercise of some of His relative attributes (not my will, but thine be done)

In the midst of this pandemic, fake news, social media, Google, Reality TV, Self-Helps, and QAnon, it's hard to know who or what to believe or follow. Adding false teachers and prophets to the mix only serves to confuse people even more. The "absolute truth" nowadays seems to be "whatever fits your current situation".

In times past people used to believe that "pictures don't lie", but the advancement of technology and photo-shopping has proven that theory to be misleading.

Your situation is screaming louder and louder in your head!

Bills due	Eviction pending	Nowhere to turn
Health threats	Food Running low	Virtual Schooling
Unemployment	No Transportation	Political/Social Unrest

Trying to keep up with all this can be daunting, making a person feel as if they are spiraling out of control! With so much information overload, what is a person supposed to do?

Christians, are not immune to the ills of this present world. Like everyone else, Christians are in a battle. But the battle is not anything physical; it is a spiritual one. God's Word warns us,

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Ephesians 6:12

All soldiers preparing for battle, must make sure they are **armed with the proper equipment**. Not only must soldiers be armed "with" the proper equipment, but they must also be **"trained"** on how to properly use it.

So, how do we defend ourselves and prepare for battle against this enemy we cannot see?

Scripture further reminds us that **"the weapons of our warfare are not carnal**, but mighty through God to **the pulling down of strong holds;**" II Corinthians 10:4.

Another aspect soldiers must keep in mind when facing battles; they must **know** their enemy.

1 Peter 5:8 urges us to **"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:"**.

Being vigilant means soldiers must keep careful watch for possible danger or difficulties.

Over the course of the next few weeks, our study will focus on *"Cultivating The Mind of Christ"*, to help us examine what is needed to be properly equipped and ready to do battle.

The study guide: ***The Mind of Christ***, by T. W. Hunt and Claude V. King, is a study of Philippians 2:5-11, which highlights the characteristics of Christ and challenges all Christians to live "Christ-like".

As we will learn, "Cultivating the mind of Christ" is a lifelong journey. This study will, hopefully, add to your arsenal of weapons to help you determine who/what to listen to and who/what to follow.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THIS STUDY

Studying requires more than just reading. It requires spending time meditating on and examining what has been read against what we currently know or believe. For Christians, studying requires another, more crucial aspect in the process. It requires that we examine what we have read against what we know or believe and compare them to the Word of God. Without that last (and most crucial) stage of the process we would be lost in our own understanding (or misunderstanding).

In order to gain the most from this study, participants are encouraged to follow these suggested steps:

- *Read through study materials prior to each lesson**
- *Read scripture passages (use bible translation that helps you understand)**
- *Pray; ask God to reveal to you areas that need to be developed (cultivated) in your life**
- *Meditate; take time to listen to the Holy Spirit's response to your prayer**
- *Write down what God has given you; answer the questions in the study guide**
- *Allow the Holy Spirit to begin changing those areas in your life that do not reflect the Mind of Christ**
- *Share in the discussion as the Spirit leads you; sharing your experiences could help someone else who might be experiencing a similar situation**

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

CULTIVATING

THE MIND OF CHRIST

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

UNIT I

BECOMING LIKE CHRIST: Introduction To Lesson

1. What is the mind? The **mind** is the set of faculties including cognitive aspects such as consciousness, imagination, perception, thinking, intelligence, judgement, language and memory, as well as noncognitive aspects such as emotion and instinct. Under the scientific physicalist interpretation, the mind is produced at least in part by the brain.

In the New Testament, the word *kardia*, the Greek word for “heart,” can also refer to the physical organ but is often translated “mind” as well.

The Greek word *phroneo* is often translated “mind” and most often refers to a person’s understanding, views, or opinions,

Biblically, the mind is simply the “inner being” or the sum total of all our mental, emotional, and spiritual faculties, without drawing fine distinctions between them.

2. What is the role/function of the mind?

Three Basic Functions (Proverbs 23:7)

- thinking (thoughts)
- feeling (feelings/emotions)
- wanting (desires)

3. What does it mean to “have the mind of Christ”?

WWJD became a popular saying among Christian youth groups during the 90’s. It was seen on wrist bands, Tee-shirts, caps, etc. What did these initials stand for?

1 Corinthians 2:16,
Isaiah 40:13

To have the mind of Christ we must exhibit the same characteristics Christ exhibited

4. If man was created in God’s image, why are our minds so different?

-How does the mind of Christ compare to the world’s viewpoint?

- It all began in the Garden
- Genesis 1:27
- Genesis 3:1
- II Corinthians 4:4
- Colossians 3:2

5. Why is it important to have the mind of Christ today?

-Our Thoughts Control Our Actions

Proverbs 23:7 "For as he **thinketh in his heart**, so is he:"

-Our Greatest Battle is The Battle For The Mind

Genesis 3:1

John 8:44

II Corinthians 11:13-14

I John 4:1

-God's desire is that we be like Christ (Romans 8:29)

The mind, body, spirit connection is important to the healthy function of all humans. What we think affects how we react.

6. Does having the mind of Christ mean we stop thinking?

Proverbs 16:9

Joshua 24:15

We were created by God to be free thinking individuals. God does not force man to follow Him, but He does warn man of the consequences of choosing not to follow. When we surrender our lives to God's will, He will direct our path.

There is a lot happening (being said) today. There is a lot of information we could focus our attention on; and there is a lot that we need to pay attention to (not stick our heads in the sand). It is crucial that we carefully examine this information to see if it is in line with God's word/desires. Jesus was very aware of the things happening around Him. However, He did not allow what was going on to distract Him from God's Word.

7. What 8 things does Philippians 4:8 tell us we should think on?

8. How do we develop the mind of Christ?

- Ephesians 6:17 highlights one piece of "spiritual" armor important to the mind, which is the helmet of salvation.
- What we believe affects what we do (Proverbs 23:7)
- The helmet of salvation protects our minds from ungodly thinking
- By putting on the helmet of salvation we choose (make a conscious decision) how we will live each day

We must consciously choose between God and the world. In order for us to make a conscious decision, we must know what God's word says. God's word provides not only a source of *information*, but also *transformation*. As we study God's word, we must do so not just to obtain knowledge, but to seek God's transforming power in our lives by pondering and meditating on His word. We must be willing to let go of any pre-conceived thoughts and allow God's word to transform us to our original design

9. What does it mean to cultivate?

- There are Six Characteristics of the Mind of Christ** (we will explore in this study)

- Alive
- Single-Minded
- Lowly
- Pure
- Responsive
- Peaceful

-Three Things to do (to develop the mind of Christ)

- Set** Your Mind (focus attention) Colossians 3:2, Philippians 4:8, II Corinthians 10:5
- Renew** Your Mind (growth and newness) Romans 12:2; John 7:38
- Gird** Your Mind (prepare for action) I Peter 1:13

-Three Stages in Developing the Mind of Christ

-Beginning (The Will Principle): **Set** your mind; you must decide, choose or determine the focus of your mind.

John 12:27-28

Mark 14:36).

-Growing (The River Principle): **Renew**; the Christian lives in a constant state of renewal. After you give (surrender or submit) your will to God, you must **continue to allow your mind to be changed (transformed)** by a renewing process. John 7:38

Luke 2:52,

Hebrews 5:8

II Corinthians 3:18

-Qualified (The Readiness Principle): **Gird** Your Mind. Your mind is to be prepared for action. Jesus demonstrated a mental readiness at all times. Readiness means being qualified for service.

Luke 20:20-40

-Three Types of Biblical Virtues

- Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
- Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)
- Godly Wisdom (James 3:17)

10. How much time do you spend each day or during the week watching TV or engaged in social media? How much time do you spend studying God's word?

***As you think about the journey of developing the mind of Christ how does it make you feel?**

- overwhelmed (this is too much, I can't do it)
- fearful (the idea of suffering sounds scary)
- excited (I understand some of the cost, but I know the results will be well worth it all)
- confused (I still don't quite understand what I'm getting into)
- other _____

The process of being molded into Christ's image is not something we can achieve on our own; it is primarily the work of God (Philippians 2:13). When we surrender our will to God, He will complete what He has begun in us.

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

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UNIT II

EXPERIENCING FREEDOM IN CHRIST: Christ’s Freedom Christ-like Characteristic: Alive

1. What does it mean to be alive?

An individual living creature is called an **organism**. There are **many characteristics that living organisms share**. All living organisms:

- respond to their environment
- grow and change
- reproduce and have offspring
- have complex chemistry
- maintain homeostasis
- are built of structures called cells
- pass their traits onto their offspring

{CK-12 Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing access to high quality STEM education resources.}

All living organisms need 5 basic things order to live and grow:

- air
- sunlight
- food
- a space in which to survive
- water

There are a lot of “Christians” who don’t appear to exhibit signs of life.

2. Have you experienced seasons in your life where you felt there was no life in you? What did you do to change your situation? What do the following scriptures tell us about life?

Romans 8:6
Ephesians 2:1

3. What does it mean to be free?

4. What does freedom in Christ mean?

John 3:36
John 10:10
John 8:36
Luke 4:18

- We are free from

-A DISORDERED MIND

5. According to James 4:1, what is the reason Christians have mental conflicts or battles ?

6. If you were to make a list of your desires, what are four desires or wants that would be on your list? Are there any desires that war against each other?

7. Which of the following describes a disordered mind?

- a. Only good desires
- b. Good and bad desires mixed together
- c. Clear choices are made regarding what to think about
- d. Little thought is given to what to think about
- e. The will is in control of thinking
- f. The will is not in control of thinking

8. How do you define desire?

-MAKING A LIST OF YOUR DESIRES

9. Read Romans 7:18-25, which kind of mind do you think Paul was describing?

A disordered mind dominated by the flesh

An ordered mind dominated by the Spirit

10. Which type of life produces which mind?

-disordered mind produces (godly living or ungodly living)

-an ordered mind produces (godly living or ungodly living)

An ordered mind, like the mind of Christ, must be controlled by the will. **You must make a mental decision concerning what you think about.** You must get to a point where you choose to deny your desires that conflict with God's desires. You must choose to want what God wants so that Christ's desires become your desires. Then you will begin to experience a freedom in Christ. (II Corinthians 10:5)

-CHRIST SETS YOU FREE

A "Process Towards Freedom" relates to what you do. But Christ is the one at work in you throughout this process.

11. What is Christ doing through this process?

God will not automatically change you. God will not violate "your" will. You must be in the process by your own choice. However, you cannot do this alone; apart from God's work in your life.

-Alive in Christ

True life is in the Spirit (John 4:24). Those persons without the Spirit are dead spiritually.

12. Read Romans 8:1-17 and list words related to

- life

-death

-Which of the following words or phrases relates to life? Death?

a. bondage to fear

g. mortify the deeds of the body

b. carnally minded

h. righteousness

c. enmity against God

i. sin

d. in the Spirit

j. Spirit of adoption

e. led by the Spirit of God

k. spiritually minded

f. live after the flesh

l. walk after the Spirit

-Christ's Freedom

Genuine freedom can occur only where spiritual life exists. God is working to give you life and freedom in Christ. Freedom in Christ is the first step in the process of having the mind of Christ. A Person is free to live in the fullest sense of the word. When you allow Christ to make you like Himself, He sets you free to fully live.

-THE ORDERED MIND OF CHRIST

In developing the mind of Christ in you, **God guides you to get rid of wrong desires and replace (renew) them with His desires.** Knowing how Jesus thought and what He showed concern for can help you understand what He wants to develop in you (Romans 12:2).

13. How do you define order?

14. What does the “ordered mind” look like? Read James 3:17 and list the eight virtues that describe Godly wisdom

These eight virtues, don't describe all of the mind of Christ, but they do describe important parts of the mind of Christ.

-Fruit of the Spirit

15. Read Galatians 5:22-23 and list the nine qualities or fruit of the Spirit.

-An Integrated Mind

The integrated mind has order, harmony, and unity. Each virtue listed in James 3:17 works perfectly with each other and also with the virtues listed in Galatians 5:22-23 (**harmony**). The eight virtues that describe Godly wisdom and the nine Fruit of the Spirit gives us a glimpse of the character of Jesus (**order**). Jesus is God, but the Holy Spirit is God also (**unity**). Whatever the Spirit produces as His fruit shows what Jesus is like and ultimately what God is like (John 17:22)

-ONE GREAT PASSION

16. Jesus had a purpose (passion) for coming to earth. Three statements illustrate Jesus' desires. What do the following scripture passages tell us about Jesus' great passion?

-Luke 2:49

-John 4:34

-John 6:38

-Jesus' One Passion

Jesus' one passion was to do His father's will. Jesus had an ordered mind focused on His one great passion.

John 14:12 commands us that we have a work to do as well “greater works” than what He accomplished.

Man seeks after (persues) a lot of things during his lifetime (fame, fortune, status, career goals, houses, etc.). Once he has attained those things, he finds that they don't always give him what he really longed for.

One of God's desires for you is for you to seek (pursue) His kingdom and His righteousness. Having the desire and seeking the kingdom, however, are not the same thing. If you have the

desire, but never seek it, it does no good. You must ask God how He would have you to begin seeking His kingdom and you must be willing to do what He impresses you to do. In order to fulfill his greatest passion, Jesus emptied himself of his own selfish desires. You must be willing to do as Jesus did, and “seek ye first” (Matthew 6:33). In seeking God’s kingdom, God reveals to you *your* greatest passion. Not only does God *reveal* your passion, He also gives you what you need to fulfill that passion. Unlike worldly desires, you will never be left feeling empty because God’s gifts are infinite.

17. What do you feel is your “one great passion”?

18. Do you feel there is something keeping you from fulfilling that passion?

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UNIT III

FREE INDEED: Christ’s Freedom

Christ-like Characteristic: Alive

-GOD’S GOAL: YOUR FREEDOM

God’s Purpose In Freedom

1. Freedom has a purpose. According to the following scriptures, what is the purpose of freedom for Christ’s followers?

Matthew 6:24

I Peter 2:16

2. Read John 8:31-36 and list statements that describe
 - (a) what a servant (disciple) of God does
 - (b) what a servant of sin does

-What is Sin based on the following scriptures? (1 John 3:4; Joshua 1:18)

-God’s Process Toward Freedom

God wants his children free from all bondage to sin. There are areas in our lives where bondage occurs. Some are **neutral areas** (may be good or bad depending on how they measure up against God’s desires for you). **Some areas are more damaging**

-Christ’s Mind-set

God’s intention is that we be free from the world’s mind-set (way of thinking). By choosing Christ’s mind-set we are free from the bonds of Satan and sin.

3. Why is your freedom from the bondage of sin so important to having the mind of Christ?

***HABITS, LOYALTIES, RELATIONSHIPS, AND PREJUDICES (Neutral Areas of Bondage)**

-Habits

4. How would you define a habit?
5. Read the following scriptures; what do they say about Jesus?
 - Mark 10:1
 - Luke 4:16
 - Luke 22:39

Jesus had habits; but all of his habits were good. Our habits can become an area of Bondage if we do not take action to change them (Romans 12:2)

-what habits do you have that are careless? Spirit controlled?

-Loyalties

6. How would you define loyalty?

We usually think of loyalty as a good quality; but not all loyalties are Christ-like.

It is important that we evaluate our loyalties according to the spirit (Philippians 4:8)

7. What loyalties might we need to evaluate?

-Relationships

8. What does Mark 12:30-31 say about relationships?

9. List three or four relationships you feel need to be changed

-Prejudices

10. How do you define prejudice?

11. Under the supervision of God's Holy Spirit, you may find unsuspecting prejudices. Do you consider any of the following to be prejudices?

-race/ethnicity

-does God work the same way in people's lives

-ways people are gifted/called and how they use their gifts

-people who don't think the way you do

If God is sovereign, no prejudice of any kind on our part can exist which would limit His working in our lives

II Kings 5:12

Matthew 9:11

Romans 14:1-10

James 2:1-6

-AMBITIONS, DUTIES, DEBTS, AND POSSESSIONS

-Ambitions

12. How would you define ambition?

Our ambitions can reveal sin in our lives if they do not honor God

13. Which of your ambitions honor self? God?

-Duties

14. How do you define duties?

15. Which of these duties can become self-honoring? Kingdom serving?

- children/family
- church
- self
- citizenship (voting)
- civic organizations
- God
- school
- job/work

Not all duties are wrong; works are a fruit of our faith. Any of these duties can be self-honoring; and any of them can honor God's kingdom.

Ephesians. 2:10

John 9:4

-Debts

16. How do you define debt?

We can become indebted to people for favors.

17. How might the following be considered a source of temporal indebtedness?

- dinner invitations
- giving gifts
- church service

-Possessions

18. How do you define a possession?

Most of us are bound by the things we own. We protect them and take great measures to safeguard their security. Few of us live the kind of life Christ lived. **We are not owners, but stewards of what God provides.** God's desire is to move your possessions from ownership to stewardship. (Matthew 6:20)

19. Is it sinful to possess nice things?

20. What possessions do you have that might be surrendered to God for His use?

- car
- family
- finances
- house
- clothes
- time
- job/career
- jewelry
- talents

***FEARS AND WEAKNESSES (Damaging Areas of Bondage)**

-Fears

21. How do you define fear?

Some of our fears grow out of a desire to protect ourselves; some have to do with money (or lack of). **All fears have to do with an element of self-protectiveness.**

22. What do the following scriptures tell us about how Christians should view fear?

John 11:1-45

II Timothy 1:7

23. What fears do you need to surrender to God?

- violence
- death
- personal safety/security
- natural disasters
- future
- health
- people
- housing/shelter
- public speaking
- money
- job security

-Weaknesses

24. How do you define weakness?

We often excuse our weaknesses by saying we were born that way. Moses tried to use the excuse that he could not speak well. Three times Paul asked God to remove the “thorn in his flesh”. God’s response is always the same; our “strength is made perfect in (our) weakness”.

25. What weaknesses are you allowing Satan to have control over in your life?

***HURTS OR GRUDGES**

Hurts are probably the most difficult area for people to deal with. Ridicule, lies, mistreatment, harassments can all cause resentment to build up. God’s desire is to move your hurts from producing resentment to producing love. Sometimes when people are hurting, they want others to feel bad too or they want to get even with the person (people) who hurt them. Some people can become so blinded by their hurt, they lose all sight of right and wrong and sometimes reality.

26. Are you holding on to hurts, grudges, and unforgiveness? How does Matthew 5:43-44 tell us we should respond to hurt/grudges?

27. As we conclude this two-part series on the Christ-Like characteristic of “Alive”, We learned that all living organisms require food in order to live. There is one final question to ponder; what are you feeding your spirit to keep it alive?