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2025 ANNUAL THEME: “HOPE IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTY”

BIBLE STUDY
August 27, 2025

August Theme: BATTLE FOR THE MIND
“Spiritual Warfare Requires Spiritual Weapons”
(Psalm 26:2; Matthew 22:37; Proverbs 27:3)

Topics

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SCRIPTURE REFERENCES [Psalm 26:2; Matthew 22:37; Proverbs 23:7 NASB 1995]

Examine me, O Lord, and try me; Test my mind and my heart (Psalm 26:2).

And He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ (Matthew 22:37)

For as he ^[a]thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, “Eat and drink!” But his heart is not with you. (Proverbs 23:7)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- A. As a Christian, what can you do to limit or eliminate negative thoughts from your mind?

- B. How does asking God to examine your heart and mind improve your honesty and integrity with Him?
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IMPORTANT EMPHASIS

The Mind

Mind is the center of intellectual activity. The biblical language possesses no one word parallel to the English *word* mind. There are at least six different Hebrew terms for mind. The primary is *leb* which means heart. Num 16:28 and *nephesh* (soul) is translated mind in Deut. 18:6 when it refers to the desire of a man's mind.

In the New Testament the word is *Kardia* it is sometimes used to represent the concept mind. *Nous* occurs 24 times it means the "seat of understanding" *Dianoia* 12 times which is defined "to think over" and to "think through".

Tryon Edwards said Thoughts lead on to purposes: purposes go forth in action: actions from habits; habits decide character; and character fixes our destiny. Proverbs 22:1

The mind is portrayed especially in the NT, as the center of a person's nature. The mind can be evil. Rom. 1:28

Our focus for the past few weeks has been to shed a glorious light on the importance of winning the battle within ourselves particularly in our mind. If we will prevail over the desires of the flesh, we must seriously consider the process and or the sanctifying of our mind. This sanctification is reenforced when we are intentional about building spiritual life sustaining habits.

We are unconsciously forming and fracturing habits all the time, and for that reason this area of life must be brought under Christ's control. It is an essential part of the soul's education. It is helpful to remember that after conversion we are no longer unregenerate personalities. *J Oswald Sanders*

The aid of the Holy Spirit is always available in the forming of a new and good habit, but it is we who must do it. God does not act instead of us: it is a partnership.

In our lesson today we have three Scriptural references which play a crucial role in the development of our mind and how it should reflect the mind of Christ. Phil. 2:5. There is Introspection, looking within. Psalms 26:2, Not a mere Infatuation a passion that is short lived Matt. 22:37 but we are in need of Information that provides godly revelation. For as he thinks within himself, so he is. Prov. 23:7

As believers we need to thirst for spiritual maturity. This is an emphasis of J Oswald Sanders in his book *Spiritual Discipleship*.

The maturity that the Hebrew writer has in view is not confined to the Spiritual life, for it must be lived out in the context of the body. This means more than the popular motto Let go and let God, for moral effort on our part is involved- moral effort, but purely self-effort.

Bishop Westcott in his Commentary on Hebrews concerning Let us go on to maturity translates this, We may stop too soon. We may feel we have arrived. But the writer rules out complacency as Paul did in Phil. 3:12

The Maturity in the spiritual realm is not attained overnight any more than it is in the physical. It is a dynamic process that continues throughout life.

Character

When we have a mind of Christ it will be reflected in our character. As Christians we must have integrity. This is known as the ethos of the person. Robert Murray McCheyne used to say “A glance at Christ will save, but it is the gazing at Christ that sanctifies. “This necessarily means that time will be set aside to enable the Spirit to effect the transformation.

Character is something you either have or are. Some people try to make something for themselves. Others try to make something of themselves. To change your character, you must begin at the control center – the heart. Spiritual bankruptcy is inevitable when a man is no longer able to keep the interest paid on his moral obligations

Character is built through the enduring the storms of life. Samuel Rutherford wrote , O What I owe to the furnace, fire and hammer of my Lord! God orders the circumstances of our lives with meticulous care. He never makes a mistake.

Phillip Brooks “A man who lives right is right has more power in his silence than another has by his words”.

KEY TERMS

Battle
Captive
Christ
Devotion
Divine
Examine
God
Heart
Integrity
Lord

Love
Mind
Prove
Relationship
Scrutiny
Soul
Test
Transformation
Transparency
Try

OUTLINE

- I. Divine Examination Purifies Your Thoughts (Psalm 26:2)**
 - A. Scrutiny of Your Soul
 - B. Testing of Your Thoughts
- II. Love of the Divine Elevates Your Thoughts (Matthew 22:37)**
 - A. Devotion Deepens Discernment
 - B. Passion Promotes Peace
- III. Principles of the Divine Rightly Align Your Thoughts (Proverbs 23:7)**
 - A. Aligning Attitudes with Authenticity
 - B. Authentic Actions Align with Attitudes

Introduction

Psalm 26:2, Matthew 22:37, and Proverbs 27:3 highlight the significance of the human mind and heart in our relationship with God, underscoring the "Battle for the Mind" in different but related ways.

The concept of the "Battle for the Mind" is a profound theme in biblical teachings, emphasizing the critical role of our thoughts and intentions in our spiritual journey. This study examines the significance of the mind and heart in our relationship with God, as highlighted in Psalm 26:2, Matthew 22:37, and Proverbs 23:7. These verses underscore the necessity of transparency, integrity, and active engagement of the intellect in our devotion to God. By inviting **divine scrutiny** (examination) and

striving for a wholehearted love for God, believers are called to confront and purify their innermost thoughts, aligning them with God's will.

Psalms 26:2, Matthew 22:37, and Proverbs 23:7 collectively illustrate the internal nature of this spiritual struggle, where the mind becomes a battleground for faith and righteousness. The psalmist's plea for God's examination reveals a desire for inner purification, while Jesus' command to love God with all our mind highlights the importance of intellectual engagement in our faith. Together, these scriptures call believers to actively participate in the transformation of their thoughts, ensuring that their minds are fully devoted to God, thus addressing the ongoing battle within their hearts and minds.

Background and Context

Psalms 26:2 is attributed to David, who expresses a desire for God to examine his heart and mind. The psalmist (David) seeks transparency and integrity before God, acknowledging His ability to discern innermost thoughts and intentions. This plea reflects the internal struggle and the need for divine scrutiny to purify impure thoughts, aligning one's life with God's will. The audience is likely the Israelites, and the occasion involves seeking God's guidance and purification in personal spiritual battles.

Matthew 22:37 is part of Jesus' teachings, directed towards the Pharisees and the broader Jewish audience. Jesus emphasizes the greatest commandment: to love God with all one's heart, soul, and mind. This command underscores the importance of intellectual engagement in faith, calling believers to actively direct their thoughts towards God. The occasion is a response to a question about the greatest commandment, highlighting the comprehensive nature of devotion required in the spiritual journey.

Proverbs 23:7 emphasizes the profound impact of one's inner thoughts on their true self and outward behavior. The verse suggests that a person's genuine attitudes and beliefs are reflected in their internal thinking, which in turn shapes their actions and character. This highlights the importance of aligning one's thoughts with authenticity, ensuring that external expressions are consistent with inner values. The broader context of this proverb underscores the necessity of maintaining integrity and sincerity in one's actions, as the mind serves as a battleground for spiritual and moral alignment.

EXPLORING THE TEXT

I. Divine Examination Purifies Your Thoughts (Psalm 26:2)

A. Scrutiny of Your Soul

Examine me, O Lord, and try me; (Psalm 26:2ab)

David expresses a desire for God to "examine" and "try" him. This verse speaks to the idea of **transparency and integrity before God**. David acknowledges God's ability to discern [understand] the innermost thoughts and intentions, inviting **divine scrutiny** of his inner being. This reflects the understanding that the mind, with its thoughts and motivations, is crucial in shaping one's life and relationship with God. Adam Clarke contends that David was appealing to God to examine him; and that he felt no hesitation in wishing to have all the motives of his heart dissected and exposed to God's view, and to that of the world.

B. Testing of Your Thoughts

Test my mind and my heart (Psalm 26:2c).

This plea also speaks to the "Battle for the Mind" by acknowledging the potential for internal conflicts and hidden sins within the heart and mind. David's request for examination suggests a desire for God to expose and purify any impure thoughts or intentions, leading to a life aligned with God.

II. Love of the Divine Elevates Your Thoughts (Matthew 22:37)

A. Devotion Deepens Discernment

And He said to him, "‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ (Matthew 22:37)"

In Matthew 22:37, Jesus emphasizes the greatest commandment: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This command reinforces the importance of the mind in loving God. It's not enough to simply have feelings or beliefs; true love for God requires an active engagement of the intellect and will.

The phrase "with all your mind" in Matthew 22:37 directly addresses the "Battle for the Mind" by calling believers to consciously direct their thoughts and intellectual faculties towards God. This implies:

- **Learning and understanding:** Actively seeking to know God and His Word.
- **Focusing on godly thoughts:** Philippians 4:8 encourages focusing on *"whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable."*
- **Taking thoughts captive:** 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 speaks about *"demolishing arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."* This highlights the need to actively engage in the battle against ungodly thoughts and ideas.

B. Passion Promotes Peace

And He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' (Matthew 22:37)

In Matthew 22:37, Jesus says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This passion for God fosters peace by aligning one's actions with divine principles of love and compassion. See **Philippians 4:7**, which speaks of the "peace of God, which transcends all understanding," and **Galatians 5:22-23**, highlighting the "fruit of the Spirit" that includes peace. Passionate love for God and others encourages behaviors that promote harmony and understanding, thus fostering peace.

Our thoughts are a battleground where spiritual warfare takes place; set your minds on things above to achieve victory and peace. (2 **Corinthians 10:5; Colossians 3:2; Isaiah 26:3**)

Continually meditate on God's Word to strengthen your mind and love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. (**Joshua 1:8**)

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. What does David desire for God to do? (Psalm 26:2)

2. What did commentator Adam Clarke declare about David's appealing to God to examine him?

3. The phrase "with all your mind" in Matthew 22:37 directly addresses the "Battle for the Mind" by calling believers to do what?

4. What does Jesus emphasize in Matthew 22:37?

EXPLORING THE TEXT

III. Principles of the Divine Rightly Align Your Thoughts (Proverbs 23:7)

A. Aligning Attitudes with Authenticity

For as he thinks within himself, so he is. (Proverbs 23:7a)

This suggests that one's true self and attitudes are reflected in your inner thoughts and beliefs. Aligning attitudes with authenticity involves ensuring that

outward behaviors and expressions are consistent with one's genuine inner values and thoughts, promoting integrity and sincerity in actions and interactions.

A mind that is aligned with God, is a renewed mind. **Romans 12:2** encourages believers to "not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." This verse promotes aligning one's attitudes with authenticity by urging individuals to resist external pressures and societal norms that may conflict with their true values and beliefs. Instead, it calls for an internal transformation through the renewal of the mind, allowing one's genuine values and spiritual principles to guide their actions and decisions. This transformation fosters integrity and sincerity, ensuring that outward behaviors are consistent with one's authentic inner self.

B. Authentic Actions Align with Attitudes (Philippians 4:8)

Authentic actions align with attitudes based on **Philippians 4:8** by encouraging individuals to focus their thoughts on qualities that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. By meditating on these positive attributes, one's inner attitudes are shaped by these virtues, leading to actions that reflect these values. This alignment ensures that outward behaviors are consistent with one's genuine beliefs and values, promoting integrity and sincerity in interactions and decisions.

Colossians 3:2 calls believers to focus their thoughts on spiritual matters (things above or in heaven which is our true home), reinforcing the importance of directing the mind towards God.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

5. According to Romans 12:2, what is a mind that is aligned with God?

6. According to Philippians 4:8, how do authentic actions align with attitudes?

7. According to Colossians 3:2, where are believers called to focus their thoughts?

Life Application – Think About it.

- How can you incorporate the practice of examining your thoughts and intentions in your daily routine to ensure they align with your spiritual values?
- In what ways can you actively engage your mind in loving God, and how might this transform your interactions with others?

Resources:

Adam Clarke's Commentary
Adult LessonMaker Questions [LOGOS]
Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary [LOGOS]
Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible [LOGOS]
Barnes' Notes The Bible Commentary (Old Testament)
Life Application Concise New Testament Commentary
LOGOS Bible Software