



Mind Matters: #2, The Mind Gone Astray
Mark 10:35-45
September 22, 2019

Last week we learned that seeing God in creation but refusing to treat him as God, leads to dire consequences, including our thinking becoming distorted. Today we will further explore the need to let God renew our minds.

The Bible uses many striking words to describe how dysfunctional our minds become when we ignore God, including **futile** (Ephesians 4:17), **debased** (Romans 1:28), **sensuous** (Colossians 2:18), **depraved** (1 Timothy 6:5), **defiled** (Titus 1:15), **unsettled** (Acts 15:24), **hardened** (2 Corinthians 3:14), **blinded** (2 Corinthians 4:4), **corrupted** (2 Timothy 3:8), **double** (James 4:8), **alienated** and **hostile** (Colossians 1:21), **poisoned against others** (Acts 14:2), and **set** either **on earthly things** (Philippians 3:19), **things of the flesh** (Romans 8:5-8), or **the things of man instead of God** (Matthew 16:23)(all ESV). These may not all apply to us, because few of us have descended to the bottom of the downward spiral discussed last week, and most of us have turned back to God. Yet returning to God does not automatically renew and restore our thinking. Our minds need renovation.

An objective test may help us see the need to have our minds renovated: Do you believe certain people in the church are more important than others? (1 Corinthians 12:21-23). Do you believe you are “something” (special) or “wise”? (Galatians 6:3; 1 Corinthians 3:18). Do you believe you are religious even though you do not control your tongue? (James 1:26).

Or perhaps we can see our need by checking ourselves against lists of unhealthy thoughts and ways of thinking, like those provided by David Burns (handouts in lobbies).

When we studied Mark, we noticed Jesus’ disciples often failed to grasp his ways. Jesus specifically called this a lack of understanding (Mark 4:13; 6:52; 7:18; 8:21; and 9:32). By comparing our thinking to theirs in a section like Mark 8-10, where their misunderstanding is highlighted, we may be able to see more clearly our need to have our minds renewed:

In 8:27-37, Peter’s thought that Jesus is the Christ or Messiah is correct. But when Jesus began to describe the suffering that awaited him, Peter showed that his actual understanding of Christ didn’t match Jesus’ teaching (8:32). His mind was on the things of man, not God (v. 33). Specifically, he did not have room for suffering in his grasp of God’s ways.

In 9:14-29, the disciples were unable to cast an evil spirit out of someone, even though Jesus had previously given them the authority to do so (6:7). Later, after Jesus cast out the spirit, the disciples asked why they couldn’t do so. Jesus replied that such a spirit could only be driven out by prayer, something they apparently hadn’t thought necessary.

In 10:35-45, two disciples asked to have the places of power and honor in Jesus’ kingdom. Jesus said they didn’t know what they were asking and redirected them toward a readiness to suffer (v. 38). This led to the ten other disciples becoming disgruntled with the two. Jesus’ subsequent teaching shows they were all focused on unhealthy ruling and controlling instead of the serving and sacrifice Jesus desires in us.

Do any of the disciples’ mistaken thoughts ring true with you? Hopefully these examples, along with the descriptions of dysfunctional minds, an objective test, and lists of unhealthy thinking, will help us see we need to have our minds renewed.

