

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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There's More: Developing the Mindset of Christ

by Dan Trygg

“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.” Luke 6:40

“Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship (‘common-sharing/participation’) of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, ² make my joy complete by being of the same mind (‘that you-might-think-the-same-way’), having the same love, united in spirit (‘joint-souls’), intent on one purpose (‘thinking the one thing’). ³ Do nothing from selfishness (‘strife, partisanship, self-promotion’) or empty conceit (‘baseless-pride’), but with humility of mind be regarding one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ not looking out for the things of yourselves, but for the interests (‘things’) of others. ⁵ Have this mind in yourselves (lit., ‘think this among y’all’) which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped (‘held on to’), ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Philippians 2:1-8

Jesus said that a disciple is to become like his or her teacher. *That is the goal of discipleship, to become like Christ. There is a process involved in this.* When we first come to Christ, we have little understanding of what God *has done* for us, as well as what He *wants to do* in and with us. There is so much to discover and experience! **As we study the scriptures, and go to church, we begin to understand the basic teachings** regarding who Jesus is, and what He has accomplished on our behalf. **As we dig a little deeper, we become more adept at interpreting the word of God, and He opens up to us a greater perception.** We come to recognize that God is a Person, who wants to interact with us, and reveal more of Himself to us. **As we seek more,** we find Him responding to us with personal signs of His presence in our lives, and **we begin to tune in to His communication with us.** We grow in our awareness of the new life in us, and we begin to perceive how to put off our old patterns of living, and walk in the Spirit. **We see the fruit of His activity in us, as He changes our character and makes us more like Himself.** We become aware of spiritual warfare in our lives, and discover how to function in the power of the Spirit in dealing with this. We also learn about spiritual gifts, and begin to seek to discover and utilize the giftings that God has placed in us. As you can see, **the Christian life is a journey of learning, discovery and developing new skills.** What Luke 6:40 tells us is that, **when we become fully equipped, we will be like Jesus. Our character will be like His. We will think and act like He did.**

If we were to take a closer look at this verse, **the phrase, “everyone who is fully trained” delineates the end result of a process of healing, restoring, equipping, and maturing.** These are all meanings of the word that underlies that statement. **No matter where we are in that process, it is God’s purpose to move us along to become like Christ** (Rom. 8:29). He will heal and restore where we have been wounded or damaged by life experiences. He will give us tools that we did not have before, and teach us how to use them. And He will grow us up to maturity. **What does maturity look like? It looks like Jesus.** We are to “attain to ...the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). This is important to clearly state and emphasize. This is the end point, the goal, of our spiritual development. This is what God wants for you to experience, ...and He is ready to work in and with you to bring it about. And, **when you are fully healed, restored, equipped and matured, you will be like Jesus in how you live and operate.** You are on that growth journey now, and this is where He wants to bring you.

The fact that this is a process, means that we do not start out that way. We do not begin our spiritual journey thinking and acting like Jesus. **This is something that we must pursue as disciples,** and grow into. **The focus of today’s study is on how we are to use our minds, ...what we think of.** There are two different words for “mind” in the NT. One word refers to our perception (*noeō*) of things, ...how we recognize, process, organize and assign meaning to the stimuli that impinge upon our five senses, our emotions and our spiritual receptors. The other word refers to **our ability to think** (*phroneō*), **our process of thoughts, and what we focus on** in our mental processing. It is *this* organ and process of thought that is the focus of today’s study. This is a very important part of the discipleship process, because **what occupies our minds will either direct us into the things of God, or away from the things of God.** Discipleship is “following” or “imitating” someone who is a mentor. **If we give our minds to think about things that are not of God, it will conflict with our ability to think about the things that are of God.** It is like Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters”. If we are following someone or something *else* in our attention and our thought process, then we cannot be following *Jesus* in our attention and thought process at the same time. **And we become what we follow! We reap what we sow.** This is unavoidable. It is the nature of reality. We may try to convince ourselves otherwise, but, **if we really, genuinely want to grow and mature in the things of God, why would we want to be investing in things**

that are in conflict with Him and His purposes for us? It is the old “garbage-in/garbage-out” principle. If we are putting “garbage” into our minds and attention, what should we expect to be coming from our minds, mouths and actions?

The Bible describes a number of conflicting avenues of thoughts.

Thoughts of Men or of God. In Matthew 16:23, Jesus rebuked Peter for being a stumbling block to Him, saying, “You are not thinking the things of God, but the things of men.” God’s thoughts are not like the thoughts of people (Isa. 55:8,9). **If we want to follow Him, then we need to focus on His thoughts, not the thoughts of other people.**

Thoughts of the Flesh or the Spirit. In Romans 8:5, Paul said that those who are living according to the flesh, think the things of the flesh, but the ones who are living according to the Spirit are thinking the things of the Spirit. A focus that is on fleshly things will not direct us toward walking in the Spirit. Focusing our minds and attention on the Spirit will direct us away from living according to the flesh. The two are incompatible principles and sources (Gal. 5:17). **If we want to walk in the Spirit, we need to direct our attention and thoughts toward things of the Spirit.**

Thoughts that are Unsound or Sound. In Romans 12:3, we are told not to think beyond what is necessary to think about ourselves and our spiritual gifts. We are to not to think things that are unrealistic, whether they be inflated beyond what is true, or they are based upon a deflated, incomplete view of ourselves. **We are to think with “sound thinking”. Why? Because how we think will determine how we see ourselves, and what we do, or don’t do.**

Thoughts that are Immature or Mature. In 1 Corinthians 14:20, we are told to not be childish or immature in our thinking, but become mature in our thinking. In 13:11, Paul had said that when we were immature we thought and reasoned like a child, but when we became mature, we put aside the things of the child. **If we want to become mature in our faith-walk, we need to put aside the thinking of immaturity.**

Thoughts that are Earthly-Focused or Heavenly-Focused. In Colossians 3:2, Paul exhorts us to “think the things above, *not* the things upon the earth.” Since we have been born again, and raised with Christ, **we are to keep seeking the things God has provided for us, “the things above”.** Again, notice the bifurcation. We can give our attention and our thoughts to the things of this earthly plane and the things of this world, ...*or*, we can give our attention and thoughts to the things above, the things of God’s kingdom. This may seem arbitrary or disconnected from day-to-day living, but in the next few verses, **this becomes the basis for putting aside the old identity and ways of living, in order to “put on” the new life and power that Christ provides us.** Note, too, that in Philippians 3:19, **those who set their minds on earthly things remain caught up in earthly things.** They do not progress or successfully mature. **Those who do mature are those who disregard earthly things in order to stretch forth for what God has for them in Christ** (vss. 13-15). They are thinking about, and living for, “the things above”.

Thoughts that Divide or Thoughts that Unify. In Philippians 4:2, the basis for unity between two believers was to “think the same thing.” **Whatever differences they had could be put aside, if they could focus their attention and their thinking upon the things they were in agreement with.** This is a *choice*. We can humble ourselves, or be “lowly-minded”. **If we voluntarily empty ourselves of those questionable things that divide us, we can find unity and work together.** The issue is what we choose to focus on, ...what we choose to pay attention to and preoccupy our thinking with. **The main thing is to keep the MAIN thing the main THING. We can agree on that!**

The Mindset of Christ. In Philippians 2, Paul repeatedly exhorts us to **think like Jesus did.** We are to “think-the-same-way, having the same love, ‘joint-souls’ (common psyche, united in heart), thinking *the* one thing” (Phil. 2:2). What “one thing”? “NOTHING from selfishness (self-promotion) or baseless pride, ...RATHER in lowly-mindedness (voluntary self-effacement), considering one another as more important than yourselves. NOT each one looking out for the things of themselves, ...RATHER each one the things of the others. Think THIS among you which was also in Christ Jesus...” **How did Jesus think? What was the “thinking that was in Jesus”? “...Who, being in the form of God (full of glory, majesty, power, authority, primacy, worshiped and served by all others = inestimable might, position, worth and privilege) did not consider equality with God necessary to be held on to, but emptied Himself, ...taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humankind, and being found in outward shape as a human being, humbled Himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death of a cross...”** Jesus put it this way: “For I have come down from heaven, *not* to do My own will, *but* the will of Him who sent Me” (Jn. 6:38). The thinking of Jesus was that He was willing to do anything to accomplish the will of His Father. He was completely sold out, willing to go to any length, to give up any privilege or comfort, to pay any price to redeem and benefit others according to the desire of His Father. **Jesus was willing to give up anything and everything in order to do His Father’s will and benefit others. His thinking was to completely humble Himself in order to do His Father’s will, ...to make all He was and had available in service to HIM and to the people He would redeem.**

Paul’s application is, **“So then, beloved ones, work out your salvation, ...for God is working in you to desire and do what pleases Him. Do all things without grumbling or complaining, in order that you might be children of God that shine as lights in the midst of a crooked world.” Think like Jesus, so that you can act like Jesus, and shine like Jesus.**