Session 4 Loving God with All of Our Mind: A Glorious Potential

1. be transformed by renewing our mind
	1. The Lord created and called us to love Him in four spheres of our life—our heart, soul, mind, and strength—because He loves us in this way. It is both our debt and gift to love God in these ways.

30“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” (Mk. 12:30)

*Tonight we are on session four: loving God with all of our mind. Tonight I want to talk about the glorious potential of this. Mark 12:30 says you shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart—notice the four different parts of our human makeup or the four spheres of our life—with our heart, and we looked at that a little bit the last couple of weeks, with your soul, with your mind, and with your strength.*

* 1. We express love for God with our mind by putting things in our mind that inspire and enlarge our capacity to love Him and by resisting things that diminish our capacity to love Him. What we do with our mind greatly affects our ability to receive and express His love.

*We can express our love for God with our mind by putting things in our mind that inspire and enlarge our capacity to love the Lord. We can express love for God also by resisting the things that diminish our capacity to love the Lord. As simple as that sounds, it is surprising how many people do not take hold of this reality and really press into it in a way that will liberate their heart. If we put the right things in our mind, it actually inspires and enlarges our capacity to love the Lord. If we resist certain things that diminish our capacity, our hearts can get liberated. Nobody can do this for you—you obviously understand that—and the Holy Spirit will never, ever force us to do this.*

* 1. As we change our mind, the Spirit changes our emotions, enabling us to love more. What we put in our mind determines much of how we feel, how we see ourselves, how we love, what we do, etc.

2“…but be transformed [emotionally] by the renewing of your mind.” (Rom. 12:2)

*Here is one of the foundational principles of the kingdom, and this is absolutely “Kingdom of God 101,” of the highest importance and so practical. Again God will not force you to do this, and no one can do this for you. The Bible tells us that we are transformed by the renewing of our mind. The way that our emotions are transformed is by* ***intentionally changing what we put in our mind****. Now we can change our mind, and God can change our emotions. You cannot change your emotions. You cannot grit your teeth, determine to feel different, and then feel different. The way you redirect your emotions is by intentionally putting new thoughts in your mind. Then in time the Lord will change or transform your emotional make-up.*

*What we put in our mind determines much of how we feel. Some folks think that they are just the victim of their feelings, “I was born that way…my past was so bad…I am stuck feeling this way.” By the grace of God, the supernatural potential that we have in the grace of God is that we can target what we put in our mind and in time our emotions will actually be transformed. It will take time, but it will happen, and this is within the reach of every single believer in the grace of God to do this. The reason I say this is that a lot of folks feel hopeless that they have these terribly dark emotions and think they are just stuck there.*

*However, I have good news for you! You are not stuck, but don’t target trying to change your emotions. Put your energy into putting new things into your mind. Do it with intentionality. Be deliberate and go after it with fierceness. Fill your mind with things. That is the way God will change your emotions at the end of the day.*

* 1. God designed our human make up so that we are able to “set our mind” on the things we choose.

5Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, [set their minds on] the things of the Spirit… (Rom. 8:5)

2Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. (Col. 3:2)

*God has so designed the human make-up that we are able to “set our mind.” That is an interesting phrase and term, “the setting of the mind.” Paul says in Romans 8:5 that the people who live according to the flesh set their mind on the things of the flesh. They fill their mind with conversations, literature, with entertainment that are setting their minds in a fleshly way, even by the words they speak. Do not imagine that the mind of the flesh is mostly just about lust. The mind of the flesh is actually the narrative of your life that is contrary to what God says about your life.*

*It is very easy for us to give in to a dark narrative of our life with despairing, inferiority, and rejection. The Lord would say, “No, buy into what I say about your life. Resist the mind of the flesh.” Yes, the mind of the flesh is about lust. It is about anger. It is about envy, but it is also about the narrative that you feed your mind with. The way that we feed our mind in that way is by the words that we say. Believers speak more words which establish their hearts and their minds in the things of the flesh. We want to put our foot down, so to speak, and fill our mind with the things of the Spirit and get that in our mouths before God. Get it in our mouth and in our conversations with people. The scripture says that if you will set your mind on these spiritual things, you can live according to the Spirit, if you will do this.*

* 1. The Lord encouraged Joshua to engage his mind in long and loving meditation on God’s Word. God’s Word equips us to think rightly about God, ourselves, others, the future, and more.

8…you shall meditate in it [God’s Word] day and night, that you may…do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous…[and] have good success. (Josh. 1:8)

*The Lord encouraged Joshua at a critical time in his life that, if he would engage himself—and this is a term that I have used over the years—in “long and loving meditation on the word of God,” if he would do that, then his life would prosper and he would find success in the things of God. Let’s read it: Joshua 1:8. This is the Lord speaking, and He says, “Joshua.” Joshua is at the crossroads of his life and of the nation of Israel. He is about to face really powerful giants in the land. He is about to enter into the land of Canaan. They have just come out of forty years in Egypt, and the big thing in front of him and in front of the nation is fear. The fear of the unknown, the fear of obstacles, the fear of failing.*

*God’s answer to overcoming and facing the fear is not just to kind of rev up and try to bolster courage. No, “fill your mind with the word of God.” If you fill your mind with the word of God, you will find, verse 8, that you are going to be able to do things that you are unable to do right now. Because, when you fill your mind day and night with the word of God, it is actually going to transform your emotions, and the fear that is natural, obvious, and common to everyone is not going to dominate you, Joshua, if you will do this.*

*Of course He said the same thing to the children of Israel: “If you will fill your mind with what I say, you can overcome fear.”*

*A lot of folk face fear by just kind of hunkering down and trying to endure fear. Like, “I am trying not to give in to it!” But you will never overcome fear by just gritting your teeth and trying to be against fear.*

*We overcome it by filling our minds with the word of God. He went on to say that that is the way that you will prosper and have good success. In terms of doing the will of God, it doesn’t mean that everything you touch will turn to gold and you’ll have lots of money all the time or that everything will work out easily in circumstances. However, you will prosper in the will of God, and you will be able to do the will of God in your life, if you do that.*

*Many sincere believers endeavor to do the will of God without meditating on the Word, and they find out that anger, frustration, and, more than anything, fear and condemnation dominates their hearts and pulls them back, though they are trying hard to press in. And like I like to say over and over, do not try harder, but rather set your attention on thinking new thoughts. Put God’s word in your mouth. See more clearly that that is where you want to put your energy: on seeing more clearly, not on trying harder to overcome negative emotions.*

* 1. Knowing and loving are deeply connected. We grow in love for God by growing our knowledge of God and agreement with Him. Agreement is the essence of love and/or union. Knowing is both informational and experiential. Thus, there is a mental aspect and an emotional aspect.

9“…I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge [of God]…” (Phil. 1:9)

*Knowing and loving are deeply connected realities. What you know about God and His word and how you love and your ability to love are deeply connected to one another.*

*Now this is so obvious, and it is kind of like everybody knows this, but it is—again I do not know what the word is—tragic, surprising, remarkable that so many sincere believers want to move forward; however, they do not target this area of their life, and they are constantly frustrated asking the Lord, “Why?”*

*He is saying, in effect, “I have given you the key. Your emotions will be transformed if you put new things in your mind.” You have to do it a lot and not on the run, not just a little bit. You have to be intentional about it. Again, to Joshua He said, “Night and day; day and night.” Now, that did not mean that Joshua quit his role as the prime minister and the head of the army for the whole nation. He was still the head of the army and the head of the nation. So He was not telling Joshua to lay aside all of his responsibilities, but He was saying, inasmuch as you can use your time while you are doing your responsibilities, fill your mind with the word of God.*

*Again, knowing and loving are deeply connected to each other. You will grow in love by growing in knowledge, and I don’t mean knowledge of just the Bible; I mean more than that. I am not just talking about Bible knowledge, but the knowledge of God, specifically who He is and what He says about you. Knowledge of the grace of God, not just Bible information. Some folks think, “Well, I’ll go to Bible school and get Bible information. I’ll study Greek and Hebrew, and with all of this Bible information I ought to grow.” Information by itself, if it is not connected to information about God Himself, does not necessarily change your heart.*

*Paul said in Philippians 1, in the prayer that is prayed so often down in the prayer room, “I pray that your love would abound more and more.” How? By growing in the knowledge of God. That is what Paul identifies. Or growing in the knowledge of who you are in the grace of God. That is how love abounds. When we have the knowledge of God, we grow in our agreement with God, and when we grow in our agreement with God, little by little, love begins to grow and abound in our heart.*

*The reason I am talking about this is because the overall theme of tonight is that Jesus is saying “Love Me with your mind.” A lot of folks think about loving God with their heart, but they do not put that kind of focus on loving Him intentionally with their mind. They are not deliberate about putting things in their minds or resisting other things and not allowing them to have entrance into their minds. The knowledge about God—the knowledge of God is the knowledge of His personality, the knowledge of what His emotions are like. The knowledge of the grace of God is very powerful to the human heart—is both informative and experiential. Knowledge about God is different than other types of knowledge; it is more than the knowledge of psychology. The knowledge of God sparks the human heart when the Spirit touches us. There is a mental aspect to it, but there is also an emotional aspect to the knowledge of God. Or, I’ll say that it’s the other side of the coin: the knowledge of who we are in the grace of God which is deeply connected to the knowledge of God itself.*

* 1. Loving God with our mind includes meditation on the Word so that we may come into agreement more and more with who He is and how He views and leads us. When we think on what the Spirit thinks, then love is awakened in us and makes our emotions feel alive with holy desire.

*Just for emphasis I want to say it again and again because there is no way to escape this reality and grow in love—I mean we cannot escape it and neglect this reality and still grow in love—loving God with our mind includes meditating on the word of God, taking the word of God and turning it into conversation with the Lord. Not just underlining it in our Bible, but actually turning it into conversation. That is what meditation means. Meditation is like you are turning it over and over in your mind, talking to the Lord about it. We love God with our mind when we give this a priority in our life.*

*Again, just repeating, this is more than gaining Bible information. This is knowledge of God that turns into conversation with the Lord. When we do this, our mind becomes more and more in agreement with God. We come into more agreement which is done progressively, little by little, and not necessarily day by day, but little by little over the weeks and the months as our mind meditates on the Word and turns it into conversation with the Lord. We grow in that agreement more and more. It is slow, but more and more, and it grows in the knowledge of who He is and how He leads us, and when we do this love is awakened in our heart. It is not one big moment that love is awakened, but it is progressively. Our heart is transformed, and our emotions are transformed, by renewing our mind, the principle we started with in Romans 12. That means changing the way we think, bringing our mind into agreement with the word of God.*

*I remember as a young believer at eighteen, nineteen and twenty, as I have said many times, that I loved going to meetings and Bible studies, and I loved the singing, the talking, and the fellowship afterwards, but me and God and the Bible was, like, so boring and so confusing. What I was doing was putting my energy into getting Bible information. The Lord helped me understand that if that information is not about Him and does not bring me into conversation, it is not going to transform me. When I began to see that I could take the Bible and turn it into a conversation with Him, then I began to feel differently just little by little. As the months turned into years, and I looked back, I thought, “Lord, this is the absolute key!”*

*But in all of the years that I have been in ministry, honestly, this is one of the most neglected principles, even among sincere believers. Taking time—not just hearing a sermon and then saying, “Hey, I will check in next week” and maybe a few minutes a day read the Bible—but making this a priority. Beloved, your mind is your most precious possession. By not putting the word of God into our mind, we lose so much of the potential of liberty in our heart and walking in the glory of God. It really is anchored in what we put in our mind and what we refuse to allow entrance in our mind.*

* + 1. This includes refusing lies about Jesus as our Bridegroom, King, and Judge.
		2. This includes resisting wrong thinking that promotes shame, bitterness, lust, ingratitude, etc.
	1. We express love for God by refusing to feed our mind on lust (Job 31:1). The end-time explosion of pornography is the enemy’s direct attack against the first commandment.

1“I have made a covenant with my eyes; why should I look upon a young woman?” (Job 31:1)

*One of the areas that is common today and such a major issue is that we express love for God by refusing to feed our mind on lust. Again, the mind of the flesh is much more than lust. It is more than anger. It is more than envy, and it is more than bitterness. The mind of the flesh is about the narrative of our life that we believe. That is as much the mind of the flesh as other things. However, the enemy is really targeting the issue of lust in this generation. Now, lust has been around for six thousand years, since Adam or however long that has been, about that time. But there is an intentionality in the kingdom of darkness to cause lust to just explode across the earth in this hour of history. The enemy knows that the Lord’s agenda is to establish the first commandment in first place in the kingdom of God.*

*This is the Holy Spirit’s agenda. He is after taking weak and broken believers who are stuck and addicted, in dark emotions and dark thinking, and transforming them so the first commandment is first and they are not loving God with just their heart. Yes, that, but they are loving God with their mind in a very intentional way. They are saying, “Lord, because I love You, I am going to take time to do this. Because I want to love You with not just my emotions, but with my thinking.” Then we will look later at loving God with our strength and loving God with our soul.*

*There is an end-time explosion happening—and it is so obvious in the last ten years—of pornography and where pornography is going in the earth today with all of the new technology, with virtual reality, with augmented reality, artificial intelligence, and state-of-the-art robotics that have human texture to them. Where pornography will be in ten and twenty years is mind-boggling. We cannot even imagine where this is going, but, with all of the power of his might and all of his resource, the enemy is targeting the human race with all of these dark emotions because he knows the Holy Spirit is targeting the human race, the Body of Christ, with the beauty of Jesus, the reality of who we are in the grace of God to awaken love in the heart so that we can walk in the liberty and the glory of a liberated heart that feels love from God, that feels love for God, and that overflows with love for people, love on God’s terms.*

*I am not just talking about generic love as the culture defines. I am talking about love the way God defines it, which is within the reach of every single believer. However, it really begins with what they target about their mind, what they put in their mind. Without taking the battlefield of the mind as the absolute top priority, hearts will not get liberated because they are not going to get liberated just in a prayer line at the end of a service or going to a conference or through a seminar. We are going to get liberated by bringing our mind deliberately into agreement with the Word of God day by day, week by week, month by month, so that our emotions get liberated from the dark, heavy, negative feelings that are so common to the human race.*

*The enemy wants to seduce an entire generation with pornography, and though I have empathy and mercy on people who are stuck in it, so many—i.e. billions of people—are stuck in this right now, and billions of others are playing with it, and they do not know that they are playing with fire. They are thinking, “Well, I can go this far, and then I can bail when I need to bail,” but they can’t. You cannot play in darkness and just get out anytime you want.*

*We have to be deliberate. Like one guy was telling me, “Man, my heart is so stuck there! How did that happen? How do I get free?”*

*I said, “You get free the same way you became captive: little by little, decision by decision, day by day. It took you a while to be taken captive in that, and it is going to take you a while by filling your mind with what the word of God says about you and about God, and your heart will get liberated.”*

*I have good news! The power of the Spirit is stronger than the power of dark emotions, but the Spirit will not bypass the process. A lot of folks are hoping that there is a seminar or there is a counseling session where somebody can lay hands on them or have a weekend with them and free their dark emotions. Though I believe that there is ministry that is helpful, it never replaces the day-by-day expressing love to God by what we put into our mind. He will not wave His hand over a generation and free them from dark emotions. He will not force His people to meditate on the Word. He will not force them, but He will woo them, and wow them, and draw them into it. But He will not make them do it, and nobody can do it for you.*

*I am just saying that I have seen people get liberated from dark emotions, powerful ones, but never in a vacuum, never just in a ministry time, never that powerful dream or supernatural encounter. Yes, those things are important and helpful, but they are never a substitute for the day-by-day meditating on the Word, taking the Word turning it into conversation with the Lord, talking to Him about the Word of God, asking Him and thanking Him for the things He promises, committing to doing the things He calls us to obey in, and asking for help. It is that conversation that I call pray-reading the Word of God, taking the Word and turning it into conversation with the Lord.*

1. the vastness of the human mind: a glorious potential
	1. Our mind includes our intellect, perception, memory, imagination, even our daydreams, etc.

*I am going to talk about the vastness of the human mind. I realize that that is a strange way to say it, “the vastness of the human mind.” Like, what? It has the most glorious potential in the way that God has designed the human mind. It is just indescribably glorious, the capacity of the human mind, and I will break that down in just a moment here.*

* 1. Much of our life occurs in our mind, and only a small part of our life is actually expressed in actions. The lyrics of Misty Edwards’ song say it well: “Much of life takes place behind the face.”

*First I want to state something that is obvious but may not seem that obvious: most of your life occurs in your mind, and actually only a small part of your life is expressed in actions. Most of your life occurs in your mind. I mean you do actions every day, but your mind never, ever stops, ever. When you are doing nothing, your mind is still moving. When you are sleeping, your mind is still moving. It is never, ever turned off, ever. Your life so consists of what happens in your mind.*

*Now the reason I want to say that is because, if you connect with that, it is like, “Wow! I need to take this more seriously because I thought my life was mostly what I did.” True, but your actions are really a small part in reality of what really constitutes the whole of your life.*

*I like Misty’s song, and she says it well. I don’t remember exactly how it is, but she says that much of life takes place behind our face. She means inside. She said, “You know you are looking at somebody, and in their mind and their life there is something big going on? That life takes place behind the face.”*

*I remember when she first sang that, and I said, “What on earth are you talking about?” Then she told me, and I said, “Wow, that is really profound!” And it is really true.*

* 1. The language of our spirit is images. It is impossible to think without seeing pictures in our mind.
	It is our “internal movie screen” that continually presents us with pictures. We are the producer, main actor, hero, villain, and audience of our “internal movies.” Our mind is like a camera that stores our memories. Our mind is a vast reservoir of memories, pictures, ideas, etc. We can never turn our mind off. When our body sleeps, our mind stays active, dreaming through the night.

*Let me break this down just a little bit more. The language of our human spirit is pictures and images. The way your human spirit and your mind operate is by pictures. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to think without seeing a picture. Now the picture may not be as clear, but if I say, “Do not think about a pink elephant,” for one second you thought about a pink elephant. That is just how it happens. You cannot actually think without seeing pictures. The language of the human spirit and human mind is millions of pictures that are going non-stop, and the conversation inside of you never stops actually. Now when you are sleeping, you are not conscious of it, but the pictures are still moving over and over and over.*

*Even right now—and I am not saying this negatively because we are all like this, but—half of you are thinking of something else right now while I am talking because you have so many conversations [in your mind], not all going on at the same time, but it is conversation after conversation. It moves on, and you can be listening to somebody, hearing music, watching a movie, hearing a message, in fellowship, but still having another conversation because it never stops and pictures are flashing. I don’t mean rapid fire, but you are just picturing because that is the language of the mind and of the human spirit; it is pictures.*

*The way I like to describe it is that there is an entire movie studio on the inside of you. An entire movie production company working on the inside of you, and those pictures never, ever stop, ever. You are continually being presented with pictures, forever. Your mind is like a camera, and much more than a camera. It stores all of your memories. Now I do not know this precisely, and so I am going to say it in a non-precise way, but I have read different articles over the years, and I am not trying to be scientifically precise right now, but scientists talk about how the capacity of the human mind is so much greater than what humans experience in this life. And their memory is far more exacting than they can even recall consciously. The memory is stored in there in a very powerful way, and that can be hurtful, or it can be positive as there are all kinds of dimensions to that.*

*I have written here that our mind is a vast reservoir of memories, pictures, and ideas. Again, they never stop. In a strange, kind of funny way I say you have a movie studio, a production company, inside of you that will be there for billions and billions of years. You are the main producer of those movies. You are the main actor. You are the hero and the villain, and you are the primary audience of those movies. They go on and on and on. You are the bad guy; you are the good guy; you are the producer; you are the audience, and you are fully engaged. Even if you do not want to be, you are. That is simply how we were designed.*

*You can never turn your mind off. You may go to bed at night, but your mind is still working. Again, I am not giving a scientific presentation, but I have read a number of articles over the years, and I do not have the precise information, but the amount of dreams that happen night after night after night that you are not even aware of and that we are not conscious of, but they are still moving rapidly inside of us. Because our human spirit is always alive, your human spirit never, ever sleeps, ever. Your outer man sleeps, but your human spirit is always active and alive as is your mind, even though we are not conscious of it because of our physical limitations and our frame.*

* 1. Humans are constantly in a conversation in their minds. The Lord created us this way for ceaseless dialogue with Him. God designed us with a memory by which we interact with Him and others in this life and in a far deeper way throughout eternity.

*Humans are constantly in a conversation inside their mind, even if we have not thought of it. The reason I say humans is because I do not know about all of the animals and all of the other parts of the created order, but in the human mind we are always in an internal conversation. Even if we do not want to be, we are in one. Sometimes it is really positive. Sometimes it is really negative. Sometimes it is really confusing. Sometimes it is in circles, but the conversation and the pictures actually never stop, ever.*

*Now the Lord actually created us this way. He created us to have this ceaseless conversation with Him for billions of years. He built in us this capacity to interact with Him and even to interact with others in a glorious way, forever and forever. However, the problem is that He built and designed the human frame this way, but because of darkness it can pull us in a wrong way. In this age, we have to be intentional about feeding that movie production company with the right things because we can actually re-write the script. We can make brand-new movies on the inside. They can overpower the old information so that the new information has more power than the old information when we are connecting with the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.*

* 1. We cannot stop the ceaseless flow of images that run across our mind, but we can direct them. Through meditation on God’s Word, we can rewrite “the script of the movie” that we continually watch within. We can replace our wrong thoughts and pictures with godly thoughts and pictures.

*God created us in His own image, and one aspect to being in God’s image is, again, this strange phrase that I am using, the vastness of the human mind. Did you know that you will have memory of what you did in this life because you are rewarded for obedience, even the simple obedience of a cup of cold water? With a resurrected mind your memory will have new thoughts that you will remember for billions and billions of years. I mean, think about this! It’s not just a little world on the inside of you. It is a universe inside of you. It is massive in its capacity. I just made up a number here: your memory in the resurrection forever is more powerful than a computer with trillions of gigabytes. Your hard drive is bigger than you can fathom, because in a million years and in a billion years from now you will still have the memories of goodness with perfect precision.*

*The good news is that the bad things we have repented of and have been cleansed of by the blood of the Lamb, it is not like those memories are—I will say it this way—they do not have power in our emotions. They do not power in us, but our good ones will, so think about the bandwidth of the human mind a billion years from now with all of the stored pictures and memories that will never be diminished, the glorious and positive ones.*

* 1. God created us after His image (Gen. 1:26). One aspect of this is seen in the vastness of the human mind which will continue to “store” knowledge for all eternity. Our mind is like a mysterious internal universe with a memory more powerful than a computer, with trillions of gigabytes.

*We will never stop the ceaseless flow of images that come across our mind, even in the age to come. Memories are so powerfully a part of love and a part of humility and a part of gratitude. That is why God gave us this—now infinite is not the right word but—this vast capacity to store these memories because they will fuel love, humility, gratitude, and kindness. It will fuel them forever and forever, but it starts actually in this age.*

*The reason I am making a big point out of this is because so many believers are so careless with their mind, “Well, I do not really have time to read the Word. I am not really into that,” and I say, “Are you kidding? Do you know what your mind was made for and what it is capable of?” Now I don’t mean being a great scientist in this age, though a few of you might be, but that is not what I mean. However, given the capacity of your mind which you possess now and that you will have forever and forever in the resurrection and the way it will form your emotions, the idea that, “I am too busy to pull back and feed my mind,” is like the guy saying—now this is not a good analogy but—“I am going to travel across country in my car. Start in California and go to New York, but I am too busy to stop and get more gasoline in my car. I am just too busy, but I am going to go from California to New York. I do not care what anybody says! I am going the whole way.”*

*That is impossible, and that would be foolish beyond measure to even think like that. However, that is how a lot of believers steward their mind. They think they are going to get into liberty, enter into goodness, and do the will of God, but they are idle or passive about what they put in their mind or they are careless with what they allow in their mind. Hoping that, just sometime in a few years, they will land with liberty and fullness. That is delusional. It’s not real. It’s as delusional as the guy crossing the nation in his car who is too busy to stop for gas. He is in delusion to think that he is going to have a successful journey.*

*Our mind has so much potential even in this age. In the age to come it is vast in its abilities and its capacities. I mean, it is one of the most glorious things that God gave us: the human mind.*

*Again, a lot of believers have just never connected the dots; it has never really grabbed ahold of them. That is why they can go week after week, month after month, rarely reading the Word and talking to God in the Word because they do not have a vision of how powerful their mind is or for what happens in their mind and how it affects their emotions. They do not have a clarity about what they put in their mind and how it is connected to the liberty or bondage of their emotions. Again, they are just hoping that in a few years they will get through the negative stuff. I have watched this for forty-plus years in ministry, and they never get through the negative stuff, so the dark emotions get worse and worse.*

*I know so many believers who in the first ten years are thinking, “Wow, it is going to be better!” But if they skip this reality here, twenty and thirty years later they are in more darkness, more anger, more angst, more lust, and more dark emotions than they had ever imagined. They just thought it would go away if they went to church services once a week, went to a home group, prayed a little bit. It would just all go away.*

*It is like, “No!” There is this glorious reality that is yours. It is doable in the grace of God. You have the indwelling Spirit. You have the throne of God open to you so you can boldly come to it. You have the written Word of God, and you have time.*

*The Lord is saying, as it were, “I want you to take the indwelling Spirit and the openness to the throne of God that you can come boldly to, the written Word of God, and your schedule. Put them together and see your emotions get liberated.” More than liberated, get inspired as your capacity to love increases, and your capacity to feel the love of God, your capacity to feel love for God, and your capacity to overflow in love. And again, love on God’s terms. Because, again, a lot of folks think they are overflowing in love, but their definition of love is not exactly like the Bible’s. Not just that, but it is actually just the opposite many times.*

* 1. The Spirit will enable us to love God with all our mind by writing His Word on our mind.

16“This is the covenant…I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them” (Heb. 10:16)

*“This is the covenant,” Hebrews 10:16. God said, “Here is the new covenant” in the Old Testament, in Jeremiah. He says, “Here is the promise of the new covenant”—born-again Christianity is what we call it—that Jesus died, rose from the dead, seated at the right hand of the Father, poured out the Spirit on us, and here is the deal: God said, “I will put My laws or My ways on—I will give new desires to—your heart!” When God puts His word in your heart, that means, “I am going to give you new desires.” That is what that means. “I promise you I will give you new desires.”*

*The question is, “How are You going to give me these new desires?”*

*We know in the resurrection that a lot of big things happen quickly. However, the way that He gives us a new heart and new desires is that He puts His Word in our heart. He changes our desires by writing His Word on our mind. Again, He writes His Word on our mind in this age as we are deliberate about bringing our mind to Him in a very, very specific way. That is how He writes it. He inspires our understanding, and He marks our heart with the written Word of God. I think of the Old Testament picture when God wrote by a finger, with fire, on the two tablets of the Ten Commandments. You know, there are two tablets with five commandments on each, and He wrote with the finger of God, with the fire of God He wrote. That was a picture of what He is doing to born-again believers the last two thousand years of church history. He is saying, as it were, “I am going to write on your hearts, but I am not going to do it in a vacuum. I am going to do it in response to you putting the Word in your heart, and then I am going to write it with the finger of fire on you. And I will do it little by little, week by week, month by month, and you will grow in it a little bit, and it will change the desires of your heart. You will find My word,” which He calls His law; that means His word in this context, “and it will be in your heart. It will be in your desires.”*

*It is like Sam Storms said. I love this quote. He said, “I do not want to just live the Christian life; I want to love living the Christian life.” The miracle of the new covenant, of being born again with the indwelling Spirit, is that we can actually enjoy and love the things we did not love, and we can hate the things we used to love.*

*I mean, I did not used to like the Word, even as a believer. I liked it as a concept. I loved the Bible as long as I did not have to read it, because it was so boring, and it bounced off, so to speak, and I could not feel it. I thought, “Lord, I don’t even like this, to be totally honest,” and now I love it! And I thought how did that happen?*

*The answer would be, “Because you stayed with it, and I wrote it on your heart. I wrote the Word of God on your mind. I imprinted it, and I have inspired your thinking with it.”*

*Now I want it a lot more now that I have it, but I am a testimony like many of you in this room; this is real! This is doable. In this covenant God is saying, as it were, “I will promise you I will do this for you, but I am not going to do it in a vacuum. And I am not going to do it without your cooperation in this age.” Again, in the resurrection a whole lot of things will happen, but, beloved, this is a glorious potential now!*

*As a shepherd and a lover of people, I look and say, “Guys, free your schedule up and put the Word of God in your mind!”*

*“Well, I do not want to get into legalism!”*

*Forget all of that silly argument! That is just all rhetoric! Take time! Your mind is glorious! Your heart has so much potential; God will give it to you. You have the indwelling Spirit, and you have access to His presence. You have the written Word of God. Take time! Put it in your mind. Read it, mediate on it, and then He will write it on your heart. He will take the finger of fire and write it in you, little by little, and your life will be different. And you will be like, “Wow! I don’t just live the Christian life. I get to love the Christian life!” That is the point I am trying to say here.*

* 1. As our mind is renewed, the Spirit imparts life and peace in us (Rom. 8:6). This peace is the result of embracing a right view of God, and His narrative for our life (Ps. 27:4; Rom. 8:28). In this way, Jesus can become our first thought—our “holy daydream” or “resting place”—He becomes our “sweet place of escape” from fear, shame, anger, and lust as we retreat into His beauty and love.

6For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Rom. 8:6)

*Our mind is renewed, meaning as we put the Word of God into our mind, and the Holy Spirit by the finger of God writes it on our mind, little by little, over the months and years. Paul said in Romans 8:6, “To be fleshly minded, carnally minded, will bring death,” meaning it will bring dullness and pain to your heart. It will bring rejection and condemnation. He doesn’t just mean death like hell at the end. That is not the main point he is talking about. A fleshly mind, even in a believer, that is left on its own—we think what we think; we put wrong thoughts in; we buy into a wrong narrative about our life—it brings death. Meaning rejection, fear, depression, condemnation, and shame. It is the opposite of a bright spirit. It is a dull spirit, dark emotions. It just sinks down. He is actually talking to believers here. Many believers have a carnal mind. They have a mind of the flesh because that is what they feed their mind with. It’s not just the media they watch, or the conversations they have, but even the things that they think and say, even to God, that are contrary even to what God says about them, and it is actually writing on their mind darkness.*

*He said, “But I want to tell you this, that if you are spiritually minded,” which means if you will take the Word of God—that is what it means to be spiritually minded—and if you will agree with it, your spirit will have that inspiration which is called life and peace. There will be a spirit of inspiration. There will be encouragement. There will be fascination. There will be life in your heart, even in this age. So he is talking to believers about how to carry their mind. And then, later on in Romans 12, he says, “You are transformed”—your emotions are—“by renewing your mind, changing what you put in your mind.”*

*Now I have added this next paragraph and it might sound strange to some of you, but I love it, and it is probably my favorite paragraph. What I love are those times—it is not all of the time—where Jesus is my first thought. He is my holy daydream. He is my resting place, my great escape. All of us have a place we go when we are weary, and things are happening. Our escape—for a lot of folks it is fear; for other folks it is fantasy, and for a lot of folks it is whatever. I do not always have this, but I love it when I am going and my first thought is Him and how He likes me! I remember that it never used to be that way that when I get under stress my escape is to interact with Him. I do not mean it is discipline. It is what happens first. It is the place I go. And I say, “Oh, I don’t ever want it* ***not*** *to be this way!” I am not trying to exaggerate it, but I want to tell you this is within the reach of every believer. It is the glorious way to live on the inside, not just living the Christian life but loving to live the Christian life. He can become our sweet escape. Again, it is that place we daydream, where we get out of our pressures and tensions, and it is within the Spirit of God’s ability to give that to a believer—to make it the Father, the Son and the Spirit—and that is filled with life and peace.*

*Again, I wish I had this all day, every day, and never lost it. I would be exaggerating to say that I did, but I have it a lot more in the last ten years than in my first ten years. I want much more, and my energy is to contend for your greatness and your liberty. I am not trying to get people to “just be disciplined and get with it.” I appreciate discipline, but what I really like is the fruit of it. I am contending for people to have a liberated heart. To go to bed at night, the Lord is the last thought, and the first thought they have when they wake up is the Lord. For real, that is within reach of every single believer if they stay with this, but a lot of believers don’t because they do not really understand the place and affect that their mind has on their emotions.*

* 1. If our mind does not actively engage in being renewed by God’s Word, then the vast power of our mind is dangerous to us. So much life and time can be wasted in our mind. It is tragic how many hours some waste away by daydreaming about things that are not based in truth.

17You should no longer walk as... the Gentiles [unbelievers] walk, in the futility of their mind, 18having their understanding darkened...23Be renewed in the spirit of your mind. (Eph. 4:17-23)

*They are careless with their mind, and they have an incredible amount of waste. Their understanding in Ephesians 4 is darkened, but they can be renewed in the spirit of their mind. Many believers, and I will say this negatively—I should say it positively, but I am going to say it negatively—for many believers it is almost a criminal waste of what they do with their time and with the potential of their mind that they are not engaging with. Our mind has such great potential to liberate our heart if we will bring it to God. It is a horrible waste how many believers carry their minds. I say, “Lord, it is tragic! They could have such a spirit of liberty operating in them and everything would look different!” I do not mean that everything would be easy and perfect, but very, very different. How many hours people spend—again, the negative word, waste—in daydreaming, with magazines, on digital devices, on certain entertainments. Daydreaming about that which will never be real in their life, ever. Some of those things might be real in some of their lives, but they will never be real in that guy’s life or that woman’s life, yet they put hours and hours and years of investing, and those years are wasted, and the potential is lost for that period of time. I mean, you can gain ground again by resetting your heart and going in the way I have been describing here. I look at so many believers, and I do not know who does what, but I think, “Oh Lord, I am so jealous that they would believe this!” I am not just trying to get people to be disciplined. I am trying to get them enjoying liberty in their heart. That is what I am talking about here.*

*Jesus says, “Love Me this way. When you do this, you show love to Me. When you have the two options, and you choose to fill your mind with Me, you are showing love to Me!” It is not like we are saying we do not love Him if we don’t do that, but it is another missed opportunity.*

*Someone might say, “Well, this sounds rigorous.” Maybe on the front end it is rigorous because our mind is so unfamiliar with the Word of God, but in a short amount of time there is the liberty and the enjoyment of the inner man. It is not rigorous when it is moving you. You cannot get enough of it, and you will want more, and you will want more, you will want more.*

*As the years unfold in my own life, it is like the analogy of the mathematicians in Houston in the Space Department. You know, the kid who wins the math contest in his high school; he is the top mathematician in his high school. He gets the big award and wins the State championship, and he thinks he knows math. Then he joins the Space Department in Houston. Twenty years later he knows a hundred times more, but now he knows how much math he does not know. He says, “It is vast!”*

*When I look at my life, I know the Word of God much more than I did thirty years ago. However, I am aware of how much more of the beauty and glory that I do not know. I am more aware of it, and I have more enjoyment of it than ever before, and I cannot get enough of it. The more I get, the hungrier I get, and then the hungrier I get, the more I want, and then I get hungrier. And I say, “Lord, this is fantastic!” The resurrection is going to be far better than this, and I just cannot wait. I mean, I do not want to hurry it up, but I just cannot wait to get into this ever-overflowing drinking from the river of pleasure.*

*Again, when I look at my own life, I am only using my example because I was so clearly stuck in my early days not enjoying the Word, not enjoying prayer. The Bible was boring, and I did not like any of it. I am just thinking that if this could happen to me, I promise you that it can happen to you. That is why I am using myself and my own story, because I know my own story so well. Again, I wish I would do it more and better, but I am so surprised that it really works! It is real! The Spirit really does write it on your heart and mind a little bit, but a little bit of this goes a long way.*

* 1. We are called to seek greater understanding of God even as one who seeks for hidden treasure. May the Spirit give you confidence that *will* find more of the knowledge of God as you are diligent.

2Apply your heart to understanding…4if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for
hidden treasures; 5then you will…find the knowledge of God. (Prov. 2:2-5)

*I am going to end with this. In Proverbs 2, he talks about gaining understanding, and he says in verse 2 to go after understanding. He is talking about the Word of God and the ways of God. Then in verse 4 he says this—here he puts this aggressive tone on it—“But when you go after the knowledge of God, seek for it as silver. When you go after it, search for it like hidden treasure. If you do that progressively, not overnight, and little by little, you will find the knowledge of God.” Do not miss verse 4, “Seek for it as hidden treasure.” If I told you that there was a billion dollars—I don’t know how—in some little units somehow, somewhere in this building. It might be two feet below in the foundation and concrete, it might be in a corner, but there is a billion dollars, and the building is yours to do anything you want with it. Bring any tool you want. Tear down walls. Do anything you want. A whole lot of people would not stop even if it took them years to find that treasure. If they knew for sure that it was there, and there were no rules: you can do whatever you want with the building, but it might be two feet down in the concrete and you might have to break it all up. You do not know. For a whole lot of folks, they would search for that like hidden treasure, and nothing would stop them.*

*Proverbs 2 says that if you will go after the Word of God like this, after the knowledge of God, I promise you that you will find it and it will be worth all of the effort you invested in searching. You will turn over every stone. You will give up certain kinds of activities, entertainment, and certain kinds of other things. You will go after it with a tenacity. And what I want to do is to tell you that the Lord actually sees that as loving Him with your mind. I want to say that it is the most glorious discovery, not just in the age to come, but even in this age. And the fact that our mind has this incredibly vast potential for billions of years of gaining new knowledge and then remembering it forever, for that which fuels gratitude, love, humility and all of these things forever and forever. I say “Lord, thank You that You helped me!” Again, I wish I had done it better, and I wish I had done it more, but when I look back over the last forty years, I have no regrets about the amount of time I have poured into the Word of God to search it out.*

*Interestingly enough, it was this passage in Proverbs 2 that the Lord gave me when I was about nineteen years old, in a very direct way, so I said, “I am going to do this! The sad part is the Word of God is so boring, I don’t know how far I will make it.” However, it was this very proverb right here when I was nineteen years old that the Lord gave me. He said, “You come after it!” and I said, “You know I believe You, but this is going to be augh! And Lord, no offense, but this stuff is boring! But I actually believe You.” It was like a little flash of light touched my soul, and so I bought into it. Again, if I had to do it all over again, I would even do it more, but my real point is that I have no regrets for the missed opportunities that I have had in other arenas like networking and social events. There were lots of things I missed, and I have missed lots of opportunities because I believed this passage right here.*

*Amen and amen! Loving God with all of our heart—what a great way to start forty days of consecration where we are going to spend more time filling our mind with the word of God. Amen and amen! Let’s stand!*