

Use Your Mind

Contemporary Christians often do better at loving God with their hearts and souls than at loving Him with their minds. Taking “mind” to mean that place where thoughts, intellect, creativity and conscience converge, loving God in that powerful engine is no small command. Yet Jesus gave us this mandate—to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, with all our souls and with all our minds (see Matt. 22:37).

The human mind and the human intellect are certainly in the same “place,” as it were, but they are not the same thing entirely. Into the gap between intellect and mind, Satan insinuates himself with horrific results—as during the Holocaust, when great intellects with twisted minds designed and built ingenious methods of mass murder.

It is not at all uncommon for the brightest and most creative to suffer demonic activity in their thoughts. Unchallenged, unchanneled and bored, sparkling rivers of creative energy may ooze out into brackish deltas of video violence and fantasy sex. An idle mind, it turns out, truly is the devil’s workshop.

The evangelical world has too often assumed some adversarial relationship between the “mind of Christ” and the intellect. What wasteful tragedies have resulted! As the president of a Spirit-filled, Christ-centered university, I am grieved by the paralyzing fear of the self-marginalized who condemn “book learning” as the doorway to damnation.

I am persuaded that when Christian minds, with intellect intact and engaged, are applied to societal challenges, God will be magnificently glorified and the world will be a better place. William Wilberforce had the mind of Christ. So did John Wesley, William Booth and Mother Teresa. The Protestant

Reformation began at a university. Sir Isaac Newton found the face of God in physics. C.S. Lewis came first to full faith and then to creative genius in his musty rooms at Oxford.

When we fear our own intellect and bludgeon discernment into silence, we drift close to the shoals of mindlessness that have made embarrassing shipwrecks out of some promising moves of God. Education is not anointing, to be sure. But neither is ignorance holiness.

Charismatics and Pentecostals often have mistakenly assumed that for the gifts of the Spirit to operate the brain must be in neutral. Rather, the minds of both speaker and hearer must be fully engaged. Spiritual gifts mindlessly manifested and mindlessly received are the surest path to La-La Land.

Informed by our past, touched upon by circumstance, entangled with emotions and wounded by outrage, the human mind called to love God wholly must be not only engaged but also whole. Those with wounded minds can love God so far as they are able, but God wants them completely healed.

Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor. He also uses the human touch, just as He does in physical healing. Christian psychologists and counselors have sometimes taken a beating from high-octane evangelists, some of whom needed counseling themselves. Well-trained to apply scriptural truth, gifts of healing and valid techniques, Christian psychologists are often the instrument of God to untie the tangled minds of those who want to love God but deeply ache for a whole mind with which to do so.

Beyond healing there is cultivation. We are called to the intentional pursuit of the mind of Christ. In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul admonishes believers to “be renewed in the spirit of our minds” (4:23, NKJV). Our minds must be bathed by the Word.

We are also called to Christian meditation, another discipline

of the mind. “Meditate on these things,” Paul wrote (Phil. 4:8). The mind grows as it is fed. An alert, well-read, Bible-fed mind meditating on God’s Word in faith is a mighty instrument in God’s hands.

This then is the goal: a whole mind, healed and engaged, wholly in love with a holy God.

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,” Paul advised (Phil. 2:5). That “mind,” he went on to explain, is one of a gentle, humble and sacrificial servant (see vv. 6-8).

Mark Rutland is president of Southeastern University in Lakeland, Florida. He is the author of many books including *Most Likely to Succeed* (Charisma House). To learn more about Southeastern go to .