

LOVING GOD WITH THE HEART, SOUL AND MIND

A lawyer of the Sadducees once asked Jesus about the greatest commandment. Jesus alluded to what Moses wrote in Deut. 6:5, which reads, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength."* Then the Lord put it this way, *"Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind"* (Matt. 22:37). Mark's account reads, *"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment"* (Mark 12:30). In another setting, Jesus used the word "strength" in addition to "heart", "soul" and "mind" (Luke 10:25-27). The Lord's response emphasizes three (3) words, **heart**, **soul** and **mind**. It is true that there are things said in the Bible that would apply to each of these 3 words, but we are trying to make a distinction when all three are used in the same context.

We shall look at these three words in relation to our loving God today.

WITH THE HEART

The word "heart" is used both literally and figuratively in our lives. Literally, the "heart" refers to the blood pump that everyone has in the physical body that pumps 6 quarts of life providing blood to each body, 3 times every minute. This process begins in the fetus 3 weeks and 1 day after conception, and supplies this blood 2.5 billion times in the average lifespan of an individual. This blood is life giving, as life is in the blood. (Lev. 17:11). This blood pump is **not** the heart of our concern in this lesson. The word "heart" refers to the seat of physical life. Acts 14:1. The word *figuratively* describes *"the seat of moral nature and spiritual life"* (VINE, p. 297).

The heart that concerns us now is the "figurative" heart, referring to the **emotional strength** that we are to possess. We are to serve God with "singleness of heart" (Col. 3:22; Eph. 6:5), meaning that we are to have a "single" purpose, and not let anything divert our attention. After speaking "singleness of your heart", Paul goes on to say in verse 6, "doing the will of God from the heart" (Gr. *Psuche*). The margin of the ASV reads, "or from the soul." We are to do it **heartily**, with more concern than trying to please men, as Paul explains in the next verse of the Colossian epistle (Col. 3:23). What our hands find to do, we are to do it with all our might, as Solomon wrote in Eccl. 9:10. Our love for God should involve all our **emotion**, as we put our hearts into it. The heart is involved in our singing (Col. 3:16); The heart is involved in our giving (2 Cor. 9:7) The heart is involved in our prayers (Luke 22:44; Jas. 5:17). The heart is involved in our teaching (Acts. 5:41-42). The heart is involved in our communion (1 Cor. 11:27-29). The heart is involved in our good works (Tit. 2:14; 3:1);.

There are several actions that involve the heart of man. We believe in the heart (Rom. 10:9-10). We understand in the heart (Matt. 13:15). We are convicted in the heart (Acts 2:37). We reason in the heart. (Mark 2:9). We obey from the heart (Rom. 6:17-18). We purpose in our hearts (Heb. 4:12; 2 Cor. 9:7). We are to keep our hearts pure (Matt. 5:8). We are to forgive from the heart (Matt. 18:35).

So, we are to love God with all of our **EMOTIONAL STRENGTH**.

WITH ALL OUR SOULS

The word "soul" in the Old Testament is from the Hebrew word *nephesh*, and in the New Testament from the Greek word *psuche*. The first time it is used in the Bible is when God made the first human **being**, giving him the breath of **life** (Gen. 2:7). Various passages in the Bible use the word "soul" to simply describe people, or **beings**, that which a person **IS**, rather than something he has (Exo. 1:3; Lev. 17:15; Acts 2:410).

However, the major use of the word soul has to do with that which a man has, a **spirit**, which God gives to every human being (Job 32:8; Heb. 12:9; Jas.2:26). Jesus gave up His “spirit” when He died to go to paradise (Luke 23:43, 46). In paradise, His “soul” was there (Acts 2:31; cf Psa. 16:10). The word “soul” is used in connection with the “body”, of which both can be eternally lost (Matt. 10:28; 16:26; Jas. 5:19-20).

So, while the “heart” describes **emotional strength**, the “soul” describes **SPIRITUAL STRENGTH** (Eph. 6:10-11).

WITH OUR MINDS

Paul writes, “Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Phil. 2:2). The “mind” is that invisible, active and powerful function of the brain. The fact that one cannot “see” the mind, is no proof it does not exist, any more than that reality that we cannot see God does not mean He does not exist. It has been stated that everything that one does or is done to him, is recorded in the brain, and something can be said or done that will “plug in” to that recording, and bring it to surface. We recently obtained a striking cuckoo clock, and after the bird makes a sound, it is followed by a special tune. Ours played a tune I had heard, and upon a recollection, I finally recognized it as the tune of “I Can't Go On This Way”, which was written and recorded and popularized around 1945, and I used to hear the song, and I remembered some of the words, after I heard it well some 70 plus years. Older folks sometimes have a better memory of what took place long years ago than that which happened yesterday, and it has been suggested (in jest) that this is probably because the brain is so full of information, that there is just not enough room for modern events.

There are two principle functions of the mind. First, we are to **think** with the mind (Phil.4:7-8). Second, we are to **remember** some things of the past (2 Pet. 3:1-2). Jesus told Peter the cock would not crow twice before Peter would have denied Him thrice (Mark 14:30). When it happened, Peter “remembered” (Matt. 26:75), or he “called to mind” what Jesus said (Mark 14:72).

There are different **kinds** of minds. There are minds that have been blinded (2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Pet. 1:9). There are minds that are carnal (Rom. 8:6). There are minds that are spiritual (Rom. 8:6). There are minds that are reprobate (tested and rejected). Rom. 1:28

So, the “mind” that loves God is the **INTELLIGENT MIND**.

In review, we see three principle ways Jesus says we are to show our love for God. First, we are to love God from the “heart”, with all our **emotional strength**. Second, we are to love God with all our “souls”, our **spiritual strength**. Third, we are to love God with out “minds”, our **intelligent strength**.

I Do you love God as you should? (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3)

Don Tarbet