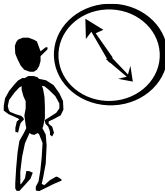


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Time of Assembly



Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.

Every other Sunday night:

Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

Set Your Mind

By Doy Moyer

How Christians think and what they think about are critical in determining how they live. Once we decide that we will live for Jesus and sanctify Him as Lord in our hearts (I Peter 3:15), we are making a priority out of thinking about things that are excellent and worthy of praise (Philippians 4:8). Paul put it this way in Colossians 3:1-3:

“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

“Set your mind” means to think, but this is not just an incidental “by the way” kind of thinking. The idea is that we are purposefully giving careful consideration to something important, to be intentional in our thinking (BDAG lexicon). There are many distractions through which we are to engage our minds for the Lord, so it is vital that we are thinking with purpose.

In contrast to recognizing that Christians are heavenly citizens, Paul warned about enemies of the cross “*whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things*” (Philippians 3:19). This may seem a bit oversimplified, but the basic difference between followers of Christ and enemies of Christ is where they set their minds.

The importance of this basic point would be difficult to overstate. Paul’s concern about where we set our minds is seen in Romans 8:5-8. After stating that there is no condemnation for those in Christ, he argues that the Lord’s people “*do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on*

the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Notice again the fundamental difference between those who are in Christ and those who are not (i.e., those for whom there is no condemnation and those who stand condemned outside of Christ). That difference lies in their respective mindsets. The term “flesh” is interesting, for it is not just the literal flesh that covers bones (the physical body). Rather, it stands for the instrument of actions or expressions that are focused entirely on physical feelings and sensations (see BDAG). Being in the flesh physically is not sinful, nor is feeling physical pleasure. God has provided proper avenues for these sensations. But when we are dominated by physical desires and our thoughts are continually geared toward fulfilling those physical urges, then we are living according to the flesh. These thoughts can easily crowd out the spiritual mindset in a way that ends up completely denying God for the sake of selfish ambitions and desires. A mind set on the flesh cannot please God. It is a mind that refuses to trust God and is hostile toward Him. It is ultimately a mind set on death.

In contrast, the mind set on the Spirit focuses on Christ, fixes eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-3), and is determined to live by faith according to the will of God. This is the mindset of the one who has been raised up with Christ into a new life, has become a new creation, and now sees everything through the lens of the Spirit and His revelation. The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace (Hebrews 12:6) and lives by the hope of the resurrected Christ, knowing that *“He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you”* (Romans 8:11).

There is always a danger of losing focus. Paul was concerned for the Corinthians as they were bearing with a false gospel: *“But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ”* (II Corinthians 11:3). “Simplicity,” here, is not “simple” in the sense of easy, but is in contrast to duplicity, a mind that is divided. In other words, God wants His people to have a single, focused mind that is intent on standing for the truth of Jesus. Distractions will present themselves. Will we stay focused on what is right and good, or will we allow the world to divide our minds and push out the spiritual?

Set your mind on the things above. You have been raised with Christ and your mind is not to be conformed to the world, but transformed, renewed so that *“you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect”* (Romans 12:1-2).

The Reality of Satan

By Doy Moyer

“Satan” is a descriptive term that means “adversary.” “Devil” means “slanderer.” These terms aptly describe the being who is known as the enemy of God and His people. The first encounter with the devil is seen in [Genesis 3](#), where the creature here slandered God’s severity by telling Eve that if she ate the forbidden fruit, they would not die as God had said. While he is not called the devil in [Genesis 3](#), [Revelation 12:9](#) tells us that this was indeed “*the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world.*”

Satan’s desires from the beginning are revealed by Jesus when He rebuked the Pharisees: “*You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies*” ([John 8:44](#)). From the beginning, Satan was a murderer and liar. His desire was not to see Adam and Eve have fun and live. By slandering God and deceiving, his design was to murder them. He wanted them to die, and this has been the devil’s desire ever since.

This reveals to us that Satan is not just some force of evil. He is a personality who desires, who acts, and who seeks to hurt those who belong to God. Recall that Jesus warned Peter, “*Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat*” ([Luke 22:31](#)). Satan had designs on Peter specifically, and Peter of all disciples knew the danger of Satan when he wrote his epistles. With his own experiences, he wrote, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world” ([1 Peter 5:8-9](#)).

Satan, then, is a deceiver, a liar who seeks to murder and devour God’s people. This makes him extremely dangerous and not one with whom we should ever play around with or see how close to him we can get. Even at a time of year like now, we need to be very careful here. Pretending to be the devil is not cute. It is not mere fun. It is dangerous and deceptive, and children need to be taught to flee from him, not act like him.

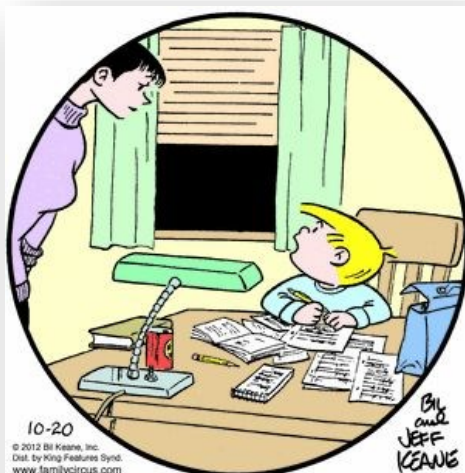
While the devil is dangerous and powerful, he is not God’s equal. He does not have the knowledge or power of God, and he is, in fact, both defeated and defeatable. This defeat was affected by Jesus Christ: “*Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free*

those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives” ([Hebrews 2:14-15](#)).

Peter said that we can resist him, steadfast in the faith ([I Peter 5:9](#)). James wrote, “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” ([James 4:7](#)). Paul told Christians what they can do to fight and stand their ground against the devil:

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” ([Ephesians 6:10-17](#)).

Scripture minces no words when it comes to the devil. We are to take him seriously so that we “do not give the devil an opportunity” ([Ephesians 4:27](#)). At the same time, we need to remember that God has already defeated Satan through Christ and given us the tools of faith to resist his influences “so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes” ([II Corinthians 2:11](#)). While “the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving,” God has “shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” ([II Corinthians 4:4-6](#)). The power of the Gospel will always win out.



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Bill
and
JEFF
KEANE

“Mommy, they don’t make you do homework in heaven, do they?”



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Bill
and
JEFF
KEANE

“The moon’s up there somewhere, but I guess God hasn’t flipped it on yet.”