

The Mind of a Christian

by Bryan Gibson

Here are some things that should characterize the mind of a Christian, using *Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*.

A mind that will not accept error, a mind that strives for the faith of the gospel (“stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (1:27). Stand fast, even when so many around you don’t (3:1-3, 17-19). Stand fast, no matter what others may say or do to you—“not in any way terrified by your adversaries” (1:28). A mind filled with courage and conviction—that’s the kind that pleases the Lord.

A mind that does not rest on past accomplishments, but keeps pressing, keeps reaching, right to the very end. Paul had this mind (“not that I have already attained”; “I do not count myself to have apprehended”—3:12-13), and so should we (“as many as are mature, have this mind”—3:15). No matter how well we may be doing spiritually (1:3-8), we can always do better (1:9-11).

A humble mind. “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself” (2:3). Note the contrast in 2:21: “For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.” Selfish ambition should never be the motive for preaching (1:16), or anything else we do in service to the Lord. After all, our goal is to exalt Jesus Christ, not ourselves. Paul’s “earnest expectation and hope” was that “Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death” (1:20).

A mind that sincerely cares for others, which is obviously not a problem for someone who is humble-minded. “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also the interests of others (2:4). That’s the very mind which prompted Jesus to come to this earth and give His life on the cross” (2:5-8). May the same thing be said of us that was said of Timothy: “For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state” (2:20).

A peaceful mind, absent from anxiety (4:6-9). This passage offers the perfect prescription for “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding” (4:7). 1) Rather than focus on your burdens, focus on your blessings—be thankful (4:6). 2) Unload your burdens on God—He can handle them a lot better than you can—“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication...let your requests be made known to God” (4:6). 3) Meditate on the all the virtuous things listed in 4:8. It’s hard to have good mental health when your mind is a garbage dump. 4) Obey the Lord, using the good examples of men like Paul—“The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these DO, and the God of peace will be with you” (4:9).

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