

Let us pray. Dear Lord, we thank you for Ben, and thank you for his dear voice and thank you for the delight that comes to our hearts when we see a human instrument being used in a way that sets forth the glory of the maker and the completion of his creation. Lord we thank you.

Father we would want to do the same thing and it makes us want to. It makes me want to speak well. It makes us all want to sing well, and do whatever we do well. If we brush floors to brush them well, for we see that's what brings you joy and delight our Father. Not the great achievements, not the great impact we make on humanity, but that we do well what you've given us to do. Lord, we would do it. We want you to be pleased with us, dear Master, with the good gifts that you've given us. We want to improve upon them and make them worth more. We don't want to be like that dear one who hid the talent because he was afraid. Lord, we want to improve on our lot that you have given us and glorify you as we do it. For your sake, amen.

Loved ones, I'd like to talk just a little more about our minds and to just remind you that you get things from God through your spirit. But those things will never get out through your life unless they pass through your mind. So you remember the piece in 1 Corinthians that says, "What no eye has seen nor ear heard God has revealed to us in his Spirit and in his Spirit through our spirits." And so that's how you receive things from God.

But the only way you get those things out to your body, and the rest of your life, and the rest of us, is through your mind. So if your mind is not renewed then you have real trouble with guidance. That's usually the difficulty with most of us. If you look again at Ananias and Sapphira, I could show you the kind of thing that happens to us ourselves. It's Acts 5 you remember. I'll just read the first few verses because it sets the scene again and reminds you of what happened.

Acts 5:1, "But a man named Ananias with his wife Sapphira sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.' When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died."

And I think death has come to many of us in this room, because our minds have not caught up yet with our spirits. And our minds are still working the way they used to when they were dominated by our bodies. And you remember, I suggested to you that our minds used to be the poor servants of our bodies. Our bodies said, "I want food, food, food! Get me food!" So the mind said, "Oh, let's get a good job and get some food." And the body said, "I want some clothes, I want some clothes." And so the mind said, "I must get some clothes."

So the mind was the poor servant and slave of the body for years until Jesus' Spirit came in and enlivened your spirit. And then your life began to move the other way from the inside out. But you see that the old mind was still like Ananias' mind, still, "Well I've sold this land, but it's dumb

if I give it all the church. I will have no means of sustenance. And so it's only reasonable to keep some of this, so that I'll be able to keep myself and my wife." And the mind hadn't caught on that, at this point in the experience of Jesus among his servants, the Holy Spirit was prompting them to give everything freely. And God would add on to them all other things that they needed.

But the mind hadn't caught up with that. And I think we do the same thing. God's Spirit prompts us to do something that is just a little beyond what we've ever done before. And the old mind is creaking along the old pattern and it 'under interprets' the fullness of what God's Spirit wants us to do. And that's when we end up in that 'half and half' kind of life. And you know it, don't you? How many of us here have missed the jackpot because we wouldn't gamble everything? And we end up back where we've always been, in that land of mediocrity, kind of toning the command down, toning the sacrifice down to a level which our old 'carnal' mind thinks is reasonable.

Now loved ones, every time you do that you repress the spirit within you. You block the spirit. And that's why you often feel frustration, or why often you don't go on to greater steps of faith, or why you don't sense the fullness and the fulfillment of Jesus within you. Because that mind represses God's guidance through your spirit, because the old mind hasn't caught up with the spirit.

I suggested to you before how really God comes to you through your spirit. [Pastor shows a 3-concentric-rectangle diagram of the personality with the spirit as being the inmost rectangle.] But really loved ones, the movement of his Holy Spirit is that way. [Pastor shows movement from God's Holy Spirit above the 3 rectangles into the spirit and then out from the spirit to the soul and through the body to the world.] And there's no question, if you do not have a mind [Shows the mind is one of the components of the soul, with also the emotions and the will.] that will let that spirit through and then on out into your body and out into the world, you will repress the Spirit. And that's what happens; many of us create a blockage for the Holy Spirit right there. [Draws a heavy line between the spirit and the soul.] And so we actually end up grieving the Holy Spirit, though we think we haven't grieved him. Because like Ananias our mind has toned the command down and toned the guidance down. And so we half express what God intended us to do.

So, many of us actually end up in a 'second best' situation in our own lives. We do! Many of us – I do think many of you possibly are in very much second best situations, because that dear old mind is still operating on the kind of 'self defensive, carnal' basis that it used to operate on. And so really, you're not in the fullness of God's plan for you. You're in kind of a second best that you've toned it down to. And you remember there's that dreadful line of Elliot's [T. S. Eliot, 1888-1965, poet, St. Louis, Missouri] that life ends not with a bang but a whimper. And the other terrible line of Auden's [W. H. Auden, 1907-1973, poet, born in the UK but became an American poet.] "In headaches and in worry, vaguely life leaks away." Now, often many of us get into half hearted situations in our lives where our life just seems to be just kind of moving but not fulfilling itself, and not opening out, because actually, God's spirit is being grieved, because it's repressed by our mind, that hears something from our spirits, but not what our spirit said! Or it hears what our spirit says, but it automatically plays it down when it passes on to our body.

It's like the joke -- it's very hard for you to understand because it's the old style of the English money which used to be three shillings and four pennies which we would have called three and four pence. It was maybe about forty cents or so. And of course there's the joke in the First World War in the trenches where they used to pass messages right down the trenches, because telegraph was not at the level that it was in the Second World War. So they would start a message at the top of the trench and it would go right down and so the message started, "Send reinforcements we're going to

advance.” And it came right down the line, “Send reinforcements, we’re going to advance.” But by the time it got to the last guy he said, “Send three and four pence. We’re going to a dance.” And that’s what happens so often with our minds. The Spirit of Jesus gives us something clear and clean, and something that would actually lead us into a fuller life. But our mind is still working on the old defensive system. And so it isn’t able to move our lives, because our mind determines what our lives and our bodies do. Our mind isn’t able to move our bodies on and our lives into something greater.

Now, that’s why, you probably know, we end up with two results. One, that our mind either contradicts what God’s Spirit is saying to us. That’s one that often happens. God’s Spirit says something; we sense something in our prayers. But our mind is contradicting it, and saying, “No.” And that’s because the mind is not renewed. The mind isn’t able to understand those things. It’s still the old carnal mind. The other alternative is that we end up with this ‘voices’ game. Voices! We end up with the voices, you see.

Our mind isn’t used. It isn’t able to understand what Jesus’ Spirit is saying. You know that it shouldn’t operate by domination of the body, so the mind is left passive. And that’s where you get children of God who are always having voices. “The Lord told me to do this. The Lord told me to do that.” Now, I know some of us say ‘the Lord’, just to give a little kind of classy appearance to what we really think. So I’m not talking about that. But I’m talking about the other loved one who is always having voices, voices in all directions, coming into their minds. And that’s what happens when your mind is not really renewed and moving according to the ‘led spirit’s’ directions.

Now, how do you begin to renew your mind? Well, there are some directions in scripture. Romans 8:5-6, “For those 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. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.” Your mind will become like the thing that you set it upon.

You have to read “Time Magazine”. You have to read “The New York Times”. You have to read “Wall Street”. We have to all do some of that just to operate in this world. But, if your mind always dwells on the outside things, on what the latest television news is, on what the latest events are, on what the people are saying to each other in your office, if your mind is all the time drawn out by all the external events and circumstances around you, it will be very difficult for your mind to get the messages that come from the right hand of God.

So really what you set your mind on determines what your mind is able to understand, and what your mind is able to grasp, and what your mind is able to express to your body. And I’m sure some of you have found yourselves almost dissipated by that kind of life. I mean, you almost get a sore head. You’re so preoccupied with what the latest is on television, what the latest thing “Newsweek” is talking about, what “Time Magazine” is talking about, what “The New York Times” is talking about, “Wall Street Journal”..., what so and so is doing in your office, what is happening to the economy, until you find yourself dissipated more and more.

Now that’s, loved ones, your mind being intensely preoccupied with things of the flesh. You see, not carnal things, sexy things, but things of the flesh in that they’re outside things. They’re material things. And the more your mind dwells on that, the more unfitted it is to begin to hear the messages that come from the right hand of God. So it is vital to spend time dwelling upon true reality, and remembering that all that we see around us is the passing ‘skema’ it’s called in Greek.

The passing façade that is on its way out every moment. And the real reality that is eternal is Jesus at God's right hand.

It's vital for your mind to begin to dwell upon that. It really is. If that's reality, even though you don't know exactly the look of Jesus face, even though you don't know exactly what he looks like there at the right hand of God, it is vital for your mind to begin to think about that and dwell upon that. So what your mind dwells upon determines what it's able to receive.

In other words, there's real place for a controlled mind of peace and rest. And I feel for you, because this society is organized to disorganize your mind. It undoubtedly is. It draws you out all the time. I don't know – we have the great advantage, I think, in one way in Ireland. It rained! Rained all the time! All the time! That's what produces all those happy, miserable, Eugene O'Neill [1888 – 1953, Irish American playwright], depressing playwrights. But at least what it did produce in us was a readiness to dwell a little in the 'interior life'. And that was good.

Obviously as you see with people like Eugene O'Neill and the old guy who wrote Ulysses, [James Joyce, 1882-1941] obviously it can bring things straight from the pit of hell. But it did at least direct us into the interior life. We live in a very external society. I don't know if you know it.

But compared with any other country, America is an extrovert society. And we're drawn out all the time, our minds are drawn out. There's so much happening.

Oh, I'd put it to you, when you go on vacation, you see what a Frenchman thinks of on vacation is sitting in the Champs-Élysées [the Avenue des Champs-Élysées is a street in Paris] at a table with a cup of espresso just watching! Just watching and appreciating! And an Englishman will think of sitting maybe with his feet in the water just watching the boats. But an American always has the same question, "What am I going to do on vacation?" And we're always going to do things. We're never content to be! And we're never content to just rest quiet. And that's one of the things that makes it difficult for us to begin to withdraw our minds from the external things, and to begin to put them on true reality, which is God and Jesus.

So loved ones, that's important. One way of beginning to bring your mind into some kind of spiritual fitness to be used by your spirit is to begin to direct your mind to those things. And that's where I kind of backed John Spaulding in his presentation of the school [CCI Training School in Minneapolis]. I think many of us don't know how to think about God. I think that's part of it. I really do think many of us want to, here in this room, but we don't know how to. And so we never get beyond just worshipping him with our spirits. We never actually make what we think of him explicit in our minds. So our minds are never used and never fitted to receive the guidance of Jesus' spirit.

If you say, "Well then after you've done that, what do you do?" Oh, it's obviously in Acts 13. For guidance it's always the same truth. It's the way the early church received guidance. "Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Mana-en a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" That's how you get guidance.

You then concentrate on Jesus. Or what Augustine said, "You love God and do what you like." When you begin to bring your mind into a place where there's dwelling upon God and upon Jesus, and where it's beginning to become a spiritual mind, then you worship God, you praise him, you love him, and

you do what comes naturally. That's normally the way guidance comes, believe it or not. And if you say to me, "Well, how is that distinguished from just operating according to a renewed mind?" Oh, the renewed mind is independent. It kind of thinks, "I have the wisdom within myself."

But a person who is operating as we suggested here is preoccupied with Jesus, and with God, and with his praise, and his love of them both. A renewed mind is preoccupied with the fact that I know how to guide this life of mine. So that's the distinction. But a mind that is renewed and a spirit that is right is preoccupied with God, and preoccupied with Jesus, and fitted to receive his directions. A renewed mind that has kind of given up on the spiritual relationship to God, and is going on its own, is preoccupied with its guidance, and preoccupied with doing the right thing. So there is a distinction.

You need the mind controlled. And that's something that isn't popular with our teachings about the free association of ideas. And loved ones, it's just dangerous, that. I think David Johnson, who is an artist, and I have talked about it at times. And it is just dangerous stuff, that letting the mind roam everywhere. And I would respectfully suggest, only you artists can work it out in your field, but I know it a little in my field of literature. And I do think that an artist is meant to have a mind that is controlled and can be directed, and can be disciplined. And even inside that then the spirit of intuition from God works.

But the other, 'free association of ideas', is just laying yourself out to Satan. And our minds are meant to be controlled. We're meant to bring every thought into captivity of Christ Jesus. And unless your mind is in some sense an organized disciplined mind, you will never be able to understand what the spirit is saying within, because God is not a God of confusion. He doesn't move by free association. But you know how we're encouraged almost to take in any thought that comes to us. It's almost -- you're a red blooded, democratic American if you accept any thought that comes to the threshold of your mind.

Well, that's not right. Our minds are meant to be controlled, disciplined, protected, guarded. Old à Kempis [Thomas à Kempis, 1380-1341] has probably written the book that I think is regarded as the most inspired, next to the Bible. And it's "The Imitation of Christ". If you've never read it, well I think I bought this for 2 and six pence in 1950 or something. So it's a little tattered. But it's that kind of a book, you read it and meditate on it at your bedside.

But he says this, "Often I wish I had remained silent and had not been among men. But why is it we're so ready to chatter and gossip with each other? When we so seldom return to silence without some injury to our conscience. The reason why we are so fond of talking with each other is that we think to find consolation in this matter and to refresh a heart weary with many cares. And we prefer to speak and think of those things which we like and desire, or of those things which we dislike. Alas however, all this is often to no purpose for this outward consolation is no small obstacle to inner and divine consolation."

In other words, one of the reasons our mind gets so little from our spirits is because we dissipate our minds so much in conversation. It is good to talk. It's good to converse with each other if you really have something to say to each other. But it's a shame just to converse because you're trying to get from each other what you're meant to get from God, or it's a shame to converse just to pass the time. But you know how we're brought up to think you're better talking than silent.

Now, I don't know what we think. We probably think there's some pearls of wisdom that will drop

into somebody's lap. But really, it is not right. Our conversation is meant to be controlled and is meant to be disciplined. And we're meant to control how much we talk. He says, "We could enjoy much peace if we did not busy ourselves with what other people say and do, for this is no concern of ours. How can anyone remain long at peace who meddles in other people's affairs?"

And I don't know if it speaks to your dear heart, but I have seen it among us as brothers and sisters. I think there's a great danger of idle chatter. And I don't know that it's even so important because of the harm the little bit of idle chatter or gossip does somebody else, but it does irreparable damage to your own spirit. And it highly unfits your mind to receive directions from your spirit when you're involved in that kind of idle, careless conversation. "How can anyone remain long at peace who meddles in other people's affairs, who seeks occasion to run around and makes little or no attempt at recollection? Blessed are the single hearted for they shall enjoy much peace."

Oh, a spiritual mind comes from spending some time in silence, really. Just spending some time in silence! It doesn't actually need to be a lot of wildly enthusiastic prayer, just sitting with maybe a book like that in your hand, and just sitting in silence, and just thinking about some of the things that it says. Loved ones, that in itself would begin to change your mind, and begin to make it receptive and perceptive enough to begin to understand what your spirit is saying.

You know the way television has gone, more and more violence. I mean, you must be fed up with the trick as much as I am. If there's no story to the thing they have a quiet scene, and then they bring a railroad running through it. So that it kind of jerks you into life. And television is driven to that. The violence has to get more and more. Do you know why? Because our perceptions are getting coarser and coarser. That's it! Really! Our perceptions are getting coarser, and coarser.

And there's no doubt in any of our minds why the little guys shoot their dads like that. They wouldn't have thought of shooting their dads if they hadn't seen on television that that's normal. And so we're becoming coarser and coarser people. Do you know why the – I forget the American name, 'billboard'. Am I doing okay? Is it 'billboards'? We call them 'hoardings' in Ireland. Why? They don't hoard anything, but we call them 'hoardings'. But the 'billboards', do you notice they have to be brighter and brighter paint? And they have to be more and more startling, and if possible more and more suggestive, because it's getting more and more difficult to get this society of ours 'by the throat' to get their attention.

Well I'll tell you very fast, it's just a little joke. But the fellow was having trouble with his mule. He couldn't make it move at all. And this old guy came up, you know it Jim, this old guy came up and said, "Okay, okay." The owner explained that he couldn't get him to obey. He couldn't get him to obey at all. The mule's owner told him everything. This old fellow took a two by four, went right back like that and slashed the mule. And he said, "First, you get his attention!"

And that's what our society is trying to do. It's trying to get our attention. And your mind is becoming coarser and coarser and needs stronger and stronger doses.

That's why, loved ones, you do have to engage in a whole renewing of your mind, because here's the way the Holy Spirit speaks. "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door I will come into him and sup with him and he with me." That's a gentleman speaking. And he will not blast in on you. And unless your mind is sensitive and perceptive, you will not be

able to hear what that gentleman says. And so it does require renewing the mind. And it does require some time spent quietly, by yourself, each day.

Would you just answer that in your own mind? How much time do you spend just sitting quietly with a book, and thinking about a few sentences? Now, I'm not talking about prayer. How much time do you spend like that? Well, do you realize that probably every one of us would say, "No time?" And do you know why we'd say it? We'd say, "We have no time. We have no time. I can't sit around like that. I have too much to do." And so we go on, and we spin our wheels like mad, because we can't understand what God wants us to do, because we haven't time to get the reception apparatus into shape.

So loved ones, that's something of what we need. We need a mind that is controlled; a mind that is renewed; a mind that is spiritual enough to think about the things that Jesus and the Father is engaged in; the things that are real and that are eternal. Now, I pray that you'll begin to do it. These are beautiful days that we have. We're going into summer time, and it's a beautiful time to have a little time each day when you sit quietly.

Do you know what the Chinese used to do if they had a window that was facing west? They invited their friends out for a barbeque? No. For a game of volleyball? No, they invited their friends out to a 'sunset appreciation evening'. And they had the chairs around the window, and they watched the sun setting. And you can see in that ancient old society just some of the sanity that God built into the world right from the beginning; and much of what you and I have lost.

And so these are some of the reasons why God is being faithful. He's giving you directions in your spirit. But the old mind is so coarse and so untrained that it can't tell what the spirit is saying. And that's where you get the confusion on guidance.

So I do pray that you'll take the steps. You can actually take them. Just set aside fifteen minutes, half an hour in the evening. Turn that thing off! Don't look at the wretched thing! And just spend fifteen minutes or half an hour with a book in your hand and thinking even of one sentence, so that your mind isn't empty. And just appreciate some of the truths that you know are real. And gradually that old mind of yours will begin to come into shape. It will! And it will begin to be able to understand what the spirit is saying to it, and your life will begin to take on order.

Let us pray. Dear Father, we thank you that you have a way of sanity for us to go. We thank you Lord that we don't need to be at the mercy of the polls. We don't need to be at the mercy of the SAT [Stanford Achievement Test] test. We don't need to be at the mercy of what this vocational guidance officer things we should do. Lord we thank you that you have put us here for a purpose and you are guiding our lives along towards that purpose. And you are able to let us know which corners to turn and which steps to go up or down.

And Lord we thank you that our minds are able to understand what you say to us in our spirits. Our minds are able to apply those truths and those guidance steps to our own practical lives. Lord we would begin to stay our mind upon you. "Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." Lord, we would commit ourselves to staying our mind upon you for some time each day, so that our mind will partake of some of the quietness of heaven, and will begin to become sensitive, and to throw off the coarseness and the insensitivity that the society tries to bring about in it.

And dear Lord Jesus we thank you that there's a whole world surrounding you, and your Father, and all the angels, and archangels; a whole world that is more real than this one; a whole world that has more people in it than this one. And Lord, that this is just a little colony here on this planet, a very small piece of relative 'unreality' in the middle of a great universe of reality. And oh Lord, we would enter into that universe at your right hand by faith, by letting our minds dwell upon the things that are unseen. For they are heavenly and the things that are seen are earthly.

Now the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us now and ever more. Amen.

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