

We have the mind of Christ

Of all of the challenges of mortality, perhaps there is nothing as difficult, nor as important as learning to control our thoughts. Ralph Waldo Emerson captured the importance of our thoughts: “Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.” The Apostle Paul admonished us to become spiritually-minded by “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5; 2 Nephi 6:74).

3 Nephi 13:5, “what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, Even as I am.”

The devil, our common adversary, lies to us about our thoughts - saying that our thoughts either do not matter or can not be controlled at all. Yet a quick perusal of nearly any media choice shows that Satan seeks to dominate our thoughts by disseminating his vile and degrading content. Through his near-death grip on modern media, the devil has truly become the “god of this world, [who] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

One day each of us will stand before the bar of God “to be judged according to our works” (Alma 9:21), which includes our desires, thoughts, and words (Alma 9:22-24). There is a saying, “Tell me what you think about when you do not have to think, and I will tell you what you are.” In the end, the lives we have lived will be nothing more than the performance of our most predominant thoughts. So let us think good thoughts!

Christ-like Thinking

When Christ was asked which of all the commandments was the greatest, He responded that we should “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Matthew 22:37). Loving God with all our heart and mind ensures that we keep all the other commandments. When we truly love God, we willingly do all that He asks including loving his children, our brothers and sisters.

The greatest aspiration of every follower of Christ should be to obtain the heart and “mind of Christ” and thereby become more like the Savior. Moroni counsels us to “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love” (Moroni 7:53). While we must do everything we can to obtain the gift of charity, it, unfortunately, comes on the Lord’s timetable, and not our own.

Along with our change of heart, our minds must be renewed through our own diligent effort and by the Spirit of the Lord. Over time, “natural man” thinking can be replaced by its spiritual opposites. Virtue replaces uncleanness; love stills anger; faith conquers fear; cheerfulness dispels depression; and thankfulness chases away ingratitude. Changing our thinking invites the Spirit to be with us always, filling us with “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, [and] temperance” (Galatians 5:22-23).

Improving Our Thinking

Changing our thoughts isn't easy, but it can be done. It involves us becoming more Christ-centered in our thinking, including by “look[ing] unto [Christ] in every thought” (D&C 6:16b), “forsak[ing] all evil and cleav[ing] unto all good” (D&C 95:3a).

We must cultivate a personal “mind of Christ” as we would tend a garden. Alma compares the “word unto a seed”, which we are to plant in our hearts and minds (Alma 16:152). We cultivate our growing faith through prayer, obedience to God's commandments, and “feasting upon the word of Christ” (2 Nephi 13:30), veritable Miracle-Gro for our souls. If we patiently “nourish” the word with faith and diligence, we are promised that it eventually will become “a tree springing up unto everlasting life” (Alma 16:170).

The Mind of Christ

1 Corinthians 2:16 - *For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.*

Meditate on everything you know about Jesus during His incarnation.

What kind of things must have been going on in His mind much of the time?



A word cloud featuring various virtues and emotions. The words are arranged in a horizontal line, with some overlapping. The colors of the words include yellow, red, orange, green, blue, and grey. The words are: Truth, Sympathy, Devotion, compassion, Benevolence, gentleness, Love, mercy, submission, Grace, Thankfulness, forgiveness, praise, Grief, zeal, Endurance, Humility, character, Trust, and patience. The word 'Grief' has a small superscript '5' next to it.

The Most Amazing Miracle

- ▶ The miracles that Jesus performed during His earthly sojourn had two primary objectives. First, they were intended to validate Jesus and His Words. He expected people to observe His works and realize that His teachings and claims were true because only God could do such things as He did.

John 5:37 *But I have a greater witness than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.*

- Second, however, the miracles of Jesus dramatized and foreshadowed the new era which had begun - an era of healing, restoration, uprightness, and new beginnings. The Kingdom of God which Jesus announced has come to earth with real, transforming power, and the miracles of Jesus were a way of telling people what more to expect.

John 2:1-11

And on the third day of the week, there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

And when they wanted wine, his mother said unto him, They have no wine. Jesus said unto her, Woman, what wilt thou have me to do for thee? that will I do; for mine hour is not yet come. His mother said unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, see that ye do it. There were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

Jesus said unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he said, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare unto him. When the governor of the feast had tasted the water which was made wine, (he knew not whence it was, but the servants who drew the water knew,) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And said unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk; then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and the faith of his disciples was strengthened in him

Implications

We have the mind of Christ. Savor that assertion for a moment. What are the implications of this astonishing statement? There are at least two.

First, possessing the mind of Christ suggests a potential for learning, understanding, thinking, planning, and all other cognitive functions, which goes beyond even the most sophisticated mind of the most learned unbeliever. It is one thing to *know* something; it is quite another thing to *know what to do* with what we know. Having the mind of Christ means that we have the capacity for knowing on a scale that is both broad and deep, and for knowing how to use what we know in ways consistent with the character and purposes of Christ Himself.

Second, possessing the mind of Christ implies stewardship of that amazing resource. We have received the mind of Christ so that we might actually *think* like Jesus, and that to the full extent of our individual capability. In other words, we must not let our thought processes be shaped, directed, or ruled by anything other than the mind of Christ. We must know how to recognize the sweet and alluring breezes of false teachings (Eph 4:14), the oh-so-appealing suggestions of the devil (1 Peter 5:8-9), and the many false road signs of our unbelieving age (1 John 2:15-17). And to recognize these, but rule over them with the mind of Christ, taking every thought captive to make it obedient to the purpose of Jesus. (2 Cor. 10:3-5)

Having the mind of Christ, therefore, means that we possess great potential for learning, understanding, and thinking like Jesus. At the same time it means that Jesus Himself expects us to be good stewards of this gift, so that we don't return our thoughts to him at the end of each day without having invested them for His enrichment and glory.

(Matt. 25:14-31)

Application

Having the mind of Christ is no guarantee that we will *use* the mind of Christ as He intends. For this to be the case we need to apply ourselves diligently to learning the mind of Christ and how to use it for His Kingdom and glory. Only as we *exercise* the mind of Christ which we possess can we expect *that* mind to become the formative power for all our thinking, observing, understanding, planning, and so forth.

Without a deliberate, determined effort to grow in the mind of Christ, we simply bury that valuable talent in the napkin of unbelieving thought, leaving it to lie fallow, uncultivated, and unfruitful. **Be sure, that a day is coming when the Lord will require an accounting from us of this stewardship. We need to make sure we will hear His “Well done” when we do.**

THE QUESTION BECOMES:

How can we consistently exercise the mind of Christ so as to endure that, increasingly:

- His thoughts become our thoughts?
- His plans become our plans?
- His insights become our insights?
- His outlook become our outlook?

For reflection & discussion

1. What does it mean for you to have the mind of Christ? How should that show itself in your life? (What potential does this have for you?)
2. Do you think Christians should be making more use of the mind of Christ than at present? In what ways?
3. What are the greater obstacles to your increasing in the mind of Christ? That is, what keeps you from growing in your mind so that you are better able and more consistent at thinking Christ's thoughts after Him?
4. What would you expect to see as evidence that you were actually growing in your ability to engage and use the mind of Christ? What potential does this hold out for you?
5. How should you take up the responsibility of growing in the mind of Christ? What would your goals be in this study? What would you hope to learn?

Encountering the Mind of Christ

John 6:63 - It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

► Brain & Mind

False assumption -

1. That all thought life is a function of the brain. (brain and mind, in other words, are merely the same)
2. The brain is the control center (rather than a contributing agent)

As the brain dictates, so we think, and so we do. The conclusion to which such thinking leads is that human beings do not have agency; they are the product of the brain's response to external and internal stimuli, over which the person has very little, if any real, control.

► Mind & Soul

In Scriptural thinking the mind, while it engages the brain - as well as every other member of our bodies - is not limited to it.

The mind, like the heart and conscience, is a *spiritual* and not a *physical* entity.

The mind has its origins in God. It best connects with our bodily members - our brains and hand and so forth - when it is in communion with Him Who made it, Who sustains it by His Word of power (Heb 1:3), and Who is able to shape and transform our natural mind more into a mind of Christ.

- ▶ [DC 4:1b](#) therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, **mind**, and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day;
- ▶ [Romans 7:24](#) And now I see another law, even the commandment of Christ, and it is imprinted in my **mind**.
- ▶ [DC 6:7a](#) Behold, thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me, and I did enlighten thy **mind**; and now I tell thee these things, that thou mayest know that thou hast been enlightened by the spirit of truth;
- ▶ [DC 6:11a](#) Verily, verily I say unto you, If you desire a further witness, cast your **mind** upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things; did I not speak peace to your **mind** concerning the matter?
- ▶ [DC 8:1c](#) yea, behold, I will tell you in your **mind** and in your heart by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you, and which shall dwell in your heart.
- ▶ [DC 10:7a](#) Verily, verily I say unto you, I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your **mind**, which shall fill your soul with joy,
- ▶ [DC 67:3b](#) not with the carnal, neither natural **mind**, but with the spiritual; for no man has seen God at any time in the flesh, except quickened by the Spirit of God;
- ▶ [Romans 8:7](#) Because the carnal **mind** is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

- ▶ [2 Nephi 6:74](#) Remember, to be carnally minded, is death, and to be spiritually minded, is life eternal.
- ▶ [Mosiah 1:39](#) For I have not commanded you to come up hither to trifle with the words which I shall speak, but that you should hearken unto me, and open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand, and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view.
- ▶ [Mosiah 5:52](#) But if ye will turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and put your trust in him, and serve him with all diligence of mind; if ye do this, he will, according to his own will and pleasure, deliver you out of bondage
- ▶ [Alma 11:26](#) And there was no inequality among them, for the Lord did pour out his Spirit on all the face of the land, to prepare the minds of the children of men, or to prepare their hearts to receive the word which should be taught among them at the time of his coming,
- ▶ [Alma 12:133](#) He knew that the dark veil of unbelief being cast away from his mind, and the light which did light up his mind, which was the light of the glory of God, which was a marvelous light of his goodness
- ▶ [Alma 16:161](#) And this because you know; for ye know that the word hath swelled your souls, and ye also know that it hath sprouted up, that your understanding doth begin to be enlightened, and your mind doth begin to expand

Resources for the mind of Christ

Jesus said that His Word and Spirit are the best resources for us to engage in nurturing His way of thinking. The Word of God, in the hands of the Spirit of God, can bring the life of God and Christ to greater brilliance and fruitfulness in us.

We have the mind of Christ, but we will only unlock the rich potential of that mind to the extent that we expose our fallen minds to the redeeming grace and transforming truth of the Word and Spirit of Christ.

If our approach to the Scriptures and to walking in the Spirit is merely casual, then we will never know our full potential for thinking with the mind of Christ. And we will be unable to fulfill our stewardship of that great gift in a way that will be pleasing to Him Who gave it.

Resources for the mind of Christ Cont.

Growing into the mind of Christ, as in every other area of our lives, involves coming into the presence of God, in His Word and Spirit, so that the glory of God which we encounter there can renew and restore our minds after the example and image of Christ.

Read: 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

We must make it our business to read, meditate in, and study the Word of God daily, cover to cover, deep and wide, over and over, and with every intention of living according to what we learn there.

AND, we must master what it says in Galatians 5:16-23. We will discover the power of the Spirit working in us as we do. 18

For reflection & discussion

1. Do you agree that the mind is separate from - although certainly involved with - the brain? What is the soul, and what is the place of the mind in the soul?
2. Why is reading, meditating in, and studying the Scriptures so important to growing the mind of Christ?
3. What does it mean to be in communion with the Lord throughout the course of a day? How would you counsel a new believer to practice this? What is the role of the mind in this activity?
4. Meditate on Galatians 5:16-23. What's the difference between walking in the flesh and walking in the Spirit? What is the role of the mind in this?
5. Summarize your understanding of how the Word and Spirit of God work to transform our minds more into the mind of Christ.
6. Would you say that your time in the Scriptures, and your attentiveness to God's Spirit, are what they ought to be for you to think increasingly with the mind of Christ?
7. "He enlightens our minds." DC 6:7a - In what ways does the Spirit enlighten our minds?

Getting Your Bearings

*Matthew 26:51 - Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father,
and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?*

Living Fully In the World

Jesus lived fully in the world. I mean, fully. He lived in the world of people and things, and He lived in the world of angels, departed saints, spiritual forces of wickedness, and His heavenly Father. He lived fully in the world, always taking His bearings not from things He could see, but from things He could not see. The mind of Jesus worked in harmony with the unseen things of the spiritual world. The operations of His mind on the earthly and human plane were strictly shaped and guided by His awareness of and participation in the unseen realm of glory.

If we want to think like Jesus we're going to have to learn how to take our bearings from unseen things as well. The writer of Hebrews tells us that faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen (Heb. 11:1). The Apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesians, that the eyes of their hearts might be opened so that they could see into the unseen realm where Jesus sits at the Father's right hand, exalted in glory (Eph. 1:17-23). And he commanded the Colossians to set their minds on such things, to take their bearings from the realm where Christ sits enthroned in glory, and not from the changeable, unreliable circumstances, people, and things of this visible world (Col. 3:1-13).

Learning to think with the mind of Christ, therefore, will require that we follow this pattern and counsel and begin to live more fully in the world - the *whole* world, seen and unseen.

The Landscape of Unseen Things

The Scriptures actually have quite a bit to say about this unseen realm, and they say it in ways designed to stimulate our minds, engage our imaginations, and capture our hearts. We know, for example, that in the unseen realm angels exist, powerful spiritual beings which strike terror in the hearts of mere men, but whose purpose in being is to assist us in our journey and labors here (Heb. 1:13-14; Alma 10:23, 16:145; 3 Nephi 8:25-26; Moroni 7:41; D&C 17:2e, 26:3e, 36, 43:6b-c). Elisha could “see” these powerful beings gathered for his protection and defense (2 Kgs. 6:15-17). We should be able to “see” them with the eye of faith, believing on the evidence of Scripture alone that our angels always behold the face of God, and are ready to come to our assistance as He directs (Matt. 18:10). Heb. 1:14; Eph. 3:9-21; Ether 5:9, 19; D&C 83:6i

Further, the saints who have preceded us into paradise constitute a great assembly whose example can inspire us to bolder and more consistent exertions in the Lord’s work (Heb. 11, 12:1-2, Luke 2:13-14).

Then there is the Spirit of God Who sanctifies us, gifts and equips us, brings forth fruit in us, and empowers us for obedience and witness (Phi. 2:12-13; Acts 1:8; Moroni 8:29). And He is able to do exceeding abundantly more in this regard than we have ever dared to ask or think (Eph. 3:20).

Getting Our Bearings

So the unseen realm is a powerful resource for making our way in this life. We will be exercising the mind of Christ to the extent that we are able to “paint out” the landscape of unseen things, creating with our sanctified imaginations a glorious, expansive, and never-quite-complete portrait of the heavenly realm, and then using that landscape as a focus of meditation and bold obedience in the Lord.

Make it a point, as you read the Scriptures, of jotting down anything you come across concerning the unseen realm. Summarize what Elisha saw. Describe the details of Christ on His throne as you see them in the Scriptures. Write down what it feels like to be suddenly accosted by an angel - like Jacob, Elijah, Joshua or Daniel. Envision the angels of the Lord coming to your defense against spiritual forces of wickedness in high places (Ps. 35:1-5; Ps. 91:11-13).

As you pray and meditate, don't forget to praise the Lord and thank Him for the resources and beauty of this glorious unseen realm. The more you engage and describe it, the more you will delight in it, inhabit it, and find yourself saying, as casually as Jesus did to Peter, that God is able to rush these resources to your aid, and all you have to do is ask. And when you get to that point in your daily walk with the Lord, you'll be living more fully in the world and thinking with the mind of Christ.

For reflection & discussion

1. How great a role does the “landscape of unseen things” play in your walk with the Lord at present?
2. What does it mean to “take our bearings” from unseen things? How does this lead us to engage the mind of Christ?
3. In what sense can we say that we are living “more fully in the world” when we take our bearings from unseen things? How is this manifestation of the mind of Christ?
4. What are the greatest obstacles to doing this more consistently? How can believers help one another to overcome obstacles?
5. Suppose you could achieve more of the mind of Christ with respect to this unseen realm. How would you expect that to affect your daily life in the world?

Mind of Christ - What Perspective Does Christ Have?

- ▶ A desire to bring glory to God
 - ▶ By our faith (Praise with our lips/obey His word/Be faithful when persecuted/Face death with faith)
 - ▶ By our worship (Pray in His name/Give generously/Believe/Love Him/Love Others/ Fasting)
 - ▶ In all we do (Thoughts/Produce spiritual fruit/Seek the good of others/Remain sexual pure/Live honorably among unbelievers)
- ▶ A longing to provide salvation for sinners
- ▶ A perspective on humility and obedience
- ▶ A compassionate heart
- ▶ Prayerful dependence on God

Closing thought: Having the mind of Christ is not something that is reserved only for “perfect” people. When believers have the mind of Christ, we understand God’s plan for the world and understand that He wants to bring about His purpose. It doesn’t mean that we are infallible and can start “playing God” in the lives of other people.