

## UNIT 1

# BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

### *Hymn Part 1* CHRIST'S FREEDOM

*"Let this mind be in you,  
which was also in Christ Jesus."*

PHILIPPIANS 2:5



### DAY 1

Characteristics of a Christlike Mind, Part 1

### DAY 2

Characteristics of a Christlike Mind, Part 2

### DAY 3

Philippians 2:5-11

### DAY 4

Developing the Mind of Christ

### DAY 5

Fix Your Thoughts on Jesus

### Why You Will Find This Unit Helpful

You will understand what God will do in you and expect of you during this course (and for the rest of your life) to develop the mind of Christ in you. You will begin to cultivate a deeper intimacy with God in prayer and in His Word.

## **Lifelong Objective**

In Christ you will set, renew, and gird up your mind in such a way that God will develop in you a spiritual mind characterized as alive, single-minded, lowly, pure, responsive, and peaceful.

## **Summary of God's Work in You**

God's desire is for you to be like Christ. The one aspect of your personality that He will constantly measure for Christlikeness is your mind. God helps in your growth by revealing through His Word the expectations He has for your mind. Through His Word, His work, His grace, and His Spirit, you can have the mind of Christ.

## **Unit Learning Goals**

- You will understand the meaning of six characteristics of the Christlike mind.
- You will understand what God will do to develop Christlike qualities in your mind.
- You will understand three stages in the process of developing the mind of Christ.
- You will demonstrate your willingness to set your mind on Christ and submit to His renewing of your mind.
- You will understand your role in developing the mind of Christ.
- You will know the focus of your thoughts related to the Apostle and the High Priest roles of Christ.
- You will demonstrate your commitment to begin developing the mind of Christ.

## **What You Will Do to Begin Developing the Mind of Christ**

- You will study the characteristics of a Christlike mind.
- You will set your mind and attention on Christ.
- You will begin to allow Christ to renew your mind.
- You will gird up your mind for action.

## **Scripture Memory Verse**

"Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

## **The Mind of Christ Cards Related to This Unit**

- 1A. Scripture Memory—Philippians 2:5-8
- 1B. Scripture Memory—Philippians 2:9-11
- 2A. Six Characteristics of a Christlike Mind
- 2B. Three Stages in Developing the Mind of Christ
- 3A. Unit 1: Scripture Memory—Romans 12:2

## **Optional DVD Message by T. W. Hunt**

- Session 2, Part 1, Chapters 1-4: His Lifestyle



## DAY 1

# CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHRISTLIKE MIND, PART 1

### Today's Bible Meditation

“Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”  
 (Rom. 12:2).

### Name of Christ for Today

The Bread of Life  
 (John 6:35)

### Prayer to Begin the Lesson

*Jesus, I am hungry and thirsty for Your righteousness. I want to be like You. You are the Bread of life itself. Fill me with Yourself so that I can experience the abundant life You came to give. Amen.*

1. Begin by reading in the left margin the Scripture for meditation and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer to begin your study. Reading those items each day will help prepare you for our time together.

Welcome to *The Mind of Christ*. You are beginning a lifelong process of developing the mind of Christ. Right now that thought may be too big to understand. Through Paul, God has commanded His people to “let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). The mind of Christ! We are not told to have a good mind, not a mind purified by discipline, not a sharpened intellect, not even the highest of human attainment in godliness and virtue—but the very mind of Christ Himself! We are not merely to resemble Jesus. We are to think His very thoughts. This is not a wish but a command. We are to have the mind of the only perfect human who ever walked our earth—the mind of the God-man Jesus Christ. Can you see why this will be a lifelong process? Let’s get started.

2. If you have not read the introduction (pp. 8–11), do that before continuing. Please check the box when you have read it.

3. You will learn many names of Christ in this study. What name did you learn today? \_\_\_\_\_

These first three activities are simple. Future activities will become more meaningful. We began with these to get you off to a good start in our study together. Please complete each instruction or activity as best you can so that God will have the maximum opportunity to work in your life.

Six times the New Testament describes or implies what the Christian’s mind is to be like. In each case the word *mind* is mentioned. From these we can derive six adjectives that describe God’s ideal for your mind. Let’s begin our study by looking at these six characteristics.



## SIX CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHRISTLIKE MIND

1. **Alive.** “The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6, NASB).
2. **Single-minded.** “I am afraid, lest ... your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3, NASB).
3. **Lowly.** “In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Phil. 2:3).
4. **Pure.** “Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled” (Titus 1:15).
5. **Responsive.** “He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45, NASB).
6. **Peaceful.** “The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace” (Rom. 8:6, NASB).

Throughout this course you will look in detail at the life of Jesus. You will see that these six characteristics were true of His mind. Let's look at what each one means for your mind.

### Alive

Paul tells us, "The mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6, NASB). Our first and last characteristics—alive and peaceful—come from this verse. Without Christ we are dead (see Eph. 2:1). In Christ we have everlasting life (see John 3:36). Jesus went further than saying we live. Jesus said that He came so that we could have abundant life (see John 10:10). You constantly demonstrate this life (or death) by the choices you make. When you set your mind on the Spirit, you experience life.

#### 4. What is one characteristic of a Christlike mind? \_\_\_\_\_

You can choose what you will think about. That is why the will is so important. "The mind set on the flesh is death" (Rom. 8:6, NASB). The mind that is set on the Spirit is alive and active. Life is distinguished by activity. The mind of Christ is not lazy. It enjoys occupation. At times it reflects on the person of God. At times it prays. At times it brings the intentions of God into our dialogue with another Christian or with a non-Christian. The mind that is alive chooses the spiritual in preference to the fleshly.

*The mind that is alive chooses the spiritual in preference to the fleshly.*

### Single-Minded

A second description of the mind occurs in 2 Corinthians 11:3: "I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ" (NASB). In other words, the mind of Christ is single-minded in devotion to Christ.

One of our spiritual problems is becoming distracted or being led astray. Concentration is difficult because the mind is bombarded by so many distractions. Most of our minds dart off in hundreds of directions during the course of a day. Single-mindedness is an act of the mind. A single-minded Christian pays attention to Christ, His commands, His person, and His ways.

Your mind must be preoccupied with sincere, pure devotion to Christ. Single-mindedness is the discipline of attention. We will see in more detail the great importance of your will in future lessons. You can direct or control your attention with a focus on Christ and His kingdom.

*A single-minded Christian pays attention to Christ, His commands, His person, and His ways.*

#### 5. What is a second characteristic of a Christlike mind? \_\_\_\_\_

### Lowly

Paul gave another description of the godly mind in Philippians 2:3: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." The mind is to be lowly. Humility, a twin of lowliness, will be treated later in the study of servanthood (unit 6). Someone cannot be humble unless he is lowly. Humility follows lowliness of mind. Humility speaks of a relationship to others and to God. Lowliness is a state of mind.

The opposite of lowliness is haughtiness, pride, or arrogance. Lowliness is a trait that must be cultivated. Members of the body of Christ learn to submit to one another by lowliness. We can foster lowliness by concentrating on a genuine appreciation for the person of God. We start there. Lowliness must come first in order for the perspective to be right.

*A lowly Christian has the security of understanding his position under the greatness of God.*

Those who encountered God in the Bible almost always first experienced genuine terror or fear before Him. This is a godly fear, not a carnal fear. Those who met God knew the need for lowliness. They immediately recognized the vast difference between God and themselves. A clear view of God's greatness will lead you to a proper view of yourself. A lowly Christian has the security of understanding his position under the greatness of God.

6. What is a third characteristic of a Christlike mind? \_\_\_\_\_

7. You have learned about three characteristics of a Christlike mind.  
Write the appropriate characteristic in front of its definition.

\_\_\_\_\_ A proper perspective of my position under the greatness of God

\_\_\_\_\_ Disciplined attention on Christ and His kingdom

\_\_\_\_\_ Activity of the mind that chooses the spiritual over the fleshly

8. Conclude today's lesson by focusing on Christ and His kingdom.  
Spend time in prayer.

- Talk to the Lord about what He is doing or preparing to do in your life and church.
- Thank God for the privilege of becoming like His Son, Jesus Christ.
- Acknowledge your proper position of lowliness before His greatness.

DAY 2

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHRISTLIKE MIND, PART 2

1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verse and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer to begin your study.

2. Can you remember the three characteristics of a Christlike mind that you studied yesterday? Write the three below and check your work.

---

**Pure**

Paul spoke about the mind in Titus 1:15: "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." Purity is depicted as a Christian's natural state. Impurity is reached by corruption of the mind and conscience.

3. What is one characteristic of a Christlike mind? \_\_\_\_\_

The natural spiritual state—one that is filled with God's Spirit and growing in Christ—is difficult to maintain. One reason is the constant assault of information on our senses. Tempters have opportunities to take us into realms of thought never known before. Television and computers, for example, can channel impurities right into the privacy of our homes. Lust is grander. Jealousy is more treacherous. Greed is simply the road to an important position, and anxiety is more fashionable. Sin is everywhere.

To overcome the temptations toward impurity, you must want to be pure. Until that desire becomes your passion, you will be overwhelmed by the impressions flooding into your senses. If your desire for purity is sincere, God will provide you with the way of overcoming impurities (see 1 Cor. 10:13). Your safest course is to escape temptation entirely. The psalmist used this approach when he said, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes" (Ps. 101:3). Strength comes prior to temptation, not during it. Overcoming is a prior act. It involves making a decision to remain pure before the temptation comes. If you have not made up your mind before the temptation, you are going to be vulnerable.

4. What is the safest way to maintain purity in the face of temptation?

---

**Responsive**

When Jesus appeared to His disciples on the evening of the resurrection, "He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45, NASB). The Lord could not open some minds today! When Jesus chose the disciples, He recognized in them a quality that made them fit subjects for 3½ years of intensive training. The disciples did not always learn quickly, but they were teachable. They at least wanted to learn. We might call this quality open-mindedness, but modern

**Today's Bible Meditation**

"To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6).

**Name of Christ  
for Today**

Image of the Invisible God  
(Col. 1:15)

**Prayer to Begin  
the Lesson**

*Jesus, Image of the Invisible God, show me the Father. Help me come to know the Father as You reveal to me what He is like. Because He is invisible, help me focus my eyes on You and on the example of Your life. Amen.*

connotations of that word give it a meaning foreign to the quality with which Jesus was working. They were responsive to His teaching.

We see the opposite of responsiveness in 2 Corinthians 3:12-16. Speaking of the Israelites in the desert, Paul said “their minds were blinded” (v. 14). Paul wrote, “Unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart” (v. 15). In Christ, however, the covering is taken away (see v. 14). The spiritual dullness of the Pharisees and Sadducees was willful. They were smug in their self-righteousness and missed the coming of their Messiah. To be unresponsive to God is to be spiritually dull-witted.

Responsiveness must be to God. We must not be responsive to anything and everything. The disciples were sensitive when they asked, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). In this petition they were not merely envying the enormous ability of Jesus to perform miracles (earlier they had been given authority to heal the sick and cast out demons). Rather, they perceived in Jesus a relationship to His Father that they wanted to imitate. Jesus was intensely spiritual, and they wanted that quality of spirituality in their own lives.

Responsiveness to God is indispensable for progress in your spiritual life. You need to be sensitive to God’s Holy Spirit. How can you cultivate that sensitivity? One way is to spend time in God’s Word. Specifically, Jesus opened the minds of the disciples to Scripture. God wants you to understand His Word, but you cannot understand it if you do not spend time in it. Prayer also sensitizes your spirit. When the disciples wanted to imitate Jesus, it was His teaching on prayer that they asked for.

*How can you cultivate that sensitivity? One way is to spend time in God’s Word.*

*Prayer also sensitizes your spirit.*

---

 5. What are two disciplines that can indicate a responsive mind?

---

The Mind of Christ Cards at the back of this book are one of the tools provided to help you. You can carry these cards with you. Throughout the day you may have free time on a break, waiting in an office, or another opportunity. Use the cards to memorize Scripture. Some of the cards will help you review the content you are studying. Saturate your mind with the things of God.

 6. Turn to the back of the book and tear out the following cards that relate to this unit.

- 1A. Scripture Memory—Philippians 2:5-8
- 1B. Scripture Memory—Philippians 2:9-11
- 2A. Six Characteristics of a Christlike Mind
- 2B. Three Stages in Developing the Mind of Christ
- 3A. Unit 1: Scripture Memory—Romans 12:2

 7. While the idea is fresh on your mind, take a few minutes to begin memorizing Romans 12:2 (Card 3A).

Jesus was sensitive and responsive in the utmost degree to His Father. Jesus said, "I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me" (John 8:28, NASB). He claimed to see what the Father was doing, to hear what the Father was saying, to do nothing independently of the Father, and to be taught by the Father. Jesus devoted Himself to reflecting the mind of the Father, and His reflection was exact. As the Father is to the Son, so Christ is to you.

- Jesus imitated the Father. You are to imitate Christ.
- Jesus saw the activity of the Father. You pay close attention to the known earthly activity of Jesus (also to His present activity).
- Jesus heard from the Father. You must hear from Jesus.
- Jesus was taught by the Father. You are taught by Jesus.
- Jesus could do nothing independently of the Father, and you cannot function independently of Jesus.
- Jesus was very close to the Father. You must remain close to Jesus.

### Peaceful

Romans 8:6 has already given us the adjective *alive* to apply to the spiritual mind. It also gives another word: "The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace." The spiritual mind is peaceful. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit (see Gal. 5:22), not an attainment. Your work is setting your mind. God's work is providing the peace. Jesus had peace. His life was completely free from sin and the ravages of the world system. He promised rest to the weary and burdened (see Matt. 11:28). You find rest by taking His yoke.

*Your work is setting your mind. God's work is providing the peace.*

8. Name the three remaining characteristics of a Christlike mind.

1. Alive	3. Lowly	5. R _____
2. Single-minded	4. P _____	6. P _____

To summarize this week's unit, you are to do three things in developing the mind of Christ. You are to—

1. set your mind;
2. renew your mind;
3. gird up your mind.

In doing these things, you are imitating Christ. As you progress through this course, you will be engaging in one of these mental operations. The New Testament mentions six things your mind is to become: alive, single-minded, lowly, pure, responsive, and peaceful. As you engage in these mental operations, you are obeying Scripture and becoming like Christ. Each of our units will relate to one of these key adjectives of a Christlike mind.

9. Pray as you finish today's lesson. Review the six characteristics of a Christlike mind on Card 2A and ask God to work in you to produce all six of those characteristics.

DAY 3

## PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

Today's Bible Meditation  
 "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you"  
 (Luke 17:21).

Name of Christ for Today  
 The Christ [Anointed One] (Matt. 16:16)

Prayer to Begin the Lesson

*Christ Jesus, You are the Messiah—God's Anointed One. I'm anxious to see some progress in developing Your mind in me, but I'm already aware that this will be a long process. I am thankful I don't have to do it alone. You dwell in me to help with the process. I love You. I look forward to deepening our relationship and to developing Your mind in me. Amen.*

*Alive*

1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verse and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer to begin your study.

You have studied six characteristics of a Christlike mind. They describe God's ideal for your mind. During your study of *The Mind of Christ*, God will work to develop those characteristics in your mind.

As I have carefully studied our primary text for this course, Philippians 2:5-11, I have come to see six parts in the hymn. Each of the parts describes an aspect of Christ's life and mind. As we study each of those parts, God will work to develop in you the six characteristics of a Christlike mind. During today's lesson we will identify how each hymn part is related to what God will do in your life. God's kingdom (rule) is being realized as you become like Christ. The inner work God does in your mind will find expression outwardly in the way you live your life.

2. Get out your Mind of Christ Cards for this unit and do the following.

- Read the hymn in Philippians 2:5-11 on Cards 1A and 1B.
- Begin memorizing the hymn at your own pace. It is an assignment over and above your weekly memory verse. Start today by working on verse 5. You may want to set a personal goal to memorize the hymn during the coming 12 weeks.
- Review the Six Characteristics of a Christlike Mind on Card 2A.

Now let's look in more detail at each part of the hymn in Philippians 2:5-11 and what God will do to develop a Christlike mind in you. The format we will use includes a hymn part and a title related to the mind of Christ. Beside each title is listed in parentheses the unit(s) related to that part of our hymn. Next, you will read that part of the hymn text. Finally, you will see the Christlike characteristic God will develop in you.

**Part 1: Christ's Freedom (Units 2-3)**

*Hymn.* "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

*Christlike characteristic: alive.* Christians can experience mental battles when the desires of the flesh clash with the desires of the Spirit. Christ intends to set you free from the dominion of sin in your life that causes such battles. Genuine freedom can occur only where spiritual life exists. Life is not fully spiritual until it is fully free. God will work to give you life and freedom in Christ.

3. Write this characteristic below and fill in the word to indicate what God will do in your life.

Characteristic—\_\_\_\_\_ : God will work to give me

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ.

**Part 2: Christ's Lifestyle (Units 4–5)**

*Hymn.* "... who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. 2:6).

*Christlike characteristic: single-minded.* The human mind tends to waver like a ship on a stormy sea. Distractions are plentiful. The world works to shape you into its mold. Single-mindedness means you set your mind and heart on first seeking God's kingdom. As you determine to put His kingdom first, God will begin to give you the virtues of godly wisdom and the fruit of the Spirit.

*Single-minded*

4. Write this characteristic below and fill in the word to indicate what God will do in your life.

Characteristic—\_\_\_\_\_ : God will work to give me the virtues of godly \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit.

**Part 3: Christ's Servanthood (Unit 6)**

*Hymn.* Jesus "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:7).

*Christlike characteristic: lowly.* Pride has been a foe of right living since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden. God despises the proud, but He dwells with the lowly. Lowliness does not mean belittling yourself. Rather, it means esteeming others. God will be working to help you see His greatness. With a lowly spirit you will take on the characteristics of servanthood.

*Lowly*

5. Write this characteristic below and fill in the word to indicate what God will do in your life.

Characteristic—\_\_\_\_\_ : God will work to help me see His \_\_\_\_\_, and with a \_\_\_\_\_ spirit I will take on the characteristics of \_\_\_\_\_.

**Part 4: Christ's Humanity (Units 7–10)**

*Hymn.* Jesus "was made in the likeness of men"; He was "found in fashion as a man" (Phil. 2:7-8).

*Christlike characteristic: pure.* When God became man, He demonstrated His intention that human beings have great authority and nobility. To have these two attributes, you must be pure. This purity will show in the way you express your humanity: in your emotions, in your relationships to things and people, and in your daily walk in the Spirit. God will work in you to cleanse the impurities of your life and to establish right patterns for living.

*Pure*

6. Write this characteristic below and fill in the word to indicate what God will do in your life.

Characteristic—\_\_\_\_\_ : God will work in me to cleanse the \_\_\_\_\_ of my life and to establish \_\_\_\_\_ patterns for living.

**Part 5: Christ's Holiness and Love (Unit 11)****Responsive**

*Hymn.* Jesus “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8). *Christlike characteristic: responsive.* Jesus “became obedient unto death.” His obedience purchased for us our holiness. Which death did Jesus die? “Even the death of the cross.” This was the ultimate expression of God’s love. Because of what Jesus did, we gladly obey Him. Responsiveness is not “doing your duty.” In being responsive, you choose to share Christ’s nature of holiness and love. God will work to make you holy and to teach you to love with Christlike love.

 7. Write this characteristic below and fill in the word to indicate what God will do in your life.

Characteristic—\_\_\_\_\_ : God will work to make  
me \_\_\_\_\_ and to teach me to \_\_\_\_\_ with Christlike love.

**Part 6: Christ's Name (Unit 12)**

*Hymn:* “... wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

**Peaceful**

*Christlike characteristic: peaceful.* Jesus’ love bought peace for us. Peace is not the absence of conflict but the harvest of love. Christ’s love took Him to Calvary. But in His death Jesus bought peace for us—peace with God. The resurrection was Christ’s victory over sin and death. His victory made peace a reality. Through Christ’s death, resurrection, and exaltation we can experience genuine peace. Peace doesn’t come while your flesh battles God for control. Peace comes when you finally bow your knees to Christ and allow Him to be the absolute Lord of your life. God will work to exalt Christ before you so that you will completely surrender to His lordship.

 8. Write this characteristic below and fill in the word to indicate what God will be doing in your life.

Characteristic—\_\_\_\_\_ : God will work to exalt Christ  
before me so that I will completely\_\_\_\_\_ to His \_\_\_\_\_.

 9. Close your study today in prayer. Of all the characteristics, which one do you sense God most wants to work on in your life? Ask God. Open your life to Him and give Him permission to mold you into the image of His Son. Thank God for the model He has given you in Jesus.

## DAY 4

# DEVELOPING THE MIND OF CHRIST

1. Begin today's lesson by reading Bible verse and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer to begin your study.

The New Testament uses three verbs concerning the mind. Becoming like Christ is accomplished through a process. If we think of the operations of the mind as a process, the three verbs can be neatly classified as the beginning, middle, and ending parts of the process. I define these three stages in the following way.



### Today's Bible Meditation

"Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Col. 3:2, NASB).

### Name of Christ

for Today

The Lord Our

Righteousness

(Jer. 23:6)

### Prayer to Begin the Lesson

*Lord, You are my Righteousness. My righteousness is like filthy rags to You. Please guide me through the process by which Your life becomes my life and Your righteousness becomes my righteousness. Help me set my mind and heart on You. Amen.*

### THREE STAGES IN DEVELOPING THE MIND OF CHRIST

Beginning stage	The Will Principle	Set your mind on things above.
Growing stage	The River Principle	Allow God to <i>renew</i> your mind.
Qualified stage	The Readiness Principle	<i>Gird up</i> your mind for action.

### The Will Principle

The first verb, or the beginning of the process, is found in Colossians 3:2: "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth" (NASB). A similar idea occurs in Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things" (NASB).

We call this stage the Will Principle. You must set your mind. You must decide, choose, or determine the focus of your mind. That is where you start in developing the mind of Christ. The opposite of *will* is *instinct* or *unwilled reactions*. Decision making is not a problem with animals. But with human beings the will is the part of your mind over which you have control. The will enables you to obey in spite of your feelings or intuitions. Often you cannot control your emotions, but you always have control over your will. Your goal is to take "every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5, NASB). Giving God your will is the first step in having the mind of Christ.

2. What do you do during the first stage, the Beginning Stage?

I (a verb) \_\_\_\_\_ my mind.

3. What does it mean to set your mind? Define it in your own words.

Beginning Stage  
*Set your mind  
on things above.*

In the Beginning Stage you set your mind on Christ. You give your will to God and seek His will as your own. Christ repeatedly identified His will with that of His

Father. In the last week of His earthly life, as He faced the cross, Jesus said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name" (John 12:27-28). Jesus openly confessed that His emotions were one place, but His will was in another. This decision to let His will rule over His emotions or feelings is also seen in Christ's plea in Gethsemane: "Father, ... take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14:36). Jesus' performance was flawless because He set His will from the beginning. Jesus' mind was given to God. Therefore, His actions worked out the implications of a blameless mind. Jesus' mind was set on things above.

I was once asked to take a position that would involve tremendous personal sacrifice as well as a huge salary cut. It also offered an opportunity to expand God's kingdom in a way nothing else offered. My feelings said no, but my will chose the will of God. Only the will can choose beyond feelings.

### The River Principle

Our second verb is *renew*. In Romans 12:2 Paul said, "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." A Christian lives in a constant state of renewal! After you give your will to God, you must continue to allow your mind to be changed (transformed) by a renewing process. This part of the process is a time of growth.

We call this middle or growing stage of the process the River Principle. Jesus said, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water'" (John 7:38, NASB). Fresh, living water flows in and washes out the old and the dead. Most of us do not work on the River Principle. We work on the Pond Principle! Ponds become stagnant, but rivers flow. Ponds become puddles, but rivers become oceans. You are to grow spiritually, and your growth in Christ is ultimately to be enormous.

Your body grows by producing new cells. As long as life continues, your body constantly produces new cells. That newness is a sign of life. Failure to produce newness is a sign of death. The spiritual life is also to be characterized by constant renewal. Lack of renewal or growth is a sign of death. I have learned to expect spiritual newness and not to be surprised at what form the newness takes. Sometimes the newness comes in the shape of new insights, previously unknown. Sometimes it comes in the form of spiritual energy. At times it is a new and deeper meaning applied to an old, familiar verse. Newness may occur as you move into a new and deeper relationship to the body of Christ or to another Christian. Newness may involve a new commitment. At times newness takes the form of new strength or a new way to resist temptation. Newness is the way of progress as you move from one glory to another (see 2 Cor. 3:18).

### 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

"WE ALL, WITH OPEN FACE BEHOLDING AS IN A GLASS THE GLORY OF THE LORD, ARE CHANGED INTO THE SAME IMAGE FROM GLORY TO GLORY, EVEN AS BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD."

4. What do you do during the second stage, the Growing Stage?

I (a verb) \_\_\_\_\_ my mind.

5. Which of the following indicate renewal? Check all that apply.

- a. Newness of spiritual growth
- b. Failure to show any signs of spiritual growth
- c. New insights into the meaning or application of Scripture

- d. Failure to understand or apply Scriptures to my life
- e. Sensing fresh spiritual energy to work for the Master
- f. Weakness, tiredness, and lack of spiritual energy to work for the Master

Allow God to renew your mind in the Growing Stage. Do you see the contrast between the River and the Pond Principles? Renewal brings newness, new insights, and fresh spiritual energy (a, c, e). Christ's life demonstrated progress and growth: "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5:8, NASB). If you are to have the mind of Christ, you must expect newness. That is the way of growth. That is renewal.

### The Readiness Principle

Our third verb associated with the mind takes us to the climax of the process. We are to gird up our minds for action (see 1 Pet. 1:13). The reference is to the long, flowing robes people wore in the first century. People could not run or move quickly in such dress. To do anything athletic, a person had to lift the edge of the robe and tuck it under the belt to free the lower legs for action. This was called girding up the robe. In this command is the Readiness Principle. Your mind is to be prepared for action.

 6. What do you do during the third stage, the Qualified Stage?

I (a verb) \_\_\_\_\_ my mind.

 7. What does that mean? Define it in your own words.

**Qualified Stage**  
*Gird up your mind for action.*

### 1 PETER 1:13

"GIRD UP THE LOINS OF YOUR MIND, BE SOBER, AND HOPE TO THE END FOR THE GRACE THAT IS TO BE BROUGHT UNTO YOU AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

In the Qualified Stage you prepare your mind for action by girding it up. Jesus was alert, or ready, as various groups attempted to trap Him with trick questions in Luke 20:20-40. The scribes and the chief priests asked whether Jews should pay taxes to the foreign Roman government. Their trap failed when Jesus answered that they should give both God and Caesar their just due. When the Sadducees questioned Him about resurrection, Jesus skillfully corrected their wrong ideas about the nature of the future life. Jesus demonstrated a mental readiness at all times. Readiness means being qualified for service. If your will is set and your mind has grown through constant renewal, you will be qualified for any test God allows to come your way. Be alert and ready.

 8. Write each verb (*gird up, renew, set*) beside its description below.

\_\_\_\_\_ Focused attention

\_\_\_\_\_ Growth and newness

\_\_\_\_\_ Prepared for action

 9. Match each verb on the right with the proper stage and principle listed on the left. Write the letter of the verb on the line beside the stage.

_____ 1. Beginning: the Will Principle	a. Gird up
_____ 2. Growing: the River Principle	b. Set
_____ 3. Qualified: the Readiness Principle	c. Renew

 10. Close this lesson by setting your mind on the Lord in prayer.

- Ask God to give you focused attention to things above.
- Offer your will to God. Seek His will as you begin this three-stage process of developing the mind of Christ.

## DAY 5

### FIX YOUR THOUGHTS ON JESUS

#### Today's Bible Meditations

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee”  
(Isa. 26:3).

“Holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess”  
(Heb. 3:1, NIV).

#### Name of Christ

for Today

Apostle and High Priest of Our Profession  
(Heb. 3:1)

#### Prayer to Begin the Lesson

*Lord Jesus, I confess that You are the Apostle and High Priest of my profession. I have decided to study this course because of my desire to know You better. I want*

 1. Begin today's lesson by reading the Bible verses and the name of Christ for today. Work on your memory verse. Then use the suggested prayer in the margin to begin your study.

Developing the mind of Christ involves a three-stage process. In nature we see the development of the mind in a little child as a process. So in the spiritual world, developing the mind of Christ is also a process. Even at spiritual birth we have the mind of Christ (see 1 Cor. 2:16). But in subsequent growth that mind must contend with established habits, the culture in which we live, and the work of Satan to keep it from growing (along with other factors to be mentioned later). In us the mind of Christ matures in a process of growth.

 2. Based on yesterday's study, what are the three verbs that describe the three stages of that process? Write the verbs in the blanks.

Beginning: S \_\_\_\_\_

Growing: R \_\_\_\_\_

Qualified: G \_\_\_\_\_

The apostle John said, “We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is” (1 John 3:2, NASB). Whatever degree of Christlikeness we attain on earth will not match that final perfection of being just like Him. Jesus will return some day to claim His own. In His presence we will become like Him without spot or blemish. Our destiny is to be like Christ. God intends it. He has commanded it, and the Scriptures call on us to participate in the process of becoming like Him.

 3. What is your ultimate destiny as a child of God?

---

Yes, you are to be like Christ in eternity. Jesus said, “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become as his teacher, and the slave as his master” (Matt. 10:24-25, NASB). Plainly, Jesus expected you to become like Him. Peter tells us, “You have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). Not only are you to think like Christ, but you are to follow His lifestyle. Peter also gives this command: “As Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind” (1 Pet. 4:1). In the process of becoming like Christ, you are to accept suffering as a tool to put the flesh to death. Developing the mind of Christ is costly. Yet its value is far beyond any cost that may be required.

 4. If you had to be honest with yourself, what are you feeling about developing the mind of Christ? Check all that apply or write your own response.

- I'm overwhelmed. This is too much. I can't do it.
- I'm fearful. The idea of suffering sounds scary.
- I'm excited. I understand some of the cost, but I know the results will be well worth it all.
- I'm confused. I still don't quite understand what I'm getting into.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

### God Is at Work

You may feel all of the previous emotions. I have felt them all at one time or another. Paul tells us that those “he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:29). That is God’s goal for us: the image of His Son. Later Paul wrote, “We all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18, NASB). What an awesome thing—to become like Christ!

We have good news for you, though. Passages in the New Testament suggest that the process of being molded into Christ’s image is primarily the work of God. We are the subjects; God is the active agent. You are not alone in this process. It does not solely depend on you. Paul indicates that God does two things for you: “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). God causes you to want the mind of Christ, and He enables you to develop it. Then Paul tells us, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6). We are commanded to “[fix] our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith” (Heb. 12:2, NASB). God is the initiator of our faith, and He will complete its perfect work. Each of us will meet many discouraging circumstances in the process of becoming like Him, but we need not despair. We do not complete the work. Jesus does. Our eyes are fixed on Him as the Perfecter of our faith.

*You to develop Your mind in me. I begin this study by fixing my mind and thoughts on You. Help me keep my mind stayed on You during these coming weeks. Amen.*

*Jesus expected you to become like Him.*

God wants you to develop the mind of Christ. He causes you to want it. He enables you to do it. Then one day Christ perfects the work God began. What a guarantee! That should be encouraging news for you.

 5. Which of the following statements describes the role you have in developing the mind of Christ? Check one.

- I'm in this work all alone. If anything happens, I'll have to do it.  
If I don't do it, nothing will get done.
- I'm not alone; God is my helper. But I carry the main assignment.  
God will help if I get in a jam, but the whole burden is on me.
- God is at work in me, molding me into the image of His Son. As I submit to His work and cooperate with Him, God will bring it to pass.

### Apostle and High Priest

The writer of Hebrews commands us to “consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession” (Heb. 3:1, NASB). The name Apostle indicates one who has been sent. Jesus was sent from heaven to earth. We are to consider Jesus. To consider means to fix your mind, thoughts, and attention on Him—to set your mind on Christ. We are to fasten our attention on His earthly life as revealed in the Gospels. Then we are to follow in Christ’s steps (see 1 Pet. 2:21).

We are also to consider Him as High Priest. Jesus served as our High Priest when He offered His life as the perfect sacrifice for us. But presently, Jesus is our High Priest as He makes intercession for us (see Heb. 7:25). Much of that High Priestly role is revealed in the New Testament Epistles.

If we are to consider both the Apostle and the High Priest, we must know the Gospels for the Apostle life and the New Testament Letters for the High Priestly life. The Gospels show us Jesus in action on earth. When we fix our thoughts on His lifestyle, we can pattern our lives after His example. The Letters describe for us both the meaning of the Apostle and the present intercessory role of the High Priest in heaven. We are to fix our thoughts on His divine work in our behalf.

 6. Match the roles of Christ in the left column with the intended focus of our thoughts in the middle column. Then indicate where we learn about that focus by matching each name with a section of the New Testament in the third column. (Write two letters in front of each name.)

_____	_____	Apostle	a. His divine work in heaven	x. Gospels
_____	_____	High Priest	b. His earthly life	y. New Testament Letters

Our goal is to become like Christ. We have a role in that process: we are commanded to think like Christ. The main work in the process, however, belongs to God. Our Christlikeness is His intention. God has predetermined it and is currently transforming us “from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18) into the likeness of Christ. In working with God in the process, we carefully study all the revealed aspects of the human life of Christ and seek to follow in His steps. (Answers: Apostle—b, x; High Priest—a, y.)

7. As you finish this first unit, review your memory verse. Work at hiding God’s Word in your heart so that you will be better prepared to face temptation when it comes. Ask God to work in you during this course to open your mind and heart to the Scriptures. Commit to God your intention of responding to all He may reveal to you during your study. Consider praying this prayer.

*I am both frightened and thrilled by the command to become like Jesus. I agree with You, Father, that He is a “Lamb without blemish and without spot.” Am I really to be without blemish and without spot like Him? At this point that seems almost unfathomable. But I truly want to be obedient. I want to be like Jesus.*

*Thank You for a starting place. For Jesus’ sake and in His name, I give my mind to You. I have set my mind on things above, as far as I know how to do that. I seek continuing renewal and thank You for it. I will gird up my mind and live in a state of readiness to witness to the glories of Jesus. It seems that my mind must be alive, or I would not want to be like Him. Thank You that Jesus was single-minded, lowly, pure, responsive, and peaceful. Help me be like Him in those specific ways. Amen.*