Week 3: *I Have a New Mindset*

**Hook**

[Image]

**Main Point:** In Christ, our whole mindset, worldview and attitude change.

Have you ever felt like you view the world differently than others? One in 12 men and one in 200 women are affected by some form of color blindness. This condition had been simply written off as untreatable until glass scientist Dr. Don McPherson made a discovery. He had been producing protective glasses for laser surgery and heard that surgeons were using them as sunglasses. When McPherson decided to try the lenses for himself in the sun, he was taken aback by how vibrant the colors around him appeared. One day a colorblind friend borrowed the glasses and was stunned—the glasses corrected his color vision deficiency! McPherson began to market the glasses to the colorblind in 2010 and the company has sold nearly 30,000 pairs of sunglasses and indoor glasses. A pair costs around $300 and is effective for 80 percent of users. One of those users, Farhan Sareshwala, describes his experience of seeing colors he had never known before: “I think understanding what you were missing before is the most important part.”

*Teacher, search the Internet for a video of someone trying a pair of EnChroma glasses for the first time and share it with the group.*
Q: How different would your life be if you couldn’t see particular colors? What would you be willing to sacrifice to view those colors as they truly are?

Q: What events have you experienced that have changed the way you view the world? (Potential answers might include: the birth of a child, an impactful mission trip, the loss of a loved one)

Q: In what ways did your worldview change when you became a believer?
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Book

Main Point: In Christ, our whole mindset, worldview and attitude change.

Text Summary: In Christ, we have been given a new worldview—the mind of Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, God transforms our minds to His thoughts and His ways. But we also have a role to play in the process. We are called to set our mind on the things of the Spirit, taking every thought captive to Christ. This change in mindset results in a change in attitude—a lifestyle of humility, service and unity.

Romans 12:1–2 and 1 Corinthians 2:6–16 [Read]

Talking Point 1: In Christ, we have been given a new worldview.

Q: Why is it significant that the Holy Spirit transforms us by renewing our minds?

Q: Why doesn’t the natural person accept the things of the Spirit?

Our worldview is just what it sounds like. It’s the way we view the world, our perspective on everything around us. Whether we realize it or not, we all have a worldview that comes from a blend of our culture, our family’s values, and our own experiences. For example, most Americans share a belief in freedom and basic human rights, which affects how we view our choices, our relationships, and our responsibilities. Your family may value education, which affects your priorities, your view of the government, and even your views of other people. If in your life experience, you were deeply hurt by a significant other, it will change the way you view relationships, your choices and even your sense of worth.

All of us have a natural worldview built on these things, one we don’t even necessarily think about—it’s just there. But when we become believers, God gives us a new worldview. When God changes our hearts, He also changes our minds. Instead of our being conformed to the world, the way everyone else around us thinks, He transforms us (Rom. 12:2). He changes the way we think, the way we see the world. In The Weight of Glory, C. S. Lewis wrote, “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen, not only because I see it but because by it, I see everything else.” Having a Christian worldview is like putting on a pair of “God glasses.” You start to see everything else the way God sees it.

Because God is the Creator and sustainer of the whole universe, when we put on those God glasses, it’s the first time we can really see things the way they are. When a person puts on eyeglasses for the first time, everything finally comes into focus. The person starts to see things clearly and even to see things he or she had never seen before. Because God’s thoughts and
ways are the truth, when we look at the world from a Christian perspective, our eyes are opened (Acts 26:18). When you put on a pair of glasses, the world around you doesn’t change at all. But you can see it clearly because you have changed. These God glasses affect the way we see everything and the way we think about everything, and that changes the way we live. Following Jesus means our faith affects everything—our view of family, education, friendships, the sanctity of life, and on and on.

What we do with our minds is important. A Christian is called to love God, not only with our hearts and souls, but also with our minds (Matt. 22:37). We are commanded to take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). We are to set our minds on spiritual things (Col. 3:2), to think about whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent and worthy of praise (Phil. 4:8). To think wrongly about God is idolatry (Ps. 50:21), but to think rightly about God is eternal life (John 17:3).

A Christian worldview is practical theology. It gives us a framework for understanding the world and how to live in it. The way we think matters. Jesus said, “Out of the heart comes evil thoughts.... These are what defile a person” (Matt. 15:19–20). He said that even to think about a woman lustfully is adultery of the heart and to think murderous thoughts about someone is the same as murder in the eyes of God. As Paul told the Romans, a mind set on the flesh is death, but a mind set on the things of the Spirit is life and peace (Rom. 8:6).

In The Christian View of God and the World, James Orr maintains that there is a definite Christian worldview that has a character, coherence and unity of its own and stands in sharp contrast with counter theories and speculations. Living with a Christian worldview means we will see the world differently than unbelievers and therefore act differently. We will not be conformed to what the rest of the world says (Rom. 12:2). We will stand firm on God’s truth, God’s perspective in everything.

Putting on God glasses affects the way we see everything, not just “church stuff.” Letting God transform our minds means every thought. In Isaiah, God says, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways” (Isa. 55:8). If we want to walk in His ways, we have to let Him transform our thoughts. God alone gives us this new mindset; it only comes from Him. It is not something we can logically deduce for ourselves; it is revealed to us only through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10–13). It is a part of the new creation, our new identity. As believers, “we have the mind of Christ” (2:16).

Q: In what specific ways has becoming a Christian changed your worldview?

Q: Share one practical example of how having a Christian worldview has changed the way you think about an issue/situation or the way you have chosen to live.

Q: How can we better develop a Christian worldview about everything in our lives?
Talking Point 2: We must choose to set our minds on the things of Christ.

Q: How can setting our minds on godly things change our attitudes and our hearts? How can it change our behaviors?

Q: What does it mean to take every thought captive to obey Christ?

In the passages above, God is the active one. We are passive; we are the ones acted upon. We don’t transform ourselves, we have to “be transformed” by the Spirit (Rom. 12:2). We don’t logically deduce the thoughts of God; they are revealed to us by the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10–13). But that doesn’t mean we don’t have a role to play in being transformed. Last week, we looked at justification and sanctification—we are declared holy before God, but the Spirit also grows us in holiness throughout our lives with Christ. That same process applies to our thoughts. As believers, we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16), yet God continues to transform our minds day-by-day as we offer ourselves as living sacrifices to Him (Rom. 12:1–2).

Scripture commands us to think about godly things (Phil. 4:8). That Greek verb carries a sense of “dwelling on” these things. It isn’t something we only think about on Sunday mornings. It is a daily practice. The verb can also mean to “carefully consider.” This is not a fleeting thought. It is something we think deeply and thoroughly about.

Scripture also commands us to set our minds on spiritual things (Col. 3:1–2). We tend to think of the mind as simply our intellect. But in ancient cultures, the mind was both the visceral and the cognitive aspects of thinking. This type of thinking is “to moderate from within, as inner-perspective shows itself in corresponding outward behavior.” It’s not just an intellectual exercise. It is a complete change in our way of thinking. It means “to have something as the habit of your thought, something in which you place your total interest.”

These passages describe the habit of regular spiritual disciplines. Discipline because it requires intentionality, prayer, training and perseverance. But it’s not something we manufacture ourselves; it takes absorbing ourselves in the Spirit. That’s why it’s a spiritual discipline—daily abiding in Christ, as fruit abides in a vine (John 15). It’s not an instance-by-instance, one-time thinking about God or spiritual things. It’s deliberate, continual practice.

But it’s also a battle. In the passage we read in 2 Corinthians, Paul says we are “waging war,” and he describes these spiritual disciplines as “the weapons of our warfare” (2 Cor. 10:3–4). As we said last week, it is easy to forget we are in a spiritual battle every day. Yes, God has given us the mind of Christ, but we have to fight every day to keep our minds on spiritual things. As Paul describes, that means destroying every thought, argument, and opinion that is not from God (2 Cor. 10:4–6). We have to see those thoughts as enemies in a battle. It is tough. There is a real struggle between the flesh and the Spirit. But it becomes easier to fight the more you set your mind on the things of the Spirit, the more you dwell on what is lovely and noble and pure. We need to preach the Gospel to ourselves, in our own minds. When those enemy thoughts
start to invade, we need to fight them with God’s thoughts, God’s Word. Every time life gets a little blurry, we need to put our God glasses back on.

**Q: Why do we find it hard to control our thoughts?**

**Q: What spiritual disciplines could you try to help set your mind on the Spirit?**

**Q: In what ways do you struggle to discover God’s thoughts on specific situations?**

**Philippians 2:1–8 [Read]**

**Talking Point 3: In Christ, we have been given a mindset of humility and unity.**

**Q: How is living in humility (putting others before yourself) a change in mindset?**

Paul implores us to have the same mindset as Jesus, which he describes as one of humility and service (Phil. 2:5). Humility is a mindset, a way of thinking about ourselves and others in light of the Gospel. We cannot have humility without a Gospel-centered understanding of who we are in Christ. The Gospel unites us all as receivers of grace. None of us has earned our place in God’s kingdom. None of us is better than anyone else (Eph. 2:8-9). In the Christian worldview, there is no inequality or division—we are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28). In the Christian worldview, there is no “greater than” or “less than.” The first become last and the last become first (Matt. 20:16). The Christian worldview tears down any and every “dividing wall of hostility” (Eph. 2:14). Therefore, the Christian worldview demands that we don’t think of ourselves more highly than we ought (Rom. 12:3).

Only when we change our mindset can we truly live in humility, unity and love as Jesus did. Jerry Bridges wrote that humility is the second-most frequently taught trait in the New Testament, second only to love. Therefore, he concludes, love and humility are “the foundational stones of Christian character. All other character traits, in one way or another, are built upon love and humility.”ix As we learned last year in our “Advancing the Gospel” study, humility doesn’t mean thinking less of yourself. It means thinking of yourself less.x It’s not about putting yourself down; it’s about lifting others up. Humility isn’t about putting ourselves lower than we ought to, but putting ourselves in the proper place. The world ranks people, valuing some above others because of class or talent or power. God’s Word says we are all equally important in God’s eyes, there is no greater or less than. So, we are all called to serve one another in humility.

Humility is a change in mindset because it changes whom you think about first. Instead of living your life in a self-centered way, you live in an others-centered way. Not that we lack self-confidence, but that we don’t live our lives out of “selfish ambition” (Phil. 2:3). We don’t look for what we can get out of the situation, but what we can give. This is what Jesus did for us. He humbled Himself to come to earth and die for us. Paul’s phraseology—being of the same
mindset as Jesus—doesn’t just mean having good thoughts. It also refers to the activity that demonstrates those thoughts. Paul is telling the Philippians that if Jesus could give up His power and status to come sacrifice for them, they must do the same for others.\textsuperscript{xii}

Jesus’s life was defined by humble service to His people (Phil. 2:7). He said it was His entire purpose in coming to earth (Mark 10:45). And He commanded His disciples to follow His example of humble service (John 13:13–15). The Church is meant to be a community that looks different from the world. It should be a place of self-sacrifice instead of power struggles, service instead of domination.\textsuperscript{xi} It is only through this kind of humility that we can hope to find true unity in the Church (Phil. 2:2). If we think of ourselves and our own preferences, needs, and desires, we will be constantly bickering or resenting one another, or even splitting. But if we put others’ needs ahead of our own, we will find ourselves letting go of “what I need” and asking, “What would be good for you?” When we change that mindset, we find ourselves spending less time demanding our own way and more time washing feet. We will find ourselves more focused on what is good for the kingdom of God rather than just what is good for me.

Q: How have you seen humility played out in the lives of individual believers?

Q: How have you seen humility lead to unity in the Church?

Q: How would your life be different if you put other people’s needs ahead of your own on a daily basis?

Q: How can a mindset of humility change your lifestyle?
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Main Point: In Christ, our whole mindset, worldview, and attitude change.

Have you ever played an instrument? There are certain combinations of notes called consonant chords, these are typically viewed as pleasant. The notes work together to produce a pleasing sound. But other notes, when played together, make the skin crawl. These dissonant chords sound jarring and quickly create a “sour note” in an otherwise soothing song. As we set our minds on spiritual things, the more that our minds our transformed, may we be quick to recognize those thoughts that conflict with the mindset of Jesus. This week, pray that you might be extra sensitive, like hearing a dissonant “sour note,” to recognize those thoughts and attitudes that conflict with those of the Lord.

CHALLENGES

THINK: How does my mindset need to change? In what ways do my thoughts not align with God’s thoughts? What questions do I still have about what it means to have a Christian worldview? In what ways do I need to put others’ needs ahead of my own? How can I practice setting my mind on things above?

PRAY: Pray as if you are in a war. Just like last week, but this time focus specifically on your thoughts. Imagine your mind as a battlefield between the flesh and the Spirit. Pray for God to take your thoughts captive in obedience to Christ. Then, throughout the day, if you find your mind drifting to ungodly thoughts, stop and pray immediately.

ACT: Practice contemplation. Choose a Scripture passage to meditate on throughout the week. Set an alarm on your phone for every three hours. Every time the alarm goes off, spend a few minutes reading and contemplating the Scripture passage. Repeatedly focusing on the same passage every day will sink its truth deeper and deeper into your mind and heart.

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xii Hak Joon Lee, “Have This Mind Among You: Philippians 2:1–11” *Theology* (Fall 2013).