

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LAW OF THE MIND

When a believer's mind has reached the point of being renewed, he will marvel at the capability of his mind. He is now severed from dull and insignificant activities. The believer's concentration is more intensified, his understanding sharper, his memory stronger, his reasoning more precise, his eyesight farther, his work speedier, and his thoughts broader. He can more easily understand the thoughts of others. He is less bound by his own little experiences, and he is more aware of the unlimitedness of spiritual knowledge and the need to have an open mind to accept it. All the biases, prejudices, and opinions about the works of God are purged completely. This kind of mind can do the work that one usually cannot do and is able to bear two to three times more responsibility than what one can usually bear. Today, the believer's mind is not useful because it has not reached the stage of renewal. However, this does not mean that once his mind is renewed, there is no possibility of his being clamped down by the old mind anymore. If a believer does not continuously resist old concepts, he will unconsciously think according to his old way. Just as a believer ought to walk according to the spirit daily and reject the behavior of the flesh, he should think according to the renewed mind daily and reject the old way of thinking. Watchfulness is necessary. Otherwise, a believer will go back to his former position. In spiritual matters, regression is something very real. Even after a believer's mind has been renewed, if he is not watchful, the possibility of believing in the evil spirits' lies and passively giving place to them still remains. If a believer desires to keep his mind in a renewed condition and have his mind renewed day after day, he has no alternative but to know the law of the mind. As the spirit has its law (which we have seen before), the mind also has its law. Now we will mention a few things. If a believer practices these things, he will be victorious all the time.

THE MIND WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE SPIRIT

If we analyze the process of the walk of a spiritual believer, it may be divided into the following steps: the Holy Spirit reveals and makes known the will of God to the spirit of a believer; the believer realizes the meaning of this revelation through his mind and then exercises the power of his spirit through the will to move his body to execute this matter. In the believer's living, nothing has a closer relationship with the spirit than the mind because the mind is the faculty that knows the things in the mental and material realm, and the spirit is the faculty that knows the things in the spiritual realm. A believer knows all the things of himself through the mind, but it is through his spirit that he knows the things of God. Because both the spirit and the mind are the faculties of "knowledge," their relationship is closer than anything else. In our life of walking according to the spirit, the mind is the best assistant of the spirit. If we want to walk completely according to the spirit, we must know how these two assist each other.

The Bible tells us clearly about the work of mutual assistance and reliance that exists between the mind and the spirit. In walking after the spirit, the cooperation between the spirit and the mind is a very important matter. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know" (Eph. 1:17-18). These two verses reveal the full relationship between the spirit and the mind. As we have mentioned before, "a spirit of wisdom and revelation" means that God has revealed and made known Himself and His will to us in our spirit. Now we have to

pay attention to how the revelation received through the intuition of the spirit goes along with our mind.

"The eyes of your heart" are the faculty of our reasoning, the faculty of understanding, which is our mind. In this section of the Scripture, the word "know" or "knowledge" has been mentioned twice. These two "knowings" have different meanings. The first knowing is the knowing in the intuition. The second knowing is the knowing or realization of the mind. The spirit of revelation is the deepest part of our being. God reveals Himself in our spirit in order that we may have the full knowledge of Him through the intuition. But this knowledge is just in the intuition. It is only in our inner man; our outer man still does not know it. It is essential for the inner man to convey what it knows to the outer man. Otherwise, the outer man will not know what the inner man is asking for and will not take the same action. How is this conveying done? The Scripture tells us that our spirit needs to enlighten our mind, so that our mind can understand the notion of our spirit and our outer man can also have the knowledge. Our outer man apprehends things through the mind. This is why the spirit's knowledge through the intuition must be conveyed to the mind. The mind in turns tells the whole body and causes it to walk according to the spirit.

We receive the will of God in our intuition first, then our mind enables us to know that it is God's will. The Holy Spirit impresses our spirit and gives us a spiritual sense. Then we apply our mind to study and understand this sense. In order to comprehend fully the will of God, there must be a co-working of the spirit and the mind. The spirit causes our inner man to have the knowledge, while the mind causes our outer man to understand. This cooperation of the spirit with the mind causes the believers to fully know the will of God, and it happens in an instant. It may takes us a long time to describe it in words. But in actuality, the two things are like the right and left hand. As soon as an assignment comes, the spirit knows it in the twinkling of an eye and causes the mind to understand. Hence, all revelations come from the Holy Spirit and reach man's spirit (not his mind). Man's spirit knows or receives God's revelation through his intuition, but he studies the meaning of the intuition of the spirit through the mind and then understands it.

We should not allow our mind to be the primary faculty of receiving God's revelation, but we also should not prevent our mind from being the secondary faculty to understand His revelation. A fleshly believer has not learned to walk according to the spirit and, therefore, must use the thoughts within his mind to be the rule for his walk. A spiritual believer should walk according to the spirit; but he should not negate the mind with its understanding of the intentions of the spirit. In genuine guidance, the spirit and the mind are in one accord. There is no such thing as the reasoning in the mind going against the leading in the spirit. The leading of the spirit may be opposite of the so-called rationale of the ordinary mind. When a believer, who has the leading in the spirit, understands God's will through the co-working of his mind and spirit, his rationale will agree that the leading in the spirit is absolutely right. Of course, we are talking about believers whose minds have been renewed. But before the spirit of a believer has reached the highest position, the mind is usually against the leading of the spirit.

In Ephesians 1:17-18 we see how the spirit assists the mind. The spirit first receives the revelation from the Holy Spirit and then enlightens the mind. Since the mind of a spiritual man does not live by the natural life, it has to live by the enlightening of the spirit; otherwise, it will fall into darkness. The renewed mind requires the light of the spirit for its guidance. Therefore, when the spirit of a believer is blocked by evil spirits, he will sense that the path of his thoughts are darkened. His thoughts will be confused,

his mind will be disorganized, and his whole being will be unable to concentrate. The mental power of a believer comes from the spirit, and when the spirit is locked up, power will not reach the mind, and the mind will seem to lose its direction. Therefore, if we want to keep our spirit and mind properly related, we have to be watchful and not allow our spirit to be surrounded by evil spirits, in order that our mind can function normally.

The believer's mind is the outlet of the Holy Spirit. We know that the Holy Spirit is living in the spirit of man. But have we ever thought about how the Holy Spirit expresses Himself? The Holy Spirit is not satisfied with believers just sensing or believing that He is in their spirit. His goal is to express Himself through man so that others may gain Him. In addition, the Spirit also has hundreds and thousands of things that need to be done through man. It is not sufficient just to have the Holy Spirit living in our spirit. He must be expressed through the spirit. The mind expresses the spirit of man. If the mind is blocked, the spirit cannot be opened, and the Holy Spirit will not be able to flow from our spirit to others. We need the mind to "interpret" the notions of our intuition so that the Holy Spirit can express His intention through us. If our mind is narrow and foolish, the Holy Spirit will not be able to fellowship with the believer according to His intention. We have to be careful not to lock up the Holy Spirit in our spirit.

MINDING THE SPIRIT AND THE SPIRITUAL MIND

The more spiritual a believer is, the more he knows about the importance of walking according to the spirit and the danger of walking according to the flesh. But what does walking according to the spirit really mean? Romans 8 provides an answer; it is to simply mind the Spirit and have a spiritual mind. "For those who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to the spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace" (vv. 5-6). To have the mind searching the things of the Spirit and the spirit governing the mind is the meaning of walking according to the spirit. A man who walks "according to the spirit" is just one who minds "the things of the Spirit" and whose mind is "set on the spirit." If we desire to walk according to the spirit, there is no other way except to mind and search the things of the Spirit through the mind that is under the spirit's control. This means that our mind has to be renewed first to become a spiritual mind—a mind governed by the spirit. Through a renewed mind, one can pay attention to all the things of the Spirit—the activities of the Spirit. In this way, we can walk according to the spirit.

We also can see from these verses how the mind relates to the spirit. "For those who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to the spirit, the things of the Spirit." The human mind can mind either the things of the flesh or the things of the Spirit. Our mind (soul) is standing between the spirit and the flesh (here we refer to it as the body). Whatever the mind is minding, that is what we will walk after. If the mind is minding the flesh, we will walk according to the flesh; if the mind is minding the Spirit, we will walk according to the spirit. Therefore, we do not need to ask if we are walking according to the spirit; we only need to ask if we are minding the Spirit, paying attention to the Spirit, and searching the activities of the Spirit. There is no such a thing as "minding" the things of the flesh, while "walking" according to the spirit. Whatever your mind is minding must be what you are walking after. This is unchangeable. In our daily life, what is our mind thinking about, paying attention to, and setting itself on? What are we paying attention and submitting to? Are we minding the spirit or the flesh? Minding the things of the Spirit will cause us to become spiritual

men; minding the things of the flesh will cause us to become fleshly men. If our mind is not under the governing of the spirit, it is under the governing of the flesh. If it is not being governed by what is heavenly, it is being governed by what is earthly. If it is not being governed by what is from above, it is being governed by what is from below. The result of walking according to the spirit is to live in life and peace. If a believer is minding and walking according to the flesh, he will live in "death." Whatever he does or says will be of no spiritual value but will be altogether of death, because all that he has, in the eyes of God, comes from the flesh, which has no spiritual life. A believer may have life yet at the same time be living in "death."

Why is minding the things of the Spirit so important in a life of walking according to the spirit? It is important because this is the biggest prerequisite for us to receive the leading in the spirit. Many believers wish that God would make arrangements for them and lead them (through circumstances), but they do not mind their spirit or pay any attention to the activities of their spirit. Many times the indwelling Holy Spirit has already guided us in our spirit, but we are unable to be clear about His guidance because our mind is so dull and foolish. Many times the Holy Spirit has revealed something to our spirit, but the sensation of the spirit is neglected because our mind is not paying attention to the activities of the spirit, or perhaps it is minding thousands of other things. At other times our spirit is not wrong, but our mind is wrong, and we still are not able to walk according to the spirit. The notion that the spirit expresses through the intuition is fine, quiet, and tender. If we are not constantly minding the things of the spirit, how can we know the intention of the spirit and walk after it? Our mind should be as a watchman; it should always be minding, comprehending, and understanding the intention of the spirit so that our outer man may be fully submissive.

All the guidance of God comes by the revelation of His will through the tender feelings. He never uses overwhelming, drowning, or other feelings to overpower us or force us to submit to Him. He always gives us the opportunity to choose. All behavior of the believers that seems to be coerced is not from God. Only the evil spirits work in this manner. Therefore, we should not just look for the guidance of the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit will not work if we have not fulfilled the conditions for the Holy Spirit to work. Before the Holy Spirit will guide us, our spirit and mind must work actively together with the Holy Spirit. We should not struggle vainly to walk according to the spirit. As long as we apply our spirit to work together with the Holy Spirit and apply our mind to pay attention to all the activities within the spirit, we will be walking according to the spirit.

THE OPENING OF THE MIND

Besides revealing the truth directly to us, God often (in fact most of the time) conveys the truth to us through His other children. This kind of truth is first accepted by our mind, and then it reaches our spirit. We use our mind to contact the speaking and writing of others. If we did not have a mind, it would be impossible for the truth to reach our life. Therefore, an opened mind is very crucial to our spiritual life. If our mind is fully occupied with opinions, whether they are about the truth or about the person who preaches the truth, there will be no way for the truth to enter into our mind or life. If believers have determined beforehand what kind of teaching they are going to read or listen to, it is no wonder that they do not get much help.

Believers have to know the process through which the truth is translated into life before they see the importance of an opened mind. The truth is first realized in our mind, then

it enters into our spirit and touches our spirit. Finally, it is manifested in our living. A closed mind hinders the truth from reaching the spirit. A closed mind means a mind occupied with opinions. Whatever disagrees with its thoughts is opposed and criticized. Its opinion becomes the standard for all truth. Anything that does not agree with its concept is not regarded as the truth. This kind of mind gives no chance for many of God's truths to come in. As a result, the believers cannot help but suffer loss in the matter of life. Experienced believers can all testify to the importance of an opened mind with regard to the revelation of the truth. Many times we do not have understanding because we do not have an opened mind, not because the truth is not preached to us. Sometimes God has to wait for many years before He can cause us to remove all the hindrances and receive His truth. An opened mind in conjunction with an opened spirit is very helpful for believers to grow in the truth.

Even though the truth may seem foggy in the mind at times, as long as it remains open, the believer will see the preciousness of the truth when the light of the spirit comes. Many times a believer receives a truth which seems meaningless. But after a while, the light of the spirit comes in, and the believer seems to understand everything, and sees the intrinsic content of the truth. Outwardly he may not be able to put it in words, yet inwardly, there is an unspeakable understanding. An opened mind opens the way for the truth to enter in. Yet without the enlightening of the spirit, it will remain useless.

THE RULING OF THE MIND

Every part of a believer's being needs to be kept under control. The same is true with the mind. This should not be ignored even after the mind has been renewed. We must never allow our mind to be as free as it wishes. Otherwise, evil spirits will come and take it over again. We need to realize that our thoughts are the seeds of our conduct. If we are not careful in our thoughts, it will not be long before we fall into sin. After the seed of a thought has been planted, we do not know when it will grow, but sooner or later it will grow. If we carefully trace all the intentional or unintentional transgressions we have committed, we will always find that they were the fruit of previous thoughts. If we let a sinful thought remain in our head without getting rid of it, some time later, even years later, it will become a sinful act. For example, if we have a bad thought about a brother and do not remove it immediately, it will bear fruit, even though we know that it is wrong and have asked God for forgiveness! All improper thoughts will certainly produce improper conduct. Therefore, believers can ill-afford not to deal thoroughly with all their thoughts. If a person cannot keep his thoughts under control, he will find out that he is not able to control anything. This is why Peter said, "Girding up the loins of your mind" (1 Pet. 1:13). This means that we need to control our thoughts and not let them run wild.

God's purpose is to bring "every thought unto the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). Therefore, believers should consider every one of their thoughts under the light of God. We should not allow any thought to run away from our jurisdiction or escape our attention. Every kind of thought has to go through our own examination and be under our own control.

While we are controlling our thoughts, we should make certain that no improper thoughts remain. All improper thoughts should be driven out.

A believer should not let his mind become lazy. This means that he has to apply his thoughts to everything. He should be a spiritual person with a full consciousness, not

allowing his thoughts to remain stagnant or become loose. If he does, evil spirits will seize the opportunity for their work. His mind should not be lazy and without any work. It should always be active. Even after he receives a revelation in his spirit, he still should exercise his thought (mind). Do not think that after he has a revelation in his spirit he can act accordingly. He must apply his mind to examine and consider what he is about to do and find out if there is still any self-intention, anything not according to God, and anything that proceeds from the flesh. Is his behavior fully according to the spirit and fully according to God's timing, or is there still something from the self? This kind of consideration will help the spirit to further brighten the revelation in the intuition. If it is not God's revelation, it will be exposed. A mind centered on the self will prevent us from realizing God's will. It is very helpful to disregard our thoughts that are centered on the self. God does not want us to follow blindly. He wants us to apprehend His will clearly. Anything which is not thoroughly apprehended is not reliable.

When the mind is working, believers should be careful not to let it work alone. This means that it should not work apart from the ruling of the spirit. When the mind does not hold its own opinion, it helps the believers know the will of God more clearly. But when it becomes independent, it expresses the fallen flesh. For example, many Bible studies are simply pursuits of men's own minds according to their own thoughts and by their own strength. Many people just understand the truth in their mind! This kind of independent action of the mind is very dangerous because this kind of knowledge will just provide more information to one's mind for his thinking and more of a basis for his boasting; however, it will have no effect at all on his life. Believers should do their best to reject all truths that have only been comprehended with their mind. This kind of comprehension will give Satan ground to work. Believers have to awaken to the fact that any knowledge, secured by the mind alone, provides a way for the devil to work. This kind of craving has to be restrained.

The mind should work; it should also rest. If believers allow their mind to work without rest, it will become sick just as their physical body would. Believers must restrain the work of the mind and not allow it to become overactive and beyond control. Elijah's failure under the juniper tree was because his mind had been overworked (1 Kings 19:4).

Believers should keep the mind always in the peace of God. "You will keep the steadfast of mind/In perfect peace / Because he trusts in You" (Isa. 26:3). A restless mind is a mind that is frequently disturbed. This kind of mind will hurt both the spiritual life and the spiritual work. It will lead believers into a countless number of wrong pathways. A restless mind cannot work according to its normal condition. This is why the apostle Paul taught the believers not to allow any anxious thoughts to remain in them (Phil. 4:6). Once such a thought comes in, it should be turned over to God. Then the peace of God will keep their hearts and thoughts (v. 7). The apostle also exhorted the believers to let their mind do some work and not stay idle. He said, "Finally, brothers, what things are true, what things are dignified, what things are righteous, what things are pure, what things are lovely, what things are well spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things" (v. 8).

The mind should not be dominated by the emotional life. We should work by faith, understanding its principle, and be quiet and restful in God. This is what "sobermindedness" means (2 Tim. 1:7). Believers should no longer depend on "voices," "visions," or "lights" as the base of their guidance. Rather, they should simply follow the intuition in the spirit. They should not seek after a feeling in the emotion or use any

outward stimulation, encouragement, or promise to keep them working; they should only depend on God's principle of right or wrong to determine everything.

The mind also should be kept in humility. Haughty thoughts are very prone to bring believers into error. All thoughts of self-justification, self-boasting, and self-satisfaction cause the mind to think improperly. Many are not lacking in knowledge; however, they are deceived by themselves and become confused because their mind is too haughty, and they care too much for themselves. Therefore, whosoever truly desires to serve the Lord must have "all humility of mind" (Acts 20:19, KJV). Believers should discard all of their self-deceiving thoughts and realize the position that God has arranged for them in the Body of Christ.

A MIND FILLED WITH THE WORD OF GOD

God said, "I will impart My laws into their mind" (Heb. 8:10). We need to read the Scripture more and memorize the Scripture more so that we do not have to search the Bible in times of urgent need. If we read the Scripture, God will fill our every thought with His law. When we need light for our walk, we will remember a word in the Scripture immediately. Many believers do not like to read the Bible with their mind; they just like to flip through the Bible arbitrarily after praying and take whatever they find as being from God. They do not realize that this is very unreliable. If our mind is filled with the Word of God, the Holy Spirit will enlighten our mind in an instant through the intuition and cause us to recall an appropriate verse which will show us what to do. We do not need any man to tell us not to steal because we know that this is in the Word of God. This word is already in our mind. If we can be one with the Bible in this way in other matters, we will know God's will in all things.

A CALL FOR A PURIFIED MIND

Believers should continually ask God to purify their mind and keep it fresh. We should ask God to wash out all our bad thoughts and vain imaginations toward God so that what we believe will be fully in accordance with the eternal will of God. We should ask God not only to make us think about Him, but also to make us think about Him in the right way. We should ask God not to let any thought issue from our evil nature. If there is any such thought, we should ask that God's light shine upon it and terminate it immediately. We should ask God to keep us from coming up with any special doctrines according to our old concepts, which would divide the church of God. We also should ask God to keep us from accepting, through the mind, any special teachings that would separate us from the other children of God. We should ask God to cause us to have the same mind as others, waiting patiently in any matter that we have not arrived at a oneness of mind with others. We should ask God to keep us from using the new life to sustain a wrong thought or teachings that proceed from such thoughts. We should ask God to help us die not only to our evil nature, but also to our evil thoughts. We should ask God not to allow our thoughts to be the cause of division in the Body of Christ. We should ask God to keep us from being deceived again. We should ask God to cause all of His children to live by Him so that they will no longer be scattered, damaging one another and wandering about, and so that they will all have the same mind as well as the same life.