

### 3 Characteristics of a strong Christian Mind

Read Romans 12:2

Intro

- Just a couple of weeks ago there was a study released from World Health Organization (WHO)
- They found that over the past 2 years COVID-19 increased anxiety and depression worldwide
  - By 25%
- They cite factors such as
  - Social isolation
  - Unable to work

- Unable to seek support from their  
community
- Loneliness
- Fear of infection
- Suffering and death of loved ones
- And many more
- There has not been a time needing of mental  
health
- Of building strong minds
- Than now
- So today we will learn how to build a strong  
mind

- By looking at 3 Characteristics of a strong Christian mind

## 1. The Christian mind is in awe of the mind of God

(11:33-36)

### a. Context

i. Paul has been teaching the church in

Rome that God has not abandoned

Israel in previous chapters

ii. This is because there was despair that

God had abandoned Israel and did not

uphold his promises to Israel

1. Because many Israelites did not  
actually believe in their Messiah,  
the Lord Jesus

iii. However even though during Paul's  
time the majority of Israelites were not  
true believers

iv. Paul taught that God had predestined a  
select few Israelites who will be saved

1. Just as he also predestines certain

Christians to be saved in Romans 9

- v. Not only is there hope because God has predestined certain Israelites to be saved
- vi. But also there is hope because God has a plan in using Israel's current unbelief
- vii. See by planning that Israel would crucify their messiah the Lord Jesus
- viii. And disciplining Israel in AD 70 and ending the nation for 2,000 years for crucifying Jesus

ix. He would focus his attention in saving non-Jews so that the Jews would be jealous and return to him

x. It is not a surprise then that God restored Israel returned as a nation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century almost 2,000 years later

xi. This is what Paul says in Romans 10:19

Romans 10:19,

19 But I say, surely Israel did not

know, did they? First Moses says,

“I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY  
THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION,  
BY A NATION WITHOUT  
UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU.”

xii. And also Romans 11:11

Romans 11:11,

‘I say then, they did not stumble so as to  
fall, did they? May it never be! But by  
their transgression salvation has come to  
the Gentiles, to make them jealous.’

xiii. This is what Paul is teaching that God is using Israel's disobedience to save us, non-Jews

xiv. And also using the salvation of Gentiles, non-Jews, to make Israel jealous to return to him and then he will save them as well

1. Just like he promised long ago

xv. This is what Paul teaches in Romans 11:32, '32 For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.'

xvi. God uses the sins of man to bring  
himself glory and save many people

1. He used Israel's disobedience to  
focus his attention and non-Jews  
and save them

xvii. In fact this is what Peter preached in his  
first sermon in Acts 2:22-23,

1. ' 22 "Men of Israel, listen to these  
words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man  
attested to you by God with  
miracles and wonders and signs  
which God performed through Him

in your midst, just as you yourselves know—23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.’

xviii. Yes, God planned the death of Jesus

xix. He planned the sinful actions of men who would crucify his son for good

xx. The good of accomplishing salvation for many people and revealing his glory

xxi. Even though God planned what these

wicked sinners would do to Jesus

xxii. He ultimately planned it for good

xxiii. And notice that God is the one who

planned it

xxiv. The ones who are guilty are the wicked

men

xxv. It is not God who is doing the evil but

these men, but God planned their evil

deeds ultimately for good

b.Application

- i. If God can use the most heinous wicked deed that has ever happened
- ii. More wicked than any sin that you can imagine
- iii. The murder of the most innocent and perfect man
- iv. Jesus, God in the flesh
- v. And used it to bring the greatest good ever, salvation
- vi. How much more can God use the mistake you made
- vii. The pain and suffering in your past

viii. For good?

ix. God is able to turn the darkest evil into  
the brightest good

x. Romans 8:28 And we know that God  
causes all things to work together for  
good to those who love God, to those  
who are called according to His  
purpose.

c. Exposition

i. The incredible mind of God

1. You see there is nothing in human  
thought or writing that has ever

conceived of such a plot or such an  
incredible plan

2. The best man could come up with  
are eight elephants holding up the  
earth in Hinduism

3. Or an angry old man throwing  
lightning bolts in Greek mythology

4. This is what Paul recognized

5. That what looked like a hopeless  
reality for Israel

6. Was actually the most incredible  
plan ever crafted

7. That only God can conceive of

8. That only the mind of God could  
create

9. This finally brings us to our text

10. Where Paul's mind is in awe of  
the incredible wisdom and mind of  
God

11. And he could not help but  
worship God for his ways

ii. God's rich wisdom and knowledge –  
read v.33

1. Paul describes God's wisdom as  
riches full of depth
2. God does not merely have a large  
quantity of wisdom and knowledge
3. But tremendous depth as well
4. His knowledge is full of complexities  
and understanding that only he can  
have
5. In addition, his judgements are  
unsearchable and his ways are  
unfathomable

6. There is no scientific method or philosophical or theological theories that can explain or replicate God's ways

7. In fact what Paul is saying here has already been said long ago in Isaiah and Job

a. Look at v.34-35

8. Both Isaiah and Job testify to God's overwhelming riches of grace and his unfathomable ways

9. And that no one whether man or  
angel can match God in wisdom or  
grace

d. Application

- i. And you yourself know this
- ii. When the worst things happen to you  
in life
- iii. And you begin to wonder, 'why God?'
- iv. 'Why is this happening or what are you  
thinking?'
- v. The answer when things are going  
completely against you

1. Is that you cannot understand

God's plans

2. But you can find hope because you

know that it is *God's plan*

vi. That although you don't know why

things are happening the way they are

vii. You don't know why you lost a loved

one

viii. That God's plan in the end is for a good

purpose

ix. You might not know it now, but you will

some day

- x. Many of Jesus' followers were in complete shock and sadness when he was crucified
- xi. They had no idea why he came to die
- xii. They did not realize until later on when Jesus rose from the dead why he had to die
- xiii. Even though Jesus told them many times that he was going to die
- xiv. But when they realized why God allowed such a tragic thing to happen
- xv. They changed the world forever

xvi. When things are not going well and you  
can't help but wonder why

xvii. Remember it is all God's plan

xviii. And his plan is for your good

e. Exposition

i. God is the ultimate source

1. And this is because everything is  
from God

2. He is the ultimate source to  
everything in life, look at v.36

3. God is the one who is behind  
everything in life

4. And he uses it all for good

5. Everything that is good

6. Gracious

7. Loving

8. Just

9. Is ultimately from God

10. Because he is the ultimate  
source

11. And therefore God deserves all  
the glory and praise and worship  
forever

f. Application

- i. If you want to build a strong mind
- ii. You must have a mind that is in awe of  
God
- iii. You must have a mind that is sensitive  
to worshipping God
- iv. You must cultivate a mindset that is  
God centered
- v. That asks, 'what would please God  
today'
- vi. This is a mind that is strong and  
protected from temptation
- g. Cross-ref Hebrews 5:11-14,

11 Concerning him we have much to say,  
and it is hard to explain, since you have  
become dull of hearing. 12 For though by  
this time you ought to be teachers, you  
have need again for someone to teach you  
the elementary principles of the oracles of  
God, and you have come to need milk and  
not solid food. 13 For everyone who  
partakes only of milk is not accustomed to  
the word of righteousness, for he is an  
infant. 14 But solid food is for the mature,

who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

i. The author of Hebrews wrote this

ii. Because he was teaching deep biblical doctrine on the order of Melchizedek

iii. And he felt frustrated that his teaching on Melchizedek would be unappreciated

1. because his listeners have become dull of hearing

iv. They became bored of reading the bible or listening to preaching

1. Because their interests have  
become worldly

v. Therefore, the author of Hebrews  
rebukes them because they have been  
Christians for some time

1. and yet are still spiritual babies that  
cannot handle deep teaching but  
only the basics

vi. They should be able to teach the basics  
of their faith to those younger in the  
faith than they

1. or be able to teach the lost the  
gospel

vii. But they can't because they are  
spiritually immature babies

viii. In fact, if you cannot explain the basics  
of your faith to those less mature than  
you

1. or if you can't share the gospel with  
unbelievers

ix. then the bible calls you spiritually  
immature

x. And so the author of Hebrews  
concludes, that mature strong  
Christians

1. Christians are those who have  
practiced or in other translations,  
trained their senses for godliness

xi. And so if you want to become a mature  
Christian

1. if you want to have a strong mind

2. you must train your mind

3. to be sensitive to the things of God

xii. you must train your mind to be

sensitive to the truths of scripture

1. and sensitive to being in awe of

God

2. Sensitive to worshipping God

h. How can we train our minds to appreciate

God more than?

i. By committing to daily prayer and

reading of scripture

ii. By committing to coming to church to

be fed the word of God and serving one

another

iii. These things are called spiritual

disciplines

1. because these are things that we

must do regardless of whether we

feel like it or not

iv. Not everybody is in the mood to come

to church in the morning

v. but yet we must come if we want to

have strong minds

vi. As the author of Hebrews says

1.the mature Christians are those  
who discipline themselves in these  
areas.

i. So begin by disciplining yourself today in  
any of these areas

i. One step at a time

ii. One day at a time

iii. and you will build a strong mind

iv. A mind in awe of the mind of God

2.The Christian mind informs the body

a.Exposition – read v.1

i. Basically Paul is saying, ‘think, now do’

ii. Think godly thoughts, now do godly things

iii. The mind is not separate from the body

iv. What goes into the mind comes out in the actions of the body

v. If we want to have strong minds

1. Our actions must follow after our minds

2. That are full of worship and in awe of God

vi. This is why Paul says, 'therefore'

1. Because action must come after  
worshipful thoughts

2. He urges us to live according to  
what we believe

3. And he not only urges us

4. He urges us by the mercies of God

vii. If your mind has been in awe of the  
mercy of God,

1. bringing salvation through Christ to  
the lost

2. then the way you live must align  
with that

viii. Specifically by presenting our bodies as a 'living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.'

ix. As Christians we realize that the OT system

1. of sacrificing animals for sin has been made obsolete

2. because Jesus the lamb of God was the perfect, ultimate, and final sacrifice for sin.

x. And as Christians we have been saved

1. because by faith alone we believe  
that Christ's sacrifice on the cross  
alone

2. can save us and none of our works  
have any merit before God

xi. But not only are we saved from the  
wrath of God

1. through the blood of his son

2. our lives are transformed to live like  
Christ and to serve him

b. Cross ref Galatians 2:20 says,

20 “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

- i. Paul realized that once God saved him on the Damascus road
- ii. the old Paul, Saul of Tarsus has been slain by the Lord Jesus
- iii. and now the new Paul lives
- iv. The new Paul, is actually Christ living in him and through him!

### c. Application

i. If you want to strengthen your mind,

1. you must follow up your thoughts

of awe and worship by action in

your body

ii. You must give up your body to Jesus

1. that you no longer have any

authority over what you do with

your body

2. because it is the Lord's body

3. and that you must obey his word in

whatever you do with your body

iii. You must give up your life

1. as Paul says, 'a *living* and holy  
sacrifice'

iv. You no longer have any authority over  
what you do with your life

1. because it's the Lord's life and you  
must live your life according to the  
bible

2. living a holy and righteous life

3. And it's a sacrifice because you do  
these things regardless of what  
your flesh wants to do

4. you must deny yourself, take up  
your cross and follow Jesus

v. Your actions must please God, as Paul  
says, 'acceptable to God'

1. because this is how you serve God  
now

2. this is how you worship God now

3. first in your mind

4. and then in the actions of your  
body

vi. You must act out what you believe

vii. Transition- Because if you are all talk  
but then no walk

1. then your faith is not genuine it is  
not real

d. Cross-ref James 2:26 says, '26 For just as  
the body without the spirit is dead, so also  
faith without works is dead.

i. When James wrote this final verse he  
was answering the question, ' how can  
people tell if someone has real faith?'

ii. And James explains that anyone who  
merely says they believe

1. but their actions don't reflect what  
they believe

2. have dead faith or fake faith

iii. You can have wonderful thoughts about  
Jesus

1. But if there is no actions

2. James says it is a fake, dead faith

iv. John Calvin commented

1. 'It is faith alone which justifies, and  
yet the faith which justifies is not  
alone, just as the heat alone of the

sun which warms the earth, and yet  
in the sun heat is not alone’.

v. What this means is that as Christians

1. Is that we are saved by faith alone

2. but genuine faith is never alone

3. just as how it is heat alone from

the sun that warms the earth

4. but heat is never alone

5. you can never separate heat from

the sun

e. Application

i. So if you want to have a strong mind

- ii. Don't just let thoughts of worshipping  
God sit there
- iii. Act on those thoughts from your mind  
that is full of worship
- iv. and you will strengthen your mind
- v. What starts in the mind ends in the  
hands
- vi. Think godly thoughts
- vii. Then do godly things
- viii. Because the Christian mind informs the  
body

### 3.The Christian mind is renewed by Scripture

(12:2)

a. Exposition – read v.2

i. If you have been saved by the Lord

Jesus,

1.and you worship him for the things

he has done

2.then Paul also urges us to ‘not be

conformed to this world’

ii. If you remember back in Hebrews 5

1. when the author of Hebrews  
rebuked them for being spiritual  
immature babies

2. he said that they had become 'dull  
of hearing'

iii. What leads to a mind that finds the  
bible dull

1. that finds God boring

2. is being *conformed to this world*

3. And it is easy to become conformed  
to this world

a. Simply by living in it

## b. Falling for materialism

i. Having nice things

ii. Nice clothes

iii. Nice family

iv. Nice car

v. Nice house

vi. And that's it

vii. That's all our life is about

viii. Don't fall for it

## iv. Application

1. Don't love the world

2. Don't let your mind fall in alignment

with how the world thinks

3. Keep checking everything that you

hear whether it's on the news

a. or from coworkers with

scripture

4. Stay committed to reading scripture

a. To meeting with other believers

throughout the week

b. To coming on church on Sunday

to hear the word and serve

others

c. So that you can prevent  
yourself from being conformed  
to the world

5. Let your mind become conformed  
and transformed by scripture  
instead

v. That's what Paul urges us to do

vi. To be transformed by the renewing of  
our mind

vii. This relates to our first point

1. about having a mind that is in awe  
of the mind of God

viii. How do you even have a mind that is in awe of God?

ix. You must be transformed by the renewing of your mind. And how do we do that? By of course none other than the Word of God.

b. Cross ref 2 Timothy 3:16 says, 16 All

Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

- i. Paul was teaching Timothy that even though Christians will be persecuted
- ii. and that things will get worse
- iii. to not worry and instead continue in what he has learned in scripture, because:
  - iv. 'all scripture is inspired by God'
  - v. meaning that all of Scripture comes from the mouth of God
    - 1. man did not merely write it
    - 2. God wrote it

- vi. 'And profitable for teaching' for  
learning about God and his good news
- vii. 'for reproof' for rebuking our sinful  
ways of thinking and living
- viii. 'for correction' for correcting us by  
guiding us back to the correct manner  
of thinking and living
- ix. It is scripture that enables us as Paul  
says to,
  - 1. 'prove what the will of God is, that  
which is good and acceptable and  
perfect'

- x. It is scripture that makes us discerning  
of what God's will is and what is right.
- xi. 'for training in righteousness' for  
becoming holier
- xii. 'So that the man of God may be  
adequate, equipped for every good  
work'
- xiii. other translations use complete instead  
of adequate
- xiv. it is Scripture that makes the believer  
complete and equipped for every good  
work

xv. And this is bible verse is the reason why  
the Word of God is the Christian's  
ultimate authority

1. because of Scripture is sufficient

2. or if scripture is all that a believer  
needs to be complete, what else  
does he need?

3. Nothing

4. Nothing but Scripture alone

c. Application

i. And so if you want to build a strong  
mind

1. you must renew your mind with  
scripture

2. Read your bible

a. but not only read your bible

b. commit yourself to listening  
carefully to the preaching of  
God's word every Sunday

c. Commit yourself to prayer over  
God's word

d. Commit yourself to live a life  
where everything is submitted  
to God's word

e. As Christians we are people of  
the book

f. We are submitted to nothing  
but Scripture alone

ii. Therefore if you want to build a strong  
mind free of constant worry and anxiety

iii. Renew your mind with scripture

d. Gospel presentation