

# *New Year~2020*

## *“2020 Vision for the New Year” Pt.3*

(1/12/20)

We are currently working our way thru the Gospel of John here at Calvary on Sunday mornings.

However, we have put that on hold to do a series we’ve entitled, “*2020 Vision for the New Year*”.

This morning, as you stand at the beginning of a new year, there are probably things you'd like to see changed—things that you'd like to be different this year.

The problem is for most people, when they enter into a new year, all they do is *hope* that things will change, all they do is engage in *wishful thinking* that things will be different but they never do anything to bring about any change.

Look—“*Wishin* and *hopein* and *thinkin* and *prayin*” is good but you need to add to it—“*doin* and *workin* and *plannin* and *tryin*” if you’re going to see any real change this year.

Now, I realize that it’s a lot easier talking about change than it is accomplishing it, but with God's grace and power—all things are possible!

However, as we have been saying in this series, change only becomes a reality—when *we* get serious about it and set our sight firmly upon it.

To do that we must see this year (and every year after it) thru the lens of God’s Word.

It's only when we view the new year (and life itself) thru the lens of God's Word that our lives come into focus and make sense—which then allows us to “*take aim at change!*”

But the Bible is a *big* Book, and we need to start somewhere—and so we said the best place to start viewing life thru the lens of God's Word is thru the greatest commandment in the Word of God.

We know it's the greatest because the Lord Jesus Christ, told us it was, that we—

***“...Love the LORD our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength.” (Mark 12:30)***

This then becomes the ‘lens’ that we must view our lives thru—the number one pursuit of this new year!

I believe if we make this our goal and pursue it by God's grace and strength—we will see the change we desire in this new year.

## **I. To Love God with All Your Heart**

The **heart** is the seat of the *will*—and therefore, to love God with all your heart means that you have to *purpose* (“will”) certain things in your heart—

**A. Purpose in your heart to live a life of obedience and commitment to God**

**B. Purpose in your heart to control what comes out of your mouth**

**C. Purpose in your heart to honor God with your finances**

**D. Purpose in your heart to bring God into every (substantive) decision**

## **II. To Love God with All Your Soul**

The **soul** is the seat of our *emotions* so when we talk about loving God with all our *soul*—we're talking about having a *passion* for God.

### III. To Love God with All Your Mind

The **mind** is the seat of *reason*.

When God said in Isaiah 1:18, "*Come let us reason together...*"—He was appealing to the *mind*.

When Jesus gave us the greatest commandment in Mark 12:30—He was quoting from Deuteronomy 6:5.

However, if you compare Deuteronomy 6:5 with Mark 12:30 you will immediately notice that Jesus added one more thing to the list—that we also love God with "**all our mind**".

Commentators really don't say much about why *they* think the Lord did this—except to highlight the importance of the mind when it comes to loving God and living a life that honors and pleases Him.

As we have said in previous studies, the mind is 'ground zero' for spiritual warfare—the main battlefield in our war with the devil where most spiritual warfare is fought.

Spiritual warfare is primarily a battle for control of our thinking, because Satan knows—if he can control the way we think, he can control the way we live!

*"As a man thinks in his heart [mind], so is he"* (Prov.23:7)

And that's why God, in His Word, commands His children—"*Above all else, guard what enters your mind, for everything you do flows from it.*" (Proverbs 4:23)

There are only two *information* streams that flow thru this world and from which all ideologies and belief systems have descended.

They both got their start in the Garden of Eden—1) The truth of God (His Word); and 2) The lies of the Devil, sometimes called the “*wisdom of this world.*”

**James 3:15 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic.

Folks, this, whether you realize it or not, is what spiritual warfare is really all about—a battle for which information stream (God’s truth or Satan’s lies), is going to be allowed to enter your mind and control your life.

If you allow the Word of God to control your thinking and ultimately your living—you will be victorious over the devil—

**1 John 2:14 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> ...I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.

The Word of God when studied and put into practice in a believer’s life (Heb.5:12-14) will cause them to *grow* and *overcome* the devil.

The goal of Christianity is to *grow* into strong men and women of God who know His Word and can use it to defeat the wicked one.

But listen, Satan is a formidable enemy and he has a powerful weapon he uses on us to stop our growth in Christ—a weapon that targets our sinful fallen nature in an attempt to cause us to grow the opposite of godly—and that is—worldly!

And just what is this weapon?—TEMPTATION!

Temptation is Satan's attempt to get us to love the world (ultimately self) more than we love God—and the mind is the target, the bullseye he's aiming for!

That's why the N.T. has so much to say about guarding and controlling our *minds* as Christians—

**Colossians 3:2 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

**Mark 12:30 (NKJV)**

<sup>30</sup> *And you shall love the LORD your God with all your...mind...*

**Philippians 2:5 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

**Romans 8:5 (NIV)**

<sup>5</sup> Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

And so again, this becomes 'ground-zero' in our battle with the devil—a battle for control of our thinking (ultimately for our heart) as to Who or what are we going to love more—God or the world?

Very simply, godly Christians defeat the enemy and worldly Christians are defeated by the enemy—and so Satan targets our flesh thru temptation in an effort to tear our heart away from the Lord Jesus (our Bridegroom) to get us to embrace (thru spiritual adultery) another lover—the world, which will keep Christians carnal and defeated.

And so, John the apostle and all the N.T. writers warned us not to fall for this—not to fall in love with the world, but to stay in love with the Lord:

**1 John 2:15-16 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> **Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.** <sup>16</sup> **For all that *is* in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.**

Satan is the master of mind manipulation which he uses on ignorant and/or immature Christians—but especially on unbelievers:

**2 Corinthians 2:11 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices (mind-games).

The Bible says that Satan has “*blinded the minds of those who do not believe, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ...should shine on them.*” (2 Corinthians 4:4)

This doesn’t mean they’re helpless victims—the only reason Satan has been able to blind them is because—they have allowed it because—they love darkness rather than light. (Explain)

**Romans 1:28 (NKJV)**

<sup>28</sup> And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

**Romans 8:7 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup> Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

**Colossians 1:21 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup> And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled

That’s why salvation begins with a change of mind—

**Acts 17:30 (NKJV)**

<sup>30</sup> Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

The Bible says that salvation requires a person to first of all repent.

The Greek word for **repent/repentance** is ‘metanoia’ which means—“*to have a change of mind.*”

Once a person repents and receives Jesus as their Lord and Savior, then, as a Christian, they are commanded—

**Romans 12:2 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

This transformation by the renewing of your mind will only take place if you continually fill your mind with the Word of God (His truth)—

**John 8:31-32 (NKJV)**

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide (**'continue'**) in My word, you are My disciples indeed. <sup>32</sup> And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Now as you fill your mind with God's Word you begin to think like God thinks—which means you stop thinking like the world thinks.

God's Word teaches us that godly living always flows from godly thinking—which is only possible by the renewing of your mind through the Word of God.

As I've said before—I am absolutely convinced that the reason so many Christians are living worldly lives is because—they're still thinking worldly thoughts!

Their minds are still conformed to this world's way of thinking and they have not allowed them to be transformed by the renewing that comes from God's Word, which means—**They are not loving God with all their mind!**

That doesn't necessarily mean that they aren't reading the Bible or even going to Bible study (although I doubt they are)—it simply means they're not serious about putting into *practice* what they are learning—

*"But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves."* (James 1:22 NLT2)

If you come to church and hear the Word of God taught but you basically let it go in one ear and out the other without any real desire to obey it—then, although living and powerful it will be rendered lifeless and powerless to change *your* life.

Once again, spiritual warfare is a battle for which information stream (God’s truth or Satan’s lies), is going to be allowed to enter your mind, dominate your thinking and control your living.

Think of it this way—your body is like a machine being controlled by a *computer*.

Your *brain* (physical) is the ‘hardware’, but the *mind* (non-physical) is the ‘software’—the information that gets programmed into your brain.

There’s an old saying with regard to how a computer functions—“*garbage in—garbage out.*”

Your mind is being ‘accessed’ (bombarded) constantly with information as you come in contact with the world throughout your day.

Everyday raw data enters our minds through our five senses—primarily through our *eyes* and *ears* in the form of written words, images and verbal messages where it is then processed.

Most of it is useless information (advertisements that you saw on TV or read in some magazine, the color socks you chose to wear that day, the stupid joke someone told at work etc.) and so it gets discarded into your mental ‘*trash bin*’—the way you would delete junk mail out of the inbox in your email account.

Some of this information is somewhat valuable and so it gets filed away in your ‘*mental file cabinet*’ for later use (as sale at Walmart, a coupon for an oil change, remember to drive the neighbor kids to soccer practice next week etc.).



A small portion of this information is very important and therefore gets *internalized* and becomes part of the core values of your heart—the things that really matter to you.

This would include information concerning your family (maybe a reunion, birthday party or graduation), your business or a philosophy or ideology you're committed to—maybe politics, sports, the environment or some other cause or concern you're committed to.

As a Christian when you go to Bible study and hear the Word of God taught—you immediately internalize that teaching because it is part of your core values—the values that you have now built your life upon.

We have an expression—“*Taking it to heart*” which refers to this very thing.

But look, everyday our mind gets flooded with many “megabytes” of raw data, of all different kinds that it has to sort through and process.

“*Loving God with all your mind*” involves, in part, guarding what gets in, what stays and what gets deleted from your mind.

Let me use a computer connecting to the internet to illustrate this—and remember computers and the internet are not evil they are neutral—it's how they are used that determines whether they will be good or evil. (The internet is like a big city...Explain)

Most of the junk that gets into your computer in the way of junk mail, which would include ads for everything from Viagra to the endless parade of pornographic images and services that flood into a lot of people's emails on a daily basis (I personally use a filter and have from the time I started going on the internet).

But much of the junk that populates your email, happens because you or someone at work, on the company network, went onto a sleazy website and made contact with it.

Once your computer connects to one of these sites the unscrupulous people that own and operate that site have designed it to keep a channel to your computer open so that, long after you have logged off, they can still flood your computer with their garbage in the form of pornographic pop-up ads and emails.

The best way to guard what enters your computer is to make sure that you don't go where you shouldn't go on the net—just like when you're in a big city.

But listen, no matter how careful you are there are times when some junk will get in.

When that happens, you have to go through and manually delete it based on what you think is valuable and what you consider to be worthless or even harmful.

When it comes to loving God with all your mind, realize that Satan, as the god of this world, has designed this world and all that is in it to appeal to the *“lust of lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life”* (1John 2:15)—and he wants to flood your mind with images and messages that will destroy your relationship with God by utilizing those 3 avenues of attack.

If you stay away from the more obvious ways he will try to pollute your mind—internet pornography, graphic videos/movie channels etc.—then most of the dangerous junk never gets into your mind in the first place.

But if you do expose yourself to these things and ‘drink them in’ (not just pornography but Facebook where you make contact with an old girlfriend or boyfriend)—you ‘download’ it into your mind where it acts like a ‘computer virus’ and pollutes and corrupts what was once a ‘pure mind’ for God!

A computer virus often goes undetected at first, working quietly in the background corrupting your hard drive unbeknownst to you until one day—your computer crashes and is possibly destroyed for good.

The same is true with ungodly images, internet chatroom romances and demonic practices people download into their minds.

They work quietly in their lives by slowly corrupting their minds, their values, their convictions, their character—long after they log off the internet or close the magazine.

Many people don't realize the extent of the corruption until their life crashes and their marriage is destroyed, their ministry, their reputation and ultimately their relationship with God!

Now listen, when you live in a fallen world, a world you have to come in contact with it on a daily basis—some junk is bound to get in no matter how careful you are in coming in contact with this world (or using the example of a computer—how careful you are when going on to the internet).

When that happens, this mental 'junk mail' the Bible calls temptation, needs to be filtered through the grid of Phil.4:8—

**Philippians 4:8 (NIV)**

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.

We are living at a time of great deception because Satan, the god of this world, is in control of most of what flows thru this fallen world system in the way of information.

The mind becomes the first line of defense in spiritual warfare against ideologies, philosophies (Playboy and others) and values that Satan wants to use to destroy us and those we love.

And the only 'virus' protection' we have is that we love God more than we love self and sin (the best defense is a good strong offense!).

In this new year, purpose in your heart to love God with all your mind by keeping out the poison and letting in what is praiseworthy!!