



## THE MIND: A Terrible Thing to Waste

A quick read through the *Proverbs* will make one thing very clear: the mind is a terrible thing to waste. The wise old king doesn't even try to be subtle on this issue. He even comes up with a nice little name for the person who chooses not to gain knowledge. He calls him a fool. He makes it very clear that the person who chooses to remain simpleminded and naïve is foolish. And, in almost every one of the 31 chapters, he keeps going back to this issue. For some reason this wise old king felt compelled, when speaking on how to make the most of your life, to address this issue over and over again. With all of his wisdom, and all of his experiences, and all of his interactions with various people, he must have seen how easy it can be to let your mind waste away. And instead of just watching the minds of the next generation waste away, he decided to fight it.

The concern of this wise king was not just a concern that people become smarter. His concern was that people know God. It wasn't just gaining knowledge in general, but knowledge that would actually be profitable that concerned him. He understood that what separated us from the animals was our ability to understand. And we were given that ability so that we would be able to understand the things of the Lord. Therefore, he felt that growing in the knowledge of God was the main way that we should employ our minds. Now, let me first say that I want to give some very practical advice to *those who would like to go ahead and travel down the road of mindlessness*. I certainly don't want to assume that every person reading this feels compelled to take positive action. Here are a few ways that you can go ahead and get started:

1. Cultivate an attitude of passivity.

Fill your life with activities which do not demand much thought. Be careful to ignore moments when you sense that you could gain some kind of helpful knowledge. If you want to really excel, then you could move from passivity to actual laziness (Proverbs 1:20ff; 6:6ff).

2. Surround yourself with like-minded people.

You must spend as much time as possible with people who fill their time with trivial activities and their minds with trivial things. In the same way, you must absolutely avoid those who will try and encourage you to think beyond the trivial (Proverbs 1:10ff; 16:25ff).

3. Become a mocker.

Attach yourself to people who mock others, mock thoughtful activities, and just generally mock everything they don't like (Proverbs 14:9).

4. Don't take advice.

You must carefully decline opportunities to learn from others and never--and I mean never--be humble enough to take advice (Proverbs 1:7ff; 19:25ff; 4:10ff).

5. Only gain knowledge when absolutely necessary.

Let's be honest. Even though there might be temptation in remaining simpleminded, there will be times in which you need some wisdom and understanding. But wait until the moment of absolute necessity to get it (Proverbs 2:20ff; 14:6).

Now, for *those who want to fight simplemindedness and gain knowledge*, here are a few things that might help.

1. Consume the Word of God.

Read, memorize, study, pray, and fill your mind with the Word of God (Proverbs 1).

2. Avoid the simpleminded.

Associate with those who want to gain knowledge and see the value of knowledge. Avoid those who foolishly mock and want nothing more than to be amused (Proverbs 1:8ff; 14:7).

3. Learn from others.

Listen to others, learn from others, and go out of your way to be under the teaching of those who are wise. Seek out wise counsel and wise people (Proverbs 4).

4. Limit mindless entertainment.

There is nothing wrong with entertainment but, as Neil Postman made clear, *it is possible to amuse ourselves to death*. Make simple, everyday choices to gain knowledge (Proverbs 4:4ff).

5. Develop a life of discipline.

It is one thing to see the value of knowledge and another to make the effort to acquire it. Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness. The rewards are great (Proverbs 12:1).

Last of all, a word for *those who are still trying to decide what to do with your minds*.

Why should we fight the temptation to waste our mind by filling it with mindless activities and fight for filling our minds with the knowledge of God? Let me propose a few reasons:

1. Thinking about God is more valuable.

If knowing God is more valuable than precious jewels, then certainly it is more valuable than mindless games and entertainment (Proverbs 3:13ff).

2. Thinking about God has better rewards.

The knowledge of God is guaranteed to bring direction, refreshment, life, protection, honor, peace, and much, much more (Proverbs 4:10ff).

3. Thinking about God brings greater joy.

Knowledge will become pleasant to your soul and is the path to real joy (Proverbs 2:10; 3:18).

4. Not to gain knowledge of God is a sin (Proverbs 2:22).

5. Thinking about God allows us not to waste our minds (Proverbs 2:5-6).

The only way that we can properly steward this wonderful gift that God has given us is to use it to think about Him.

We are bombarded with opportunities to waste hours upon hours with mindless activities. And let's be honest, there is something very tempting about just being passive. But please know, there is no virtue in being simpleminded. There is no virtue in being a person that thinks little about the things of the Lord. There is certainly no virtue in being a church that does not call people to think more about the Lord. Thinking little about the things of the Lord is a dangerous thing.

By God's grace and for His glory let us strive to be a people who make the most of our minds. Let us intentionally fill them with heavenly thoughts and not passively allow others to fill them for us. Let us read Scripture, memorize Scripture, talk to others about the things of the Lord, listen to others, and seek the knowledge of God as if it were more precious than gold.

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