

**Learning to Think Biblically**  
**II Timothy 3:14-17**  
**Argyle – 11/12/17 – Applications of Our Life in Christ**

**Introduction to Worship**

Most of us are familiar with the time where Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was. Do you remember how Jesus answered that question? “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” How are you loving God with all of your mind? That is what we will be talking about this morning.

**Introduction to Scripture**

This morning’s Scripture passage is one that has had a big impact on my life and ministry. I memorized part of it back when I was in college. “All Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

These words can be found in II Timothy 3 where Paul was warning Timothy of false teaching that would threaten the church in the days before the return of Christ. The history of the church bears witness to the reality of what Paul warned about as over and over again we have had to refute false teaching that threatens our faith and practice. In an article in *Christianity Today* magazine, Justin Holcomb identified three particular heresies that have threatened the church - Marcionism,

Sabellianism and Arianism. You may think this is getting a little too intellectual, but these are three heresies you have probably encountered in your life. You just don't know their formal names.

So, let's look at how Paul told Timothy to deal with the false teaching he would encounter. These instructions are just as applicable today as they were 2000 years ago, because they are "God-breathed." (Read II Timothy 3:14-17)

### **II Timothy 4:14-17**

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, <sup>15</sup> and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

(Unison prayer)

May the mind of Christ our Savior  
Live in us from day to day,  
By His love and pow'r controlling  
All we do and say.

May the Word of Christ dwell richly  
In our hearts from hour to hour,  
So that all may see us triumph  
Only through His pow'r. Amen

## Introduction

“Close your books, take out a piece of paper and a pencil.” When we were in school, those words used to strike fear into our hearts. The dreaded pop quiz. This morning I am not giving to have you write anything down, but I do want to ask you a few theological questions. Don’t be intimidated by the word “theological.” We all are theologians. Theology is formally defined as “the study of God” which we all engage in some way. I like how Charles Ryrie defines theology. He says it is “thinking about God and expressing those thoughts in some way.” We do that all the time. The issue is, are we good theologians or bad theologians?

Last year Lifeway Research and Ligonier Ministries did a study on the state of American theology. They asked 3000 Christians a bunch of questions about what they believed. Here are 10 of the questions they asked. These are “agree or disagree” questions.

1. People have the ability to turn to God on their own initiative.
2. Individuals must contribute to their own salvation.
3. Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God.
4. God knows all that happens, but doesn’t determine all that happens.
5. The Holy Spirit is a force, not a personal being.
6. Everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature.
7. God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism and

Islam.

8. Worshipping alone or with one's family is a way to replace church.
9. My good deeds help to earn my place in heaven.
10. God will always reward faith with material blessings.

Do you agree or disagree with those statements? What is significant of these particular questions is that the majority of the Christians who answered them got them wrong. That is a problem!

Here is why that is a problem. If I don't understand that the Holy Spirit is God, one of the three persons in the Trinity who lives inside of me, I will find the Christian life to be impossible. That will be very frustrating. But, if I don't understand that there is nothing I can do to earn my own salvation, that it is totally by God's grace, I may miss out on receiving Christ as my Savior. That will have an eternal impact on my life. Being good theologians is a very big deal. So, how do we become good theologians?

### **How Do We Love God with Our Minds?**

This is just another way of asking, how do we love God with our minds? I think it is easier to understand how to love God with our hearts and souls and strength than it is with our minds. We love with God with our minds by getting to know what God thinks. How would God answers those questions on the Lifeway survey? This is one time you want to cheat on a test. You want to look at God's

answers to those questions and copy them down on your sheet - but not just copy them down, but also embrace them. It is not enough to know the right answers in this case, we need to appropriate them into our lives.

We get to know what God thinks by studying the Scriptures. Paul wrote, “All Scripture is “God breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the servant of God will be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” The Bible is God’s word to us. It is how we learn what God thinks.

We love God with our minds by getting to know his word, the Bible, and applying it to our lives. You have heard me say this many times and in a variety of ways over the years - read your Bibles, get in a Bible study, go to Sunday School, take notes on sermons, memorize Scripture and live your lives based on it! We love God with our minds by getting to know how God thinks and shaping our thinking and lives to his truth.

### **How Are We Loving God with Our Minds?**

I want to talk now about some ways we are doing that. How are we loving God with all our minds? How are we actually doing this in the Argyle Presbyterian Church?. To help us do that, please take out the green insert Essentials of our Faith Insert. This is from a sermon series I preached in 2009 on the basics of what we believe as Christians. It is what we are studying in our

Know What You Believe Sunday School class during this quarter. The “Essentials of Our Faith” is a short statement from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church on what beliefs we share with other churches and denominations. When I preached on this, I took each of the statement and summarized it in my own words and then gave some supporting Scripture passages. I thought this would be a good reference tool for you to put in your Bibles or somewhere else as a summary of what we believe.

The first statement is on the importance and authority of Scripture. We are loving God with our minds by taking Scripture seriously. Today many of us will stay an extra hour to study Scripture and talk about how to apply it. This week over 100 will use one of our personal Bible reading guides. Others of you have your own strategy for personal Bible reading. Throughout the week 15 small group Bible studies and Growth Groups will meet to explore what the Bible means. We love God with our minds when we take the Bible seriously.

The second statement in the Essentials is about the Trinity. We believe in one God who exists in community. The Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are a divine community. Since we are created in God’s image, we recognize the importance of living out our faith in community. So, we work at building community. Last night a group of us gathered for a meal to honor our veterans. On Wednesday the women will gather at Panera in Saratoga for lunch. The whole

congregation is invited to eat together in homes on December 2 for Dinner for 8. And then on December 17 we'll eat together as a whole congregation at our Christmas Brunch. We eat together a lot because it is a way to build community which is a reflection of our Triune God. More intimate community is built in Young Life Campaigners and Club and WyldLife Club and the many Bible studies, Growth Groups and prayer groups that meet every week. So, when our participation in the church goes beyond merely showing up for worship, but connecting with others through groups and ministries, we are loving God with our minds by reflecting the divine community of the Trinity.

The third point in the Essentials is about how Jesus took on human flesh to live in this world. We call that the incarnation. How in the world can we live that out? I first learned this principle as a Young Life leader. The foundation of Young Life is Christian adults going to where kids are, getting to know them so they can see what the gospel looks like in our lives. The idea is to let them see Jesus in us so that when we get a chance to tell them about Jesus, they will already have experienced Christ through us. We are all called to live incarnationally which means to go to our neighbors and fellow students and co-workers and others, invest ourselves in them and care about them. Then when opportunities come up, we can tell them about Jesus and what he has done in our lives.

One of the ways we live out the truth about the Holy Spirit in our lives is by

discovering and using the spiritual gifts that he has given us. If you know what your spiritual gifts are and are using them, you are loving God with your mind.

In the section on Salvation we read, “Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's free grace. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, thereby justifies them in His sight.” This addresses a couple of the questions I asked you earlier. When we stop striving to earn our salvation by our good works and religious activities and instead simply surrender our lives to Jesus we are not only saved, but we are loving God with our minds. We are submitting to his truth rather than trying to live out our own truth.

In the section on the church we are reminded that the church is more than just a human institution. We are the body of Christ, imperfect in this world until Christ returns, but still his people called together and given important work to do. We love God with our minds when our commitment to the church reflects the exalted place it has in God’s plan. And we love God with our minds when we partner with other churches to carry on his work. That is happening this morning as we are joining churches around the world in praying for the persecuted church. That will happen this week when some of our folks serve at the Open Door Soup Kitchen. That happens just about every Tuesday when Bryan and I gather with 6-8 other pastors using video conferencing technology to discuss books on theology

and ministry. And on Wednesdays when I meet with 3 other area pastors to pray for our area, our churches and one another.

These are just a few of the ways we are already loving God with our minds. We love God with our minds when we make the effort to learn what God thinks through studying his word and shaping our lives according to its truth. That is what it means to think Biblically.

### **Conclusion**

Thinking Biblically is one of the applications of our life in Christ that we need to learn to make in order to live the way God designed us to live. The other applications we have talked about so far are learning how to pray, learning how to live in community and learning what our mission is. How are you doing in applying your salvation in Christ to your everyday life?