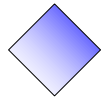


# The Voice of Truth



April 7, 2013

## Adorning the Doctrine of God

By Jimmy Pettigrew

*"That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2:10).* "Adorn the doctrine." The attitude is the same as that in **1 Peter 2:12**, *"Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."* Christians are exhorted to give glory to God (**Psalm 29:2**). God created us for His glory (**Isaiah 43:7**). God deserves our adoration and praise! Christians are exhorted to give glory to God and support and honor to the gospel of God's grace, by their good works and holy lives.

In Every way Christians will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. By doing this, dignity and honor are given to the gospel of Christ, making it beautiful and attractive. We give dignity and honor to the gospel by:

1. The love we demonstrate (**John 13:34-35**).
2. The forgiveness demonstrated (**Ephesians 4:32**).
3. The compassion shown (**1 Peter 3:8**).
4. A life of holiness and godliness (**Titus 2:11-12**).
5. The stand we take. We must stand for sometime or we will fall for anything (**Ephesians 6:11-14**).
6. Knowing the truth (**John 8:32; Psalm 119:11**).
7. Loving the truth (**Psalm 119:47, 140; 2 John 1:6**).
8. Following the truth (**1 John 1:7; 3 John 4**).
9. Putting the kingdom of God first (**Matthew 6:33**)
10. Supporting His cause (**1 Corinthians 16:1-2**)

There is no greater need in this entire world, than for those who are members of the Lord's spiritual body to

really live a genuine Christian life in a world that is steep in darkness and sin. What we need is a glow of light from a Christian who's living there life right before God (**Matthew 5:16**). *"Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27)*. We must live worthily of the faith, the gospel (**Jude 3**). We must stand fast in the faith (**1 Corinthians 16:13**). This should cause each one us to think of his own individual life. We need genuine Christians lives lived by those of us who profess to be followers of the Lord. We need Christians who will make the doctrine of Christ attractive by honoring His word, by loving, obeying following and knowing the truth; by demonstrating love, forgiveness and compassion for one another; by living a life of holiness and godliness! *"The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk becomingly, as in the day; not in reveling and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to (fulfil) the lusts (thereof)" (Romans 13:12-14)*.

Nothing in this world hurts the cause of Christ more than hypocritical lives and I'm afraid so often that's what we see. I appeal to you to really live a Christian life. Be a faithful child of God! Don't be like those who left their first love (**Revelation 2:1ff**). Be committed to His service, consecrated to Him and to His cause every day! Let us all determined to follow the old paths! Let us all determined to always "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." ♦

### THINK ABOUT IT!

When a farmer stops plowing his land, stops planting seed, and stops harvesting his crops, he has stopped doing those things that identify him as being a farmer. When a Christian stops attending worship services regularly, stops studying, stops giving as he has been prospered, and has stopped working for the Lord, he has stopped being a Christian because he has stopped doing those things that identify him as a Christian. *"By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20).* ♦

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## “Think Like God Thinks” By Jarrod Jacobs

In **Romans 12:1-2**, the apostle Paul wrote, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”* In this article, I want us to study the phrase *“the renewing of your mind.”* The word “renewing” means, “renewal, renovation, complete change for the better” (Thayer’s, p. 38). Please notice the contrast made between God and the world in this text. It is obvious that to be like God is better than being like the world. If we are not going to conform to this world in its thoughts, actions, etc., we need to think like God thinks!

### How Can I Think Like God Thinks?

Let’s answer this question by asking: How can anyone think like another? Thinking as someone else demands first that that person’s thoughts be revealed! Thus, if we are to think like God thinks, we must know what He is thinking. How can this happen? Is this even possible? Paul writes to the Corinthians about this very subject and says, *“Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual”* (**I Cor. 2:8-13**). Therefore, **Romans 12:1-2** was not telling us to do something that we cannot do. God has revealed His mind to men through His Spirit.

### Where Were God’s Thoughts Revealed?

Now that we know the Holy Spirit has revealed God’s thoughts to men, where are they revealed? Is God’s will revealed in such a way that is “better felt than told?” Does the Spirit speak personally to every person on earth so God’s will is known? Has He hidden it in some obscure place that will take men a lifetime to find? The answer to

these questions is “no,” but unfortunately, it may take some a lifetime to find the Bible. See, the Bible reveals the thoughts of God to man. Peter wrote, *“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...”* (**I Pet. 4:11**). The word “oracles” means, “the utterances.” Therefore, every time we read and speak from God’s word, we are reading and speaking the revealed thoughts of God to men. Isn’t that amazing!! God loved us enough to give us His thoughts, and when we study and read His word (**II Tim. 2:15; Eph. 3:4**), we can think like God thinks! What other book, man, or group of men could give you that?

### Why Were God’s Thoughts Revealed?

Have you ever wondered why God would spend so much time and expend such effort in giving us a book by which to live? Why were His thoughts revealed? Was there a reason we need to know who God is? Let us let the Bible answer the question “why.” In **John 20:29-31**, we read, *“Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”* God’s thoughts were written so we might believe. Why believe? It is because through faith we obey God’s word and can be saved (**Rom. 10:13-17; Heb. 11:6, 5:8-9**; etc.). God’s thoughts revealed man’s sin, his need for a Savior, and the way to be saved (**Rom. 3:23; Rev. 3:20; Mk. 16:16**).

### How Were His Thoughts Revealed?

We have discussed the “where”, and “why”. Now, how did the Holy Spirit reveal God’s thoughts? The method used for revelation is revealed for us in the Bible as well. *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds”* (**Heb. 1:1-2**). Peter says something similar to that in **II Peter 1:20-21**. *“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”* These passages reveal that God spoke to the fathers for a time. These men were “moved” (inspired) by the Holy Ghost to say the things they did (**I Cor. 2**). Jesus was also sent to reveal God’s thoughts to man (**Jn. 12:49-50**). After

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God's thoughts were revealed to man, they were written down for future generations to receive the spiritual benefit (**Ex. 34:27; Jn. 20:30-31; Eph. 3:3-5**; etc.). Thus today we have the written word so that we might think like God thinks (**Rom. 12:1-2**)!

### What Does This Mean For Those In Religious Error?

When one decides that he is going to think like God thinks, he will stand opposed to religious error. Therefore, Satan has lost a soldier. When we think like God thinks, we will no longer be "tolerant" of those that are impenitent in sin. We would rather teach the truth and have folks not

like us, than to have a friend that goes to Hell because of our inaction (**II Tim. 2:2**). Thinking like God thinks will make us realize that we need to be doing all that God has said. We cannot "pick and choose" our obedience and hope to go to Heaven (**Ecc. 12:13-14; II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:14**).

### Conclusion

Have you renewed your mind? Have you decided you want to think like God thinks? Your only other option is to think like the world. Which will it be? (**Matt. 6:24, 16:26**).

*Credit: The Old Paths - 2/27/11 ♦*

## The Journey to Understanding By Jonathan L. Perz

To those who think that seeking and finding God is easy: think again.

Listening to Paul explain Abraham's justification demonstrates the complexity of God's mind. God's plan of justification by faith in Christ Jesus is so intricate and detailed, that it takes divine intervention—the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—to understand it. If the apostle Paul hadn't written down his inspired understanding of this mystery for us (**cf. Eph. 3:1-7**), we couldn't possibly have riddled out those details by ourselves. Every detail matters—from when God justified Abraham (before Abraham's circumcision) to how God justified Abraham (faith accredited as righteousness). Over four hundred years between Moses and Abraham, and God purposed every last detail. Nearly two thousand years later, men still wrestle and struggle to grasp knowledge that God has always known. The same principle applies to every other inspired word revealed to us in Scripture.

Some argue that God does not expect us to pull bits and pieces from here and there to discern what He means, wants or desires. I wholeheartedly disagree. Clearly, God does want us to study His word in detail and rightly divide it (**2 Tim. 2:15**). Anyone who has read Paul's inspired explanation of the intricacies of God's thinking, as He unfolded His plan to redeem mankind from sin, knows this to be true. Who would've thought that the lack of the plural "s" in "seeds" mattered at all (**cf. Gal. 3:16**)? God did. Not one jot or tittle (the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet and the smallest stroke in the Hebrew letter) passed from the Law until ALL was fulfilled (**Matt. 5:18**, emphasis mine, jlp).

Even Christ spoke in parables with this express pur-

pose in mind. When asked "why," He explained, "*Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given*" (**Matt. 13:11**). It was not because God respected one person over another (**cf. Gal. 2:6**), but because, "*seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand*" (**Matt. 13:13**). As Jesus prayed, "*I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes*" (**Matt. 11:25**). Even more amazing is that this prayerful statement caveated some of Jesus' most famous words—words often abused to demonstrate how "easy" it is to enter heaven, "*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light*" (**Matt. 11:28-30**).

Paul, an inspired writer, quotes from the words of the prophets, "*For who has known the mind of Lord?*" (**Rom. 11:33-36; Isa. 40:13; Jer. 23:18**). Who indeed! The Ethiopian eunuch, when asked if he understood what he was reading from **Isaiah 53**, answered, "*How can I, unless someone guides me?*" (**Acts 8:30-31**). How indeed! Jesus teaches us, "*narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it*" (**Matt. 7:13-14**). Few indeed! Is it this way because God desires few to be saved (**cf. John 3:17; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9**), or is it because God only wants those who truly seek Him?

The more I study God's word, the more I am convinced that the journey to understanding is just as important as the understanding itself. As Jacob wrestled with the Man at Peniel (**cf. Gen. 32:22-30**), God wants us to wrestle with

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His word. God wants us to struggle "until dawn" with it—until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts (cf. 2 Pet. 1:19b). There is not a chance that we will come out of this struggle unchanged.

God didn't give us His word and will in 'cliff notes' format. There is no bullet point summary that can truly encapsulate the mind of God. There is no simple list of rules to follow. We can simplify and simplify and simplify, but we can never quite capture it in our simplifications because that is not the intent. I am convinced that His intent is not just for us to know what His will is, or even just to understand it, but to be conformed to it and transformed by it (cf. Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:21, et al). The only way this truly happens is when, "...you **incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding**; yes, if you **cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding**, if you **seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.** (Prov. 2:2-5, emphasis mine, jlp). It is not enough to just know what to do so

you can do it, you must know what to do *and become it*. That is not "easy."

The point is that you have to want it. You have to want God's righteousness and kingdom more than anything in this world before He will reveal it to you. You have to be willing to sell all that you have to gain it (cf. **Matt. 13:44-46; Prov. 23:23**). You must be willing to forsake everything—whatever your "ALL" might be (**Luke 14:33**). You have to want it for the right reasons. Anything less than this will fall short when it comes to seeking and finding God. The beautiful promise of our Lord is, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (**Matt. 7:7-8**).

The problem is not that God can't be understood and found. The problem is that too many don't want to understand Him or to seek Him diligently. "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled*" (**Matt. 5:6**). *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦*

Some go to church just for a walk;  
Some go there to laugh and talk;  
Some go there for observation;  
Some go there for speculation;  
Some go there to sleep and nod;  
We should go there to worship God! ♦

When an archer misses the mark, he turns and looks for the fault within himself.  
Failure to hit the bull's-eye is never the fault of the target. To improve your aim –  
Improve yourself.

### What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

### About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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#### Schedule of Assembly

**Bible Study:** Sunday, 9:00am  
**Worship Service:** Sunday, 10:00am  
**Bible Study:** Wednesday, 7:00pm\*

\*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

**www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com**