

Mind Renovation

A Study Guide

By

Dwight J. Olney
www.mindrenovation.com

Greetings!

Welcome friends.

This is an continuation of a massive reconstruction project. If you have already worked through *Master Mind*, you are ready to carry on on this journey into the mind of God. In our natural state, there is a great chasm between human and divine thinking. But our Creator-Savior wants to fix that problem. He wants to transform our minds so that our lives can become the living and holy sacrifices they were intended to be. God truly does want to transform us into new people by changing the way we think.

I trust that the following questions in this study guide will lead you into a place where minds can be renovated, where weak and faulty human thinking can be ripped out and replaced with supernatural ideas in line with God's thinking. Everyone who is serious about their Christian faith knows that there is a lot of work to do in cleaning out the old and bringing in the new.

We cannot be content with our tiny human thinking—it is so deceptive and destructive because it is based on a satanically inspired worldly system. Worldly reasoning can appear harmless, even quite intelligent at times. But an honest appraisal of natural human wisdom finds it to be completely wanting. Human thinking will continually disappoint us and frustrate our attempts to find true meaning in life. It is time to tear out those destructive thought patterns and reconstruct our minds with the God's truth as revealed in his Word.

Continue to proceed with caution! The work zone can be very dangerous for your natural mind.

Dwight Olney

Fellow renovator

www.mindrenovation.com

Chapter 1 – “Oops, my infinity is showing.”
Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think God made the Universe so incredibly massive?
2. What fields of study clearly showcase God’s infinite and eternal power?
3. Give an example of something that appears finite but is actually infinite.
4. What does it mean to live life with a finite perspective?
5. How are our lives impacted by having a more infinite perspective of all Creation?
6. How does Romans 1:20 relate to the age of the Earth debate?
7. How do human inventions point to God’s infinite power?
8. With all the evidence around us displaying infinity, why does the world still have such a finite mindset?

Chapter 2 – “My son’s name ticks off a lot of people.”

Discussion Questions

1. What’s the difference between ‘believing in God’ and ‘following Jesus’?
2. Why is the name of Jesus so offensive?
3. What is so significant about the name of Jesus according to the biblical writers?
4. It’s hard for the human mind to think of persecution as a good thing. What are some words or phrases in Scripture that are associated with suffering for Christ?
5. The responses Jesus received to his ministry were ironic. Explain.
6. Practically speaking, what does it mean to boldly proclaim the name of Jesus?
7. Is it possible to boldly proclaim the name of Jesus without experiencing the world’s contempt?
8. Can Christians use shyness as an excuse for not vocally declaring the significance of Jesus in their lives?

Chapter 3 - "True greatness serves."
Discussion Questions

1. Traditionally, how has humanity defined greatness?
2. How did this perception begin to change in the late 20th century?
3. What was Jesus' response to his disciples' constant bickering about human greatness?
4. Illustrate how our desire for human glory is reflected in our tendency to "go vertical."
5. What do Paul and Peter have to say about this matter of servanthood?
6. Is it still okay as a Christian to want to be great in your earthly endeavors? Explain.
7. Describe the irony of the disciples' behaviour at the Last Supper.
8. List several ways Jesus personally exemplified the principle that true greatness serves.

Chapter 4 – “I’m looking for a few good words.”
Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the pitfalls of talking too much?
2. How does the Lord’s Prayer exemplify brevity in talking with God?
3. What can Elijah’s story on Mount Carmel teach us about offering a few good words to God?
4. What is the main idea of James’ teaching on the tongue?
5. Summarize the Book of Ecclesiastes’ instructions regarding the tongue.
6. Being mindful of God’s warning to speak less, how do we know when it’s time to speak up and when it’s time to be quiet?
7. What was the problem with the words Job’s friends offered him?
8. What was the problem with Job’s words?

Chapter 5 – “Sin—what a waste!”

Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the most wasteful consequences of sin?
2. What destructive behaviors did evil spirits instigate in the New Testament accounts of demon possession?
3. What are some of the mind games we play to minimize the seriousness of our sinful behaviour?
4. Like Adam and Eve, what are some of the ways we waste our time ‘hiding from God’?
5. What does Deuteronomy 28 teach us about the depleting effects of sin?
6. What does the story of Sarah Winchester tell us about the motive of demons?
7. What does it mean to comprehend the travesty of sin in all its fullness?
8. Can you identify a period in your life where sin consumed you?

Chapter 6 – “I am tolerant of intolerance.”

Discussion Questions

1. What is the current worldly perspective on tolerance and intolerance?
2. Give examples of religious and non-religious intolerance in the past.
3. How are post-modern thinkers sometimes inconsistent in their wholesale tolerance?
4. Are there some behaviors that even pagans would consider intolerable?
5. What is the original meaning of the word tolerance and how does that impact our understanding of the topic?
6. What role do the concepts of inclusion and harmony play in this discussion?
7. How might behavioral continuums help in the discussion of moral matters?
8. How does the life of Paul exemplify both good and bad tolerance and intolerance?

Chapter 7 – “I love to find lost things.”
Discussion Questions

1. Why do the spiritually lost rarely realize they are lost?
2. What is the most common imagery in the Scriptures for lost humanity?
3. Why do Christians struggle to think deeply or often about the lost?
4. What is the difference between a spiritually lost homeless drug addict and a spiritually lost successful businessperson?
5. What do we learn from Luke 15 about God’s attitude towards finding the lost?
6. In Ezekiel, who does God hold responsible for the unreached lost?
7. Why might a Christian hesitate to label someone as lost?
8. As the church, what approach should we use to truly make an effort to reach the lost?

Chapter 8 – “Orphans and widows are particularly dear to my heart.”

Discussion Questions

1. Describe God’s attitude towards widows, orphans, oppressed foreigners, and the poor.
2. How were the Israelites to care for the needy in their community?
3. What was the basis for this ‘socialist’ mindset (#2)?
4. Why is it easy for Westerners to overlook the downtrodden?
5. What is the outcome for those who deliberately abuse the needy?
6. What role should a Christian play in response to major social injustices in the world?
7. How might believers follow after God’s heart in this matter within their own neighborhoods and churches?
8. “Evangelicals fear the Social Gospel—Jesus knew no other.” Agree or disagree.

Chapter 9 – “No, seriously, my clock’s not broken.”
Discussion Questions

1. Why are people in the West typically in a hurry?
2. How would you describe Abraham’s experience with God’s timing?
3. What are some of the things we do because of impatience with God’s timing?
4. What is the appropriate age to enter a major leadership role in Christian ministry? Why?
5. Which biblical characters besides Abraham had their faith tested as they waited for God’s timing?
6. Describe some situations where we might deem God’s timing to be too early or too fast.
7. Why does God keep us guessing with regard to his timing?
8. Sometimes when we are ‘waiting for the Lord to act’, there’s another issue at play. Explain.

Chapter 10 – “You might want to pay more attention to conspiracy theories.”
Discussion Questions

1. How do the average citizen and the scientific community view conspiracy theories differently?
2. What are the basic tenets of conspiracy theory?
3. What phrases does the Bible use to describe Satan and how do these relate to our perception of conspiracy theory?
4. Give some examples of conspiracies that were masterminded in the biblical narrative.
5. What grand conspiracy is Satan scheming for the end times?
6. What organizations might conceivably play a role in that plan (#5)?
7. Is there any proof that significant conspiracies have actually been executed in history?
8. Should a Christian lean more towards or against conspiracy theories? Why?

Chapter 11 – “I like to ask a lot of questions.”
Discussion Questions

1. How should we view the Bible in terms of its purpose for our lives?
2. Why does God ask us questions? Does he always expect an answer?
3. How might some of God’s questions for us have a double meaning?
4. God asked Job a lot of questions. What was the Lord communicating to him?
5. “What are you doing here Elijah?” What was God doing in the prophet’s life with this line of questioning?
6. “Jesus was the ultimate inquisitor.” Explain.
7. Explain the significance of any three questions asked by Jesus.
8. What do you think of the concept articulated in the last paragraph of this chapter?

Chapter 12 – “Dads are awesome too.”

Discussion Questions

1. What mixed message do our media portray about fathers and men in general?
2. What is the difference between many Mother’s Day and Father’s Day church services?
3. Describe the divine model for proper fatherhood.
4. What are some of the ways fathers exasperate their children?
5. What three facets of a father’s love are uniquely masculine?
6. How do these behaviors (#5) resemble the way God the Father loves his children?
7. How does one overcome the baggage of bad fathering?
8. How can godly fathers fulfill their divine role beyond their own families?

Chapter 13 – “I do look at the heart, but I also appreciate a well-trained
mind and body.”

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to think one-dimensionally regarding man’s purpose on Earth?
2. List some great earthly achievements of the earliest men in Genesis.
3. What is the key difference between the constructions of Noah’s Ark and the Tower of Babel?
4. How did Moses exemplify the consummate well-rounded person?
5. What do the constructions of the Tabernacle and the Temple teach us about God’s attitude towards excellence in human achievement?
6. How important is polished well-performed musical worship in church?
7. What do other biblical characters teach us about excellence in mind, body, and heart?
8. What does it mean for a believer to live a rich and multi-dimensional life to God’s glory?

Chapter 14 – “I do some of my best work on mountains.”

Discussion Questions

1. From a human perspective, how are mountains typically viewed?
2. What role did mountains play in Jesus' ministry?
3. In your opinion, what is the most intriguing mountaintop experience in the Bible?
4. Why is Mount Sinai significant in the Old Testament narrative?
5. Why is the Mount of Olives significant in the Bible?
6. Is life truly healthier up on the mountains and more sinful down in the valleys?
7. Where in their lives might people find metaphorical mountains of spiritual retreat?
8. Do we really need a 'mountain' in our lives to gain spiritual rest and enrichment?

Chapter 15 – “Yah, you’re right. I am a little old-fashioned.”
Discussion Questions

1. Why are we so infatuated with things that are new?
2. How may we actually diminish our lives by repeatedly pursuing the ‘next new thing’?
3. What do you think is the best illustration of ‘newer is not necessarily better’?
4. What was Jeremiah’s antidote for the sinfulness of his Jewish contemporaries in 6th century B.C.?
5. What are the benefits of walking in the old godly way?
6. What does the Book of Ecclesiastes have to say about the allure of new things in life?
7. “You can walk in the old godly way and still be contemporary.” Agree or disagree.
8. How should a Christian properly determine the value of a new idea or opportunity in life?

Chapter 16 – “I hope you don’t mind that I can be a little mysterious.”

Discussion Questions

1. How should we respond to those aspects of God’s ways that are mysterious or confusing?
2. Why is it odd that God chose the magi to play a part in revealing Christ to the world?
3. What is strange about Matthew being the one to record the story of the magi?
4. From a human perspective, how might the magi’s journey be considered wasteful?
5. How else is this concept of lavish or wasteful worship illustrated in the New Testament?
6. How might some believers today be viewed by others as ‘wasting their lives’?
7. How is God vulnerable in the story of Jesus’ birth?
8. How does God continue to put himself at risk today?

Chapter 17 – “What do you want to be saved from?”
Discussion Questions

1. At first glance, what is odd about the Triumphal Entry?
2. Describe the confused thinking of the Jews surrounding Jesus' entry into Jerusalem the week before he died.
3. Why did Jesus wait so long to publicly proclaim himself as the Messiah and the King?
4. What is the significance of the palm branches in the story?
5. List three ways Jesus demonstrated his power over all Creation in the Triumphal Entry.
6. What does the word 'Hosanna' literally mean?
7. What kind of Savior do we naturally want?
8. What kind of Savior is the real Jesus?

Chapter 18 – “My Kingdom is the exact opposite of everything you’d expect.”
Discussion Questions

1. Is there anything truly worthy of admiration in the accomplishments of all the earthly kings of the past?
2. What is the Kingdom of God?
3. What are the basic differences between earthly kingdoms and the Kingdom of God?
4. Who will largely be the recipients of the Kingdom of God in eternity?
5. It’s easy to enter the Kingdom of God. Agree or disagree.
6. In your opinion, what are the most perplexing aspects of God’s Kingdom?
7. “This is a kingdom where one human soul is more valuable than 2000 animals.” Explain.
8. Why did the Jews of Jesus’ day have such a hard time accepting his teaching on the Kingdom?

Chapter 19 – “It’s a home run!”
Discussion Questions

1. What does ‘home’ provide for the human soul?
2. Instead of hungering for our eternal home, what do we typically pine for?
3. How has this tendency (#2) been exemplified throughout history?
4. Why do we tend to place so much significance on our earthly homes?
5. What is the biblical teaching on earthly homes?
6. What does the Bible say or imply about us truly ‘being home’?
7. What was Jesus really saying in John 14 when he told his disciples about what he was preparing for them?
8. As we reflect on our attitudes toward our earthly homes, what adjustments need to be made in our thinking to align our minds with God’s?

Chapter 20 – “Are you dying to meet me?”
Discussion Questions

1. How can Christians be selfish in the face of death?
2. How do we mistakenly portray to the world that Heaven is only a consolation, not the top prize?
3. For a Christian, what is the irony in modern medical advancements?
4. How are we as believers in this world similar to unborn babies in the womb?
5. Why did Jesus cry at Lazarus' tomb?
6. How does God expect the survivors to handle the loss of loved ones?
7. Contrast Moses' and Hezekiah's attitudes towards their impending deaths.
8. How can the Apostle Paul's life and teaching help us to put our earthly demise in its proper perspective?