

Phroneō Part 3

– *mindset, frame of mind, attitude* –

Concept

The Greek concept of **φρονέω** (phroneō) encompasses the frame of mind, mental attitude, and mindset. It is not about individual thoughts, as much as the entire mental approach to all of life. Our reaction to every circumstance we encounter reveals our mental attitude. The Bible teaches that a humble frame of mind is the key component to genuine fellowship. Furthermore, it describes Spiritual maturity as functioning with the mindset of Christ.

Introduction

We are continuing with part three in our study of **φρονέω** (phroneō, Strong's 5426), another Greek word used in Scripture to describe the function of the mind.

Definition

The verb **φρονέω** (phroneō) is translated as *savourest, thinkest, mind, understood, and even affection*. When joined with other words it is also translated *high-minded, likeminded*, and is part of the compound word *humble minded*. The meaning of **φρονέω** (phroneō) has to do with *the frame of mind, mindset, mental attitude*.

Review

Our first two studies in this series came from the second and third chapters of Philippians and had to do with Paul's theme of fellowship.

Review ~ Meaning Part One

In Philippians 2:5, Paul commanded believers to submit to the process of having their frame of mind (**φρονέω**, phroneō) changed. Paul taught it is necessary for a believer to have his approach to life changed so the things of this world would not hold more value than they should. Because nothing of personal desire should interfere with the fellowship between believers.

Review ~ Meaning Part Two

In Philippians 3:12-20, Paul used himself as an example. He expressed that while he has not completely arrived, he is continually pursuing the process of a renewed approach to this earthly life. His attitude now is that he considers all earthly things garbage and loss so that he might gain Christ. He goes on to say, in Philippians 3:15, that all mature Christians should have this same frame of mind or attitude (**φρονέω**, phroneō), effectively presenting his frame of mind as the pattern of transformation for all believers.

Meaning Part Three ~ Matthew 16:21-24

Paul also explains there are many "enemies of the cross of Christ" who are setting their frame of mind (**φρονέω**, phroneō) on earthly things (Philippians 3:18-19). Because our interpretation and application of the Word of God is influenced by our mindset, it is essential to understand mindset is shaped either through the Truth by the Spirit of God, or through the logic and the reason of the flesh. In this week's study we explore Matthew 16:21-24 in order to gain an understanding of those whose frame of mind is on earthly things.

Minding the Things of God

The sixteenth chapter of Matthew records when Jesus and His disciples come to the region of Caesarea Philippi and He asks His disciples, "Who do people say the Son of man is?" The disciples tell Him that some people think He is John the Baptizer; other people think He is Elijah; and even others that He is Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Then Jesus asks them, "But who do you yourselves say Me to be?" Peter confesses, "You Yourself are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus tells Peter that his understanding has not come from human opinion, but rather was given as revelation from His heavenly Father.

Preservation of the Flesh

After this exchange, Jesus tells His disciples about the suffering He will soon face explaining that He must go to Jerusalem where three things will happen; He will suffer many things, He will be killed, He will be raised from the dead.

21) From then Jesus began to show to His disciples that it is necessary for Him to go away unto Jerusalem, and to suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and to be raised the third day.

Peter's response to Jesus' information follows:

22) And after Peter had taken Him aside, he began to rebuke Him, saying, "God be merciful to You, Lord; this will never happen to you."

The man who had just received revelation from God now steps forward to correct Jesus' understanding. He takes Jesus aside, rebukes Him, and tells Him that this will never (double negative) happen to Him.

Minding the Things of Man

In response, Jesus rejects Peter's attempt to take charge and points out some very important lessons:

23) But having turned, He said to Peter, "Go behind Me, Satan, you are *an* offense to me; because you do not have your mindset (φρονέω, phroneō) on the things of God, but the things of man."

24) Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone is desiring to come behind Me, let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross, and let him follow Me."

Proper Relationship

Jesus remains in charge of the situation and establishes four important principles for a proper relationship with Him.

Principle One ~ The believer must have a proper alignment with the Lord.

The first thing Jesus does in response to Peter is to turn and command the one influencing Peter to get behind Him by saying, "Go behind me, Satan." This shows that proper alignment in our relationship with Jesus is to follow behind Him.

Principle Two ~ The believer's mindset must be framed by the Spirit of God.

Jesus tells Peter that he is an offence to Him. The word for offense is **σκάνδαλον** (skandalon, Strong's 4625) and represents anything placed in a person's path that would cause him to stumble or fall. The Lord's path is to the cross. Satan is influencing Peter's mind in an attempt to place a stumbling block in the path of Jesus, to keep Him from the suffering and death of the cross.

Principle Three ~ The believer's frame of mind must be on the things of God, not on the things of man.

Jesus pointedly told Peter that he did not have his frame of mind (φρονέω, phroneō) on the things of God, but on the things of man. The Greek word for *man* is **ἄνθρωπος** (anthropōs, Strong's 444) which means *human*. Jesus is telling Peter that his frame of mind is on the things of the human, not on the things of God. It is necessary for us to understand the importance of this teaching. Peter, who has just received revelation from God, is now functioning under the notion that he is receiving revelation from God no matter what he is thinking. A few minutes earlier, God the Father was influencing his understanding, but now Satan is influencing him to take Jesus aside and rebuke Him because Jesus is talking about going into Jerusalem to suffer and die. The mind of the flesh does not believe in nor will it accept suffering as part of God's plan. Peter is

defending the flesh even to the point of rebuking Jesus Himself. His frame of mind is bent toward human logic and reason, not toward the spiritual things of God.

Principle Four ~ It is necessary to reject one's self and the flesh in order to be positioned behind Jesus.

Jesus specifically says that anyone desiring to come behind Him must do three things: deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him. The Greek word for *deny* is **ἀρνέομαι** (arneomai, Strong's 720) and means *to reject*. Jesus says it is necessary to reject one's self because the mind of the flesh always wants to command God or tell the Holy Spirit what to do. That command will always be for the benefit of the flesh and makes it impossible to follow behind Jesus.

Take Up Your Cross

According to the Lord, it is also necessary to take up one's cross. In order to understand this, we must understand two things about the suffering and death of Christ.

(1) First, the suffering that Jesus experiences before He is nailed to the cross is not for our redemption. All the mockery and suffering that He endures at the hands of sinners is to show His followers what to expect from the world. With this understanding, Peter writes his first epistle to encourage believers to submit to the suffering the world administers because this is *grace* with God. He is teaching that the Lord ministers His grace to those who suffer on His behalf. In I Peter 2:21, Peter writes, "For unto this you were called; because Christ also suffered on behalf of us, leaving an example for us, in order that you might follow His steps." The Greek word for *example* is **ὑπογραμμός** (hupogrammos, Strong's 5261) which means a writing that has been made for people to copy. An example would be a teacher who writes the alphabet for students to trace or copy. Jesus suffered and left an example or pattern for believers to follow.

(2) The second thing we must understand about the death of Christ is the fact that He died on the cross in substitution for, not only the penalty, but also the punishment for my sins. He died my death. Therefore, I have died. I am to take up my cross and follow behind Him in His steps. In order to do that, I must reject my flesh and myself.

Importance of Understanding φρονέω (phroneō)

The concept of **φρονέω** (phroneō) is essential to understanding Christian maturity. Through these scriptures, God is teaching that a person can approach the Word of God with a mindset that has been formed and established by an understanding from out of the flesh and not from out of the Spirit of God. The person who has a mindset that has been developed by the flesh will interpret and apply the Scriptures in a way that is favorable to the flesh. This person will even

understand and present a teaching of Scripture that will promote fleshly happiness and well being. This person will interpret that a God of love would never allow the flesh to experience hardship. Of course, this contradicts the Word of God. Paul says in Philippians 3:18 that people with this mindset are "the enemies of the cross of Christ." This does not mean that they deny the work of Christ on the cross, but rather they deny that believers must follow Christ in experiencing hardship, rejection, and even physical suffering through our identification with Him.

Conclusion

In order to follow after Jesus, to have the frame of mind necessary for Christian maturity, we must allow our minds to be transformed by the Word of God and by the ministry of the Spirit of God. We must understand that our view of life and the teaching of the Word of God needs to come out of a frame of mind that has been established solely on the truth ministered by God's Spirit through His Word.

Notes

- phroneō is the English font spelling of the Greek word φρονέω.
- All Biblical quotes contained herein are a Literal English Translation of the Bible produced by BTE Ministries - The Bible Translation and Exegesis Institute of America.