

Mental Faculties

God designed the human soul to think using mental images and inner dialogue. Every thought we have includes either a picture we form in our mind or a discussion we have with our self in our mind and often both.

This study intends to bring to light knowledge of how the human mind forms, stores and uses ideas. It is this same system that God, the Holy Spirit (GHS) uses to enlighten our minds with the truth, enabling us to see the truth and say the truth as a result of His ministry.

Mental Faculties of Perception – Mind’s Eye

A. Visual Faculties – (Eph 1:16-19) – enlighten eyes/heart

Vs 16 – Paul’s prayer; Vs 17 – might give (main verb) [idea] A/A/Subj **didomi** – gift

The gift - spirit of wisdom & revelation through full knowledge of Him (Christ)

- Spirit – message, inner disposition of wisdom and understanding of hidden things
- Knowledge – **epignosis** – knowledge believed **à** building blocks of wisdom & insight

Vs 18 enlighten – P/P/Ptc – inst ptc – means - give light to see; enabled to process **epignosis**

Vs 18 eyes / heart – **ophthalmos** mental faculties/perception – mental images seen in heart

Vs 18 that you might know – **oida** Pf/A/Inf – see with the mind – 3 categories – tis what

- hope of His calling; riches of His glorious inheritance/saints; exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe
- a. Mental faculties of perception connected to the heart – process gnosis **à** epignosis
 - b. Eyes / heart enlightened to know (see with mind) – 3 categories of privileges in position/Christ
 - c. Heart enabled to visualize: hope / calling; riches / inheritance; greatness / power

(Luke 11:34-36) – eye is the lamp of the body;

Vs 34 – eye – mind’s eye; eyes / heart – perceptive, visualization faculties

(Jam 1:2-4) – **hegeomai** – **ago** = lead + **oomai** = imagine – lead your imagination to visualize different scenarios God might bring about to cause good out of adversity

(Heb 11:24-27) – **hegeomai** - mental imagery Moses used to choose God’s Plan and Rewards

B. Verbal Faculties – “He said in his heart” (Gen 8:21) [God], (Gen.17:17) [Abraham], (Gen.27:41) [Esau], (1Sam 27:1) David – inner dialogue / discussion forming our thoughts.

- We function in our souls in a similar manner based on divine design.

Mental Faculties – Divine Design

1. In 1st Century the writers of scripture used terminology that made distinctions about the design & function of the human soul.

Nous – mind; **kardia** – heart; **pneuma** – spirit; **suneidesis** – conscience; **oomai** – imagination; **boule** – motives; verbs / seeing – **blepo** – focused mind; **horao** – big picture; **theroo** – theorize

These distinctions were not made by biblical writers – These distinctions were made primarily by Plato and Aristotle between the years 428-322 BC. These Greek philosophers / psychologists observed and termed these distinctions, which were carried to Israel by Alexander in his conquest of the known world. These distinctions were extra-biblical but used by **Jesus** and the writers of scripture and were commonly used terms in their day.

- Science, history, medicine, psychology can add to our understanding of spiritual concepts
- Brain science, psychology offers knowledge of mental mechanisms GHS works with

(Rom 1:18-20) God's invisible essence can be discerned by observing nature

2. God designed the human soul with mental/verbal faculties - mental organs of perception

(Heb 5:14) Greek **aistheterion** – faculties, mental organs/perception – discern good/evil

(Eph 1:18) Eyes/heart; (Lk 11:34) – eye as lamp of the body;

(Gen 17:17) Abraham's thinking was revealed as he was saying it in his soul – he laughed inside at God's promise that Isaac would be born to Sarah.

3. Both Old Man & New Man systems use these faculties to form thoughts.

- Old Man (OM) & New Man (NM) are systems of influence over the soul – philosophies and lifestyles
- We form OM beliefs, thoughts, feelings, words & actions using these faculties
- We form NM beliefs, thoughts, feelings, words & actions using these faculties
- **God, the Holy Spirit (GHS) uses our human faculties to reveal the truth to us – enlightens us to see the truth**
- Understanding how our human faculties work is key to examining our own thoughts.
- Eucharist – see / say what is involved in the bread / body; see/say the cup

4. Our human faculties form, store, use images/words to motivate & guide us.

Form Personal experience – parental relating; parents, marriage; books, movies –

Stored Categorically stored memories corresponding to different areas of life

Use Recall images to tell us how life should work – marriage, family, career, friends

- a. Motivation – our deepest needs and longings for relationship are tied to these images
- Desire for love, intimacy, belonging, appreciation, significance, impact
 - Biblical images – hope / calling; riches / inheritance; greatness / power – for us
- b. Guide – we first draw on our experiences, then exchange them for biblical principles
- Experience – our parental models of marriage and family; books, movies, stories
 - Biblical – divine parental model of marriage and family; body, shepherd/sheep

5. Mental Faculties are developed by exercise – apply doctrine to life situations

(Hebrews 5:14) But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

- Practice – **hexis** – habituated by use; Trained – **gumnazo** – exercised by use
- Meat doctrines feed our faculties and nourish them for spiritual exercise and growth

(Jam 1:2-4) – adversity > hegeomai (imagine God's good) > faith application > God's completes the Faith Cycle by fulfilling His word > growth = greater confidence in His faithfulness

(1Pet 1:6-9) – suffer much grief > faith proven genuine by application > praise, glory, honor

- a. God allows situations in our life that offer us the option to trust OM beliefs or His word
- b. Trust OM beliefs > choose human agenda > MAS - anger, frustration, grief, fear
- c. Trust NM beliefs > choose God's plan > Peace, confidence, rest > God is glorified
- d. When we trust God and he completes our faith, it builds confidence in our discernment and ability to apply God's word and win the spiritual battle in our life.

6. Stored images/words activate in situations similar as in their formation

Max Wertheimer formed an experiment nicknamed "the dot essay" because it was illustrated with abstract patterns of dots and lines – he concluded that the perceiving eye tends to bring together elements that look alike and will complete an incomplete form.

- Marriage – similar situations evoke old images that we are compelled to complete
- Children – we mysteriously train & discipline our children as our parents trained us, even when we remember little about our own childhood
- Both OM & NM contain stored memories – which one is dominant and in control?

7. When our relational images/words are false, they create conflict in relationships.

- All of us store images and phrases in memory of our parents and how they related
- We are imprinted with how they related to one another, others and to us.
- We store these images for future use to guide us in our own relationships
- Both OM & NM have their own relationship standards and strategies

OM – relate selfishly, conditionally (give to get), instinctively – out of these images

NM – relate selflessly, unconditionally, intentionally, to edify others for Christ's sake

8. God calls on us to cleanse our hearts from OM beliefs and the habituated function of our faculties to use NM beliefs and habituate our faculties with NM ideas.

Discover what is true and false within our hearts – purify our hearts with truth

(2 Corinthians 7:1) Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh & spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God

(2Cor 10:3-5) – tear down strongholds & bring every thought captive into obedience to Christ