

## Godward Sobermindedness

or

Don't Waste That Thought!

### **Session # 1—What is sobermindedness?**

- 1) Negatively—what it is NOT
  - a) It is not being serious all the time, never laughing or having fun
  - b) It is not strictly self-discipline as evidenced in the ancient Stoics, or in modern day Eastern religions. Mental self-discipline alone does not necessarily glorify God.
  
- 2) Positively—what it IS
  - a) Nouns
    - i) Sophronismos [# 4995] *self-control, moderation*
      - (1) Occurrence—2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:7
  
    - ii) Sophronos [# 4996] *sensibly, with self-control*
      - (1) Occurrence—Titus 2:12
      - (2) Antonyms
        - (a) Asotos [# 811] *riotous, loose, wasteful*
          - (i) Luke 15:13
        - (b) Ataktos [#814] *disorderly*
          - (i) 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 3:6, 11
  
    - iii) Sophrosune [# 4997] *moderation, self-control, rational, restraining passions and impulses*
      - (1) Occurrences—Acts 26:25; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:9, 15
      - (2) Synonym
        - (a) Phronesis [# 5428] *wise way of thinking, prudence*
          - (i) Luke 1:17; Ephesians 1:8
      - (3) Antonyms
        - (a) Anoia [# 454] *rage, ignorance, madness, fury, folly*
          - (i) Luke 6:11; 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:9
        - (b) Asotia [# 810] *dissipation, excess*
          - (i) Ephesians 5:18; Titus 1:6; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:4
        - (c) Aphronsune [# 877] *foolishness*
          - (i) Mark 7:22; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11:1, 17, 21
        - (d) Mania [# 3130] *madness*
          - (i) Acts 26:24
        - (e) Paraphronia [# 3913] *madness, insanity*
          - (i) 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2:16
  
    - b) Verbs
      - i) Sophroneo [# 4993] *of sound mind, thinking straight, keep one's head*
        - (1) Occurrences—Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35; Romans 12:3; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:13; Titus 2:6; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:7
        - (2) Synonyms

- (a) Nepho [# 3525] *sober, clear-headed, free from mental and spiritual excess, clarity of mind resulting in good judgment*
    - (i) 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:6, 8; 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:5; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8
  - (b) Eknepho [# 1594] *to regain proper control of one's thinking*
    - (i) 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:34
  - (c) Phroneo [# 5426] *to think, the activity involves the will, affections, and conscience*
    - (i) Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33; Acts 28:22; Romans 8:5; 12:3, 16; 14:6; 15:5; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 4:6; 13:11; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 13:11; Galatians 5:10; Philippians 1:7; 2:2, 5; 3:15, 16, 19; 4:2, 10; Colossians 3:2
- (3) Antonyms
- (a) Atakteo [# 812] *set oneself outside the order, evade responsibility*
    - (i) 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 3:7
  - (b) Existemi [# 1839] *be removed, changed, altered, confused*
    - (i) Matthew 12:23; Mark 2:12; 3:21; 5:42; 6:51; Luke 2:47; 8:56; 24:22; Acts 2:7, 12; 8:9, 11, 13; 9:21; 10:45; 12:16; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:13
  - (c) Paraphroneo [# 3912] *to be irrational, out of one's mind*
    - (i) 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11:23
- ii) Sophonizo [# 4994] *bring someone to their senses, teach, train*  
(1) Occurrence—Titus 2:4
- c) Adjectives
- i) Sophon [# 4998] *self-controlled, sensible, curbing one's desires and impulses so as to produce a measured and orderly life beneficial to those around us*
    - (1) Occurrences—1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8; 2:2, 5
    - (2) Synonyms
      - (a) Nephalios [# 3524] *sober, temperate*
        - (i) 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:2, 11; Titus 2:2
      - (b) Sophos [# 4680] *wise, skilled*
        - (i) Matthew 11:25; 23:34; Luke 10:21; Romans 1:14, 22; 16:19, 27; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:19, 20, 25, 26, 27; 3:10, 18, 19, 20; 6:5; Ephesians 5:15; James 3:13
      - (c) Phronimos [# 5429] *wise, sensible, thinking resulting from insight*
        - (i) Matthew 7:24; 10:16; 24:45; 25:2, 4, 8, 9; Luke 12:42; 16:8; Romans 11:25; 12:16; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 4:10; 10:15; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11:19
  - (3) Antonyms
    - (a) Asunetos [# 801] *without understanding, senseless, unintelligent, dull*
      - (i) Matthew 15:16; Mark 7:18; Romans 1:21, 31; 10:19
    - (b) Aphron [# 878] *not using sense, foolish*
      - (i) Luke 11:40; 12:20; Romans 2:20; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:36; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11:16, 19; 12:6, 11; Ephesians 5:17; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:15
- 3) Specifically defined: Godward sobermindedness is the God-given (either directly from Him or indirectly through others), God-honoring mental discipline of the genuine believer to control and order his thoughts, emotions, and passions, so that he can view his *actions* (habits of doing), *attitude* (habits of thinking), *appetite* (habits of desiring), and *situation* in a Godward manner. It is learning to take one's thoughts seriously, viewing one's life from God's perspective, making

the appropriate Godward decisions, and living one's life within specific limits for the glory of God.

## Session # 2—Why is sobermindedness so important?

- 1) Because it glorifies God
  - a) By imitating Christ—1<sup>st</sup> John 2:6
    - i) Christ never “lost his head,” even in the most difficult of circumstances.
    - ii) Christ always did those things that pleased the Father—John 8:28
  - b) By obeying God's Word
    - i) Follow the *commands* regarding the need for sobermindedness
      - (1) Regarding an unbelieving world and Satan
        - (a) Because of the need for righteous living before this multitude of unbelievers who know not God—1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:34
        - (b) Because professing Christians will not stay true to God's Word but will accumulate piles of teachers who will tell them what they want to hear—2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:5
          - (i) Don't grow discouraged in a culture of spiritual treason.
        - (c) Because the devil is prowling and seeking someone to devour—1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:8
          - (i) Lions roar to unsettle the thoughts of their intended victims.
      - (2) Regarding the believing community and God
        - (a) Because of the need for unity within the assembly—2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 2:5
        - (b) Because of the work of the Father in our salvation—Colossians 3:2
          - (i) Unbelievers set their mind on earthly things—Philippians 3:19
        - (c) Because the end of all things is at hand, be sober and alert in your prayers—1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:7
          - (i) Compare 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:6, 8
    - ii) Follow the *principles* regarding the need for sobermindedness
      - (1) Regarding the unbelieving world and Satan
        - (a) When tempted to doubt the wisdom of God's plan—Matthew 16:22, 23; Mark 8:32, 33
        - (b) When taunted by unbelievers—Mark 3:21; Acts 26:24, 25
        - (c) Everyone of us was conceived/born and now lives as a spiritual fool—Romans 1:21, 22, 31
          - (i) Compare Romans 8:5
          - (ii) Salvation is essential to become genuinely soberminded.
        - (d) When evangelizing unbelievers and establishing an assembly—1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:10
      - (2) Regarding the believing community and God
        - (a) When tempted to have the wrong view of ourselves (too high) and other believers within the assembly (too low)—Romans 12:3, 16
        - (b) When exercising Christian liberty—Romans 14:6
        - (c) When interpreting Scripture—1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 4:6; 10:15
        - (d) When discerning God's will—Ephesians 5:17, 18

- (e) When exhibiting spiritual maturity by having proper spiritual goals—Philippians 3:15
  - (f) When a Christian woman is deciding what to wear—1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:9, 15
  - (g) Recognizing God’s grace is essential when battling temptations—Titus 2:12
  - (h) Because God’s free grace has been granted to Jew and Gentile alike in Christ—1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:13
  - (i) Because genuine Christians have a transformation of life that causes unbelievers to be bewildered at this change—1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:4
- 2) Because of the spiritual situation we are in
- a) The *flesh* tempts us to think the way **we** want to think (independently of God, focusing only on SELF).
  - b) The *world* tempts us to think the way **it** thinks (temporarily, focusing only on the present, assuming SATISFACTION comes from possessing, doing, etc).
  - c) The *devil* tempts us to think the way **he** thinks (SUBJECTIVELY, without any absolute standard of right and wrong).
- 3) Because without sobermindedness we will dishonor the Father and His Word—Titus 2:5, 10

<b>Session # 3—Who needs sobermindedness?</b>
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- 1) Generally—all Christians
- a) Romans 12:3—Godward evaluation of oneself
  - b) Titus 2:12—God’s grace trains us to have this quality
  - c) 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:7—because the end is near, this quality is essential for Godward prayer
- 2) Specifically
- a) Men
    - i) Older men—Titus 2:2—temperate, sensible
      - (1) Older men are to set the example of what this looks like in real life
    - ii) Younger men—Titus 2:6—sober-minded, sensible
      - (1) Young men struggle with this character trait perhaps more than any other
  - b) Women
    - i) In general
      - (1) 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:9—pertaining to clothing
      - (2) 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:15
    - ii) Older women—Titus 2:3-4
      - (1) Older women are to exercise this in bringing younger women to their senses
    - iii) Younger women—Titus 2:5
      - (1) Younger women need this to not be swayed by the world’s siren call to neglect her family and household and thus dishonor God’s Word.
    - iv) Deaconesses—1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:11
      - (1) I realize some understand this to refer to the wife of a deacon
  - c) Pastors and church planters
    - i) 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8
      - (1) A man who does not control his passions and appetites is not fit for the office of pastor

- ii) 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:7
  - (1) The church-planter Timothy needed to know that God had given him this trait, so that no matter what events took place, Timothy could think in a Godward fashion.
- iii) Titus 1:6
  - (1) A man whose children can be successfully charged with moral recklessness and abandonment is disqualified from the office of a pastor.

#### **Session # 4—What does sobermindedness look like in real life?**

- 1) It impacts **every** facet of one's life
  - a) MENTALLY—my mental passions must be controlled for God's glory
    - what I think about, who I think about, how I think, where I think, what I set my desires on, etc.
  - b) PHYSICALLY—my physical passions must be controlled for God's glory
    - what I eat/drink, why I eat/drink, where I eat/drink, how I express my body's desires, etc.
  - c) EMOTIONALLY—my emotional passions must be controlled for God's glory
    - do my emotions control me or do I control them by God's grace?
  - d) FINANCIALLY—my financial passions must be controlled for God's glory
    - what I do to make money, what I do with the money I make, what my financial goals are, etc.
  - e) SOCIALLY—my social passions must be controlled for God's glory
    - who I spend time with, why I spend time with them, when I spend time with them, where I spend time with them, etc.
  - f) SPIRITUALLY—my spiritual passions must be controlled for God's glory
    - am I growing spiritually?, am I hungering and thirsting for righteousness?, etc.
- 2) Questions for discussion:
  - a) Amy and Mandy were talking during lunch break. Tom, a classmate and popular athlete, walked by carrying his lunch tray. "Isn't he hot?" Amy asked. "Yeah, I'd give anything to have just one date with him," Mandy responded, watching Tom walk over to another seat.
  - b) "Hey! Did you hear the news? Snow day! What do you want to do? We have the whole day to ourselves."
  - c) "Come on, man. You don't *really* believe the Bible is the only book that God communicated to people in, do you? Aren't the Mormons Christians too?"
  - d) "Aw, Dad! All the girls at school are wearing their clothes like this. Why do you have to be so old-fashioned?"
  - e) "I know the game is at the same time as church, but..."
  - f) "And if you hurry in now, we'll take an additional 15% off the price. Put in on your credit card and we'll let you take it home today! This offer won't last long."

#### **Session # 5—How can sobermindedness develop in my life?**

While there is no one teaching section of Scripture that explains this process, I would suggest the following practical principles.

- 1) Salvation
- 2) Prayer
- 3) Scripture memorization
- 4) Study
  - a) Of Greek or Latin based languages
    - i) The patterns of noun and verb forms, sentence structure, etc.
  - b) Of history
    - i) The patterns of Divine and human behavior over extended periods of time.
  - c) Of mathematics
    - i) The patterns and laws God established within numerical systems
  - d) Of logic
    - i) The patterns of thought
    - ii) Check out Nathaniel and Hans Bluedorn's "The Fallacy Detective" for an excellent introduction (Trivium Pursuit). [www.triviumpursuit.com](http://www.triviumpursuit.com) or [www.christianlogic.com](http://www.christianlogic.com)
    - iii) See also "Better Thinking and Reasoning" by Ron Tagliapietra (BJUP).
- 5) Reading solid material
  - a) The book of Proverbs was written to help the young princes of Solomon's kingdom learn to think appropriately—Proverbs 1:1-7
  - b) The book of Romans was once studied in the normal course of training lawyers.
- 6) Making decisions only after careful deliberation.
  - a) Don't rush into anything.
- 7) Spend time with those who demonstrate sobermindedness
  - a) See Proverbs 13:20