

Serving God with Our Minds

“...the mind is its own place
and in itself can make
a heaven of hell and
a hell of heaven...”

“Disciplining the Mind”?

- seems like an unfamiliar idea?
- sacred/secular divide of modernity

Key Discipleship Principle:

“He must increase...I must decrease.” (Jn 3:30)

- Christ – saves and justifies us
- Christ – makes us more like him
- Christ – the reason for international mission
- Christ – the ordering of our intellectual life

How Big is Our Christ?

“...**Christ**, in whom are hidden

all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge...

For in Christ

all the fullness of the Deity

lives in bodily form, and in Christ

you have been brought to **fullness.**”

(Col. 2:3, 9-10)

Why Do We Need Reminding?

“I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by **fine-sounding arguments**...See to it that no one takes you captive through **hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elements of this world rather than on Christ.**” (Col. 2:4,8)

“Once you were alienated from God and were **enemies in your minds** because of your evil behaviour.” (Col. 1:21)

“[Satan] has **blinded the minds** of unbelievers...” (2 Cor. 4:4)

“Hollow & Deceptive Philosophy”

False dichotomies: the sacred/secular divide of Western “modernity”.

False holisms: reductionist philosophies are all smaller than Christ:

- Scientific materialism: “everything is matter/energy”
- Marx: “everything is about economic production”
- Nietzsche: “everything is the will to power”
- Freud: “everything is our psychological response to childhood”
- Social constructivism: “everything is just what society says it is”
- Critical theories: “everything is social ‘justice’ “

The glory of Christ (John 1:1-18)

1 In the beginning was **the Word**, and the Word was with God and the Word was God...

3 **Through him all things were made**; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world... 14 The Word **became flesh** and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ...

18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in **closest relationship** with the Father, has made him known. (John 1:1-18)

The glory of Christ (Heb. 1:1-4)

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God **spoke** to our fathers by the prophets,
2 but in these last days he has **spoken** to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things,

through whom also he created the world.

3 He is **the radiance of the glory of God** and the exact imprint of his nature,

and he upholds **the universe by the word** of his power.

After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is **more excellent** than theirs.

What patterns do you see?

He is

the image of the invisible God,

the firstborn over all creation

For in him all things were created:

things in heavens and on earth

visible and invisible, whether

thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;

all things have been created through him and to him

and he is first of (before) all things

and in him all things hold together.

And he is the head of the body, the church:

He is

the beginning and

the firstborn out of the dead

so that he might become, in all things, the first,

For in him all God's fullness was pleased to dwell

and through him to reconcile all things to him,

(having made peace through the blood of his cross)

whether things on the earth or in heaven.

(Col. 1:15-20)

The Beloved Son of God

'...his Beloved Son. He is

the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn over all creation
For in him all things were created:
things in heavens and on earth
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and he is first of (before) all things
and *in him* all things hold together.

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Creation

and he is first of (before) all things
and in him all things hold together.

And he is the head of the body, the church:

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so that he might become, in all things, the first,
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whether things on the earth or in heaven.

**Redemption /
New Creation**

Against false dichotomies:

Christ concerned with 'all things'

He is

the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn over **all** creation

For in him **all** things were created:
things in heavens and on earth
visible and invisible, whether

thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;

all things have been created through him and to him

and he is first of (before) **all** things

*and in him **all** things **hold together**.*

And he is the head of the **body**, the church:

He is

the beginning and

the firstborn out of the dead

so that he might become, in **all** things, the first,

For in him **all** God's fullness was pleased to dwell

and through him to reconcile **all** things to him,

(having made peace through the blood of his cross) whether
things on the earth or in heaven.

Against false holisms:

Christ is supreme

He is

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the **first**born over all creation
For in him all things were created:
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thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;
all things have been created through him and to him

and he **s first** of (before) all things
and in him all things hold together.
And he is the **head** of the body, the church:

He is

the beginning and
the **first**born out of the dead
so that he might become, in all things, the **first,**
For in him all God's fullness was pleased to dwell
and through him to reconcile all things to him,
(having made peace through the blood of his cross) whether
things on the earth or in heaven.

Christ the key point of reference for creaturely minds

He is

the image of the invisible God,
the **first**born over all creation
For **in him** all things were created:
things in heavens and on earth
visible and invisible, whether
thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;
all things have been created **through him** and **to him**

and **he is first** of (before) all things
and in him all things hold together.

And **he is** the **head** of the body, the church:

He is

the beginning and
the **first**born out of the dead
so that he might become, in all things, the **first**,
For **in him** all God's fullness was pleased to dwell
and **through him** to reconcile all things **to him**,
(having made peace through the blood of his cross) whether
things on the earth or in heaven.

The mind is **not** its “own place”

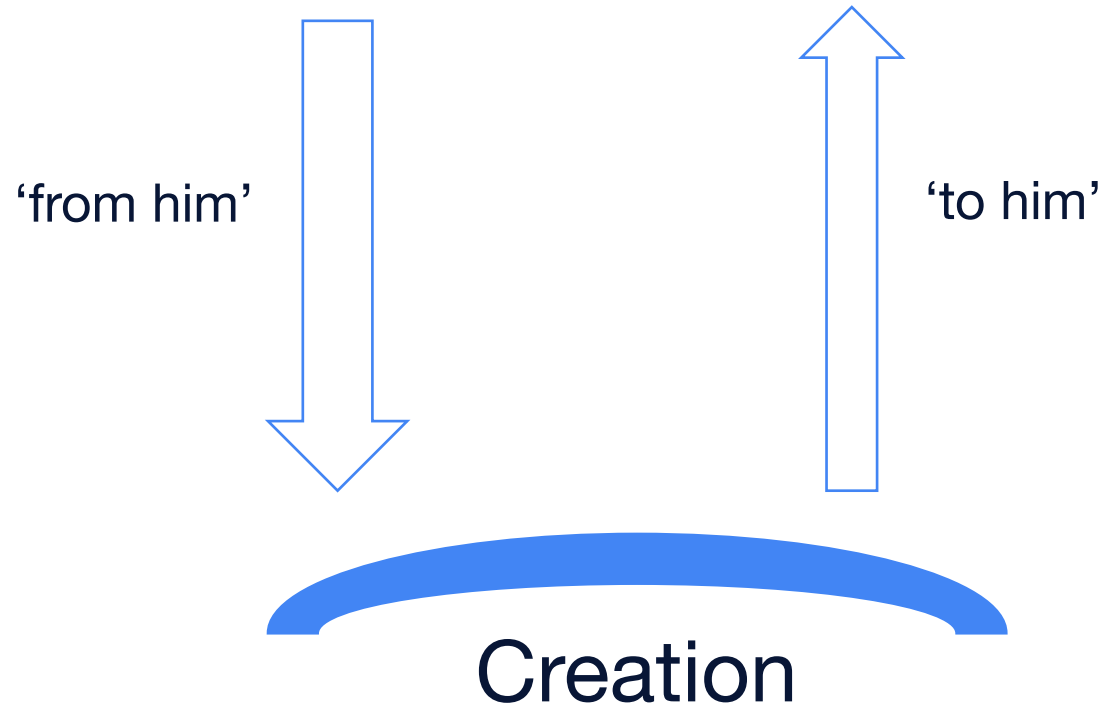
The created mind is disciplined as it recognises its place within its context:

God-given reality of which Christ is the primary point of reference

The creaturely mind
exists
“from”
and “to”
God

Triune God

Son, Christ, the Image, the Radiance, the Word



*Creation exists as God’s meaningful self-communication.
It reflects him and points us back to him*

Lord, our Lord,
How majestic is Your name in all the earth,
You who have displayed Your splendour **above** the heavens!
From the mouths of infants and nursing babies You have established strength
Because of Your enemies,
To do away with the enemy and the revengeful.
When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have set in place;
What is man that You think of him,
And a son of man that You are concerned about him?
Yet You have made him **a little lower than** God,
And You crown him with glory and majesty!
You have him rule **over** the works of Your hands;
You have put everything **under** his feet,
All sheep and oxen,
And also the animals of the field,
The birds of the sky, and the fish of the sea,
Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.
Lord, our Lord,
How majestic is Your name in all the earth! **(Psalm 8)**

**How the mind's
CONTEXT
gives direction to
our intellectual
activity:**

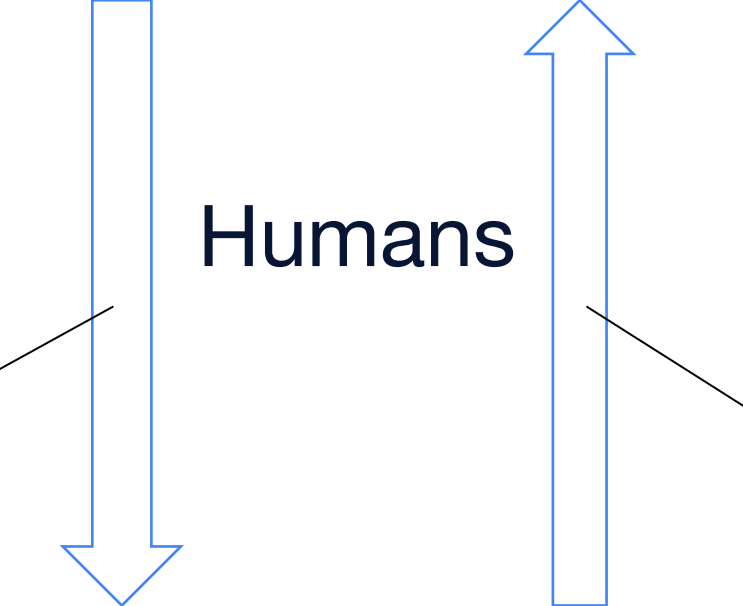
God
'From him' 'to him'

**Royal
stewards**

Humans

**Priestly
praise**

Think how to contribute to the good of creation in the light of reality: implications of creation, fall, redemption...



Rest of creation

Think how the signposts, insights, questions, philosophy of God's world helps us point attention to him

Romans 1

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, **19** since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. **20** For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22** Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools **23** and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images

Thanksgiving as basic to creaturely life

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21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22** Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools **23** and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images.... (Romans 1)

For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with **thanksgiving**... (1 Timothy 4:4)

Thanksgiving and praise as basic to creaturely life

“You say grace before meals. All right. But I say grace before the concert and the opera, and grace before the play and pantomime, and grace before I open a book, and grace before sketching, painting, swimming, fencing, boxing, walking, playing, dancing and grace before I dip the pen in the ink.”

- **G. K. Chesterton**

Thanksgiving and praise as basic... to evangelism



Conclusion: honouring the Lord with our minds

- Read: *The Gospel and the Mind*, Bradley Green
- Resources: Cambridge Christian Study Centre (Round Church); UCCF 'Your Studies'. Lawyers Christian Fellowship (and equivalents in your area) etc. www.gospelacademia.org
- “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 9:10)
- Developing a personal language of praise in our own area of life
- “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord not for human masters.” (Col. 3:23)
- What a Master we have... use your mind to appreciate that he is incomparably supreme over all