

The Dangers of Double-Mindedness

Part 4: The Mind of Christ Series

Key Scripture:

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” James 1:5-8 (KJV)

Portion for the Journey:

The above passage provides us with a very graphic picture of the life of a person who is double-minded. They hesitate, vacillate and never settle. They are like a wave in the ocean, literally driven by whatever direction the wind blows and tossed about. They are not able to find firm footing in anything they do! Discouragement and loneliness of heart must always be a part of their essence. They have a loyalty that is divided between God and the world. To be ‘double-minded’ is the same thing as having a double-heart or to be two-souled. Double-mindedness separates one from receiving any of the blessings of God in their life. This passage tells us a double-minded person will be unstable in all of their ways. Since the implications of this condition have an extremely harmful effect, especially in such a subtle way, it is important to take an in-depth look at this subject.

Ask the LORD to show you any aspect of double-mindedness that may be affecting your walk of faith. It is important that we understand the characteristics of double-mindedness and can recognize it in our own lives, but also in the lives of those we are praying for or counseling.

DEFINITIONS OF WORDS USED REGARDING DOUBLE-MINDEDNESS

I. The word "**double-mindedness**" comes from the Greek word ‘dipsuchos’ (Strong’s #1374). This word has two parts: ‘dis’ (Strong’s #1364) twice, two and ‘psuche’ (Strong’s #5590) soul, mind. Psuche means of two minds, this word literally means “double-souled”, “of two minds,” “two-souled” or “animal spirit”. It indicates a wavering attitude in which a person looks first one direction, then another. Double-minded, this state results in constant doubting or wavering. The double-minded person thinks in two directions at the same time. It carries with it the implication of one who is wavering between the world, his sin nature/passions/desires and one who desires the things of God. The word corresponds to "wavering" (Strong’s #1252, see below). In James 4:8 double-mindedness describes a highly unstable person.

Psuche or soul is that immaterial part of man held in common with the animals that is one of the primary manifestations of the vital manifestations of life. This word corresponds to the Old Testament word: ‘nephesh’ which is possessed by all lower creatures. Nephesh is used in the context of creature, person, life, or desires and lusts of the flesh. Psuche is consistently used in comparison with Nephesh in the following passages: Acts 2:27/Ps. 16:10; Rom 11:3/1 Kings 19:10; 1 Cor. 15:45/Gen. 2:7; Matt. 20:28/Isa. 53:10.

- The following verses provide insight into the use of the word “soul” in the Word of God: 1 Cor 15:45; Gen 2:7
- Verses in which Nephesh (soul) is used in context of desire or lust include: Eccles 6:9; Jer 22:27; Mic 7:3; Hab 2:5; Ex 15:9; Ps 78:18; Deut 23:24. Compare this with the Lord’s command that all of our desire should be for Him.

In his book, “The Latent Power of the Human Soul” Watchman Nee draws great distinction between the spirit, belonging to God; and the soul, which belongs to man. He describes the latent power of the human soul as “spiritism” or that which counterfeits the works of God through man’s latent soulful capacities. Religions involving occult powers seek to develop the latent power of the soul. Christians who have come from a background such as these may have to renounce these works of the soul. There appears to be a tendency in such persons to find themselves struggling with double-mindedness and lack of steadiness in God’s ways. The characteristic of the angels is spirit, and that of the lower animals such as beasts is flesh. We humans have both spirit and body; but our characteristic is neither spirit nor body, but soul. We have a living soul. Soul stands for our personality, for what makes us as man. Andrew Murray describes the soul as the meeting place or point of union between body and spirit. The body allows man to relate to the external, natural world. The spirit allows man to relate to the spiritual world and the Spirit of God. Thus, the soul had the power of determining itself, of choosing or refusing the objects by which it was surrounded, and to which it stood related.

Many times, in the scriptures, we are instructed to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. We are to follow Him with our whole heart. King Solomon was ensnared by his soul’s desires because he did not follow God with whole hearted devotion as David had (see 1 Kings 11:1-8). (See also Deut. 6:5; Deut. 10:12-13; Deut. 11:13-14; Deut. 13:3; Deut. 30:6; Josh. 22:5; Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:30; Mark 12:33; Luke 10:27) God wants us to walk in singleness of eye before Him, that we should not waver in our desire to be led by God and God alone. The double-minded man’s soul is thus seeking to follow both after God and after the flesh. The Israelites illustrated this pattern of behavior during their time in the wilderness when they wavered between being worshippers of God and desiring the physical provisions and pleasures of Egypt, conveniently forgetting their forced labor/slavery.

II. Wavering: “Diakrino” (Strong’s # 1252) means literally to be separated or divided in one’s ability to decide. It comes from two words: dia (1223) denoting separation; and krino (2919) to distinguish, decide, discern or judge. Krino is the ability to make a distinction or to make a determination. There is literally a battle in the mind between two thoughts or opinions! The person who wavers is at constant war with oneself. Matt. 16:3; Acts 15:9; 1 Cor 4:7; 11:29; 6:5; 14:29

The word “diakrinomai” is derived from this word. It means ‘to contend, dispute with another, it to distinguish or divide from him in discourse: (Acts 11:2, Jude 9) **To doubt, to be distinguished or divided in one’s mind**, to exhibit partiality or prejudice (Matt. 21:21, Mark 11:23, Acts 10:20; Rom. 4:20; James 1:6; James 2:4; Jude 22)

Diakrisis (1253, from 1252) to separate one from another, divide, part. Discerning, distinguishing (1 Cor. 12:10; Heb. 5:14); a difference, dispute, controversy (Rom. 14:1), translated disputations.

Wavering is used in a positive manner, relating to discernment, to distinguish between, to separate throughout, here to separate one's self entirely, **also to be in separation with one's self, to be in strife with one's self, hesitate, waver.** James 1:6 twice.

Wavering corresponds to doubt. James 1:6-8 indicates that one who wavers is driven and tossed about by the wind (could that be the spirit realm?), and that he is unstable in all his ways.

cf. Matt. 21:21; Mark 11:23; Acts 10:20; Eph. 4:14; Matt. 14:28-31; James 4:8; 2 Peter 2:14.

Matt 21:21-22 21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. 22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. (KJV) (see also Mark 11:23 cf)

Acts 10:20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. (KJV)

Eph 4:13-14 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (KJV)

This passage again makes reference toward need for faith, for maturity (see also Hebrews 5:11-14), and being tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by the craftiness in deceitful scheming. PRAY THROUGH EPHESIANS 4:11-16: need ministry of the Body to attain the unity of the faith = maturity.

Heb 5:11-14 11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (KJV)

Diakrisis is used in this passage with reference to discernment of both good and evil. Thus, we see that in order to discern good and evil we need to first learn the principles of God (milk) and then receive the meat of His word when we reach full age. This passage indicates that by reason of use we will have our senses trained in discernment (rightly dividing the word of truth). The term senses (145) used in this passage refers to the faculties of perception (or way we view the world).

** Heb 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (KJV)

God's Word will divide asunder between soul and spirit: This means that it will divide or separate between that which is of the soul (animal life) and the spirit (God life).

DANGERS OF DOUBLE-MINDEDNESS AND WAVERING:

Characteristics of the double-minded person:

1. **The Double-minded is one whose faith is weak.** Because God's word assures us that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, we will usually find that the double-minded has probably not had a lot of good sound teaching to form the basis of his foundation in Christ. Double-mindedness is equated with doubt. Because of his doubts and because of the sin of double-mindedness, the James 1:5-8 passage indicates that he cannot expect to have his prayers answered.
2. **Such a person will be lacking in wisdom** necessary to determine the course of life pleasing to God. They are like the fool spoken of so frequently in the book of Proverbs and will not be able to make wise decisions for their lives nor will they see when they are on a path leading to destruction (see Prov 14:1,6,8,12,15,16,26-27).
3. **The double-minded person will feel driven by forces outside of his/her control.** He will feel tossed about, never feeling sure of himself or the direction of his life.
4. **They are unstable in all of their ways.** Unstable (182) akatastatos comes from the negative "a", "not" and kathistemi (2525) which means to settle. Hence the unstable personality is unsettled, unsteady. He does not stand fixed in his position and is not established fully in the way of God. Inconstant. Easily beguiled, enticed or caught with bait.
5. **The double-minded is easily enticed into sin,** because the power of the flesh has equal pull in their hearts against the desire to obey the LORD. Pernicious (sensuality: that which pertains the psuche (animal life, see soul) natural, of the animal nature of the soul, it denotes man as he is by nature, i.e. stranger to what is of the Spirit, hence, man as a sinner estranged from the divine principle of eternal life (see James 3:15, denotes destitute of the spirit, and because those destitute, actually opposed to; one who acknowledges no restraints, who does whatever his caprice and unmanageable frowardness dictates. Synonymous with asotia (810) wastefulness and riotous excess. Asotia, extravagant squandering in one extreme (Eph. 5:18; Tit. 1:6, I Pet. 4:4) An asotos, a prodigal, is one who spends too much, who slides easily under fatal influence of flatterers and the temptations with which he has surrounded himself into spending freely on his own lusts and appetites. Asotia is a dissolute, debauched, profligate manner of living. Mark 7:20-23; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 4:17-24; 1 Pet 4:1-5; Jude 1:4; Rom 13:11-14
6. **Unstable souls are easily let astray in times of darkness.** He will not be able to stand in the evil day spoken of in Eph. 6, because he has not determined in his nature to resist evil and to stand firmly according to God's ways. Unstable souls are easily beguiled, enticed or caught with bait because they have not crucified the flesh with its evil desires. (see 2 Pet. 2:14). In experience, we will see one who is double-minded become a Christian but continue to waver between the ways of the flesh/world and the ways of God. They will seem to be in a constant state of backsliding.
7. **They are a target of the false teacher** who would seek to use their carnal desires as bait by which to entrap or ensnare them. False teachers appeal to the soul-side of man. (see Rev. 18) Watchman Nee writes that the human soul will become a commodity in Babylon, the human soul will be used as instrument of the anti-Christ and false prophet in the end of this age as Satan seeks to gain control of man's soul. See 2 Pet 2:1-22. This passage indicates that those who are false teachers will especially seek to entice those who are unstable (double-minded, wavering), see vs. 14. Pernicious ways (sensuality) (766) aselgeia, seiges, continent, filthy, lascivious, licentiousness (sometimes including other devices); wontonness.

REMEDY FOR DOUBLE-MINDEDNESS:

1. PRAY TO BE FREED FROM ALL UNBELIEF: This passage offers insight to know how to pray regarding unbelief.¹“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. 16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, 17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. 18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be. 19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb: 20 He **staggered not** (NAS **"He did not waver in unbelief"**) at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Rom 4:13-25 13 (KJV)

From this passage we can see that wavering is of the law, it makes our faith void, it is the opposite of having righteousness of faith, which is of grace, and is the result of weakness of faith. Verse 21 indicates that he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief...and thus it was counted to him as righteousness. Therefore, when we waver or doubt as a result of double-mindedness, we cannot expect to receive from God because our heart is not right before Him through faith.

As we confess our sin of unbelief, our sin of choosing to walk in the flesh, we must by faith appropriate His forgiveness and cleansing. We must then choose to walk in His righteousness, crucifying the flesh with its evil desires.

2. PURIFY YOUR HEARTS: Purify means to make pure, to cleanse, to make clean and free from all admixture. “Come close to God and He will come close to you. [Recognize that you are] sinners, get your soiled hands clean; [realize that you have been disloyal] wavering individuals with divided interests, and purify your hearts [of your spiritual adultery]. [As you draw near to God] be deeply penitent and grieve, even weep [over your disloyalty]. Let your laughter be turned to grief and your mirth to dejection and heartfelt shame [for your sins]. James 4:8-9 (AMP)

- **We purify our hearts through confession of sin:** 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (KJV)
- **We purify our hearts by faith:** Acts 15:8-9 8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; 9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. (KJV) Faith is the firm persuasion, the conviction that is based upon hearing, not upon sight, or knowledge, a firm relying confidence in what we hear from God in His Word. Jesus rebuked His disciples for being “of little faith” (3640) is a word

¹ For more in-depth study of Unbelief, see Portions for the Journey study, “Lord, Help My Unbelief” in the Studies in Faith Series. (1480)

used only by our Lord, to rebuke four different states of mind: anxiety, fear, doubt, and forgetfulness.

See	Matt. 6:30	Anxiety for God's provision: food
	Luke 12:28	Anxiety for God's provision: clothing
	Matt. 8:26	Fear: doubt of God's protection in storm
	Matt. 14:31	Doubt: Peter walking on the water
	Matt. 16:8	Forgetfulness/trying to reason among themselves

- **We purify our hearts by the Word:** The remedy for double-mindedness is God's Word. We are washed by the water of the Word. Eph. 5:26; It divides between spirit and soul. Heb. 4:12; It grants faith. Rom. 10:17
- **WE CAN PRAY FOR THE LORD TO GIVE PURITY OF HEART:** See Jer 32:32-41 32

3. CHOOSE TO FOLLOW GOD WITH WHOLE HEART. TO RENOUNCE ALL FALSE GODS, FALSE TEACHINGS, IDOLS THAT ONE IS FOLLOWING:

- **The Word is clear that to follow Him fully we need to make a choice** to renounce the world and set our hearts to walk with Him. Meditate on these passages that call us to make a definite choice to follow the LORD:

Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. (KJV)

1 King 18:21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. (see vs. 16-46)

Matt 6:19-24 19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (KJV)

Col 3:22-24 22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. (KJV)

Deut 30:19-20 19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: 20 That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them. (KJV)

- **Choose righteousness by denying ungodliness and worldly lusts:** Tit 2:11-14 11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (KJV)
- **Seek to follow the LORD with a single-hearted purity and whole-hearted devotion.** The Lord promises that if we seek Him with our “whole heart” we will find Him. In 2 Cor. 11:3, Paul said, "But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray [corrupted and seduced] from the simplicity [Strong’s #572 ‘haplotes’ means purity, single, not having any ulterior or double motive, whole-hearted and sincere] and purity of devotion to Christ." Rom. 12:8; Sept. 2 Sam. 15:11; Prov. 19:1; Eph. 6:5; "in Singleness of heart". Col. 3:22, Sept. 1 Chron. 29:17

THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT CHOOSING GOD’S WAY ARE SEVERE:

Prov 1:23-33 23 If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you. 24 But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, 25 since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, 26 I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you—27 when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you. 28 “Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. 29 Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD, 30 since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, 31 they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. 32 For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; 33 but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.” (NIV)

Isa 65:12 I will destine you for the sword, and you will all bend down for the slaughter; for I called but you did not answer, I spoke but you did not listen. You did evil in my sight and chose what displeases me.” (NIV)

What the Lord is speaking to my heart:

My Response to the LORD: