

Spiritual growth 14 - Double vs. Single Minded

1. Double Minded.

Because so many sins involve being double-minded, this is a topic often preached in Bible believing churches.

Jas 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded.

Jas 1:8 A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

People are able to quickly identify the trouble with being double-minded, especially when it involves someone else. We have many examples in the Scriptures of people who had the drive to succeed because they were single-minded and many examples of those who failed, not just because of their sin, but due to the specific problem of being double-minded. I am not talking about people who are in out and out rebellion or sin presumptuously. I am talking about people who vacillate between sin and righteousness, who don't have a sense of priorities, and are not single-minded with regard to truth. It is pitiful because even though someone is not being deliberately sinful, it suggests that someone is to one degree or another weak in character.

Hopefully you will remember these Biblical figures if you are in the habit of reading your Bible. Their names should bring a picture of single-mindedness and the strength of their character. In spite of the seasons of spiritual weakness they might have faced, it was their single-mindedness that carried them through and restored their relations with God and other people.

- Job resisted two temptations from the devil, discouragement from his wife, and friends who kept trying to second-guess God
- Noah labored 120 years preaching and building the ark
- Joseph stayed on track pursuing the will of God while thrown in a pit, sold as a slave, being falsely accused, and forgotten in prison
- David kept his testimony of being a man after God's own heart
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego survived the fiery furnace
- Esther was able to face possible death and steadily applied herself to the salvation of all Israel
- Peter knew of nowhere else to turn but Christ until he was able to reach spiritual maturity and participated in turning the world upside down for Christ
- Paul survived stonings, shipwreck, perils by his

countrymen, long journeys, and more until he had finished the good fight and his course

There are plenty of examples of the double-minded in the Scriptures –

- Pharaoh who seemed to use a daisy to decide to let the Israelites go – I'll let you go, I'll keep you here, I'll let you go, I'll keep you here – until he ended up drowned in the Red Sea
- Lot who couldn't choose between the righteous and the wicked until he finally fell into gross immorality
- Esau who ultimately lost both his birthright and his blessing
- Solomon whose kingdom was split because his attention was divided between his wealth and wives, and their gods, and the God of Israel
- Demas who worked with Paul and ultimately caved in to his lust for the world
- Agrippa who was *almost* persuaded to be a Christian

The problem of being double-minded is worth analyzing and then challenging it in our hearts more thoroughly.

2. Don't be double-minded in heart.

The easiest kind of double-mindedness to see is being double-minded in peoples their heart for self vs. heart for God. This is where the greatest sin takes place.

Matt 6:21-24 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23But 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!

24No 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.

No man can serve two masters. You will either hate the one and love the other or you will serve only one while you despise the other. Jesus challenges to have a single focus, that "thine eye be single." Trying to keep our eye on the world and the kingdom of God leaves us in darkness. We might think we love God while we are in lust with the world, but the truth is that we don't really love God.

1John 2:15 Love not the world,

neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Consider the Galatians. They were rebuked because they vacillated between faith and works:

Gal 3:1-3 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

2This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

3Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

They got saved by faith, but they became preoccupied with works. Paul called on them to figure it out. Is there salvation based on faith...or works? The same is true here. If you try to claim both you find that you are not saved at all. Salvation that professes to be based in part on works is actually *only* on works.

Paul warned the Colossians not to be caught divided between philosophy and Christ:

Col 1:23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Col 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Philosophy will only take you on a trip in a never ending circle of reasoning. Only the truth of God's Word is a sure foundation to build your life on.

Paul reproved the Corinthians for, among many other things, using the Lord's table as a fleshly feast:

1Cor 11:20-22 When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper.

21For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

22What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not.

1Cor 11:29-32 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

30For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

31For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

32But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Of the seven churches of the Revelation, the Laodiceans received the harshest reproof from John because of their double-mindedness:

Rev 3:15-19 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

19As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

The worst judgment of all is for the person who toys with the things of God while clinging to the world. They might think themselves sophisticated in their interests, but they are lost and on their way to Hell. They might dabble in the things of God and look spiritual, but inwardly they are in darkness. The time will come when their indecision will come to an end and the decision will be made for them.

2Thess 2:7-12 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

8And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

9*Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

10And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not

the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

12That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

When God's children are received up in glory, the terrifying fact is that those who rejected the Gospel will be granted their wish of not having to deal with God. They will be left to the delusion that leads them to join the Antichrist.

3. Don't be double-minded in stewardship.

After being *spiritually* double-minded, it is a little harder to catch ourselves when we are being double-minded when it comes to our sense of stewardship, or the management of our life.

God is a God of order.

1Cor 14:40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

When it comes to our work in the world, Paul wrote:

Col 3:22-24 Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: **Are we trying to please men, or God? Paul challenges us to serve God with a singleness of heart.**

23And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

24Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

God is also the God of *not* working:

Exod 20:8-11 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

10But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:

11For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Solomon pointed out that there is a time for all things to be done:

Eccl 3:1-10 To every *thing there*

is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
2A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up *that which is* planted;
3A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
4A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
5A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
6A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
7A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
8A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.
9What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?
10I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.

I've asked young people the question, "What are your plans after high school." "Hopefully go to college." And then what? Get a good job. And then? Get a home. And then? Retire. And then? At some point they say, "Die." And then? Stand before God. And finally I ask the question again, "And then? What will you say when you have to give account to Him for your life?"

I love the illustration of the Christian football player who died and met Apostle Paul in heaven. He is so excited to meet Paul, "You're Paul who wrote Scripture that would last through eternity, Paul who started numerous churches, Paul who appeared before governors and kings, Paul who overcame great hardships to serve Christ. I am so glad to meet you!" Paul asks who he is and he replies, "I'm Joe Superstar. I gained the most yards, earned the most Super Bowl rings, and I have a special place in the Football Hall of Fame." The apostle Paul then asks, "What's football?" Playing a game to the best of our ability is nothing to be compared with the things of eternal consequence. While this is not going to happen, the point is that the time to prepare for the account we will give of our lives is not when we are in heaven. The time to prepare is yesterday and since yesterday is gone we have no time to lose.

Sometimes being double-minded in the stewardship of the time we have on earth means going back and forth between multiple missions and not doing a good job at anything. Trying to be a master chef, a cancer researcher, and climbing Mt. Everest all within the short time we have should be an obvious problem. Yet, it is possible to be far less ambitious and *still* have the same

problem of having too many irons in the fire.

We need to have a sense of mission.

Eccl 9:10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

Eccl 12:13-14 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man.

14For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.

Just like asking the youth "And then what?" we have to answer "What is the point to our life on this earth?" The issue is not that we should abandon all else to pursue one great mission in life, but to fit all into our mission for Christ.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Matt 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

The small-minded, self-serving, irresponsible soul only looks ahead to the next pleasure. The more you face the fact that the foundation you lay today will carry the life you can build, the more you realize that you have to plan. I remember one young man who thought it was funny to not do his homework, study, or apply himself. He pays the price for that to this day. I remember another alcohol addled young man who simply announced to me, "I'm a bum. I can't do any work." I created a job for him in town, sweeping sidewalks. He complained, "This is too hard. Don't you have something easier for me to do?" They, and many others I could introduce you too, had no foundation. But we are much smarter than that, and the moment you start examining what you will need, the more apparent the need for a broad and solid foundation you need. The foundation determines what kind of building you will create for the glory of God.

Matt 7:24-27 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will

liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

4. Don't be double-minded in commitment to truth.

One thing that will help all double-mindedness is to be single-minded when it comes to our commitment to truth. Don't just seek the truth. A double minded person only seeks the truth to find out if it will conveniently serve him.

Prov 23:23 Buy the truth, and sell *it* not; *also* wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

1Thess 5:19-21 Quench not the Spirit.

20Despise not prophesyings.

21Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

When you hear something preached that you don't like, don't despise it and throw it away. Prove it out and then hold fast, hang onto it, take it for the full ride wherever it leads you as you search the Scriptures and pray to see how they apply to you after all!

Heb 11:6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

John 6:68-69 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

69And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

One of the most amazing parts of some testimonies is how long someone holds out before giving in to the thing they clearly see from the Lord. There are some things that we study that require some extra digging. However, most of what I do is point out the obvious...at least it is obvious after we take a moment to examine what was in plain sight under our noses.

When someone asks if I can attend a

party on a Sunday, I don't have to check my schedule. I already know what my schedule says. If I go on vacation, my schedule is still the same, I am going to be in some church. Vacations are fine, if that's what they are. We shouldn't take 52 vacations a year. There is no such thing as living like the world to win the world. We can't say that we love God and then reject the admonitions to Godliness. We shouldn't bemoan how we can't tithe and then throw money away at the lottery, liquor store, or cigarette machine. When we are with each other, we cannot pay attention to the game on our phone and the live person sitting next to us. Our households must become single minded. Our hearts must be single. Within that single focus, there is so much variety for life.

Do not be quick to dismiss the eternal and spiritual. You are not just the product of a bunch of chemicals doing what they will do. You are a person, something supernatural, beyond the chemicals found in nature. You exist apart from the hydrocarbons that make up your body. You will stand before God and you will receive the consequences of what you did with the Gospel.

1. Double Minded. Jas 4:8, Jas 1:8
2. Don't be double-minded in spirituality. Matt 6:21-24, 2John 1:6-7, Gal 3:1-3, Col 1:23, 2:8, 1Cor 11:20-22, 29-32, Rev 3:15-19, 2Thess 2:7-12
3. Don't be double-minded in stewardship. 1Cor 14:40, Col 3:22-24, Exod 20:8-11, Eccl 3:1-10, 9:10, 12:13-14, Luke 19:10, Matt 28:18-20, 7:24-27
4. Don't be double-minded in commitment to truth. Prov 23:23, 1Thess 5:19-21, Heb 11:6, John 6:68-69