

Psalms 119
week 7, v. 112-113

What is an incline? The noun describes an area of ground that heads upwards or downwards. The verb, to incline, is to have a tendency or disposition to bend towards something; to be willing to move towards an action, attitude or belief.

Ps 119:112 I have inclined my heart to perform Thy statutes Forever, [even] to the end.

What do you think it means when the Psalmist says he has inclined his heart to perform God's commands?

incline <natah> to stretch, to turn, to cause to yield

Verse 112. [I have inclined mine heart] I used the power God gave me, and turned to his testimonies with all mine heart. When we work with God, we can do all things. Adam Clarke's Commentary

Ps 57:2 I will cry to God Most High, To God who accomplishes [all things] for me.

Mr 9:23 And Jesus said to him, "'If You can!' All things are possible to him who believes."

Mt 17:20 And He *said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible to you.

Php 4:13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Think of the word perseverance. Have we determined to seek God no matter what, at all times, in all circumstances, in our last breath and ounce of strength? Do you believe God will grace you with His strength to do exactly what He says? Belief, trust, prayer and obedience are necessary to this end since it is God's work to bend our heart towards Him. Are we listening to His prompting and acting on His words? Why is this important to address?

Eze 33:31 "And they come to you as people come, and sit before you [as] My people, and hear your words, but they do not do them, for they do the lustful desires [expressed] by their mouth, [and] their heart goes after their gain.

Is it always easy to do the 'right' thing? This inclination to follow God's commands is not to be practiced only when it is easy or convenient or fits in with our plans or desires. Either we are all in or all out. We can't straddle the fence.

Ga 1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

Ro 6:16-19 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone [as] slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members [as] slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in [further] lawlessness, so now present your members [as] slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

Ro 8:5-8 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷ because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able [to do so]; ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

The grace of God had inclined him to incline his heart in a sanctified direction. Many are inclined to preach, but the Psalmist was inclined to practise; many are inclined to perform ceremonies, but he was inclined to perform statutes; many are inclined to obey occasionally, but David would obey always; and, alas, many are inclined for temporary religion, but this godly man was bound for eternity, he would perform the statutes of his Lord and King even unto the end. The Treasury of David

Throughout these last eight verses we have studied the benefits of God's word to His children. It guides us generally and specifically. The example to us from David is to keep close to God's word in all circumstances; there was nothing more important or enduring to keep David on the path of righteousness. The Psalmist views His relationship with God as the single most important inheritance of his life here on earth and forever after. With God's grace, he would continue to follow His direction.

Ps 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Now we begin a new section of eight scriptures with Psalm 119:113.

What do you think of when you hear the words divided mind?

Ps 119:113 I hate those who are double-minded, but I love Thy law.

Look back at the section of verses we just finished. David shares with the reader his intent to follow God's word and the benefits of doing that. In Ps 119:106, he takes an oath and confirms that he will keep God's commands. He recognizes he is weak when he is attacked and needs to look to God as his teacher. It's as if there is an inward fight going on between what he knows is right to do and the benefits of following God (joy) and realizes his struggle to choose what is easy to do – falling victim to weakness and sin. The psalmist's resolve is strong. Raw obedience is our example. Pure, simple determination to follow God regardless of who or what is around us or how we feel.

In looking at verse 113 of this Psalm, David now states he hates double-mindedness. The KJV reads "I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love". The word vain is in italics and has been added to help with meaning. Thoughts <ce' eph> means a divided mind, a skeptic.

We read this same word translated hate in verse 104 in regard to hating every false way. Vain thoughts are David's enemy, his foe. **How often have your thoughts taken you to the edge of sin and beyond?**

Consider this question. **Can you read the thoughts of others?** It is right to hate sin we see around us but we can really only judge our own thoughts. Since we see this inward struggle of the Psalmist in choosing to do what is right, it makes sense that David is speaking mainly of his own sinful thoughts; that is where we will concentrate our efforts also.

Have you ever said one thing then acted in contradiction to what you said? Sin should not control God's children but we do have to constantly put off sin, there is an inward fight to keep our thoughts and actions honoring God. We have been saved from the power of sin but not from its presence in the world and all around us.

Familiar concepts of being double-minded might be: saying one thing but doing another or always agreeing with whomever is talking never having your own convictions. The word pretending may be appropriate. Pretending to be something you aren't. How about acting one way with one group of people and another with a different group of people. Or acting differently when you are alone. Another example, thinking one thing in your heart and saying another with your lips.

Either we're all in or we're all out. A sincere faith, a real faith cannot be compromised. Do we esteem to follow God's commands in all areas or just in those areas that fit in with our lifestyle? Does attending a weekly Sunday service at a church make you a Christian?

What does the Bible say about a double-minded man?

1Ki 18:21 And Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long [will] you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people did not answer him a word.

Jos 24:15 "And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Mt 6:24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Jas 1:6-8 But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸ [being] a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

God's word is consistent, unwavering, and certain. Can your faith be described in the same manner?

We may not be able to completely stop all sinful thoughts from entering our mind but we can make choices how to respond to sin – either we crush it and recognize sin for what it is or we entertain it and open the door to sin.

There is no better test of our true character, than the habitual effect of "vain thoughts" upon our minds -- whether we love and indulge them, or abhor, and watch and pray against them. --Thomas Scott, 1747-1821.

Giving heed to evil thoughts leads to sin.

Mt 5:28 but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Pr 6:12-14 A worthless person, a wicked man, Is the one who walks with a false mouth, ¹³ Who winks with his eyes, who signals with his feet, Who points with his fingers; ¹⁴ Who [with] perversity in his heart devises evil continually, Who spreads strife.

Think of the relationship between Saul and David. It was good until Saul began entertaining the feelings of envy in his heart towards David. Saul heard the singing that David had slain tens of thousands while Saul had only slain thousands. Envy and jealousy began in the heart and grew in Saul's mind. (1 Samuel 18:5-9)

The Psalmist counteracts his hate for sin with his love for God's law. So we have an example of what to do and what not to do. The more we love God's law the more sensitive we are to recognizing the vices of sin. It's not that David did not sin but he truly hated sin in his life and desired to keep from it. The best and most important tool he had to fight sin was God's truth. **How will this example help us in our fight against sin? What is the object of your hatred? What is the object of your love?**

God's word is truth. We need to strive to follow all of it all the time. Obeying some of the time, some of God's commands is not enough.

"With thoughts of Christ and things divine, fill up this foolish heart of mine." TOD

Application Questions

In Psalm 119:112 David says he has inclined his heart to perform God's commands. Picture the large trees in the Antelope Valley and how many of them have grown leaning towards the east because of the strong winds. Are you leaning towards God in your thoughts, words and actions?

Support your answer with evidence. Is there action you need to take?

How long does the Psalmist say he will perform God's statutes in this same verse?

How is it possible to persevere even through the most difficult circumstances?

Refer to Psalm 57:2; Mark 9:23; Matthew 17:20; Philippians 4:13

Why is it important in the understanding of this verse to define the difference between knowing who God is and having a personal relationship with Him?

Read Romans 6:16-19.

Psalm 119:113 speaks of being double-minded. What does this mean?

How often do our thoughts lead us down the path of sin? Read the account of Saul and David in 1 Samuel 18:5-9. Is hate too strong a word to use against sin? Why or why not?

What does Matthew 6:24 say about living a double minded life?

The answer to recognizing the traps of sin more is to love God more. What is the best tool you have to fight against sin in your life? Is it always with you, ready for use at any time?