

A Beautiful Mind

Let this mind be in you,
which was also in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:5

The movie entitled “A Beautiful Mind” was made about a man who is a genius and a schizophrenic. He achieved success and a graduate degree by conceiving an original theory that refuted an accepted idea by Adam Smith, the world-renowned economist. The movie explores the imagination of the real-life teacher at Princeton and tells his story of dealing with a mental infirmity. The point that particularly intrigues me is the title of the movie. Pondering the meaning of a “beautiful” mind, I picked up Webster’s Dictionary to look for a definition of *beautiful*. I discovered that *beauty* is the quality attributed to whatever pleases or satisfies in certain ways, as by line, color, form, texture, proportion, rhythmic motion, tone, etc., or by behavior, attitude, etc. Synonyms helped to compare, contrast, and determine the meaning more fully. *Lovely* refers to that which delights by inspiring affection or warm admiration. *Comely* applies to persons only and suggests a wholesome attractiveness of form and features rather than a high degree of beauty. *Fair* suggests beauty that is fresh, bright, or flawless and, when applied to persons, is used especially of complexion and features. Considering all these definitions, I concluded that a beautiful mind gives the highest degree of pleasure to the senses or to the mind and suggests that the object of delight approximates one’s conception of an ideal. Applying the definition, I mused over finding an example of someone who exhibits a beautiful mind. My conclusion was a delightful revelation: God exhibits a beautiful mind!

God’s mind knows all things—possesses all knowledge, understanding, and wisdom and demonstrates His holy character. God’s beautiful mind gives the highest degree of pleasure to the senses and mental capacities and fulfills all ideals. God’s beautiful mind is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. The Savior *is* God, reflecting His Father’s being (John 12: 45; 17:3-4).

Rejoicing over my discovery, I reflected on the possibility of man exhibiting such a mind. Wonder of wonders! I realized that people who receive Christ into their hearts have God’s grace for making God’s beautiful mind visible in this present time (Rom. 8:9-11; Col. 1:27; 2 Pet. 1:3-4). In Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians he says that believers possess God’s mind (I Cor. 2:16). In his second letter, he explains why. Christ, God’s treasure, resides in “earthen vessels” so that “the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of [men]” (2 Cor. 4:7). God has designed a plan to manifest Himself in beings that have no glory of their own so that His love, humility, mercy, glory, and grace are exhibited. Through Christ, God fulfills the law of love that gives freely to those who have *nothing*!

How much more delight I had to discover what value God places on a person who exhibits God's beautiful mind. That person is one who gives Him the highest degree of pleasure and fulfills all God's ideals, for that person has achieved God's chief aim for salvation: that is to mold each believer into God's perfect image (Genesis 1: 26-27; Romans 8:29) and to restore what was lost in the Garden of Eden. He accomplishes His aim by equipping men with the capacity to have God dwelling in them by the Person of Christ (I John 5:11-13) and by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God (Rom. 8:9).

The following is a representative list of many, many wonderful characteristics of "A Beautiful Mind" that values Truth, honesty, justice, purity, loveliness, virtue and also earns "good report" and "praise" (Phil. 4:8):

"A Beautiful Mind" does not judge by the outward appearance (I Sam 16:7b, Mt. 23:27, Jn 7:24).

"A Beautiful Mind" does not make comparisons of itself to other people (2 Cor. 10:12).

"A Beautiful Mind" measures itself by the standard of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:12)

"A Beautiful Mind" reflects a joyful heart (Phil. 4:4; I Thes. 5:16)

"A Beautiful Mind" gives thanks and praise (I Thes. 5:18)

"A Beautiful Mind" avoids worry and care (Mt. 11:28-30; Phil. 4:6; I Peter 5:7).

"A Beautiful Mind" imitates good men who follow after Christ (Phil. 4:9; Heb. 13:7; I Pet. 2:21).

"A Beautiful Mind" delights in God (Psa. 1:2; 37:4; Song. 2:4; Isa. 58:14).

"A Beautiful Mind" trusts in and fully depends upon God (Prov. 3:5-6)

"A Beautiful Mind" does not depend on worldly wisdom (I Cor. 2:4-13).

"A Beautiful Mind" rightly divides the Word of God (2 Tim. 2:15).

"A Beautiful Mind" displays an attitude of humility (Phil. 2:2; I Peter 5:6)

"A Beautiful Mind" shows a sense of God's abiding, peaceful presence (Gen. 28:15; Isa. 26:3).

"A Beautiful Mind" chooses God's ways over man's ways (Psa. 1:1; Heb. 11:25).

"A Beautiful Mind" learns at the feet of Jesus (Luke 10:38-42; Mat. 11:28-30).

"A Beautiful Mind" rests in God's presence (Song 2:4, John 15: 4-5, Heb. 4:10), is full of peace and not troubled nor afraid (John 14:27)

"A Beautiful Mind" has a ready, prepared tongue for active service (I Peter 3:15; Psalm 45:1).

"A Beautiful Mind" is exemplary in word, conduct, love, spirit, faith and purity despite its age (I Tim. 5:12)

"A Beautiful Mind" exhibits life on the highest plane and will never experience condemnation (Rom. 8:1; Eph. 1:6).

"A Beautiful Mind" obeys the highest law of all: love to God and mankind (I Cor. 13; Prov. 31:26; I Jn. 3:18).

The truths I discovered have everything to do with education. The mind of Christ enables a believer to think on temporal and eternal matters from God’s perspective. The residence of Christ in a believer effects his education, for education is much more than simply storing away knowledge. Education is knowing how to think with God’s mind, to “see” or “know” from God’s perspective. The primary source of education—God’s textbook—is the Holy Bible, Scripture, the written Word, the Living Word, *Logos*, Christ who abides in us with the Spirit of God. Remember: God’s intent for education is to make each of His children living epistles—Christ-like or godly, set apart, separate from sin, holy as He is (2 Cor. 3:3; I Peter 2:14-16)—in other words, to exhibit *His* beautiful mind!

By grace, man is not left alone to educate himself. God assists with comprehension and application. Besides the fact that believers have Life dwelling in them in the person of Jesus Christ, God has provided the Spirit of God to dwell within them 24 hours a day for guidance, counsel, and instruction in righteousness (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15). God’s 24-hour provision for education is available to teachers and to their students at no cost to themselves because Christ has paid the price of death at Calvary with His shed blood! God has paid **ALL** the cost for man’s education!

In addition to God’s personal presence *within* individual believers each of His children are provided educational gifts *through* the Church, the collective Body of Christ. God has equipped pastors and teachers and all members with gifts specifically designed “for the perfecting [completion of work] of the saints for the work of the ministry for the edifying [building up] of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [mature] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:12-13).

Training up a child to display “A Beautiful Mind” in adulthood is more than stuffing a child’s head full of facts or fancy or sheltering them from a secular world. Teachers who strive to educate students to exhibit the beauty of God’s mind—a mind that separates the holy from the unholy and displays God Himself, have a lofty goal set before them. In theory the ideal is lovely and true. How, though, is the teacher going to incorporate this ideal into the school years?

How nice it might be if teachers could merely hand their students God’s beautiful mind and be done with their education completely and immediately! Education does not come that easily, neither for the student nor the teacher. More exactly, *the mind of God and education is a gift that each person must receive for himself from the direct hand of the Giver of all Good Gifts* (James 1:17). Each man is responsible for his own choice to receive or refuse *the Gift* [*Logos*, Jesus Christ, “the Way, the Truth, the Life] Rom. 6:23; I John 5:11-12; Ezek. 18:4, 20; Jer. 31:30a; John 14:6). God is the true power source for education. A student who has a teacher who sets the example of having received the gift of life and is seeking to exercise *the Gift* has indeed received a blessed gift from God at birth—a gift worthy of honor, thanksgiving and praise to God for such a *goodly*, (beautiful) *heritage* (Psa. 16.6b; 61.5b). The

reasonable response from the student is to grab hold of his godly heritage by calling on God as “My Father” and “My Redeemer” and turn toward Him (Jer, 3:19; Isa. 63:16) as Ruth did by choosing her mother-in-law’s God.

FIVE KEYS are the Christian parent’ and teachers’ guide to opening the way to achieving the goal of refining, establishing, strengthening, and settling young minds in God’s ways.

- ⊕ Be equipped with the Word of God to lead a child / student to place his trust in Christ as the only mediator between God and men.
- ⊕ Require that child/ student respect God and His Word and submit to leaders who have been authorized for their protection, such as government, church, community officials.
- ⊕ Apply God’s Word to your own life as a parent/teacher; demonstrate how to apply God’s Word to daily situations that arise in the daily family life; and give child/student opportunities for making choices that help them to practice separating truth from error.
- ⊕ Yield to God’s mind and ways, allowing the Spirit within you to demonstrate a spiritual composure that manifests the fruit of the Spirit and inspires others to choose God’s pathway. Without seeing you working out your own salvation, children/students will not be impacted by your well-meaning words alone. The messenger *is* the message!
- ⊕ Create a congenial atmosphere for your family or your students so that they may ponder, reflect, think, meditate, chew over what they are learning and practice communicating their lessons to others without the fear of condemnation. Provide times of prayer, friendly conversations, lively discussions, and encouragement for sharing ideas through writing. Articulation sharpens the focus on whatsoever is true, good, virtuous, etc. and settles Truth into the mind.



There is indeed a great deal more that can be said about the fifth key. Helping students to *possess* the truth and have it *clear* in their minds is a very important part of teaching. Too little time do we reserve for refining, establishing, strengthening, and settling ideas in our minds in a world that bustles about and worships busyness, however much Scripture stresses the habit of chewing over Truth.

Taking time to think over lessons is part of the fifth key. The first Scriptural example of meditation is the patriarch Isaac, going out to meditate in the field “at eventide” (Gen. 24: 63). Joshua, God’s leader, is exhorted to meditate “day and night” in order to be “prosperous” and “have good

success” (1:8). David, God’s poetic spokesman, calls meditation “sweet” (Psa. 104:34) and an activity for “day and night” (Psalm 1:1) and throughout the day (Psa. 119:15). Defining meditation, David wrote,

I have *considered* the days of old, the years of ancient times. I *call to remembrance* my song in the night; I *commune with mine own heart*, and *my spirit made diligent search* ...I will *remember the years* of the right hand of the Most High. I will *remember the works of the LORD*; surely I will *remember thy wonders of old*. I will meditate also of all thy work, and *talk of thy doings*. (Psalm 77:5-6, 10-12)

Another part of the fifth key is articulation that requires much practice. Choose a good language arts curriculum to guide you to teach your students to listen, speak, and write artfully. Because time is necessary for developing the artistry of using words to paint pictures, explain ideas, persuade, and transfer information into other people’s minds in a pleasing manner, do not neglect time for language *arts*.

Clear thinking is perhaps the most important skill to be developed. If a student can not think clearly, he cannot speak, or write appropriately or solve any problems, make decisions, etc. To increase skill in every subject of study—ALL other subjects—a student must learn to discipline his mind to think in an orderly and precise, artistic manner.

There are many names for this pattern of thought: “The Joy of Discovery,”[†] exegesis, exposition, explication, critical thinking, the scholarly method, the scientific method—to mention but a few names. The pattern can be applied to studies of the Bible, literature, social studies, law, mathematics, physics, art, and ALL studies.






This pattern appears in Scripture within the narrative of a joyous event in Israel’s history. A remnant of Jews returned from captivity to rebuild Jerusalem. Upon their attempt to recover their nation, they discovered their ancient source of education in their ravaged temple. Recovering the scrolls of Hebraic Law set off a celebration known as “The Great Revival under Ezra.” The story is found in Nehemiah 8:1-10:39; the pattern is outlined in chapter 8:

- v. 3 Ezra, the priest, read from the book of the law of Moses and “the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.”
- v. 7 Men “caused the people to understand [discern] the law.”
- v. 8 “They read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense [explained it], and caused them to understand the reading.”
- v. 9 “...all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.” [They took the words to their hearts.]

[†] (See attached: “Joy of Discovery” that illustrates how to use Five Keys of Study for Bible study.)

- v. 10 Then Ezra told the people to “eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared....”
- v. 12 “And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.”

Compare the passage in Nehemiah with **F**ive **S**tudy **K**eys listed below:

	Astute Observation	Ezra read the Law, and the people were attentive to the details.
	Precise Interpretation	People received understanding, the sense or meaning of the Word read.
	Wise Application	People wept and repented.
	Careful Comparison	
	Appropriate Responses	People enjoyed, savored, shared the Word with others not in attendance.

Comparison (not mentioned in the Nehemiah pattern), has been added to the list because comparison/contrast of similar and different ideas enhances understanding, appreciation, and evaluation. Applying this key to the study of literature, for instance, a student is exposed to greater literature appreciation as an art form. Let us say that a student is studying *Canterbury Tales*, and in his studies he compares Chaucer’s use of the framed tale format with Boccaccio’s *Decameron* and learns that Chaucer has surpassed his Italian medieval teacher who inspired Chaucer’s use of the form. Later, the reader is already prepared to appreciate more fully Decameron’s original idea, surpassed by Chaucer’s work, and developed further in a Romantic form in Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

Study over the **F**ive **S**tudy **K**eys chart on the next page. May it assist you in your school year in preparing your student to be one who yields himself to be an earthen vessel for God to fill with Himself!

Five Study Keys

🔑 Five aspects of thinking that are applicable to any discipline of study.

🔑 – Astute Observation

Purpose: To discover all details and ideas that are easily overlooked. We read, listen, think too haphazardly. We fail to look and see what is evident.

Meaning: To look, inspect, hunt, pay close attention to, be attentive, notice, watch, consider every detail, savor, enjoy, delight in, appreciate the art of the language.

Method: Read. Ask questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Look for descriptive details: size, color, shape, texture, number, vivid words, figures of speech, word usage, sensory perceptions—smell, taste, touch, see, hear. Look at reaction and interaction. Define terms.

🔑 – Precise Interpretation

Purpose: To determine the meaning, the sense of the subject being studied.

Meaning: To gain clarity, understanding, the sense, the meaning; see the pattern, trend.

Method: Use the dictionary, reference books, other resources that provide insight into the meaning. Organize facts into graphs, outlines, etc.

🔑 – Careful Comparison

Purpose: To relate this portion of knowledge with other knowledge of related subjects. Seeing likenesses and differences. Truth is a unified whole, and it is beneficial to see how all the pieces of an idea fit together to create a whole.

Meaning: To correlate, integrate, analyze parts to the whole.

Method: Ask yourself what other information you know that agrees with or refutes what you have learned from this study. Is Truth confirmed? Compare this study to other studies, opinions, experiments, conclusions, suppositions, discoveries.

🔑 – Wise Application

Purpose: To see the relevance of this study its relationship with similar and dissimilar subjects. To make a practical use of the study.

Meaning: To utilize, employ, do, exercise, appropriate (verb).

Method: Answer these questions: What use is this information? What does it add to my understanding of this subject? What light does it shed on understanding principles, natural laws, ethics, and other subjects?

🔑 – Appropriate Responses

Purpose: To clarify one's understanding and to articulate lessons for another's benefit. Share ideas.

Meaning: To contemplate, ponder, reflect on the lessons in a quiet, unhurried manner and to organize thoughts for explanation, entertainment, appreciation, persuasion, description of ideas for the sake of others in addition to yourself.

Method: Consider your audience and choose a style that is effective for your chosen purpose of communication. Meditate, pre-write, outline, write, edit, polish, practice articulation that settles lessons into your heart.

The Joy of Discovery

The following is a **Bible study method** to help Christians read God's Word with greater understanding so that they can discover for themselves the precious truths found within.

OBSERVE John 5:39 "Search"

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Purpose: To discover all the words and details and ideas that are easily overlooked. We read too hastily. We fail to see what the verse clearly says.

Meaning: To look, inspect, hunt, pay close attention to, notice, watch, consider every word.

Method: Read. Paraphrase. Take notes. Ask questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

INTERPRET — Matthew 24:15 "Let him understand"

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE MEAN?

Purpose: To explain, give the meaning the writer intended and which his readers understood.

Meaning: To explain, elucidate, tell the meaning, give the sense.

Method: To bridge the cultural, language and time gap. To do this we often need help from such secondary sources as different translations, dictionaries, atlases, reference Bible notes.

APPLY - James 1:22 "Be doers"

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE MEAN TO ME?

Purpose: To learn spiritual lessons and to grow in grace resulting in a changed life. Amending one's life because of what God has said in His Word.

Meaning: To utilize, employ, do, obey, believe, exercise.

Method: Answer these questions: What should I believe? What sins should I avoid or confess? What command am I to obey? What promises am I to claim? What examples should I seek to follow? What examples should I avoid?

COMPARE - 1 Corinthians 2:13 "comparing"

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ELSEWHERE?

Purpose: To relate the portion of Scripture that I am studying with the rest of the Bible. The Bible is a unified whole, and we must see how all the pieces fit together. (2 Peter 1:20)

Meaning: To correlate, integrate Scripture.

Method: Ask yourself what other verses, paragraphs and chapters in the Bible tie together with your study. Are there parallel passages that shed light and help confirm what you have just discovered. Use cross references found in your Bible as well as a concordance.

MEDITATE - Joshua 1:8 "meditate therein day and night"

HOW CAN I BRING INTO ACTION INSIGHTS GAINED?

Purpose: To make the truth of Scripture a reality in your own life

Meaning: To contemplate, ponder a portion of Scripture in a quiet, unhurried manner

Method: Memorize and apply truth to your daily life. Share it with others. Reflect on the passage as a guide for prayer in terms of confession, petition, intercession, praise and thanksgiving.

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