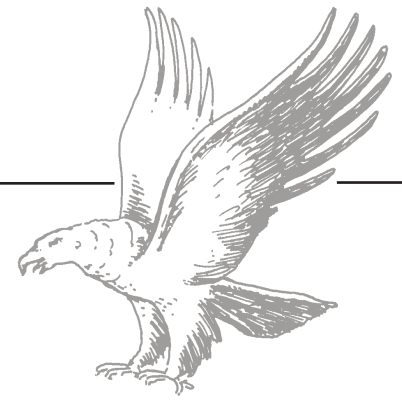


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



April 17, 2016

God Knows

The awareness that our thoughts are an open book before God is a strong incentive to harness our minds in purity. It's the first requirement in living a moral life.

*“Would not God search this out?
For He knows the secrets of the heart”
(Psa. 44:21).*

“You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts” (Lk. 16:15).

“For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things” (1 Jn. 3:20).

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me . . .” (Psa. 139:23).



There are many arguments for the existence of God, but one of the best—and least appreciated—is the role of *the conscience* in the human psyche. We have an innate awareness of the rightness and wrongness of our behavior, and that inner small voice incessantly drives us to live up to a higher standard.

But the scope of that judgment is not limited to our external behavior. It likewise regulates how we *think*. Even if we manage to keep our outward conduct under control, impurity in the heart will still trouble us. The Bible presses that point by emphasizing that God judges not just what we *do*, but also what we

think. He can read our minds like an open book, and the knowledge that He is doing so 24/7 is a powerful incentive to keep our minds—and therefore, our lives—clean.

This simple truth has serious implications for our lives. We can hide lust in our heart; but *God knows* the illicit passion we are nurturing. We can hide hate for a brother in our heart; but *God knows* the venom we are storing up. We can hide an inordinate desire for wealth and possessions in our heart; but *God knows* the selfishness that dominates our life.

When we feast our eyes on pornography, or rehearse over and over our evil intentions toward someone who has wronged us, or spend every waking moment thinking how we can increase our material gain, we are not merely living in a fantasy world. We are preparing ourselves to act out those fantasies; we are setting ourselves up for a life of sin. We may not be acting out those thoughts yet, but deep in our hearts, *that's who we really are*.

Knowing that our innermost thoughts are wide open before God can

be scary, if we are prone to harboring sin in our hearts. But the awareness that God is reading our minds can also be a source of great comfort. David invited God to “search me and know my heart,” not because he believed he was sinless, but because he knew that his heart was where the real battle was being fought, and God's scrutiny would help keep him honest. What better incentive is there to maintain clean books than to invite an audit at any time?

The atheist may claim to live a moral life, but where it really counts—in his heart—he has nothing to guide his morality. In his view, there is no God to examine his heart. He has no auditor, so his heart really is a sealed record, open to no one. He is free to entertain every hateful, lustful, greedy thought, as long as he doesn't act on them.

Of course, that's the problem, isn't it? Sooner or later, a heart that feeds on unrestrained thoughts will produce a harvest of unrestrained behavior. The only way to keep our thinking under control is to constantly remind ourselves of the obvious: *God knows*.

– David King