

LOVE YOUR GOD WITH ALL OUR MIND

J.P. Moreland

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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WEEK ONE

LOVE YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR MIND | J.P. MORELAND

A SUMMARY

In chapter one, Moreland sets up his case for the rest of the book by arguing that the church has abdicated its intellectual authority and tragically disengaged from honest scholarly pursuits. He demonstrates the historical downslide of Christian intellectualism and its devastating effects on the Church and American culture.

ASSESSING THE TEXT

J.P. Moreland largely attributes the rise of Christian anti-intellectualism to the Great Awakenings in America when the message of Christ was spread furiously and hundreds were converted at a time. Why do you think this led to the anti-intellectual nature of Christian evangelicalism that we see today?

Moreland identifies one of the hallmarks of Christian anti-intellectualism as the spawning of an irrelevant gospel. *“Today, we share the gospel primarily as a means of addressing felt needs.”* Do you agree with this statement? How does marrying the Gospel to felt needs damage its relevance?

“If our lives and ministries are expressions of what we actually believe, and if what we believe is off center and yet so pervasive that it is seldom even brought to conscious discussion, much less debated, then this explains why our impact on this world is so paltry compared to our numbers. I cannot overemphasize the fact that this modern understanding of Christianity is neither biblical nor consistent with the bulk of church history (pg. 25).”

What do you make of Moreland’s assessment?

How can healthy debate be reinstated in the Church today? What practical steps or attitude changes must take place first?

CONNECTIONS WITH TODAY’S CULTURE

“...faith is now understood as a blind act of will, a decision to believe something that is either independent of reason or that is a simple choice to believe while ignoring the paltry lack of evidence for what is believed... For many, religion is identified with subjective feelings, sincere motives, personal piety, and blind faith (pg. 25).”

How has this attitude impacted Christians’ attitudes towards spiritual disciplines like Bible study, prayer, and commitment to Christian community?

How has it impacted many Christians’ views on theology and social issues?

“We have organizations for businessmen that emphasize personal testimonies, devotional reading, and the like. But where do these organizations train businessmen to develop a Christian understanding of economic theory, capitalism, business ethics, or moral issues in the employer/employee relationship?”

Why don’t devotional and curriculum materials intersect with the practical challenges facing most Christians today? What leads Christians today to compartmentalize their faith?

“Three of the major centers of influence in our culture – the university, the media, and the government- are largely devoid of serious religious discussion. In fact, it is not unfair to say that university, media, and government leaders are often illiterate about how Christians see the world and why (pg. 32).”

What evidence do you see of this today?

BRINGING IT HOME

“We often hear it said that “if your religious beliefs work for you, that’s great, but don’t impose them on others.” However, no one would say that a scientist is imposing anything on anyone when he says that water is H₂O or that 2+2=4. Nor would these claims be viewed as private opinions whose sole value was their usefulness for those who believe them. Why? Because only science supposedly deals with facts, truth, and reason, but religion and ethics allegedly deal with private, subjective opinions (pg. 33).”

What problems has this cultural approach to religion created for you in relating your faith to others?

How has the anti-intellectual tide in the Church impacted your own spiritual walk? What hinderances, theological misunderstandings, or despairing trends have you faced as a result of it?

Much of the material offered through the Fellowship of Christian Grads deals with integrating faith with academics. How can graduate students perform a reverse emphasis, integrating their academics in the ministry of the church to benefit the Body of Christ? What would such an effort look like in your local Christian community?

How can your own research be used to better inform and minister to the church? What are its implications for theology?

TAKE ACTION

In response to this chapter, what action steps will you take this week to grow in your intellectual love for God?

As you pray this week, ask for discernment to better understand your academic discipline’s role in the discipling of other believers in your Christian community. Pray for creativity and boldness to know how you can use your knowledge to better serve the Church.

WEEK TWO

LOVE YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR MIND | J.P. MORELAND

A SUMMARY

In this chapter, Moreland lays out a biblical and historical case against the anti-intellectual mindset pervading the evangelical church today. Throughout his argument, he demonstrates that a desire for knowledge and wisdom is a hallmark trait of the Christian life. He also shows the deep academic heritage of Christian Europe in previous centuries.

ASSESSING THE TEXT

Moreland defines reason as the use of *“all our faculties relevant to gaining knowledge and justifying our beliefs about different things.”* Other than academic study, what other faculties are available to us that contribute to sound reason?

“His church – not the university – is the pillar and support of the truth. (I Timothy 3:15) (pg. 44)”

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

How can the church become the pillar of truth in today’s culture? What steps would need to be taken and how would it practically look?

“According to Plato, if you know something, what you know must at least be true and you must believe it.”

“...faith is relying on what you have reason to believe is true and trustworthy. Faith involves the readiness to act as if something were so (pg. 60).”

How do these two ideas impact the worldview of religious pluralism? Can Plato’s position reconcile with it?

Do you believe most Christians see their faith as truth and are ready to act on it?

“Unfortunately, many today apparently think that hard intellectual work is not needed to understand God’s propositional revelation to us. Instead, they believe that the Holy Spirit will simply make known the meaning of a text if implored to do so... In my view, the Spirit does not help the believer understand the meaning of Scripture. Rather, He speaks to the believer’s soul, convicting, comforting, opening up applications for His truth through His promptings (pg. 46).”

Do you agree or disagree with Moreland’s assessment? What is the danger in viewing the Holy Spirit as a personalized interpreter?

What kinds of issues arise when we ask the question, “What does this passage mean *to you*?”

What role does the Spirit actually play in biblical interpretation?

CONNECTIONS WITH TODAY'S CULTURE

“When we affirm that the Bible is a revelation from God, we do not simply assert that God as a person is known in and through it. We also mean that God has revealed understandable, objectively true propositions (pg. 45).”

In your opinion, is this how we actually treat Scripture? Is it treated as truth or irrelevant religious preference by most Christians today?

BRINGING IT HOME

“Finally, I sometimes hear two claims that express the idea that it is futile to use your reason or to emphasize its importance when it comes to the Christian way: God’s ways and thoughts are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:9) and knowledge puffs people up and makes them arrogant (I Corinthians 8:1) (pg. 61).”

...Paul’s statement is not against knowledge per se, but against a certain attitude toward it. The proper response to his warning is humility, not ignorance! Second, for every knowledgable person who is arrogant, there is an unknowledgable person who is defensive and proud as a cover-up for his or her lack of knowledge (pg. 61).”

How can we, as Christian scholars, demonstrate a working knowledge of the world without appearing arrogant?

How have you encountered and dealt with anti-intellectualism in your own church?

TAKE ACTION

In response to this chapter, how can you take action towards becoming a fully Integrated Grad Disciple this week?

As you pray this week, ask for discernment to better understand how your unique opportunities as a Christian scholar can be used for Christ. Pray that God will use your diligence for His glory.

WEEK THREE

LOVE YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR MIND | J.P. MORELAND

A SUMMARY

In this chapter, Moreland discusses the nature of the soul and the anatomy of our beliefs and actions. In particular, he demonstrates how the life of the mind is so important to the development of one's soul.

ASSESSING THE TEXT

"We are so familiar with [Romans 12:1-2] that some of its oddness or peculiarity is lost on us. But to see how truly peculiar this teaching is, think of what Paul could have said but did not. He could have said, "Be transformed by developing close feelings toward God," or "by exercising your will in obeying biblical commands," or "by intensifying your desire for the right things," or "by fellowship and worship," and so on. ...Yet Paul chose to mention none of them in his most important précis of the spiritual life." (pg. 65)

The reality is that not everyone is necessarily spiritually stimulated by intellectual studies. Are you the type of person who is? If not, what helps you grow best spiritually?

"The mind is the soul's primary vehicle for making contact with God, and it plays a fundamental role in the process of human maturation and change, including spiritual transformation. In thought, the mind's structure conforms to the order of the object of thought. Since this is so, and since truth dwells in the mind, truth itself is powerful and rationality is valuable as a means of obtaining truth and avoiding error. Therefore, God desires a life of intellectual growth and study for His children." (pg. 67)

Do you agree with Moreland's thesis for the chapter? Why or why not?

"If a culture reaches the point where Christian claims are not even part of its plausibility structure, fewer and fewer people will be able to entertain the possibility that they might be true. Whatever stragglers do come to faith in such a context would do so on the basis of felt needs alone, and the genuineness of such conversions would be questionable to say the least. This is why apologetics is so crucial to evangelism. It seeks to create a plausibility structure in a person's mind, "favourable conditions" as Machen puts it, so the gospel can be entertained by a person." (pg. 76)

Do you think we have reached this place in our culture yet? If not, do you feel that we are coming close?

How can Christians better stem this tide of anti-Christian sentiments within the academy?

CONNECTIONS WITH TODAY'S CULTURE

"A sensation is a state of awareness or sentience, a mode of consciousness, for example, a conscious awareness of sound, color, or pain.... A thought is a mental content that can be expressed in an entire sentence and that only exists while it is being thought.... A belief is a person's view, accepted to varying degrees of strength, and of how things really are.... A desire is a certain felt inclination to do, have, or

experience certain things... An act of will is a volition or choice, an exercise of power, an endeavoring to do a certain thing.” (pg. 70)

Which of these five states of the mind is most commonly emphasized and followed in our culture today?

BRINGING IT HOME

“In fact, the more you know about extrabiblical matters, the more you will see in the Bible. Why? Because you will see distinctions in the Bible or connections between Scripture and an issue in another area of life that would not be possible without the concepts and categories placed in the mind’s structure by gaining the relevant knowledge in those extrabiblical areas of thought.” (pg. 79)

Have you experienced a greater understanding of Scripture as you’ve become more educated? If so, why do you think that is?

“Beliefs are the rails upon which our lives run. We almost always act according to what we really believe. It doesn’t matter much what we say we believe or what we want others to think we believe. When the rubber meets the road, we act out our actual beliefs most of the time.” (pg. 73)

Do you find this to be generally true in your own life? Where do you find yourself betraying your own beliefs?

Moreland emphasizes that the content of a belief is not the only aspect to consider. He also mentions the importance of a belief’s strength and centrality. If you were to rate your Christian faith in strength and centrality to your life, how would you rate it (Scale 1-10)?

If it is less central or weaker than you wish for it to be, how can the rest of the group support you in making it stronger and more central to your life?

“If we’re honest with ourselves, we have to admit that we get into ruts in our thinking and develop habits of thought that can grow stale after a while. This is where renewing the mind comes in. A life of study can give us a constant source of new categories and beliefs that will lead to fresh new insights and stave off intellectual boredom. Many people become bored with the Bible precisely because their overall intellectual growth is stagnant. They cannot get new insights from Scripture because they bring the same old categories to Bible study and look to validate their old habits of thought.” (pg. 80)

Have you experienced this?

As a busy graduate student, how can you overcome these mental ruts?

TAKE ACTION

In response to this chapter, how can you take action towards becoming a fully Integrated Grad Disciple this week?

As you pray this week, ask for discernment to better understand how you can grow in your Christian faith as a busy graduate student.

WEEK FOUR

LOVE YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR MIND | J.P. MORELAND

A SUMMARY

In this chapter, Moreland gives practical advice for overcoming intellectual emptiness in one's heart and mind. He encourages his readers to challenge themselves with a variety of literature, even those works which spark disagreement. In all, he underlines the importance of living an intellectually fulfilled life as a means to a more spiritual life.

ASSESSING THE TEXT

Neurosis is always a substitute for legitimate suffering. – Carl Jung

Do you agree or disagree with his opening quote? Why?

“A healthy form of individualism is a good thing. Sadly, we have all known people who fail to draw appropriate boundaries and do not separate and individuate from others in a healthy way. Such people do not think or feel for themselves, they are easy to manipulate, and their well-being is far too dependent on what others think of them. A person with a healthy individualism learns to avoid these problems in order mutually to depend upon and relate to members of the body of Christ.” (pg. 88-89)

Have you known anyone like this? What advice would you give someone who is seeking to become less individualistic? How can you make someone aware of their inordinate individualism?

“Because the empty self has a deep emotional emptiness and hunger, and because it has devised inadequate strategies to fill that emptiness, a frenzied pace of life emerges to keep the pain and emptiness suppressed. One must jump from one activity to another and not be exposed to quiet for very long or the emptiness will become apparent.” (pg. 92)

Do you think this could describe the typical graduate student? Why or why not?

CONNECTIONS WITH TODAY'S CULTURE

“Many people today, including many Christians, simply do not read or think deeply at all. And when believers do read, they tend to browse self-help books or other literature that is not intellectually engaging.” (pg. 87)

Why do you think evangelicals avoid intellectually-challenging topics and discussions?

As a graduate student conducting highly specialized study and research, what role can you play in reversing this trend? How could you appropriately challenge your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to more fully engage the mind?

“We modern evangelicals often feel small and without influence in the public square. We must recapture our intellectual heritage if we are to present to our brothers and sisters, our children, and our post-Christian

culture a version of Christianity rich and deep enough to challenge the dehumanizing structures and habits of thought of a society gone mad.” (pg. 87)

What evidence of this have you found in our culture today?

How has this created problems for evangelicals spiritually? Politically? Economically? What about other areas of the public sphere?

BRINGING IT HOME

What books have you read lately that have stimulated your personal and/or spiritual growth that you would recommend to others?

“The infantile person is controlled by infantile cravings and constantly seeks to be filled up with and made whole by food, entertainment, and consumer goods. Such a person is preoccupied by sex, physical appearance, and body image and tends to live by feelings and experiences. For the infantile personality type, pain, endurance, hard work, and delayed gratification are anathema. Pleasure is all that matters, and it had better be immediate. Boredom is the greatest evil, amusement is the greatest good.” (pg. 89)

Which of these ‘infantile cravings’ do you suffer from the most? What advice would you give someone else in trying to overcome them?

“Spiritually, the narcissist dethrones God and His purposes in history from the center of religious life and replaces them with his or her own personal fulfillment.” (pg. 89)

Spiritual narcissism being an imminent reality for all humans, where have you struggled with it in your own life?

“I have spoken in hundreds of churches and have regularly observed Sunday school classes which divide into small groups to reflect on a passage or discuss an idea. Later, when the groups recombine to share their observations with the entire class, group feedback is almost always affirming no matter how inaccurate or poorly reasoned a point is... It also keeps adults from learning how to receive criticism for their ideas in the interest of truth and stifles growth in the ability to respond nondefensively... If we don’t work on this in the safety of the company of our own brothers and sisters, we will come off as small, reactionary, and inarticulate in the public square.” (pg. 97)

What are some principles of respectful disagreement learned in the academy that could be easily applied within the walls of the local church?

TAKE ACTION

In response to this chapter, how can you take action towards becoming a fully Integrated Grad Disciple this week?

As you pray this week, ask for discernment to better understand how you can grow in your Christian faith as a busy graduate student.

WEEK FIVE

LOVE YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR MIND | J.P. MORELAND

A SUMMARY

In this chapter, Moreland deals with the habits and virtues that shape an intellectually-fervent lifestyle. He defines and lists several important virtues, discusses the spiritual discipline of study, and then gives an important lesson in basic logic and thinking skills. **For the purposes of this week’s discussion, the guide primarily deals with the first half of the chapter and focuses less on the logic section. However, we encourage you to discuss the section with your group if discussion permits.**

ASSESSING THE TEXT

“You cannot learn to use your mind well for Christ’s sake by just reading a logic book or taking more adult education courses. You must order your general lifestyle in such a way that a maturing intellect emerges as part of that lifestyle.” (pg. 105)

Why is it so hard to make Christian intellectualism a personal lifestyle rather than an interest or admired concept?

“If one came to believe that Christianity or some doctrinal belief were false, then one ought to give up the belief in question. By way of application, we should learn to listen to what our critics say about us even if we don’t like the way they express their views.” (pg. 106)

Do you agree or disagree with Moreland? Why?

Why have so many Christians neglected to hear their opponent’s viewpoints in today’s “culture war”?

Moreland includes a lengthy list of virtues important to becoming a Christian intellectual. What would you add to the list or take away from it?

“By way of application, it is important to read books from time to time as a form of spiritual discipline an intellectual exercise, even if the topic of the book does not address one of your immediate, felt needs.” (pg. 112)

What is the lasting impact of this habit on a person’s life?

CONNECTIONS WITH TODAY’S CULTURE

“Ought not a Minister to have, First, a good understanding, a clear apprehension, a sound judgment, and a capacity of reasoning with some closeness?” – John Wesley

Do you think this accurately describes ministers today? In your opinion, which of these is most often lacking in the repertoire of modern-day clergy?

“God is not honored when His people use bad arguments for what may actually be correct conclusions.” (pg. 107)

Where have you seen Christians do this in our culture today? Can you give a specific example?

“The purpose of intellectual humility, open-mindedness, and so forth is not to create a skeptical mind that never lands on a position about anything, preferring to remain suspended in midair. Rather, the purpose is for you to do anything you can to remove your unhelpful biases and get at the truth in a reasoned way. A proper development of this group of virtues can aid in that quest.” (pg. 109)

What often keep academics from finally “landing” on a position or belief?

BRINGING IT HOME

“A person with a well-developed lawyer-type mind will have a distinctive way of being present in the world. This is also true of a person who is cultivating a careful Christian mind. That person will be present to the world in a distinctively Christian intellectual way.” (pg. 105)

How are you uniquely present in your world as a result of your area of study? As a result of your faith?

“To develop a Christian mind skillfully, you must want to be a certain sort of person badly enough that you are willing to pay the price of ordering your lifestyle appropriately.” (pg. 105)

What habits are you attempting to develop to cultivate your Christian mind?

“It is unproductive to try to believe something beyond your grounds for believing it and dishonest to act as if you believe something more strongly than you do. Overbelief is not a virtue.” (pg. 107)

What are some symptoms of overbelief? How can they be lovingly challenged by others in the Church?

“One must have peace and serenity of mind in order to develop a life of understanding, reflection, and meditation. An anxious, depressed, distracted soul is not conducive to intellectual growth. We Christians trust and hope that truth is good and worth having because we are confident in the God of truth.” (pg. 108)

What often keeps you from the peace and serenity of mind required for developing a life of study and meditation?

Which of the logical fallacies mentioned tend to annoy you the most? Which of them are you most guilty of?

TAKE ACTION

In response to this chapter, how can you take action towards becoming a fully Integrated Grad Disciple this week?

As you pray this week, ask for discernment to better understand how you can grow in your Christian faith as a busy graduate student.

WEEK SIX

LOVE YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR MIND | J.P. MORELAND

A SUMMARY

In chapter six, Moreland explores the relationship between apologetics and evangelism, highlighting the importance of being able to compassionately persuade others with intellectual arguments.

ASSESSING THE TEXT

“Because of the mindlessness of our culture, people do not persuade others of their views (religious or otherwise) on the basis of argument and reason, but rather, by expressing emotional rhetoric and politically correct buzzwords. Reason has given way to rhetoric, evidence to emotion, substance to slogan, the speech writer to the makeup man, and rational authority... to social power...” (pg. 128)

What examples have you seen of this today?

How do churches seem to exacerbate this problem?

“So understood, apologetics is a ministry designed to help unbelievers to overcome intellectual obstacles to conversion and believers to remove doubts that hinder spiritual growth.” (pg. 131)

Using this definition, what are some of apologetics’ limitations?

“I am not suggesting that the only thing in Scripture relevant to evangelism is rational argument and apologetics. However, I am suggesting that apologetics is an absolutely essential ingredient to biblical evangelism.” (pg. 132)

Do you agree or disagree with Moreland’s assertion here?

CONNECTIONS WITH TODAY’S CULTURE

“As British sociologist and theologian Os Guinness has argued, the Devil will allow short-term success in evangelism and church growth if the means used to achieve it ultimately contribute to the marginalization of the church and her message. In this case, the church becomes her own gravedigger. By eschewing the role of reason in evangelism, and substituting in its place an overemphasis on a simple gospel appeal directed at felt needs, short-term gains are to be expected in a culture of empty selves.” (pg. 130)

What examples of long term damage have you seen from this simple gospel appeal?

BRINGING IT HOME

“When religion is handed down among us by hereditary succession, it is not surprising to find youth of sense and spirit beginning to question the truth of the system in which they were brought up. And it is not surprising to see them abandon a position which they are unable to defend.” – William Wilberforce" (pg. 134-135)

Which elements of Christian doctrine are most difficult to intellectually defend? Why?

Which social elements of Christian doctrine are most difficult to defend? Why?

Which doctrinal or social elements of Christian doctrine do you most struggle with as a Christian?

TAKE ACTION

In response to this chapter, how can you take action towards becoming a fully Integrated Grad Disciple this week?

As you pray this week, ask for discernment to better understand how you can grow in your Christian faith as a busy graduate student.

WEEK SEVEN

LOVE YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR MIND | J.P. MORELAND

A SUMMARY

In chapter seven, Moreland lays out the intellectual frameworks most hostile towards Christianity and offers tips for refuting each of them. Stories from his personal experiences demonstrate how someone can integrate evangelism and apologetics compassionately and accurately.

ASSESSING THE TEXT

“If we don’t know how we know things, how can we know anything at all or draw limits to human knowledge? But if we don’t know some things before we ask ourselves how we can have knowledge in the first place, on what basis will we answer that question? ...The skeptic claims, among other things, that no good solution to the problem exists and, thus, there is no knowledge.” (pg. 139)

Can honest scholarship be performed under this intellectual framework? Why or why not?

What particular problems does this present for Christians attempting to share their faith with skeptics?

“According to Methodism, one starts the enterprise of knowing with a criterion for what does and does not count as knowledge; that is, we start with an answer to question two and not question one.” (pg. 139)

What potential dilemmas could methodism bring about in scholarly discussions?

“According to particularists, we start by knowing specific, clear items of knowledge: for example, that I had eggs for breakfast this morning; that there is a tree before me or, perhaps, that I seem to see a tree; that $7 + 5 = 12$; that mercy is a virtue; and so on. I can know some things directly and simply without needing criteria for how I know them and without having to know how or even that I know them.” (pg. 140)

What potential intellectual dilemmas could particularism present? Moral dilemmas?

Of the three frameworks – skepticism, methodism, and particularism – which seems the most conducive to honest scholarship and faith dialog?

“Scientism is the view that science is the only paradigm of truth and rationality. If something does not square with currently well-established scientific beliefs, if it is not within the domain of things appropriate for scientific investigation, or if it is not amenable to scientific methodology, then it is not true or rational.” (pg. 144)

Can honest scholarship be performed under this intellectual framework? Why or why not?

“Strong scientism is not itself a proposition of science, but a proposition of philosophy about science to the effect that only scientific propositions are true and/or rational. In other words, strong scientism is a philosophical claim, not a scientific one.” (pg. 146)

Do you agree or disagree with Moreland's statement on this? Why?

What dangers arise when people make philosophical assumptions from scientific evidence?

CONNECTIONS WITH TODAY'S CULTURE

"To refute something is to show that it is wrong. The skeptic thinks avoiding error is better than gaining truth and thinks he must be shown wrong before anyone can claim to know anything." (pg. 142)

In what ways do some Christians today apply this philosophy in their faith and practice?

Do you know anyone who deals with this fear of being overly confident in their theological assumptions? What do you think causes this?

"This moral thesis holds that everyone ought to act in accordance with the agent's own society's code... Put differently, moral relativism implies that moral propositions are not simply true or false. Rather, the truth values (true or false) of moral principles themselves are relative to the beliefs of a given culture." (pg. 149)

How have you seen this idea play out in recent political debates over social issues?

BRINGING IT HOME

"If normative relativism is true, then it is logically impossible for a society to have a virtuous, moral reformer like Jesus Christ, Gandhi, or Martin Luther King Jr. Why? Moral reforms are members of a society who stand outside that society's code and pronounce a need for reform and change in that code. However, if an act is right if and only if it is in keeping with a given society's code, then the moral reformer himself is by definition an immoral person, for his views are at odds with those of his society." (pg. 150-151)

In what ways did Jesus actually encounter this problem in the first century world? What were the moral assumptions he contradicted?

Which of these frameworks – skepticism, scientism, moral relativism – do you encounter the most as a Christian scholar?

TAKE ACTION

In response to this chapter, how can you take action towards becoming a fully Integrated Grad Disciple this week?

As you pray this week, ask for discernment to better understand how you can grow in your Christian faith as a busy graduate student.

WEEK EIGHT

LOVE YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR MIND | J.P. MORELAND

A SUMMARY

In this chapter, Moreland lays out his thesis' implications on worship and fellowship within the local church. He challenges the reader to think creatively about the meaning of worship and how to more effectively approach him with our praise.

ASSESSING THE TEXT

“Note carefully that the California board of education regards religious, that is, Christian, beliefs as personal, private, subjective opinions to be contrasted with the true, public, objectively rational affirmations made by scientists. Where do secular people get this image of Christian doctrine? May I suggest that they get it from watching the Christians they meet, and more specifically, from watching the role that reason and truth play in the evangelical community.” (pg. 156)

Do you agree or disagree with Moreland's assessment here?

How has our lack of commitment to reason impacted our role in the intellectual community?

“Theologians describe God as a maximally perfect being. This means that God is not merely the greatest, most perfect being who happens to exist. He is the greatest being that could possibly exist.” (pg. 158)

What is the significance of this?

How should this impact how we worship and view the concept the worship?

“God is worthy of the very best efforts we can give Him in offering our respect and service through the cultivation of our total personality, including our minds.” (pg. 159)

How does “giving it our best” relate with true worship?

CONNECTIONS WITH TODAY'S CULTURE

“Worship is not under the control of human beings, nor is the form it takes up to their whims. Rather, worship is a response to a God who initiates toward His people, gives them life, and shows Himself active on their behalf.” (pg. 161)

How can worship services be better organized to accurately reflect this concept of worship as response to God?

“New Testament fellowship is a means for developing commitment to and advancing the spread of the kingdom of God and the gospel of Christ.” (pg. 171)

How can Fellowship impact evangelism?

Why is Fellowship so central to the commands of the Christian life?

BRINGING IT HOME

“The essence of worship is the intentional ascription of worth, service, and reverence to the Lord. Worship can take place in public or private, in individual or corporate ways. In fact, for the integrated believer, in one way or another, everything in life can be understood as an act of worship. In this sense, worship is expressed in one’s overall approach to life and in every area of life (Romans 12:1). Worship creates a home for the soul as it learns to rest in God.” (pg. 157-158)

What are you currently doing to ascribe worth and service to God as a graduate student on campus?

What could you be doing?

“Jesus meant that the worship that really counts is not based on external conformance to custom. Instead, it is to be rooted in the inner being; it should be sincere and earnest; and it ought to be in accordance with the true nature of God, His revelation, and His acts.” (pg. 160)

What steps do you take to personally prepare yourself for corporate worship each week?

“According to Aristotle, there are three kinds of friendship: friendship based on usefulness and advantage, those based on pleasure, and those based on goodness and virtue.” (pg. 170)

Which category would the majority of church relationships likely fall into?

“The third type of friendship is quite profound. Here friendships are formed around a common vision of virtue and the good life, and friendship serves to sustain, foster, and strengthen each friend in his or her commitment and progress in a life well lived.” (pg. 170)

How many relationships of this kind do you have in your life? What impact have they had on you?

What is so difficult about cultivating this type of relationship?

TAKE ACTION

In response to this chapter, how can you take action towards becoming a fully Integrated Grad Disciple this week?

As you pray this week, ask for discernment to better understand how you can grow in your Christian faith as a busy graduate student.

WEEK NINE

LOVE YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR MIND | J.P. MORELAND

A SUMMARY

As Moreland begins wrapping up the book, he turns the focus to the integration of faith and vocation. He explains the difference between a career and a vocation, then offers examples and tips for becoming an integrated Christian.

ASSESSING THE TEXT

“Further, as a disciple of Jesus, I do not have a job, I have a vocation; and if I go to college, I go to find and become excellent in my vocation, not simply to find a job. A job is a means for supporting myself and those for whom I am responsible. For the Christian, a vocation (from the Latin vocare, “to call”) is an overall calling from God.” (pg. 174)

How might someone treat his or her career differently with this in mind?

CONNECTIONS WITH TODAY’S CULTURE

“One may justly say that our Public School tradition has actively encouraged an attitude to life which makes a strong distinction between the theoretical and the practical, and which gives to ideas and ideals the status of leisure-time interests not to be taken too seriously and on no account to be related to practical affairs.” – Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind*

Do you agree with Blamires? If so, which practices of our education system have led to this dichotomy?

“...the lordship of Christ is holistic. The religious life is not a special compartment in an otherwise secular life... To live Christianity is to allow Jesus Christ to be the Lord of every aspect of my life. There is no room for a secular/sacred separation in the life of Jesus’ followers.” (pg. 174)

What practices of the church have most led to this secular/sacred separation?

BRINGING IT HOME

“With God’s help, I seek to live as Jesus would if He were me. That is, how would Jesus live if He were a philosophy professor at Biola University married to Hope and father of Ashley and Allison?” (pg. 174)

Applying this concept to your own life, what qualities or characteristics would he exhibit?

Which of these qualities or characteristics do you most struggle with?

Which of these five models of integration provided by Moreland best describe your area of study?

- A. *“Issues in theology and another discipline may involve two distinct, nonoverlapping areas of investigation.” (pg. 177)*
- B. *“The complementary view: Issues in theology and another discipline may involve two different, complementary, noninteracting perspectives about the same reality such that the whole truth is a combination of both perspectives.” (pg. 178)*
- C. *“Issues in theology and another discipline may directly interact in such a way that either area of study offers rational support for the other or raises rational difficulties for the other.” (pg. 179)*
- D. *“Theology tends to support the presuppositions of another discipline and vice versa.” (pg. 180)*
- E. *“Theology fills out and adds details to general principles in another discipline and vice versa, and theology helps one practically apply principles in another discipline and vice versa.” (pg. 180)*

On pages 181-182, Moreland proposes five questions to consider when assessing the Christian faith and its role in your vocation. Take time and think about each of these questions, then discuss your answers with the group.

What are the ethical issues involved in my vocation and how do they relate to my ethical beliefs as a Christian? (pg. 181)

What does my field say about what is and is not real, about what is true and false, and how do I understand that as a Christian? (pg. 182)

What does my field say about the nature and limits of knowledge? (pg. 182)

What methodology for gathering data does my field require before someone is allowed to assert his or her views about something? (pg. 182)

Are there any specific virtues that seem to be especially relevant to your work? (pg. 182)

TAKE ACTION

In response to this chapter, how can you take action towards becoming a fully Integrated Grad Disciple this week?

As you pray this week, ask for discernment to better understand how you can grow in your Christian faith as a busy graduate student.

WEEK TEN

LOVE YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR MIND | J.P. MORELAND

A SUMMARY

As Moreland ends the book, he focuses on the importance of all Christians getting actively involved in ministry work. He also offers an engaging discussion on the importance of churches organizing themselves around this idea.

ASSESSING THE TEXT

“Saint Paul tells us that the Church – not the university, the media or the public schools – is the pillar and support of the truth (I Timothy 3:15). But you would never know it by actually examining our local church practices week by week or by observing the goals and objectives set by many parachurch ministries (pg. 188).”

Do you agree or disagree with Moreland on this point?

Why, do you think, that churches are no longer a place for deep thinking and reflection?

CONNECTIONS WITH TODAY’S CULTURE

“When faced with a crisis situation, we evangelicals usually do one of two things. We either mount a public crusade, or we retreat into an inner pious sanctum.” – Mark Noll (pg. 187)

Do you agree with Noll? What do you think has contributed to this type of reaction from the church?

“...how is it possible for a person to be an active member of an evangelical church for twenty or thirty years and still know next to nothing about the history and theology of the Christian religion, the methods and tools required for serious Bible study, and the skills and information necessary to preach and defend Christianity in a post-Christian, neopagan culture (pg. 188)?”

Why do you think this happens?

How can graduate students and professors help correct this?

“Many of the things we do in the local church are good and should remain a part of our philosophy of ministry. But no business, movement, or group will survive and flourish if its resistance to relevant and important change is rooted in the idea that we should keep doing something simply because that’s the way we’ve always done it (pg. 189).”

Why are many Christians so resistant to change in the Church?

How can Christians better decipher the non-negotiable elements of Christian living from empty tradition or preference?

“Their [pastors] job description is to equip others for ministry, not to do the ministry themselves and have others come and passively support them (pg. 191).”

How does this differ from how pastors usually structure their time and priorities?

Why do churches tend to operate as if the pastor is the ministry practitioner and everyone else simply cheers him/her on?

How has this mentality damaged the effectiveness of the church?

How can Christians turn this around and begin seeing their pastors as leaders rather than practitioners?

“The senior pastor model tends to centralize ministry around the church building and the pastor himself. Where he is, is where the action is. We bring people to him to evangelize, to counsel, and so forth. On this view, there is little need actually to equip parishioners to develop their own gifts, talents, and ministries because their job is to support the minister (pg. 191).”

What can pastors do to better structure the church in such a way that it promotes individual calls to ministry?

TAKE ACTION

In response to this chapter, how can you take action towards becoming a fully Integrated Grad Disciple this week?

As you pray this week, ask for discernment to better understand how you can grow in your Christian faith as a busy graduate student.