The Spiritual Brain

Heather Zeiger keys off The Spiritual Brain *by Beauregard and O'Leary to critique the materialist position that belief in God is simply in the neurons of the material brain. The Christian worldview is non-materialist and recent experiments bear out its power of explanation over and against the materialist worldview.*

The Worldview of Neuroscience

The popular worldview held in neuroscience, or the study of the brain, is materialism. Materialism says that humans are only physical beings, which means there is no possibility of an immaterial mind or a soul. On the other hand, non-materialists would say that humans have both a physical aspect and a spiritual aspect. As Christians, we are non-materialists, and would say that we are both physical and spiritual because God, a spiritual being, created us in His image. However, our physical bodies are important because God gave us bodies suited for us.

But what if materialism were true? First, self-consciousness would just be an evolutionary bi-product; something that randomly evolved to help our species survive. Secondly, we would just be a product of our genes and our environment, so free will or the ability to make decisions would be an illusion. This implies that our thought life, our prayers, and everything that dictates our identity is nothing more than neurons firing.{1} And from this we can conclude that our beliefs are unimportant because we really can not trust them anyway. They might be caused by a misfiring neuron. But is this what the data shows us?

In this article we will be looking at some examples in neuroscience that seem to contradict materialism, and to guide us we will be using the recently released book, *The Spiritual*

Brain by Mario Beauregard and Denyse O'Leary. We will look at some experiments materialists have tried to do to explain religious experiences and their effects on the body. Then we will look at some experiments that can only be explained from a non-materialistic worldview. Finally, we will see how the data from neuroscience fits within a Christian view of the mind and brain.

The Spiritual Brain does not take a distinctly Christian perspective. So while the studies within this book do not necessarily confirm or deny that Christianity is the "best" religion, it is still useful for apologetics. First, it allows us to break through the language barrier between a materialist and a Christian by looking at data in general neuroscience terms. Second, science studies the world around us, which is God's general revelation, and while this gives us truths about the character of God and His creation, our interpretation of the data must be filtered through the lens of the special revelation of God's Word.

Is God All in Our Heads?

Is there a part of our brain that creates God? Are some people genetically predisposed to being religious? A materialist would say "yes" to these questions. However, as the book *The Spiritual Brain* shows us materialists have not been successful in proving this.

Dean Hamer, geneticist and author of the book *The God Gene*, proposed that some people are more religious than others because they have one DNA letter that is different from non-religious people.{2} While this story was touted as a breakthrough in the media, the scientific community was not amused. Hamer's experiments were not well-defined, and no one could replicate them.{3}

Another popular theory is that people that have a religious experience may be suffering from mild forms of temporal lobe

epilepsy. Basically, a misfiring in the brain causes people to be obsessive about something, like religion. These scientists speculate that people like Mother Teresa, Joan of Arc, and the apostle Paul are likely candidates for temporal lobe epilepsy.{4} Epilepsy specialists, however, do not believe that religious experiences are characteristic of temporal lobe epilepsy, and usually seizures are not associated with peace, tranquility, or religious visions. Also, temporal lobe epilepsy is quite rare, yet over sixty percent of Americans have reported having some kind of religious or mystical experience. And as we will see, many parts of the brain are involved in religious experiences, while temporal lobe epilepsy is much more centralized.{5}

Perhaps one of the strangest experiments to hit the popular media was that of the God Helmet. Neuroscientist Michael Persinger claimed that religious people were more sensitive to magnetic fields, and that electromagnetic radiation was what prompted religious experiences. He developed a helmet that produced strong electromagnetic waves. Several people who tried on the God Helmet reported having a religious or mystical experience of some sort. However, there were some fundamental flaws in the whole setup, including the fact that Persinger never published his results and did not have brain scans to back up his statements. Eventually, a group of scientists from Sweden, using a double-blind test, proved that the God Helmet was really the power of suggestion. The electromagnetic waves didn't cause the religious experiences.{6}

Experiments That Don't Mind

All of these failed experiments presumed that there is no God and there is no spiritual component to people. We have shown, however, how the evidence from neuroscience doesn't seem to fit the materialistic worldview. As we will see, some experiments reported in *The Spiritual Brain* cannot be

explained from this worldview. What we will find is that they fit nicely within a Christian worldview.

The first example is obsessive compulsive disorder therapy. Obsessive compulsive disorder, or OCD, occurs when a person has distressing or unwanted thoughts that dominate their thinking, and these obsessions trigger an urge to do some kind of ritual behavior, also known as a compulsion. The interesting thing about OCD is that the person knows that the obsession is irrational and the ritual won't really fix it, but their feelings tell them otherwise. Scientific studies have shown that the brain is actually misfiring. The part of the brain that tells a person, "There's a problem, do something to fix it," is firing at the wrong times. OCD is a clear case of a healthy mind and a malfunctioning brain.

A materialistic worldview would say that the only way to treat OCD is by *physically* fixing the bad neurons. However, the treatment that actually works involves the patients *mentally* fixing the bad neurons. Patients learn to take control of their OCD by recognizing when their brain is misfiring, and try to starve the urges to do the ritual. After treatment, brain scans show that the brain of an OCD patient is starting to fix itself. The patient is changing his physical brain with his mind!{7}

Similar kinds of therapies have been applied to depression and phobias.{8} In both cases, *The Spiritual Brain* reports instances where a patient's brain chemistry was directly affected by their mind.

Another phenomenon that can't be explained from a materialist's worldview is the placebo effect. The patient is given a medicine that they are told will help them, but in actuality they are given a sugar pill. Interestingly, the patient's belief that the sugar pill will help them has caused measurable, observable relief from symptoms. Many doctors say that a patient's attitude oftentimes can help or hinder real

medicines or therapies from working.{9}

The ability of the mind to change the brain's chemistry does not fit within a materialistic worldview. But as Christians we know that our minds are very real and can have a very real effect on our physical bodies.

Can We Take a Brain Scan of God?

As noted previously, the popular worldview among neuroscientists is materialism, which essentially means they do not account for or acknowledge spiritual effects on the brain nor do they believe that there is a spiritual component to the person. This would mean that even religious experiences are just our neurons firing. Materialists would claim that either the effects of religious experiences, including prayer, are neurons misfiring, or the person is faking it.

On the other hand, Christians believe that there is a spiritual realm, and there is a spiritual component to human beings that we call the mind or the soul. We believe that when we pray that we are actually praying to God who is real and separate from us, not just a figment of our imagination.

Mario Beauregard, one of the authors of *The Spiritual Brain*, took brain scans of Carmelite nuns while they were remembering the deepest and most poignant religious experience they had had.{10} Using functional MRI and QEEG he hoped to see what parts of the nuns' brains were active.{11}

Dr. Beauregard and his lab found that religious experiences involved many brain regions at once, which rules out materialists' suggestion that there is some kind of "God spot" in the brain.{12} They also found that brain scans during these religious experiences were very complex and consistent with something other than merely an emotional state. Lastly, they determined that the data did not have any of the markers one would expect to see if the nuns were faking it or lying.

This is all that the data can tell us. Physical machines cannot prove the existence of a spiritual God. But as the authors of *The Spiritual Brain* point out, what these experiments do show is that certain explanations, namely materialistic ones, are inadequate for explaining the data in neuroscience. The nuns are experiencing something beyond what materialism can account for.

Prayer is complex and more than just emotional contrivances, so from a Christian worldview, the results are not surprising.

The Christian View of the Mind and Brain

Experiments such as the God Helmet and theories about temporal lobe epilepsy did not work because their premise was that God was something we made up ourselves. However, as Christians we know this is false. The Bible says that God is the creator and is distinct from His creation, not made from it.

The results of experiments with OCD, phobias, depression, and the placebo effect do not make sense to materialists because the mind seems to affect the physical brain. However, we know from Scripture that the mind, or the soul, is an essential part of our being. James 2:26 and Luke 8:55 show us that when the soul leaves, the body is dead, and when the soul returns, the body is alive. Also, passages such as Matthew 26:41 and Romans 8:10 and 11 tell us that our spirit can affect what our bodies do and keep us from sinning. Passages about the resurrection such as in 1 Corinthians 15 discuss the distinction between our spirit and our physical body.

Lastly, the experiment with the Carmelite nuns showed that during a deeply prayerful experience, their brains display signs of a very complex interaction that is going on. As Christians, we believe prayer is a way to interact with the Creator Who is separate and distinct from us. While this experiment does not prove God’s existence, it is reasonable to conclude that it is the level of complexity we would expect to

see if someone were interacting with something distinct from themselves.

At one time people feared that neuroscience would be the death of God. The fear was that science might prove that everything that we do, including prayer and worship could be reduced to neurons firing in our brains. Hopefully, you are convinced that neuroscience actually points us towards God. There is evidence for a spiritual component of the human self. And, the evidence is consistent with what we would expect from a Christian worldview.

Notes

1. Mario Beauregard and Denyse O'Leary, *The Spiritual Brain* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007) 3, 4.
2. Ibid., 48-50.
3. Ibid., 51, 52.
4. Ibid., 58, 64.
5. Ibid., 72, 71.
6. Ibid., 79-100.
7. Ibid., 126-130.
8. Ibid., 133-140.
9. Ibid., 141-142.
10. For a detailed account of the Carmelite nun experiment see Beauregard and O'Leary, *The Spiritual Brain*, 255-288.
11. Two things we must keep in mind. First, usually the brain will take the same pathways when it remembers an event as when the event actually happened. Second, this experiment can't tell us what the nuns were actually thinking, but it can tell us what kind of brain activity was occurring.
12. Beauregard and O'Leary, 42-44.
13. For more articles and information on the subjects covered in *The Spiritual Brain* see Denyse O'Leary's blog, Mindful Hack, at mindfulhack.blogspot.com.
14. See also Kerby Anderson's article "Mind, Soul and Neuroethics" at www.probe.org/mind-soul-and-neuroethics/.

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“My Friend Believes Jesus’ Miracles Were All Done by Mind Power”

I just had a conversation with a friend about his spiritual beliefs. I was talking about Jesus and my friend said that the miracles He performed were from His own mind power. That he had a higher control over his brain than other people. Jesus attributed his miracles to God’s power but that’s only because he didn’t understand where the power came from.

He generally believes that there is a lot of power in oneself and if one will only utilize it and become self actualized one can become god-like.

I responded by talking about my belief in the fall and its effect on humanity. How man is hopelessly flawed and incomplete without Christ. I noted how man’s efforts and science have failed to deliver. The world is still wrought with disease and suffering. I’m trying to be brief so I’ll not go into the rest of the conversation. How would you have responded and do you have any suggestions on what to bring up the next time we talk about that kind of thing?

It sounds like you’re doing a great job talking with your friend! Here are a few thoughts: It might be worth asking your friend, “If Jesus had such incredible control over His brain, including the ability to perform miracles by the sheer power of His mind, then how is it that He was deluded about where His power actually came from?” I would challenge your friend,

“If Jesus was so superior to you in mental power and abilities, then why should you think that you know more about where His power came from than He did?” It’s a question that deserves a careful answer, I should think.

More generally, however, I would ask your friend why anyone should believe his rather original spin about where Jesus’ power came from? Why does he think he’s correct? What evidence supports his opinion? Further, why does he reject what the New Testament says about Jesus? Shouldn’t the original witnesses to these events have been in a better position to judge what happened than he is? What does he do with the evidence for the historical reliability of the Gospels, etc.?

Finally, if Jesus really died on the cross (which no serious scholar disputes) then how can your friend explain Jesus’ greatest recorded miracle—His resurrection from the dead? If Jesus was dead, then how could He have used His brain to accomplish the miracle? If your friend doubts that Jesus rose from the dead, then challenge him to investigate the evidence for himself by reading some good books and articles on the subject. Challenge him to read Lee Strobel’s book, *The Case for Christ*. Or challenge him to read some of William Lane Craig’s work on the historicity of the resurrection. Log onto this site and register for free, then search for the following www.reasonablefaith.org:

- *Article: The Resurrection of Jesus*
- *Section: Scholarly Articles/The Historical Jesus (numerous relevant articles).*
- *Audio-Visuals Page and Debates Page: Dr. Craig also has audio and visual stuff as well as debate transcripts regarding the resurrection here*

I have tried to give you some helpful information here. But the most important thing is to share this information with

genuine love, compassion and respect. No one likes an intellectual bully. So please be sensitive to the Spirit's guidance.

Hope this helps.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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"Where Is the Spiritual Heart of Man?"

Some newly converted family members to the Church of God and I are in disagreement about the location of the spiritual heart of man. I believe it's hidden in the physical heart of man, but they believe the heart is in the mind. I cannot find many scriptures to concretely back up my theory since the heart and mind are used interchangeably in scriptures.

They presented some pretty strong arguments because the heart and mind are used interchangeably.

In the Bible, the heart is shown to have three capacities: to think (or believe), to choose, and to feel. The heart is really the "innermost part" of us to which David refers in Ps. 51. But it doesn't tell us about a link between the spiritual heart and any physical organ. Consider this; what happens to someone with a diseased heart who gets a heart transplant? Does the very essence of the person change because he's lost his old heart and received a new one? No.

Then consider what happens to the person plagued with Alzheimer's disease or stroke who has suffered brain damage. She has lost her previous capacity to think, choose and feel, but what happens at death? Wouldn't she enjoy full use of those capacities again, unhindered by an uncooperative brain? But even *before* death, does God no longer indwell the heart of a believer with brain damage? No, because He promised He would never leave us or forsake us.

I think, to be honest, that the question of the location of the spiritual heart of man is a moot one. It's like asking, "What color is love?" Instead of trying to pin down a physical location of a spiritual thing, perhaps our time would be better stewarded developing our hearts, as you so obviously have!

The Lord bless you and keep you.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

The Christian Mind

The Need for a Christian Mind

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4:17)(1) This familiar admonition was first spoken by John the Baptist and soon after it was echoed by Jesus. The phrase is certainly worthy of a great deal of attention; it provides a lot of food for thought. For the moment, though, let's concentrate on the first word: *Repent*. This expression is a central portion of the doctrines

concerning sin and salvation. Literally it refers to a *change of mind*. It does not mean that one is to be sorry for some action. Thus, the first hearers were admonished to realize that they were in need of radical change before a holy God, beginning with their minds. They were to turn from sin to God by changing their thinking. Certainly the same holds true for us. Most of us are in need of reminders that lead us back to one of the crucial aspects of our salvation: repentance, or a change in our thinking. In addition, we should couple such memories with the realization that our changed minds should always be alive to God. To paraphrase Kepler's famous phrase, we are to "think God's thoughts after Him." Since the Christian life is all-inclusive, the mind is included.

But, some may ask, do we actually have a mind? Current research and thought in the fields of neuroscience and evolutionary psychology concludes that we are much too free with the word *mind*. Perhaps we should get used to making reference to the brain, rather than the mind.
"Some neuroscientists are beginning to suspect that everything that makes people human is no more than an interaction of chemicals and electricity inside the labyrinthine folds of the brain."(2) E.O. Wilson, the father of what is called sociobiology, proposes that we can determine an ethical system based on scientifically observable evidence. He writes, "The empiricist argument holds that if we explore the biological roots of moral behavior, and explain their material origins and biases, we should be able to fashion a wise and enduring ethical consensus."(3) Thus, ethics are not to be found external to physical reality; there is no mind through which we can respond ethically. It

seems that Wilson and those who are like-minded believe “the mind is headed for an ignoble fate.
Just as the twinkle of stars was reduced to nuclear explosions, and life itself to biochemical reactions, so the brain may one day be explained by the same forces that run the rest of the universe.”(4)

Such perspectives should come as no surprise if we are aware of the permeation of a naturalistic worldview in both the physical and social sciences. The Christian, though, is not relegated to this type of reduction. A biblical worldview makes it clear that we are more than physical beings; we are also non-physical beings made in God’s image. As a popular joke from the nineteenth century says:

> *What’s the matter?*
> *Never mind.*
> *What is mind?*
> *No matter.(5)*

The truth of the joke should not be lost on those of us who claim to be followers of Christ. We should realize the importance of cultivating Christian minds. As the great statesman Charles Malik stated, “As Christ is the Light of the World, his light must shine and be brought to bear upon the problem of the formation of the mind.”(6)

The Scriptures and the Mind (Part 1)

“Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD” (Isa. 1:18). Imagine you are in a courtroom.
You are the defense attorney; the prosecutor is God Himself. He has just invited you, Judah’s

attorney, to engage in debate concerning the case at hand which happens to focus on the crimes of your client. Indeed, He wants the two of you to *reason together*. That is the scenario presented in this famous passage from the first chapter of Isaiah. God was inviting Judah to debate a case in court.(7) What a remarkable idea! And what a stunning statement concerning the importance of the mind. God was calling upon His people to use their minds to see if they could engage Him in debate concerning their sins.

In a time when the mind appears to be denigrated at every hand, such a passage should serve to reawaken us to the importance of using the minds God has given us. After all, the Bible, which most Christians claim to be the very word of God, calls the mind to attention throughout its pages. As J.P. Moreland states, "If we are going to be wise, spiritual people prepared to meet the crises of our age, we must be a studying, learning community that values the life of the mind."(8) Let's begin such studying and learning by considering some of what the Bible says about the ungodly and rebellious mind, and then the godly mind.

First, the ungodly mind is described in terms that are sobering. When we apply these phrases to the culture around us, we can better understand why what we see and hear disturbs us. For example, Romans 1:18-28 describes what one scholar called "The Night." Here are some of the ways unbelievers' minds are depicted in this dark passage:

- Suppressing the truth
- Rejecting God
- Foolish speculations
- Foolish hearts

- Professing wisdom
- Exchanging God for a counterfeit
- Lusting hearts
- Exchanging truth for a lie
- Worshipping the creature
- Degrading passions
- Exchanging the natural for the unnatural
- Committing indecent acts
- Depraved minds

Another somber statement about the ungodly way of thinking is found in 2 Corinthians 4:4: "The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." Perhaps you have had conversations with unbelievers that were characteristic of such "blindness." The person with whom you were talking just didn't see it as you attempted to share the truth of Christ. Such responses should not surprise us.

A foolish mind also is described frequently in Scripture. Jeremiah 4:22 is a strong indictment of those who know the things of God, but foolishly reject them:

> *For My people are foolish,*
> *They know Me not;*
> *They are stupid children,*
> *And they have no understanding.*
> *They are shrewd to do evil,*
> *But to do good they do not know.*

Hosea 4:6 shows the result of God's reaction when His people reject the truth:

> *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*
> *Because you have rejected knowledge,*
> *I also will reject you from being My priest.*

These ancient proclamations could not be more contemporary. May we heed their warnings!

The Scriptures and the Mind (Part 2)

"We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and
we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). When the apostle
Paul wrote these words, he was very aware of the need for a Christian mind. Philosophical
speculations abounded in his time, just as in our time. Thus he described the Christian's mental
responsibility in terms of warfare. The Christian mind is active—it enters the battle; it is filled with
the knowledge of God—it is prepared for battle; it puts all things under the lordship of Christ—it
follows the only true commander into battle. And that battle has been won innumerable times, even
in the minds of brilliant people. "One of the most astonishing and undeniable arguments for the
truth of [Christianity] . . . is the fact that . . . some of the most subtle of human intellects have been
led to render submission to the Saviour."(9) The Bible contains many such insights into the nature
of a Christian mind. We will consider two of these.

Reason is a term that is descriptive of the Christian mind. This does not mean that a
Christian is to be a rationalist, but rather he is to use reason based on the reason of God found in
Scripture. For example, on one of several occasions Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus to test
Him by asking for a sign from heaven. Jesus responded by referring to their ability to discern signs
of certain kinds of weather. Then He said, "Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky,

but cannot discern the signs of the times" (Matt. 16:3)? Obviously He was noting how people use reason to arrive at conclusions, but the Christian mind would conclude the things of God. The book of Acts indicates that the apostle Paul used reason consistently to persuade his hearers of the truth of his message. Acts 17:2-3 states that "according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths *reasoned* [emphasis added] with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead." For two years in Ephesus Paul was "reasoning [emphasis added] daily in the school of Tyrannus" (Acts 19:9). In light of the fact that our contemporary world attempts to reject reason, such examples should spur us to hold out for the possibility of reasonable dialogue with those around us. After all, those who reject reason must use reason to reject reason.

If the Christian mind is characterized by reason, such reason must be founded upon knowledge from God. Upon reflection of their conversation with Jesus on the road to Emmaus, two of the disciples said, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us" (Luke 24:32)? The word *hearts* in this passage refers to both moral and mental perception. In his letter to the Colossians Paul wrote, "we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ" (Col. 1:28). And in his Ephesian letter he wrote, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened" (Eph. 1:18-19). May this beautiful prayer apply to us as we consider how to use our God-given minds!

Mandates for the Mind

"AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR
SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH" (Mark 12:30). These words
have echoed for thousands of years, beginning with Moses and leading to Jesus. They contain the
first of what I call *Mandates for the Mind*: Strive to Know God. To love someone we must
know him or her. In the case of my wife, for instance, it would have been absurd to declare that I
loved her before ever meeting her. My love for her implies an intimate knowledge *about*
and knowledge *of* her. In the same manner we are to strive both to know *about* God
and to *know* Him intimately. Our minds are crucial to this mandate. It is my contention that
one of the major problems in contemporary Christianity is that too many of us are attempting know
God without using our minds to investigate what He has told us of Himself in Scripture.

The second mandate is that the Christian mind should strive for truth. "Jesus therefore was saying
to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of
Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free'" (John 8:31-32). Abiding in
His word implies a continual dedication to using the mind to search the Scriptures, the place where
His truth is written.

The third mandate pertains to maturity. Romans 12:2 declares: "And do not be conformed to this
world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God

is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." It is pertinent to note that the words *conformed*, *transformed*, and *prove* refer to continuous action. Thus, the Christian mind is to be characterized by continuous development toward maturity. Hebrews 5:14 refers to Scripture as "solid food" as the writer describes the mature mind. He then asserts that the Christian is to "press on [continually] to maturity" (Heb. 6:1). Such maturity is a strategic need in the contemporary church.

The fourth mandate involves proclaiming and defending the faith. The maturing Christian mind will actively engage the minds of those around him. For example, Paul modeled this while in Athens: "[H]e was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present. And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him" (Acts 17:17-18). Paul proclaimed and defended the truth of the gospel in the synagogue with his own people, among the populace, and even with the intellectual elite of the time. Such encounters are easily duplicated in our day.

The fifth mandate refers to the need for study. Philippians 4:8 states: "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things." Note the final phrase: "let your mind dwell," a clause indicative of the need for concentration, or study. The phrase also includes a command that such study is to be continuous. We are to ponder, or think

on the things of God.

Applying the Christian Mind

“Prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves” (James 1:22).
This exhortation from the book of James includes the last of our *Mandates for the Mind*.
That is, the Christian mind should be applied; what is in the mind should flow to the feet.

It would be easy to state that such a mandate applies to all of life and let that suffice, but specific examples can help us focus on how this works. Thus we will focus on three contrived stories.

Our first story involves a fellow we will call Billy. Billy is an excellent softball player. Three nights per week he plays for his company team. He has a reputation as a fierce competitor who will do virtually anything to win. He also has a volatile temper that explodes in ways that embarrass his family and teammates. On some occasions he even has had shoving and cursing bouts with opposing players. Each Sunday, and even on other occasions, he attends a well-known church in his city. One Sunday his pastor shared an exceptional sermon based on 1 Corinthians 3:16: “Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” Upon hearing this message, he suddenly realized that softball games could not be isolated from his commitment to Christ. Whether in his business, his family, or his softball games he needed to stop and think: if he is a temple of God, all of life is a sacred task. His life, including softball, was never the same.

The second story focuses on a woman named Sally. She is a

teacher in a public elementary school who is also a young Christian. Her new life in Christ has invigorated her to the point that she is beginning to think of ways she can share her joy with her students. She decides that at every opportunity she will encourage the children to discover the wonder of life. As she guides them through science, she expresses awe as they investigate the simplest flower, or the profundity of the solar system. As she discusses arithmetic she encourages them to realize the beauty of logical order in numbers. As she reads stories to them she gently emphasizes the amazing concept of human imagination. In these ways and others Sally begins to realize the excitement of using her mind for God's glory. In addition, she soon finds that she is having conversations with her students that give her opportunities to share the One who is guiding her.

Our third story concerns Steven, a businessman and father of an eight-year-old boy. Steven has come to the realization that his son, Jimmy, spends most of his time either watching television or playing computer games. So he begins to consider ways to stimulate Jimmy's thinking. Since he also wants to see Jimmy come to faith in Christ, Steven suggests that they read C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* together. Soon, the two of them are delighting in these tales, and Steven finds ways to discuss the spiritual metaphors in Lewis' classic fantasies.

These stories may not apply directly to your life at this time. But, hopefully they will stimulate a broader understanding of how your mind can be used for God's glory within the routines of life.

Notes

1. All Scripture references are taken from the New American Standard Version.

2. Sharon Begley, John Carey, and Ray Sawhill, “How the Brain Works,” *Newsweek* (7 February 1983), 40.

3. Edward O. Wilson, “The Biological Basis of Morality,” *The Atlantic Monthly* (April 1998), 54.

4. Begley, 47.

5. Quoted in Begley.

6. Charles Habib Malik, “Your Mind Matters; Cultivate It,” *Active Christians in Education* (January 1981), 1A.

7. R. Laird Harris, ed., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, *Vol. 1* (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 377.

8. J.P. Moreland, *Love Your God With All Your Mind* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1997), 39.

9. R.V.G. Tasker, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963), 135.

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