

**A Mind That Is Vigilant  
(Part Two)  
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***This is the fourth in a series about the mindset that God desires for his people***

Let us read Deuteronomy 4:9, 15—16, 19 and 23 to learn more about the mindset that God desires for us—“such a mind as this” (Deut 5:29). In these verses a vigilant mind is depicted by the verbs “take care,” “keep,” “watch,” and “beware” with the conjunction “lest.” (The verbs are underlined and the conjunctions are double-underlined.)

- (9) Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life ...
- (15) Therefore watch yourselves very carefully. Since you saw no form on the day that the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire,
- (16) beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female ...
- (19) And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven ...
- (23) Take care, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the LORD your God has forbidden you.

Mental vigilance and the prevention of misdirected worship are contrasted with forgetting and disobedience. The verbs plus “lest” teach that we must *diligently* care for our souls, lest we fall into the sin of false worship. The mind that is vigilant resists the tendency to ignore what is most important (God) or to embrace what is most destructive (idolatry).

Further, the vigilant mind exhibits situational awareness. It interprets current challenges in light of the big picture and within its proper theological context. In Deuteronomy chapters 7 and 8 two contexts are highlighted when spiritual vulnerability is acute and when vigilance must be maintained.

1) In ancient Israel careless intermingling with the other cultures of Canaan was dangerous. God instructed Israel to destroy the Canaanites (7:2) and above all not to intermingle with them by covenant-making or intermarriage (v. 3). The reason provided is that interaction would cause some to “turn away” from the Lord to serve other gods (v. 4; 8:19). Other worldviews functioned as a “snare” (7:16) or lure, as it were, that “ensnare” (7:25) those with undisciplined curiosity. For this reason, Moses cautioned the people not to even “inquire” about other religions (12:30; 18:11) and to “not listen to” those promoting deviant spiritual agendas (13:3, 8; 18:14).

In our day, the spiritual danger from other worldviews is even more acute. We must be careful to distinguish between diversity and plurality of worldviews and the idea that arises from saying that all worldviews are merely different paths to the same destination, what is called *perspectivalism* or *pluralism*. Clearly, we must discipline our curiosity. As Jesus told us, we should be “wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matt 10:16).

2) The second enticement concerned prosperity. In Chapter 8 the enticement concerned wealth and power acquired during a time of peace and security. In verses 7—10 Moses described the

“good land” where they will “lack nothing” and “be full,” which should produce praise of God for what he has given. In verse 11, however, he solemnly warned them about the dangers of prosperity and a false sense of empowerment it fostered:

(11) Take care lest you forget the Lord your God ...

(12) Lest when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them,

(13) and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied,

(14) then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God ...

(17) Beware lest you say in your heart, “My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.”

Moses’ cure for this early form of consumerism or Prosperity Gospel was vigilance—the mental and spiritual discipline of continual remembrance and re-actualization of their pact with God. He told them, “You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is *he* who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day” (v.18).

Several Christian leaders have commented that consumerism is the greatest threat to the church. Consumerism enshrines a sense of entitlement that boasts: “My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.” Consumerism tells us that the meaning of life is shopping and earthly pleasure. Consumerism is actually a form of cultural imperialism and is very different from economic justice and equal economic opportunity.

So, do you think that these two spiritual dangers—false worship and consumerism—are just as real today? They are. Do you understand the necessity for spiritual vigilance? Do you realize how important it is for us to guard our minds within the modern spiritual marketplace?