

Heart and Mind

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In my experience theological discussions about worship tend to focus on the cerebral, not the visceral - on the mind, not the heart. "True" worship, we are often taught, is more about the mind thinking right about God (using theologically correct language and liturgy), rather than the heart's hunger for Him. But the words of our Saviour resound the undeniable call to worship that transcends the intellect: "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth" (John 4:24). We have been inclined to conclude that *mind* is the proper synonym for *spirit* here, but the bible shows that heart is a better candidate. "In truth" certainly suggests participation of the intellect in worship, but it is inescapably second - and dependant upon the heart's fullest release first. This priority is usually held suspect. The heart is said to be governed by affections, and thus is more vulnerable to deceptions than is the intellect. But to base worship on the intellect is to entertain a dual delusion: first, the mind is less subject to deception than is the heart; second, that the mind is the main means to "contact" God in worship (note verses like Job 11:7: "Can you fathom the mysteries of God?"). Yes, human intelligence contributes to worship, but God's Word indicates he is not looking for something brilliant but something broken: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart - these O God you will not despise" (Psalm 51:7). These exercises of our enlightened minds may deduce God, but only our ignited hearts can delight him - and in turn experience his desire to delight us!