

Joshua Reed  
Being and Knowing  
Spring, 2017

### Study Questions 3

#### Do We Survive Death

Russell doesn't think we can survive death primarily because he believes our physical brain is our mind. Russell does not believe in a distinction between a soul and a body.

The reasons he believes that our physical brain is our mind are the affects habits and injuries to the brain have upon our behavior and personalities. Russell gives an analogy of a river that has been deepened by time such that the water flows increasingly through. This river is like the formation of a habit. Like the water cutting into the ground, repeating an action regularly builds stronger neural pathways in the brain and reinforces these habits.

Habits and memories seem to make us who we are. Like this river, if the channel in the ground ceased to exist, then so would the flow of the water. In this instance, if the structural pathways ceased to exist, so would our habit or memory.

Russel also gives a compelling example of dilating a mans pupil while ringing a gong. The neural pathway eventually causes his pupil to dilate with only ringing a gong. I do agree, but I'm at the deadline so I can't expand upon this further.