

Some Thoughts on Thinking

Written by Jeffery Bond

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What is a thought? If you just answered this question to yourself, then you just thought the answer to yourself, therefore, what was the action that you just did? We think all the time of different things that are going on, decisions we have made, decisions we are going to make and sometimes just non-important matters. However, what we think on is very important. In where our thoughts lie, many times, determines the decisions we make.

When you are alone, maybe driving down the road, or before you go to sleep at night, what are your thoughts about? We hear many times the line: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," which was derived from Proverbs 23. Is that true? Does what you think inwardly really determine your outward self? Would God condemn a soul to hell over a corrupt thought? Hopefully, this article will help answer these questions.

We need to be careful of what we think on. Psalm 1 describes how a Godly man should be, and one of the descriptions is, "his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:2). Here, this man meditates (thinks) about the law of the Lord not only during the day, but also in the night. Therefore, it implies that this righteous man (or any righteous man for that matter) should always have his thoughts on God and His ways.

Paul also knew what to think on. In his letter to the Philippian brethren, he begins to conclude it with these words: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). He lists all these things and says to only think on them. Why did he not tell them to just go ahead and do these things? It was because he knew that if he could first get them to have these thoughts, then it would begin to affect their behavior, mold their character, and they would do these things not only because they should, but also out of habit.

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It would affect any of us the same way. If only we would think on the things mentioned in Philippians 4:8 and not the things of the world, then we would change as well. We would view life in a whole different way. Our actions would be pure because our thoughts would be pure.

However, in contrast to all we have mentioned, there are also bad thoughts we can have. Bad thoughts have been around for a long time. Even back in Noah's day, only about 1500 years after creation, are these words: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Genesis 6:5-6).

These people were having such evil thoughts it grieved God Himself that He had made man in the first place. Every thought that these people were having was evil. As a result, God sent a world-wide flood that killed everyone except Noah and his family. Evil thoughts were prevalent then, just as they are today.

When Jesus was forgiving a man of his sins the scribes were thinking evil thoughts about him. "And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" (Matthew 9:3-4). Thus, evil thoughts were present in Jesus' time also. Jesus even described what would defile a person: "And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man" (Mark 7:20). He says, "that which cometh out of the man"—the thoughts that we think. He even went on to explain this further by saying, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23).

Here Jesus mentions these things as only a thought, but in Galatians 5 they are mentioned as works of the flesh, verifying the fact that when something starts as a simple thought it can continue to develop until one is not only thinking about it, but committing it also. If we allow our self to think badly then it will hinder our spiritual growth. We might be able to act like a Christian, but if our thoughts are always otherwise then we are not truly "like Christ" are we?

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What about thinking on things that aren't necessarily wrong, but just cares of this life? Should we think about things that concern tomorrow? Jesus answers this question for us in Matthew 6:25-34. He says for us not to be thinking or worrying about future events. He establishes the point that we should have our faith in God and trust that he will provide for us. Sure, we can plan ahead and look at the future, but don't forget about God and realize the fact that our "future plans" have to correspond with His will. Many times our simple view of life is so small that it is hard to see God's will in it, but as God Himself said, "...my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9). We do not need to worry about problems that might arise in our lives, but trust that God will direct us through.

Pure thoughts are the only answer to a pure life. However, the only way to make sure that we have those pure thoughts is to focus on what affects our thoughts. Things we see, hear, and take part in determine what we will be thinking of in the next five minutes or five years. Job recognized this problem as well. He said, "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?" (Job 31:1). He located the source of where lustful thoughts might come into his mind and made this covenant with his eyes. Everyone needs to make this same type of covenant or agreement with themselves, that if there is an avenue in their life that is open to the influence of the world, they need to close it. Television, music, magazines, and web pages, all can and do have devastating effects on not only young people, but also older people as well. These things will begin to creep in very slowly and before we know it our thoughts are so clouded with the things of this world we no longer have time to think about important matters affecting the Church and ourselves.

Why is it that we watch, listen to, and take part in things, and then wonder why we cannot keep a clear mind in worship service, prayers, or just our personal Bible studies? How can we cure this? What can we do to keep our thoughts pure and check them to make sure they stay that way? We need a filter. Something we can send everything through before it comes into our minds to make sure it is pure. The Bible is that filter. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). Things that will cause us to think need to be checked with the Bible first to make sure it is something we should be thinking about.

Let's open our lives to God. Allow him to search every aspect of it even our thoughts, making sure they are where they should be. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23). Thoughts are important. Are you are what your thoughts are about? Or ~ should I ask, is what you are thinking right now shaping your life for the better or for

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the worse?

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