

☞ Think Biblically

Review: the real enemy is spiritual. The real battle primarily happens in our minds.

☞ Philippians 4:8

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.

There are different ways of looking at things; different ways of thinking.

(Glass half-full vs half-empty)

If you're an optimist, you might describe the glass as half full. If you were a pessimist you might describe it as half empty. If you were a realist, you might respond to the question like this: that depends on whether you are pouring or drinking. If you were a functionalist, you might note that the glass is simply twice as large as it needs to be. If you were logical, you might say it's not half full or half empty; it's half full of water and half full of air. If you were cynical, you might say that the glass will be broken soon anyway, so who cares? If you were pathological, you might fear the contents of the glass, because water causes drowning. Of course, the purpose of the question is to demonstrate that the situation may be seen in different ways, depending on one's point of view or attitude.

I read about a boy who brought home his report card filled with poor grades. "What do you have to say about this?" asked his father. "One thing is for sure," the boy replied, "Dad, you can be proud. You know I haven't been cheating!"

There are different ways of looking at things. Different personalities see things differently. Different upbringings and backgrounds can affect how you think about things. But the Bible says that there are fundamentally two ways of thinking. There are two different mindsets: The Mind of Man and The Mind of Christ.

☞ The Mind of Man:

- Focused on earthly things**
- Believes lies**
- Robbed of or suppresses truth**
- Indulges ungodly desires**
- In bondage**
- Brings death**
- Wavering and unstable**
- Depraved and corrupt**
- Hostile to God and enemies of the cross**

☞ The Mind of Christ:

- Focused on heavenly things**
- Embraces truth**

Pursues spiritual desires
Brings life and peace
Sober and stable
Renewed
Discerns God's will
Loves God and sold out to Jesus

Romans 7 and 2 Corinthians 10 paint the picture of a war going on in our minds. Romans 8 shows that these two mindsets are opposite and in conflict with each other. These scriptures are written specifically about believers. We wrestle with our way of thinking. We have been accustomed to the Mind of Man, but now we have the Mind of Christ and these two are struggling for dominance in our thought life. Therefore, we must **Think About What We Think About.**

In this verse we are told to give careful attention to what we think about. This is because what we think about impacts how we feel and what we do. In verse 9, Paul says "Do what I do." He puts the emphasis on action. But in verse 8, he puts the emphasis on thinking. The right thinking must precede the right action.

☞ Jesus taught that **all sin begins in our thoughts.** In Matthew 7:20 Jesus said, "It is what comes from inside that defiles you," and then listed a number of sins. No one commits these outward sins without first thinking about them in their minds.

In verses 2, 3, Paul tells two women in the church to agree together in the Lord and to work out ☞ their conflict. **The reason we have personal conflicts is because we think wrongly.** When we are letting the Holy Spirit control our thoughts, we will live in harmony with other believers.

In verse 6, Paul tells us not to be anxious (or worried) about anything. **Why do we worry?** ☞ **Because we think wrongly.** In verse 7, Paul talks about the peace of God and again in verse 9. God wants us to have peace, but peace is only ours when we have a mind that is focused on these qualities in verse 8.

Later, in verse 11, Paul talks about learning to be content in every situation in life. **Why are we** ☞ **not content? Because we think wrongly.** Our thinking is key to living a joy-filled life. In fact, the theme of the whole book of Philippians is "rejoice in the Lord always." The key to displaying God's joy is to have a mindset like Paul is talking about in this verse. **Judicious thinking leads to** ☞ **joyful living.**

Once again, I'm not just promoting positive thinking, like Peter Pan: "Think happy thoughts." This verse is about thinking Biblically. Every one of the characteristics mentioned in verse 8 are true of the Word of God. Essentially, Paul is telling us to think in accordance with God's Word. **Think Biblically.**

☞ First, we are told to think on whatever is **true.** The Word of God is the only real truth in this world. (John 17:17) The Holy Spirit that lives in us "guides us into all truth." (John 16:13) Satan, on the other hand, who is the prince of this world, is called "the Father of **Lies.**" (John 8:44) Satan

deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden, and he is constantly trying to deceive us with the ideas promoted in this world. (2 Cor. 11:3)

☞ Next, we are told to think on whatever is **noble**. The Greek word means “honorable, noble or dignified”. The same Greek word is translated as a character quality required in deacons when it says they are to be “respectable” (1 Tim. 3:8, 11.) It is the **opposite of shameful**, twisted, or foolish. We are to think about that which is honorable and noble.

☞ Think on whatever is **right**. This is not just about right versus wrong. It has to do with being in right relationship with others, especially those in authority. It is the **opposite of rebellious**. If we are thinking thoughts of rebellion against those God has placed over us, it is not pleasing to the Lord. Think about righteous things. God is righteous; Jesus is righteous; and we who are saved are to live righteous lives. But we will never live righteously until we think righteously.

☞ Think on whatever is **pure**. The Word of God is pure. It is **not contaminated**. Ephesians 5:3-5 lists a number of sins and says there should *not even be a hint* of these things amongst us.

☞ Think on whatever is **lovely**. This is the only time in the NT this Greek word is used. It means “pleasing and attractive; or friendly towards something.” When we are thinking ugly, **unfriendly, antagonistic** or hostile thoughts toward others, that is not “lovely.” We should think about what is pleasing to Christ.

☞ Think on whatever is **admirable**. This means to speak well of something or to give something a good reputation. It means to believe the best about someone. If you love someone, you don’t believe **evil reports** about them until there is certain evidence to establish it. God’s Word teaches us to think the best of others.

☞ Think on what is morally **excellent**. It also means virtue. Paul uses this word in case he has left anything out. This word is a broad word that just means “what is the best thing I can think about?” When we focus on **weaknesses or failures** in ourselves or others, we are not thinking excellent thoughts.

☞ Think on things that are **praiseworthy**. It is the opposite of **finding fault and blame**. We should look for good qualities in others, especially other believers that are bearing the fruit of the Spirit. We should give God glory as we see others reflecting the image of Christ. God is praiseworthy, so, we should daily think about how great God is and how marvelous His works are.

Paul is telling us here to feed our minds with the good stuff, the Word of God. **Think about what you think about. Do a “check up from the neck up.”** Be careful about what you put into your mind. **Think Biblically.**

“Think on these things” is a strong word used by Paul thirty-four of the forty times it appears in the NT. It means “to reckon, calculate, or take into account,” and as a result to “evaluate” a thing. Last week I mentioned how this kind of thinking is like taking inventory. It’s meticulous and careful, giving account of everything.

Paul says to continuously focus our minds on these things, to reflect carefully on them, with the kind of meditation that moves us to action. Of course, the opposite is true, too – if it's not on the list, it's not something to focus your thoughts on.

Computer programmers will tell you that if you put mistakes into a program, you'll get mistakes out. **Garbage in, garbage out**, they call it. Our minds are similar in that respect. What we put into our minds determines what comes out in our words and actions. Do you have problems with impure thoughts? Examine what you are putting into your mind through television, books, conversations, movies, and online. Replace harmful input with wholesome material. Read God's Word and pray, asking God to help you focus your mind on what is good and pure. It takes practice, but it can be done. Paul tells us to program our minds with thoughts that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy.

☞ **Thoughts make deeds. Deeds make character. Character makes destiny.**

Let's now consider several steps to victory in our thoughts. These points are not going to blow your mind. Yet, I believe they are helpful.

☞ **First, you must be saved.** Before salvation, our minds are corrupt and foolish. Romans 8:7 says, "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot." You need to believe the Gospel. Believe that you are a sinner and that Jesus died on Calvary to pay for your sin. **Repent of sin and rely totally on Christ** to save you.

☞ **Secondly, you must stop your stinkin' thinkin'.** Don't allow thoughts to enter into your mind that are sensual, greedy, impure, violent, hateful, selfish, etc. Proverbs 4:23 says "Above all else, **guard your heart**, for it is the wellspring of life. We must be vigilant and never let our guard down. In Psalm 101:3, David said, "I will set before my eyes no vile thing." He was not going to intentionally focus on evil. Now, here's the truth - regardless of how much we try, bad thoughts will come into our minds because our human nature is sinful. But as soon as a thought comes into our minds, it must be compared to this list in Philippians 4:8 and if it doesn't align, we must capture and control it.

☞ **Thirdly, read your bible.** You need to read your Bible every day. Listen to God's Word on your phone and in your car. Memorize the Word of God. Fill your mind with Scripture **regularly**. Wholesome music can be helpful. Praise songs are great, especially when they are taken directly from Scripture. Also, many of the old hymns teach sound doctrine. Consume the word; it is life-giving bread to the soul. And as you fill your thoughts with the truth of God's word, your thinking will be right and your mindset will become established in truth.

Conclusion:

One of the greatest issues the church faces today is unbelief which comes from wrong thinking. Many church-going people in reality, are practical atheists. They can sing the songs and quote the verses, but they do not display a true knowledge of God. They have wrong thinking which leads to unbelief, and, it is unbelief that keeps people separated from God.

Many have bought into lies concerning the true nature of God. Some think that God doesn't really care about our sins. Others think that God really isn't all that powerful and his promises aren't true. Many have bought into the lies of our culture regarding right and wrong. In fact, the modern trend is exactly what the bible predicted – people will love pleasure and hate good. Isaiah 5:20 says, “woe to those who call evil good and good evil.” This kind of wrong thinking has even affected many churches and so-called believers. The truths of the Word of God must be restored. It all starts individually in our minds. We must wage war on our unbelief, on our distorted thinking, and on our lack of true knowledge of God and his Word.

We can fight back by capturing our thoughts and filling our minds with the Word of God. When we do these things, the enemy's power is weakened and our lives begin to manifest the life of ☞ Christ. Remember: **As a man thinks, so is he. So, think biblically!**

The B.I.B.L.E.