

☞ Think About What You're Thinking About

We've been talking about our spiritual enemy the past few weeks. Our enemy is not flesh and blood, but it's Satan, the accuser, tempter, and liar. His primary weapons against us focus on our minds, so what we think about becomes vital to our spiritual well-being. It really is the thought that counts; in our own minds, that is. Some really smart people have commented on this over the years...

— **Albert Einstein** "The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking. We cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them."

— **Henry Ford** "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't--you're right. Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason so few engage in it."

— **Winnie the Pooh** "Did you ever stop to think, and forget to start again?"

— **Bob Proctor** "What you think about, you bring about."

The way you think shapes the way you behave...

Romans 1:21-22 tells that futile or empty, useless thinking leads to darkness, wickedness and being deceived.

Ephesians 4:17-19 tells how thinking wrongly can lead to lack of understanding, hardening of the heart, and separation from God.

Proverbs 23:7

For as a man thinks in his heart, so *is* he.

So, the way we think affects who we are and how we behave. And, the good news is that we have the ability to control our thinking...

☞ **2 Corinthians 10:5**

take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

There has even been scientific research done which demonstrates this truth. Dr. Caroline Leaf is a neuroscientist who is also a Christian. She has done the research and written a book called **Switch On Your Brain**. Here is some of her research:

As we think, we change the physical nature of our brain. It all starts in the realm of the mind, with our ability to think and choose. The brain is malleable and adaptable, changing moment by moment of every day. Eric Kandel, a Nobel Prize-winning

neuropsychiatrist shows how our thoughts, even our imaginations, get “under the skin” of our DNA and can turn certain genes on and certain genes off, changing the structure of the neurons in the brain.

Research shows that 75 to 98 percent of mental, physical, and behavioral illness comes from one’s thought life. Science shows that our thoughts, with their embedded feelings, turn sets of genes on and off in complex relationships. Research also shows that DNA actually changes shape according to our thoughts.

The main point is that mind controls matter.

So, our thinking affects us in profound ways. Therefore, our minds need to be redirected and renewed.

☞ **Romans 12:2** says to **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**... The word “renewing” is from the Greek word which means to renovate. If you renovate a house, you have to demolish the parts you no longer want. You tear it out, often with some effort. It’s similar when renovating your mind. You must tear out and demolish the old part of your mind and then put in the new.

☞ The NLT says it this way: **“let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.”** So we have to begin thinking differently.

Even Jesus’ basic message was to “repent.” We understand repentance to mean change and do something different, but at its core, repentance essentially means to change the way you think. The bible word is “metanoia,” a compound word; “meta” means “after” or “change;” and “noia,” which means “mind.” It’s opposite, is “pronoia,” which means “previous thinking.” So, the primary idea of repentance is to change your thoughts into a new way of thinking, which leads to behavioral change.

If there is no change in your behavior, question your thinking. If someone says, “I believe in tithing” but doesn’t tithe – then he doesn’t really believe in it. You only really believe the parts of the Bible that you obey.

The way you think determines the way you feel, and the way you feel determines the way you act. If you want to change the way you act, you must determine the way you think.

☞ **1. All behavior is based on a belief**

- When I was a toddler, I enjoyed being tossed 10 feet in the air by my dad, because it never even crossed my mind that he might drop me. My belief allowed me to enjoy those moments of being out of control.

- I also remember being at my uncle's farm when he was feeding the pigs. He invited me to come in the pen, but I believed those hogs would eat me alive, so I refused. My belief was wrong, but it affected my behavior nonetheless.

☞2. Behind every sin is a lie that you believe

- At the moment you sin, you're doing what you want to do; what you think will be good. Sometimes, you think it really isn't going to cause any problems, even though God says it will kill you. What are you doing? You're believing a lie. Start looking for the lies behind why you act the way you do.
- When you live in sin, you're living in deception and believing a lie. Confront these lies. When you start dealing with these lies, you'll start seeing change.

☞3. Change always starts in the mind

- You've got to start with the belief – the lie behind the behavior.
- You have to replace the lie with the truth.

We do not just get hit by a certain feeling out of the blue. We have thought something first that causes our feelings to be activated. If you think somebody doesn't like you or is against you, then anything they say will be colored by that view. Even a casual comment could be misconstrued as derogatory. Somebody else that you are sure likes you, could do or say the same thing, and it would be okay because your thoughts aren't clouded by that perspective.

So, we have to capture our thoughts and take control. We must embrace truth. How you think affects how you view the world and how you behave. If you don't believe you have the power to change your thoughts and control your choices, you are not going to do it. So, it all begins with accepting truth.

Occupy your mind with the truth, or the enemy will fill it with his lies. Don't leave it unoccupied!

☞**We renew our mind by focusing on truth.** That's where it begins...

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brothers, **whatever is true... think about such things.**

You have to really think about Godly things. The idea in Philippians 4 is to take inventory, which is not a casual activity. There's counting, record keeping, assessing and adjusting. Taking inventory is time consuming and meticulous. That's how we're supposed to be with thinking about what we think about. And here's why:

☞ **Proverbs 23:7**

For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. NKJV

Someone described it this way: Your belief patterns are in your mind. Every time you think about a belief, it creates an electrical impulse across your brain. Every time you have that thought again, it creates a deeper rut. Over time, a mindset is formed. When people have learned something over and over, being taught by the world's way of thinking, they're programmed to go that way. If you want to change that, and align it back to God's truth permanently, you have to do it God's way – you have to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, by the constant feeding on the truth of God's Word!

Proverbs 4:20–27 says that if we direct our attention to the Word of God, we will align our thinking and subsequent choices with God, and the outcome will be healing and health.

The prodigal son had a change of mind. Only then did he see a change in behavior. The renewed action was the fruit of a renewed mind, or way of thinking, which happened at the pigpen. He saw the truth of his condition and it changed his thinking, which changed his behavior, which changed the rest of his life.

In Austin Bevere's *Keys To Getting Unstuck* he says this:

☞ **Circumstances + beliefs = thoughts, which lead to emotions, which lead to actions, which will eventually lead back to circumstances.**

☞ **You can't always control your circumstances. But you can control your beliefs.**

So, reset your beliefs, the way you think, which will lead to resetting the way you feel, and will ultimately change the actions you respond with. So ask yourself these questions...

- a. ☞ **What emotion am I feeling?**
- b. **What circumstance or belief caused this emotion?**
- c. **What does the Bible say?**

☞ **Replace lies with truth.** Partner with the Holy Spirit in believing by faith what the Bible says. Here are a few examples to start with. Say these things to yourself repeatedly...

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

I am a new creation. I have been reconciled to God. God accepts me as righteous because of Christ. Therefore, I am righteous.

Romans 8:1

God does not condemn me.

Ephesians 3:17-19 & Romans 5:8
God loves me greatly, even when I sin.

Deuteronomy 31:8 & Romans 8:35
God is near. I am never alone.

Now, I'm not just presenting a self-help program to you. What do I always say everything keeps coming back to? It always comes back to Jesus. You need more of Jesus in your life.

Colossians 3:10 says we have put on the new self, which is being **renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.**

Hosea 4:6 says, "my people are **destroyed from lack of knowledge.**"

Knowledge has to do with our way of thinking. We need to think about who God is; who we are; and what the truth really is. So, I'm not just Peter Pan promoting thinking happy thoughts. I'm promoting being set free by knowing the truth, and, **ultimately, truth is a ☞ person... Jesus Christ. We are transformed as we spend time with him, getting to know him more and more.**

Many of us remember Silly Putty. It's one of the greatest toys ever invented. You could shape it and reshape it. But, its most famous characteristic was its ability to be flattened against an image on paper and lift the image off onto itself. Humans are like Silly Putty. We take on whatever image we choose; whatever image we put ourselves next to. Often, that image is of the world, but Paul encourages us to take on the likeness of Christ... be Silly Putty and smush ourselves against Jesus to pick up His likeness.

Likely, this is the reason behind Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:17... "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, **so that you may know him better.**" Knowing him better changes us!

☞ -- Warren Wiersbe... ***When the people of God look into the Word of God and see the glory of God, the Spirit of God transforms them to be like the Son of God (Romans 8:29).***

☞ **Think about what you're thinking about. Get your mind renewed. Capture those thoughts and replace the lies of the enemy with the truth of God's Word. Spend time with the Person of Truth, Jesus Christ. You can be transformed! It starts with thinking about what you're thinking about.**