



Think Jesus

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How would you like to be Allen Greenspan? It would be a tough job. The Federal Reserve System, they are the ones who attempt to discover whether at some point in the future, say 12 to 18 months down the road, if we're going to be dealing with good or bad economic conditions. They try to attempt to adjust the interest rates to safely steer America, and ultimately the rest of North America, between the dangerous monsters of inflation on one side and depression on the other side. We don't want either. And so they have a hard job. Basically they're trying to get the knowledge in advance for the future. They don't want us languishing behind. They don't want us suffering with stagflation even. And so they constantly try to outguess the future.

How would you like to know your future? How would you like to know what you will be doing, as far as you and Jesus, 5, 10 or 15 years from now? Will you be in the church? Will you be saved? Will you still be battling that same habit you have been fighting all of these years? Will you still be an alcoholic or will you be victorious? Will you be fighting the same temptations? Well, what will you be in a few years? You can know! You can know where you will be spiritually if you are alive 15 years from now. Would you like to know how you can know that? This is the focus of our sermon today. It is just one little thing... What you spend your time thinking about today is what you are going to become tomorrow! What you spend you time thinking about today is what you will become tomorrow. All the yester-years don't mean much but what you think about means everything.

Every day you are becoming more like your thoughts. Let's look at this in the Bible. **Proverbs 23:7** says, " **For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.**" As you think, so you are. The greatest discovery that any human being can possibly make, other than discovering Jesus, is that you can change your life by altering the attitude of your mind. You are what you think. If you think about Jesus you will soon become more and more like Jesus in your inner self. The streams of life flow from the inner heart. And the inner heart is where changes take place. So if you find yourself thinking about a certain thing quite often, be careful, for that is what you are becoming. If we could measure the numerous thoughts of our mind and equate them with their subject material; if you are thinking about good things, you are going to become good. If you are thinking about the gutter, and about some of the selfish, sinful temptations of life, you will soon be drawn into that. That is where you are headed.

Come over here to James chapter one in the Bible. We become what we allow ourselves to think about. If all you can think about is money all the time, then you'll probably end up being corrupted by it. Certain temptations are so powerful because they match what we have been thinking about. Look at **James 1:14**, " **But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.**" You are dragged away, you are enticed, by your own evil desires. Your own evil thinking has enticed yourself. We are tempted when we are enticed and baited by our own evil desires, thoughts, and fantasies. You fantasize all the time about something wicked and pretty soon that will become a reality. An opportunity will come that matches your thoughts and you fall. That is how it happens.

If we allow our mind to think about some evil, those thoughts become the bait in the devil's trap and we are caught and we can't get away. And the end of it is death. And it all happens because of thought patterns in our mind. Look at **James 1:15**, " **Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.**" You see, that evil thought gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. So that is where spiritual death comes from because of bad thinking. In other words, the ancestry of every action is the thought. If sin had a mother, it would be an evil thought. It is when the mind becomes pregnant with an evil thought or idea, that the deed is about to be born. The mind is a garden that you can cultivate and produce a harvest of anything you choose. You can grow thorns and thistles in your garden, or you can grow tomatoes. You can grow anything you want in the garden of your heart. And it's what you are growing that determines where you are going to be with Jesus 10 or 15 years down the road from now. That's exactly the way it is.

We live our thoughts. We can't think crooked and live straight. You can't watch that television program and still be the Christian that you want to be. You have got to make a change. We are what we think. Now, I am repeating a phrase over and over, and I realize that, but I want you to think about that phrase. We are what we think. Every day you are becoming more like your thoughts. The mind is a workshop producing the character. On a television program a small boy was asked if he had any pets. "Well," he replied, "I did have some goldfish, but some water softener got into the aquarium and they were softened to death." Softened to death. Don't let your thoughts get soft. Keep your thoughts strong. Keep your thoughts toward Jesus.

Every day you are becoming more like your thoughts. So be careful what you put into the garden of your mind. Don't allow your mind to dwell on an evil thought. Now you can't stop an evil thought from entering your mind. But you can stop your mind from dwelling on that thought. We owe it to ourselves to keep the traffic of evil thoughts on the exit ramp of our mind! We are not responsible for the thoughts that come into our minds. But we are responsible for the reception that we give them. You can't be too inhospitable

to a bad thought. Move it on out, quickly! Don't allow it to lodge in your mind. Kick it out!

One day at a Harris Pine Mill in Pendleton, Oregon, they purchased a brand new \$2000 band saw blade. They got it on the band saw, they started it up. And the very first log that those loggers put through that mill, went through the band saw and broke the blade because unseen inside of that huge log, was an old horseshoe buried in its heart. It was a \$2000 mystery as to how that horseshoe got there. They concluded that perhaps some early American Explorer had stopped in the deep woods to shoe his horse and had hung the old iron horse shoe on a branch of a young redwood tree. Through the years the tree had grown around that iron shoe until it was deep within the heart of the tree. No one knew it was there until the day the new saw blade was ruined.

When an evil thought comes into your mind, don't provide a lodging place for it. Extract it. Don't dwell on it. Be rude to that thought. Kick it out. And with the power of Jesus, you can control your thoughts.

Look at **1 Peter 1:13**, " **Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**" You guard those stray thoughts. Some people's minds are like their bedroom. Their mind is as unmade as their bed. Dirty thoughts, like dirty sox are all over the place. The place is a clutter and you have to be careful, or you will stumble and fall in there. We need to keep our minds clean. We are responsible to God for our thoughts. Now you may say, "I don't think a thought is a sin." Well, when did Eve sin? When she took a bite of the apple or when she picked the apple or when she believed the devil and doubted God. Be careful about those thoughts! Those thoughts will lead you into perdition. So, keep your mind clean. If you allow yourself to indulge in vain imaginations, you are permitting your mind to dwell upon impure subjects, then you are setting yourself up for a fall. All that prevents the action from taking place is the lack of opportunity.

You ask a rancher how a cow gets lost, and chances are he will reply, "Well, you know, the cow starts out nibbling on this tuft of grass and she eats it, and finally it's gone, and the she looks around and there is another one over there, and she goes over there and nibbles on that tuft of grass for a while, and it's gone and she looks around and there is another one, and finally she finds a tuft of grass right by the fence where there is a hole in the fence. She nibbles on that one and then sees another one on the other side and the first thing you know, that cow has nibbled herself into being lost. Lost by nibbling!

We could do that same thing ourselves. You may say, well I read the Bible. I have a steady diet of the scriptures. But your nibbling may be on some other things. Watch your nibbling. Don't be quibbling over your nibbling. Christians are not much different than cows. We allow our mind to think on a small tuft of evil which leads to another small tuft of evil, maybe a pornographic site, or some thing else, whatever it is, and pretty soon we are out there on the devil's turf. We have crossed the fence, and we are lost by nibbling. It happens little by little that we lose our spirituality.

But conversely, you can be saved by nibbling. Now you think about that. If you are nibbling on the right thing, you are saved. How do you receive the truth? If you want to prove a doctrine you take here a little, there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept. **Isaiah 28:10**, "**For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.**" Nibbling. It depends on what you are nibbling, doesn't it. Be careful!

Keep your thoughts fixed on Jesus Christ. Guard against wandering away. A man purchased a new hunting dog. And he was anxious to find out how this hunting dog would do. And so he took the dog out into the woods to hunt and track a bear. And sure enough, they got into the woods and the dog sensed a track and smelled a bear and off he went. And the man thought, "What a dog I've got!" And he kept right on the trail of that bear and all of a sudden the dog stopped. He started sniffing around and the first thing you know, off he went that way. A deer had crossed the trail of the bear. So off the dog went, chasing the deer. And the first thing you know the dog stopped again and he started sniffing around and he went that way. And he had discovered a rabbit trail that had crossed the track of the deer. And finally when the hunter caught up to his new hunting dog, he discovered the dog was barking triumphantly down the hole of a mouse.

Sometimes we as Christians are like that. We start out with a high resolve, maybe New Years, January 1; we have all these New Year's resolutions. They ought to be revolutions. We are going to keep Christ first in our lives. But soon our attention is diverted by something else. By things of lesser importance. And one pursuit leads to another until finally we've strayed clear away from Jesus and we are barking down the rat hole of the devil. Now be careful. Be careful!

You cannot escape the results of where each little thought is going to take you. You become what you think. Behind every tragedy in human character there is a process of wicked thinking. Turn in your Bibles to **Matthew 15**. You know this is a vein that runs through the entire scripture, teaching us what we ought to be and what defiles us. Notice **Matthew 15:19**, "**For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.**" What makes you unclean? Where does it start? What is the first thing that makes you unclean? The very first thing on this list is evil thoughts. An evil thought will make you unclean. It will define a man.

That was the problem in Noah's day. Look back here in Genesis chapter six in your scriptures. The problem in the days of Noah, well you can say it was that they were eating and drinking and marrying and giving in marriage, but what was the problem? Look at **Genesis 6:5**, "**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 the Bible says, as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man. Their thoughts were bad, and led them to be some of the worst people in the history of the world. And our problem today in the year 21st century is that our thoughts are bad.

If you think evil thoughts long enough, you are going to become evil to the core. And what your mind feasts on is what you are becoming. If you subscribe to magazines that contain evil pictures or sinful stories, your desires, your actions will not be far behind. That is just how it happens. Just one evil television program could swing your life onto a new wicked path. "Oh, I kind of like that. I think I will watch that again next week. Vile comic books, repulsive videos, porn sites, these things plant seeds. They defile the mind. You need to memorize this inspired quote by E.G. White found in the book Education Page 209. "Right living depends on right thinking." Right living, that is what you want to do, right? Right living depends on right thinking. That's the key! And what I am urging you and I to do is think on Jesus, and you will become like Jesus. Our goal is to become like Jesus. And how do we accomplish that? Think on Jesus.

Isaiah 55:7 says, "**Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.**" You see, the mind is the battlefield where all the decisive battles of life are either lost or they are won. Now let

me tell you a story about a man. James Nesmeth had a dream. He wanted to improve his golf game. Now this man was a golfer. He just wasn't very good. His score was too high. And he wanted to improve his game. And before he starting this method, he was just your average weekend golfer. In fact, for seven years, his score was in the mid 90s. And then for seven years he quit golfing. Never even picked up a club for seven years. During that seven year break he came up with and amazing and effective technique. In fact, the first time he set foot on a golf course after seven years he shot an astonishing 74. He had cut twenty strokes off of his average and had never set foot on a golf course in seven years. And not only that, his physical condition was worse than it had been seven years before. It had deteriorated badly. And you know what his secret was? His thinking. He used his mind. You see, he was in the Vietnam War. And he was taken prisoner and he was taken to North Vietnam and placed in a prisoner of war camp. And he was placed in a cage that was 4.5 feet high and five feet long. Never could stretch out or stand up fully. And during that whole time of those seven years, he saw nobody; he talked with no other human being for seven years. During the first several months he prayed and hoped for release. Finally he realized he had to do something or he was going to loose his sanity, and so he turned to his mind. And in his mind every day he selected his favorite golf course. And he started to play golf in his mind. Everyday he played a full eighteen holes. His mind let him experience everything to the last detail. He saw himself dressed in his golf shoes. He smelled the freshly cut grass, and the hot days, the rain, the sunny mornings, every detail, every blade of grass he imagined. In his mind he practiced smoothing out his down swing. He practiced his follow through. He could see the ball going through the air and where it was landing. And it took just as long, or longer, to play 18 holes in his mind than it would have in real life. He did it all in his mind. Seven days a week, four hours a day, inside that small cage for seven years. Finally he was free. The very first game he had twenty strokes off of his previous game. A score of 74. How did he do it? His mind. Your mind is a powerful thing!

Friends, if we could just harness the power of our own minds for Jesus, just think what we could do! Just think of the power for good that we would possess! **Romans 12:2** - I would like for you to underline this in your Bible. This is special. Here is how you can change yourself. **Romans 12:2** says, "**And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**" It is going to happen in your mind.

The mind is a factory where you are forging the weapons for your victory or your destruction. And in this wicked world, we can only be successful as we return our evil, defective minds back to the store where we got them and give them back to God and ask Him to exchange our evil mind for a brand new mind. That is what David is talking about in **Psalms 51:10** where he says, "**Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.**"

Only God can give us a clean thinking process. If you give your sinful heart to Jesus, you will be given a brand new clean heart in exchange. We are not to be in charge of our own mind. We are not capable of that. We want Jesus to be in charge of our new mind. We need Jesus to sit at the steering wheel of the new clean heart that God has promised to give us. Let him be in charge of your thoughts! You see, if you sow a thought you will reap an act. If you sow an act you will reap a habit. And if you sow a habit you will reap your character.

Look at **PHILIPPIANS 4:8**. If you don't already have this memorized, you should do so. This is great. Here is a whole list of things that we can think about. There are many, many good things to think about. And here it is: "**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." That's what we need to be thinking about!

It all starts in the mind. If you start thinking about Jesus, you start spending a thoughtful hour each day thinking about His life, especially the last scenes of His life - thinking about His love. His great sacrifice for you on the cross. You walk through the closing scenes of the life of Jesus. And you think about each detail it is going to change your life. Because you see, we are all POWs. We are all prisoners of war. We are here in this concentration camp, aren't we? And like Major James Neshmeh in that small cage in Vietnam, the only way we are going to survive is to spend time every day with Jesus. The only way we will ever make it out of here is to immerse ourselves in Jesus. We have to retrain the synapses of our minds to cogitate on Jesus.

Decide what type of thoughts you want to have in your mind, that you want controlling your mind, and then begin storing them in your memory. Now God has given us wonderful minds, so we can memorize a lot of things. So let's suppose you want to plant **Philippians 4:13** in your mind: "**I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.**" How can you get that in your mind? You can read it. You can write it down on a card. You can repeat it 40 times, 60 times. You can share it with others. And soon it will become a part of your life. That is how you get scripture in your mind.

You pray to Jesus, you saturate your life with His Words. You think of heaven. Think noble thoughts. And soon you will lead a victorious life. Saturate yourself with Jesus, and let your imagination be captured by Jesus. It will change your life, you will never be the same. The good thoughts of our savior will produce a good life. The life that you want to live. Focus on Jesus! Think Jesus!