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The Importance of Thoughts

by Bill Crews

If you are concerned about your character, your conduct, your life and your destiny, ***then be concerned about your thoughts***. “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (**Prov. 4:23**). The heart is the mind, and the mind is the center of thoughts. “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (**Prov. 23:7**). A man may not be what he appears to be, but he is what he thinks.

What goes **into** your mind, then, is extremely important. Be careful about the interests you acquire, the tastes you cultivate, the desires you develop. They shape what goes into your mind. The conversations you listen to, the scenes you observe, the movies you view, the TV programs you tune into, the newspapers, magazines and books you read, the songs by which you are entertained, the jokes you laugh at, the things you are taught all have a part in feeding information into your mind.

You evaluate and monitor all that you hear and see. Your standard for evaluation and your conscience are vital and play their roles. You may seek out or receive what is vulgar or distorted, or you may reject and refuse it. You may pursue and embrace what is wholesome and true, or you may have no interest in it and neglect it. Be cautious, particular and selective about what goes into your mind. If you allow garbage to go in, then garbage will come out in the form of words and deeds.

What goes on **in** your mind is also extremely important. Be careful about your thoughts, meditations, desires, ambitions, daydreams and fantasies. You determine what goes on in your mind. You are the master of it because you have control over it. It is your own little secret world -- except that God knows all about it, and will one day bring it to light when you have to answer for it in the judgment (**Eccl. 12:14; Acts 17:30-31; Rom. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:10**). And sooner or later it will find expression in your life and make itself known.

We cannot be like God without thinking the thoughts of God. We cannot know the thoughts of God apart from the revelation of the things of God in the word of God (**1 Cor. 2:11-13**). We cannot have the thoughts of God in our hearts apart from reverent study of and meditation upon the word of God, coupled with a sincere desire to do the will of God (**Jn. 7:17**).

We Can Do That

by Stephen Russell

As we look for ways to tell the world around us about the God we serve and His marvelous word we will find no better "instruction manual" than the very word we hope to teach. Specifically, the book of Acts shows us many examples of the truth being spread throughout the world. There are a number of circumstances in that book that are unique to the time that we cannot duplicate. For instance, we cannot do signs and wonders to show we are from God. We cannot deliver the gospel for the first time in history. These peculiarities of the first century, however, should not hinder us from learning from the examples written there for our learning. While there are some things we cannot do, there are a number of things that we most certainly can do.

We can find individuals who are interested in truth. The day of Pentecost was a grand response to the first gospel sermon but we cannot expect to always have such an audience before us. Philip had a eunuch so he preached to him. Peter had Cornelius and his household, Paul had Lydia or Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. The point is that the teachers of the first century didn't wait until a great multitude had gathered to teach God's word. It was ever in their conversation and on their mind whether they had one or 3000 to speak to. The world is not brought to God one multitude at a time but one soul at a time.

We can teach God's word. Peter and the other preachers of the first century enjoyed the blessing of having God's word directly revealed to them. That must have been wondrous. But equally wondrous is having the complete revelation laid out before us. We are at no disadvantage today for not having direct revelation, for the same truths that were being revealed then can now be read and repeated by anyone who would pick up that marvelous book. It was not the method of delivery that converted souls but the message.

Finally, we can depend on God for everything as they did. These men had great powers and knowledge yet they also knew from whom all these blessings flowed. Paul makes it clear that he knew exactly what his role in the process was (I Cor. 3:6). His role was to deliver the truth and let God's power work in the hearts of men. We too must make our goal to the delivery of the message. It is God who saves and we are simply the messengers of that salvation.

We are preaching to the same kinds of people. People of different religions and people of no religion. People who are seeking to know God and people who have been ignoring God. We receive the same types of reactions to the message. Some believe while many reject. In these respects we are no different than those Christians in the book of Acts. We should then be no different in our zeal and boldness to proclaim the good news that has lost no luster in these 2000 years since that day.