

LESSON 1



OUR THOUGHT LIFE

Scripture Texts: Psalm 19:14; Mark 7:21-23; Joshua 1:8; Philip-pians 4:8; Isaiah 55:9; Hebrews 10:16

This quarter we want to consider some standards for our personal Christian living. When God saves us, He places within us a new life and makes us holy. He gives us His nature with power to live righteously. But this is not the end of our progress. We are not automatic machines. We still have our judgment and will and power of choice. God gives us tools, the rules, and loving leadership. Then it is up to us to use them to make what we will of our lives. Let us carefully consider the instructions God gives us through the following lessons and build our lives by them.

MEMORY VERSE: *And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?*

— *Matthew 9:4*

God Knows Our Thoughts

Psalm 19:14. **Let . . . the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight.** God sees our thoughts. He judges them. He is the One they must please. Every word and act begins in thought. Our thoughts form our lives. God knows all our thoughts. Let us measure them by how God will think of them. Read Hebrews 4:12-13.

A Heart Condition

Mark 7:21-23. **From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts.** We cannot help thoughts of evil coming to us. What we see or hear causes our minds to think, but the thought does not become an evil thought until it enters the heart. A clean heart refuses to entertain thoughts that would grow into evil. The mind thinks, but the heart controls the quality of the thoughts (see Titus 1:15). Twelve other sins are named, and Jesus said they come from the heart. Each begins with an evil thought. Watch the heart and allow no evil thought to spring up.

Joshua 1:8. **This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.** God gave Joshua this command when he was preparing to lead Israel into Canaan. Joshua was told to hold God's Law in his mind, to think, to go deeply into its meanings, to love, to cherish, and to do it. Obeying this would bring a **prosperous way and good success**. Not financial prosperity or worldly success was promised, but spiritual prosperity and success in the work God gave him.

In these days of hurried, busy lives, meditation is much neglected. Yet it is a precious tool in the forming of our thought life. David said, "I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways" (Psalm 119:15). In our forming the habit of meditating, God has the opportunity to teach us, to plant and cultivate His Word in our hearts, and to develop a beautiful life.

Dwell Upon Righteous Thoughts

Philippians 4:8. **Whatsoever things are true . . . honest . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . of good report . . . , think on these things.** Here God, through Paul, tells us what sort of things to think of. Obeying this would eliminate lies, filthy talk and actions, gossip, unkind words, and many other evil things. It would keep the heart pure. Matthew 5:8 says only

the pure in heart shall see God. We cannot follow worldly ways and have godly thoughts. *If we feed upon foolish talk, low literature, movies, TV shows, etc., how can God and His ways find a place in our hearts?* Eliminate all influences contrary to God.

Physically, we become what we feed on, and the same is true morally and spiritually. Paul's awareness of this is his reason for speaking as he did in this verse. Does your way of thinking differ from God's? Read Psalm 139:1-4.

Isaiah 55:9. **For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.** If our thoughts are to please God or be a part of a holy life, they must be higher than those of the natural (unsaved) man.

When we consider that our sun is 93 million miles from the earth, and the nearest star is billions of miles away, we begin to realize the vast superiority of God's thoughts over ours. Some galaxies of stars are believed to be so distant that light from them, traveling at 186 thousand miles per second, takes 140 million years to reach earth. Oh, how small we individuals should feel in the sight of such a great God! Read Psalm 8:4. Only God Himself can make the thoughts of our hearts acceptable in His sight.

God's Law Is Written in the Mind

Hebrews 10:16. **I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.** God made a covenant. Ever since Christ came and died to make our hearts pure, this promise has been and is being fulfilled.

It is not sin to be tempted, but when we allow evil thoughts to come in and stay in our hearts and minds, then it is sin. Everyone is tempted by evil thoughts, but we can resist and command them to depart. A Christian has power over all evil thoughts if he turns to the Lord for help. We must be determined to resist and not allow them to enter. When a man with even the most brilliant mind finds himself thinking contrary to the Word of God, he should change his thinking.

When God puts His Law in our hearts and writes it in our minds, He makes it possible for us to think thoughts that will build our lives after His pattern. The choice is ours as to whether we refuse or dwell upon evil thoughts.

JUST A THOUGHT

**A thing is not true because God said so,
but God said so because it is true.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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