

## **THE INCREDIBLE POWER OF THOUGHT**

I Peter 1:13; I Peter 4:1, 2; Isaiah 26:3

Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

"You become what you're thinking about all day long." I came across that saying several years ago. There are different ways of saying that and I researched about three different sources from Ralph Waldo Emerson to Earl Nightingale who, in turn, got that thought from Napoleon Hill (speech writer for FDR). Now we cannot take that philosophy literally. Yesterday, Beverly Ann took her sick dog to the vet. She asked me to pray for Hope (her dog's name) yesterday morning. She sent me a text that she arrived home from the vet at 7:36 PM. At 9:27 this morning Beverly Ann requested that I continue to pray for Hope. Now our fine church member has been thinking much about her little dog for well over a day, but Beverly Ann did not become a dog. However, the dominant thoughts in our mind determine our actions. There is incredible power in thought. There are two stories that illustrate in a humorous way the power of our thinking; one story has to do with a man trying to diet and the other has to do with a man who accidentally fell into a freshly dug grave.

The average person has 48 thoughts per minute. That comes up to 70,000 thoughts per day. That in turn becomes 25 million, 550 thousand thoughts per year. The brain weighs approximately 3.3 lbs., made up of 100 billion brain cells which are the longest living cells in the human anatomy. Brain cells usually last until you die. Most experts believe the brain is not fully developed until the age of 25. Some neurologists believe for some it is not fully developed until 30. Thoughts are powered by neurotransmitters, which are powered in turn by copious amounts of blood. These neurotransmitters develop pathways in the brain. Just as a river forms by repeating a path, so our thoughts develop a reality by going down these same paths over and over again. Thoughts repeated become thoughts ingrained.

Observe Colossians 3:1, 2. There is a difference between your brain and your mind. It is similar to the difference between a piano and a pianist. II Corinthians 3:18.

Proverbs 4:23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." How important are thoughts? God destroyed a whole civilization because of their thought life. 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.”

Many years ago, Mr. Betts had a music store in London. A ragged looking man stepped into his store and pleaded, “I need food; please buy my violin.” Mr. Betts tried to talk him out of it. When the man continued to beg, Mr. Betts gave him the equivalence of five U.S. dollars. After the old man left, Mr. Betts tucked the violin under his chin and heard rich tones that he had never heard before. He lit a candle and looked inside. Mr. Betts saw that immortal name, “Antonio Stradivari.” Mr. Betts, being the honest man that he was, rushed outside to find the old man because of the costly mistake he made by selling the violin for this measly amount. Mr. Betts never found the man and he eventually sold it for \$5,000. This was many years ago, but it does reflect the value of this instrument. This is nothing compared to the value of the brain and the mind God gave you to think with. Therefore:

#### I. UNDERSTAND WE ARE LIVING IN A BATTLEFIELD.

I 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.” The Bible is a book that encourages you to think...and to think correctly. When the warrior in the ancient world went into battle, he would take his toga or robe and tie it off between his legs, actually girding up his loins and freeing him to do battle without any hindrances. The Jews would also refer to the loins as the place that power is generated. Figuratively they were saying, release power by right thinking.

II Corinthians 10:3-6.

(A) Our battle is not in the flesh: “...we do not war after the flesh....For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal...” (II Corinthians 10:3b, 4a). Ephesians 6:12: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

(B) Through God’s strength formidable fortresses can be taken down: “...mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds” (II Corinthians 10:4b).

(C) The sentinels of sin can be expelled: “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God...” (II Corinthians 10:5a).

(D) Runaway thoughts can be transformed: “...and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (II Corinthians 10:5b).

(E) Obedience to Christ means being always prepared: “And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled” (II Corinthians 10:6).

## II. THERE IS OVERCOMPENSATING STRENGTH IN THE SURRENDERED MIND.

Romans 7:18-25.

In the same way the law of gravity can be overcome by the law of aerodynamics, so also the mind stayed on Christ will overcome any and all wicked thoughts.

## III. SUBSTITUTE THE WRONG THOUGHTS WITH THE RIGHT THOUGHTS.

Philippians 4:8. Romans 12:1, 2.

(A) Think Truly (True): Things that are true as opposed to false. Not inauthentic or fictitious. False Evidence Appearing Real is a good way to remember what wrong fear is. II Tim. 1:7; I John 4:18.

(B) Think Honestly (Honest): Honest: honorable, reverent or worth of dignity. Do I have dignity of holiness?

(C) Think Justly (Just): Righteousness. Is this thought leading me to right actions?

(D) Think Purely (Pure): Something so clean that it is fit to be brought into the presence of God. The little ermine serves as an illustration in its determination to protect its pure white coat.

(E) Think Lovely: soothing thoughts that bring forth kindness and love. Is this entertainment or activity going to make me a better person?

(F) Think Pleasantly (Good report): Is it fit for God to hear?

(G) Think Virtuously (Virtue): Excellence. Am I the best I can be through our Lord's help?

(H) Think Praiseworthy (Praise): Do I think thoughts that lead me to give praise to our Holy God?

## IV. THOUGHTS LEAD TO ACTION; ACTION LEADS TO THOUGHTS.

Proverbs 23:7: For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he....” Thoughts lead to actions. This is recognized in the majestic thought life of Jesus. John 2:17: “And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” This was quoted from the Psalms and, in fact, referenced the attitude of our Lord that caused Him to clean out the Temple and overthrow the tables of the money changers. Our Lord never had a problem adjusting His thought life. What do we do when we have a

problem in thinking the right thoughts that lead us to right action? At those times the Lord tells us to do the right thing anyway. Proverbs 16:3: "Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established."

A few years ago I read a book entitled *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell. He tells of people who were studying emotions and how emotions affect people. In these experiments they selected three groups. They said, "We are going to give you actions to act out. Whether you feel the emotion or not, we are going to ask you to act like it as intensely as you can." The first group was assigned sadness. They were told to tell sad stories, even cry if you need to. The next group was assigned anger. They were encouraged to lose their temper, shout and/or be mean to one another. Finally, the third group was assigned happiness or joy. Think happy thoughts; be over-the-top joyful. The experiment showed that the sad people were very sad for the next three weeks. Among the angry group, friends who were angry stopped talking to each other. The people assigned happiness, stayed joyful.

#### V. A PEACEFUL MIND CAN BECOME PERPETUAL.

Isaiah 26:3: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee."

(A) Scrutinize your thoughts: James 3:14-18.

(B) Know that God has accepted us through Christ: Ephesians 1:6.

(C) Live peacefully with each other: Romans 12:18; I John 4:7-12,  
19-21

-Pastor Pope-