



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 41, No.17, April 28 , 2015 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter is **a weekly Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

OUR MIND and THOUGHTS Birth emotions, feelings, actions!

[Article is developed from Spiritual Stability, part 5: GODLY THINKING, by John MacArthur. Complete message: <http://www.gty.org/resources/sermons/50-41/Spiritual-Stability-Part-5-Godly-Thinking> / The quotes below are ones that **Eric T. Young** pieced together from the above mentioned sermon, which was based on Philippians 4:8... I have done some additional editing; additions are marked by being within brackets]

[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." **Isaiah 65:2—** I have spread out My hands all day to a rebellious people, which walk in a way that was not good, AFTER THEIR OWN **THOUGHTS.** **Jeremiah 6:19—** "Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, EVEN **THE FRUIT OF THEIR **THOUGHTS,**** because they have not hearkened unto My words, nor to My law, but rejected it."]

You are the product of your thoughts. The computers, people say, G.I.G.O., garbage in, garbage out. Whatever you program is exactly what you're going to get. You are the product of your thinking. Now, what is particularly frightening about that in our culture is that... We are not so concerned about thinking as we are about two other things.

Let's call them emotion and pragmatism.

We are concerned about feeling and we are concerned about success; we are not so concerned about thinking. **In other words, people don't ask this question: Is it true? And they don't ask the question: Is it right?** They ask these questions: Does it work? And How will it make me feel? That's what they want to know. They don't want to know is it right, they don't really care if it's right.

They don't particularly care if it's true, but will it work and will it make me feel good?... **The mind is depreciated in our culture because we are into a feeling kind of culture...** [WE] live in a culture that is fast learning not to think because it is fast learning not to read, which creates thinking.

Paul Robinson, a professor at Stanford University,... wrote an article entitled, **"TV Can't Educate."**... He, simply coming from a secular mind analyzing our society and the mode of communication that is effective in the thinking process, simply says this: **"The only way to learn is by reading."** It's the only way to learn because words on a page freeze a thought, you can analyze it, you can synthesize it, you can verify it, you can meditate on it. **Pictures don't create thought; they just grab emotions.**

He goes on to point out the fact that the worst possible TV is educational TV because it is a contradiction in terms since TV can't educate. He said, "You would be better off never to have educational TV because at least in your mind there would be a vacuum that someday might be filled with a real thought." We have a society that doesn't think. We're not into is it true, is it right, we're into how does it make me feel and does it work.

Bill Hull, in a book entitled *Right Thinking* written in 1985, writes, **"What scares me is the anti-intellectual, anti-critical thinking philosophy that has spilled over into the church.** This philosophy tends to romanticize the faith, making the local church into an experience center. Their concept of church is that they are spiritual consumers and that the church's job is to meet their felt needs," end quote.

And what is happening in the church is that people are going to church not to think, not to reason about the truth, not like the noble Bereans to search the Scriptures to see what is true, but they're going there to get a weekly spiritual fix, a weekly spiritual high, so they can feel that God is still with them. **They are spiritually unstable because they live on feeling rather than on thinking. . .**

[BEWARE: All across the land, churches promote Children and youth programs around stirring up EMOTIONAL EXCITEMENT; likewise worship services are designed to pull upon and move emotions and feelings, rather than TEACHING and preaching the Word of God!]

Now, from the biblical perspective, it becomes very clear how important thinking is, and that is precisely what Paul is calling for in this verse. [Philippians 4:8]He is saying you've got to learn how to think on the right things. Let's talk a little bit about what the Bible says about thinking...

First of all, God has commanded us to think. Do you remember Isaiah 1:18? You remember what God said? He said, **"Come now, let us" - what? - "reason together."** Let's think this thing through. He didn't say, "Come, let us feel one another." He didn't say, "Come, let us experience this together." He said, "Come, let's reason. Let's think this through." ...

Jesus said, "Even though someone is raised from the dead, they won't believe if they didn't believe Moses and the prophets." (Luke 16:31)

Always, the Bible calls on men to think, to reason. You see, that's why the Bible is a book. **When God gave us His revelation, He did not give us a movie. He did not. He did not give us a series of music videos. You know what? He didn't even have built-in organ background when you read the Bible. Nobody is humming. There's nothing to touch your**

emotions except the contemplation of truth. No stimulus other than truth, which requires thought.

So Scriptures assume that **the first priority is to think because it's a book**. The Bible is, by its very nature, calling men to think. [AGAIN, THIS IS RADICALLY different from much of modern Christian religion... which is so focused on emotional experiences! **YES, God has given us emotions. And emotions have their place. BUT TRUTH COMES FIRST!** The great Revival in Nehemiah's day was deeply grounded in being ATTENTIVE TO THE PURE WORD OF GOD. The result was GENUINE REVIVAL, with manifestations of WEEPING as they repented! (Neh. 8-9)]

Psalm 32 verse 9 - verse 8 actually, "I will instruct you," says God, "I will teach you in the way which you should go, I will counsel you with My eye upon you." In other words, "I'll give you all the truth, all the instruction, all the teaching, all the counseling." Verse 9: "Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding." Think. Don't be like a horse or a mule; think and you'll have access to My truth. Psalm 73:22, the Psalmist admits, "I was senseless and ignorant, I was like a beast." Don't be like that. **Think.** Listen now, careful thinking is the distinctive of our revealed faith. Let me say that again. **Careful thinking is the distinctive of our revealed faith.**

James Orr, in *The Christian View of God and the World*, says very insightfully: "If there is a religion in the world which exalts the office of teaching, it is safe to say that it is the religion of Jesus Christ. *It has been frequently remarked that in pagan religions, the doctrinal element is at a minimum. The chief thing there is the performance of a ritual. But this is precisely where Christianity distinguishes itself from other religions - it does contain doctrine.* It comes to men with definite, positive teaching. It claims to be the truth. It bases religion on knowledge, though a knowledge which is only obtainable under moral conditions. *A religion divorced from earnest and lofty thought has always, down through the whole history of the church, tended to become weak, [naïve], and unwholesome* while the intellect deprived of its rights within religion has sought its satisfaction without and developed into godless rationalism," end quote...

Now, when you come to considering this matter of the mind, the Bible has a lot to say, has a lot to say about thinking. Let me give you a little theology of thinking... What about before you're saved, what does it say about your mind?

First of all, your mind is depraved, Romans 1:28. It's depraved, debased, debauched, wicked, evil, that's what that means. **Secondly**, it's blind, 2 Corinthians 4:4. **Thirdly**, it is futile, vain, worthless, useless, Ephesians 4:17. **Fourthly**, it is ignorant, Ephesians 4:18. Finally, it is foolish, 1 Corinthians 2:14.

[SO OFTEN, CHRISTIAN PEOPLE SEEM PUZZLED AS TO WHY LOST PEOPLE ACT THE WAY THEY DO. This reveals our ignorance of or rejection of Biblical revelation. **The lost person's MIND is**, (regardless of education, IQ, social standing, gifts, or personality), depraved, blind, futile, ignorant, and foolish!] ...

So depraved it does not choose what is good, so blind it does not know what is good, so useless it does not perform what is good, so ignorant it doesn't even know it's doing all of this, and you're left with the only alternative: everything is foolish. **That's the mind of man, fallen man.**

The gospel, then, penetrates, right? **Now, what about the mind at salvation?** Is the gospel concerned about the mind? You better believe it. [THE HOLY SPIRIT MOVES THE PEN OF PETER]... in 1 Peter 3 where Peter says you must be able to give to every man who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you. You have to be able to show him a reason for this. Why do you believe this?

In Matthew chapter 13, Jesus said, "Sometimes the seed falls" - verse 19 - "on the ground and the seed is the Word of the kingdom and the hard ground is the heart that does not understand it and Satan snatches it away." It demands reason and it demands understanding.

An element of salvation, an element of it, is occurring within the mind as a person is coming to a proper comprehension of truth, truth about himself, truth about his sin, truth about God, truth about Christ, truth about the work of Christ, truth about the future. That all comes into

the mind. That's why it says in Romans 10 that **faith comes by hearing a speech about Christ.** It's not some esoteric [OBSCURE, ABSTRACT] thing; faith comes through the mind, through the reason. "**Come now, let us reason together,**" says Isaiah, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool, though they be red like crimson, they shall become as white as snow." Let's reason that. **The gospel hits the mind.** That's what made those Bereans so noble, they searched the Scripture, they thought it through.

J. Gresham Machen,... in his book, *The Christian Faith in the Modern World*, said, "What the Holy Spirit does in the new birth is **not to make a man a Christian regardless of the evidence,** but on the contrary, to clear away the mists from his eyes and enable him to attend to the evidence." That's the point. He sees it. He understands it by the working of the Spirit of God. Well, this we know because men are saved to be worshipers, right? John 4, the Father seeks true worshipers, and a true worshiper worships in spirit and in what? Truth. **So if we're saved to worship in truth, then truth is crucial. Salvation is God's work on the mind.**

You see, it is unacceptable to worship God apart from the truth about God. That's why Paul was so upset when he got to Mars Hill in Acts 17 and he found a bunch of erudite Greek philosophers who built an altar to what god? The unknown god - how absolutely ridiculous. That does not please God. God isn't saying, "Well, it's a nice gesture and I really understand the spirit of it and I accept it." Not on your life. God is not the unknown God, God will be worshiped only according to the truth of who He is, and so Paul immediately informed them of who God really was.

And in Luke 10:27, it says you must love the Lord your God **with all your heart, all your soul, and ALL YOUR MIND.** You see, salvation is an intelligent response to God's self-revelation in Scripture prompted by the Holy Spirit. True faith is not an irrational leap,... True faith is not some explosion into a non-quantifiable event. True faith is not some mysterious, irreproducible, unspeakable encounter. True faith is a reasonable trust in the revealed truth about the true God. It is a process of thinking. **Salvation is impossible without thinking. . .**

Philippians 4:8— “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy— **[THINK!], meditate on these things.**”

. . . **If I look at the world, am I going to find the truth?** If I look around at the world, am I going to find what is honorable, what is right, what is pure, what is lovely, what is of good report? When I turn on the television, is that what I’m going to see? When I go to the theater, is that what I’m going to see? When I read a book or a magazine, is that what I’m going to see? When I have a conversation with friends, is that what I’m going to experience?

The point is, you’ve got to protect your mind because that is what determines what you want and what you desire and that’s what determines how you react to the stimuli of life.

And then he says, **“If there’s any excellence and anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.”** And those are statements that we could just as well read “since there is excellence and since there are some things worthy of praise, please focus on them.” **Please. Your mind is the greatest treasure you have in terms of those gifts of human life, and now as a believer, your mind works in concert with the Spirit of God. You must protect that mind**, and the way you protect it is how you think, and you must protect its influences. You must avoid those things which negatively influence your thinking. . .

. . . We must learn to guard our minds. You cannot expect the fullness of spiritual joy and usefulness unless you desire the right things because that’s what moves your behavior, and your desires are a direct reflection of your influences. **So brethren, think on these things.**

Grace to one and all! James Bell www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Questions call Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

**** WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM; Come in side entrance, iron steps... meet in Ladies Sunday School Room ****

NOTE: Jody Allen is ministering to **Children**, during Prayer Service.

WEDNESDAY YOUTH MEETING, 6:30pm led by Chris and Rachel Beth Estep.

LADIES BIBLE STUDY— RESUMES, June 4, 11:00am, The Life of David! Cindy Bell, teaching. {Meet in Ladies Sunday School Room: Come in FRONT doors of the church auditorium or the SIDE door at the top of the IRON STEPS!}

*** EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study!** {Study in 1 Thessalonians}... Come to back of Church building... Come in under the drive-thru awning... walk forward... till you smell the coffee!

Sunday May 3— 9:30am- Sunday School; **10:45am-** Worship Service; **NOON-** Fellowship, Covered-dish meal; **1:00pm-** Early Afternoon Service

Sunday May 10— 9:30am- Sunday School; 10:45am- Worship Service; NOON- Fellowship, Covered-dish meal; 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service
NOTE: May 10 is MOTHER'S DAY! We encourage HONORING MOTHERS with GIDEON BIBLES given in APPRECIATION of them AND/OR IN MEMORY of....

Sunday May 17— 9:30am- Sunday School; 10:45am- Worship Service and THE LORD'S SUPPER. No Noon meal or afternoon service. HOME GROUPS IN THE EVENING.

Sunday May 24— 9:30am- Sunday School; **10:45am-** Worship Service; **NOON-** Fellowship, Covered-dish meal; **1:00pm-** Early Afternoon Service

Sunday May 31— 9:30am- Sunday School; **10:45am-** Worship Service; No Noon meal or afternoon service. **CHURCH-WIDE PRAISE/SINGING/TESTIMONY MEETING AT 6:00PM**

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SUMMER CAMP ☐ JULY 6-10 // PRAY and PLAN!

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SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL! Call— 616-452-5951

PLEASE PRAY FOR THIS VITAL MINISTRY!