

Men of Faith – Teaching Your Children to Think Biblically
October 21, 2017

It is good to see all of you here today. Even though the word “children” is in the title, our time this morning is geared toward all of us.

- Before we can teach anyone to think Biblically (in our point man group, in our ABF, in our personal discipleship, or in our home) we need to be able to think biblically ourselves.
- My hope is that our time will encourage us to see the need for this topic, to highlight Scripture that emphasizes points of thinking, and to have a process for helping others think more biblically.

There were several events over the last couple years that brought this topic to a head for me.

#1. Our son Joe. With Joe there were two somewhat unrelated issues.

- First, he was being challenged theologically by a classmate specifically over the place of baptism in salvation.
- Second, Joe is no longer in our home full time. He stayed in our home for his first year of college at Ivy Tech, but decided that the Lord wanted him to go to WOL this year.
- I started asking myself, Have I done all that I can, as a dad, to help him think biblically about things he will face in his life? Will he have the courage to do what God is calling him to do? Will he be able to defend the theology that we have taught him? Will he be able to separate good fun from fun that dishonors Christ? Will he be able to treat people with love and compassion or will that only happen to people that he likes?

#2. Last year’s election. I realize I am just one person with one opinion. I am not trying to cast my opinion on any of you. But the election concerned me.

- On the one hand, there was Clinton. I was very concerned about her agenda and what it might mean for our nation.
- On the other hand there was Trump. While I shared more in common with a few of his views, I was very concerned about him as a person and how his pride might result in him making decisions that are not in the best interest of our country.
- How do I think about this choice? Then how do my children think about it ... **especially** since one of them can vote?

#3. Tension surrounding those with different amounts of pigment in their skin. As a person who believes that all human beings are made in the image of God how do I process and help my children process riots, violence against law enforcement, unjust violence by law enforcement, and the tensions that exist from adult society to the bathroom in school.

#4. It would not be hard to add in the most recent event in Las Vegas. One gunman who made extensive preparations killed scores of people he had never met.

I am sure that you could give me a dozen more issues. Every issue is important. Every issue is something that we and our children need to think about biblically. Looking at our world for 5 minutes shows us the need to get to a better place.

We need to get to a better place by using the Scripture to guide us and direct us.

INPUT – What are your favorite passages of Scripture that have helped you learn to think?

2 Corinthians 10:5 *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

- That “every thought” is a powerful comment isn’t it?

Philippians 4:8-9 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. 9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

- It is easy for our family members to dwell on something negative. What comes out of their mouth **is the fruit of the negative ... complaining ... anger ... thoughts of quitting ... these are rooted in thinking whatever is false whatever is dishonorable whatever is ugly of bad reputation is anything is worthy of condemnation think on these things.**

James 4:1-2 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have; *so* you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; *so* you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.

- **Desires and the “I don’t know” syndrome. I don’t know** is sometimes a front to hide our real intentions. **We don’t want to give the real answer. I want to encourage you that accepting “I don’t know” is a missed opportunity. It is a missed opportunity for that person to think and understand themselves better which puts them in the position to better understand God’s grace.**

Proverbs 18:13 He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.

- After you have your children for a while there seem to be definable patterns. HOWEVER, sometimes they break those patterns. That is true for their friends, their teachers, and their coaches. Sometimes we want to give an answer before we actually hear.

Proverbs 18:17 The first to plead his case *seems* right, *Until* another comes and examines him.
 1 Corinthians 14:20 Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.

- Children are notorious for jumping to conclusions. They see a report on Facebook and assume it is correct. They see a news report and assume it is written without bias. They hear one student tell a story and assume it accurately represents the facts.
- Part of training them is to help them have a healthy questioning that encourages them to get more sides to the story before jumping to a conclusion.

Proverbs 23:7 For as he thinks within himself, so he is.

- This passage speaks of the importance of thinking. The call for all of us as influencers (parents, grandparents, friends) is to help others think wisely because their thoughts will determine their direction.

We have considered the need, we have looked at Scripture and now we need to think about a process.

Step 1: Memorize specific Scripture about thinking and the process of thinking

I want to evaluate what I hear through the truth of Scripture. In order to do that I need to let the Word control how I think. That means we need to have it at ready recall.

One of my seminary professors used to say that All Scripture is profitable, but not all scripture is equally profitable when addressing the matter of thinking.

Last week I was reading 2 Kings 15-16 and the number of times a king of Israel was assassinated. That was probably not the kind of meditation I would want during the presidential campaigns.

Set a goal to teach your children 3 or 4 passages in the next 6 months. Have them hide it in their heart so they learn the process of thinking.

Step 2: Engage in conversation with your children

My point here is that as children get older simply telling him something is not normally sufficient. There is a big difference between teaching something and someone learning something.

The latter requires buy-in. As adults we have learned that just because someone makes an argument for a particular position that does not make their argument compelling.

If we are going to ask questions and have a conversation ... we need to learn to ask good questions.

INPUT – What are some of the questions you have found helpful to engage your children in conversation?

- What part of the story do you think that person left out in order to make their version more compelling?
- Did you see the events? If so, what did you observe?
- How might personal experiences impact how a person views that situation?
- What passages of Scripture do you think should impact how we respond to a situation like this?
- What do you think that person wanted to accomplish?

One interesting theological issue that came up in our home a couple years ago was the concept of baptismal regeneration. The idea that baptism is part of the salvation process. Instead of by **faith alone, it would have been by faith and baptism alone. One of our children's friends believed** that --- passionately. That person tried to convince one of my children that by faith alone was an improper reading of Scripture.

- This was a live test case for how we were going to think. It was important to engage in **conversation that led to questions like ... “What does that text say?” “How do you put this passage and this passage together?” ...** When you have competing passages, how do you reconcile them?
- What resources can I put into his hand in order to help him think about that issue more clearly?

The more we spoke, the more he read, and the more he interacted with the other person the more convinced he became in by faith alone. This issue lasted about 6 months with many conversations in that time.

The process of developing thinking takes years. All of us are mixed bags. I believe that there are **times that I am foolish in my thinking and other times that I am wise. So with our children let's**

exercise the same **grace that our heavenly father gives us**. Let's continue to spur our children on to wisdom, but remember that foolish bumps will also be part of the process.

That reminds us ...

Step 3: Pray and ask the Lord for his continued wisdom.

James 1:5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Our lesson today emphasized

- We need to think biblically
- The passages of Scripture that emphasize thinking
- The process to develop biblical thinking in others
 - o Memorize the Word
 - o Engage in Conversation
 - o Pray and ask the Lord for his continued wisdom

Men, thank you for being here. **Let's continue to encourage one another to think biblically about whatever comes in our direction and then to teach our children to do the same.**

Pray