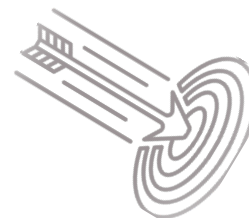


DAY 7

MIND BUILDERS / INTENTIONAL GROWTH [IG]



PONDER

"Don't you see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and then out of the body altogether? But the things that come out of a man's mouth come from his heart and mind, and it is they that really make a man unclean. For it is from a man's mind that evil thoughts arise."

-Matthew 15:17-18 [PHILLIPS]

Write down God's thoughts to you from the verse above.

PLUNGE

Ancient philosophers have argued that man is born inherently good but society corrupts him. Nothing could be further from the truth. God says man is corrupted from within and that corruption begins in his thought life. What ruins people's lives is within them not

outside of them. The mind and not mankind is the genesis of sin.

What a sobering statement from Christ Himself. Our thoughts have so much power they can literally defile our lives. We carry in our heads the ability to impair or improve our own future! A galaxy of thoughts between our ears that can either amplify darkness or multiply goodness, corrupt God's plans or magnify His purposes. And we get to choose the path by the way we choose to think.

Why would God place so much destiny power inside of us? The power to think for ourselves and decide between good or evil?

GOD'S INTELLIGENCE IS NOT ARTIFICIAL

Free will is a gift from God not a curse from God. The other option would have been for Him to program us like a computer and predetermine every word we say and every action we make, removing our ability to think, feel, and choose this over that. If God would take away our free will, He would also take away our ability to love Him and be in relationship with Him. A computer will never be able to love willfully. It only does what it was programmed to do. No matter how much progress is made with artificial intelligence or artificial android-companions for lonely people out there, this intelligence is still *artificial*. It is dependent written code and pre-programmed information.

But God is not artificial and neither are we for we were made in His image. He is truth and made us to be in a real, honest, organic and willful relationship with Him. He gives us the freedom to choose what to think and with that comes the opportunity to think thoughts and do things that dishonor Him and make us unclean. To remove the potential for this evil would be to remove the potential for any good as well.

Our only choice is to use our free will to wisely steward it and protect it from the invasion of thoughts that are contrary to a holy life.

THE PROCESS OF DEFILEMENT

Let's look deeper at the process of how we become unclean. Jesus says that the words that come out of our mouths (our actions) first go through our hearts (our emotions) which originate in our minds (our thoughts).

“...the things that come out of a man's mouth come from his heart and mind, and it is they that really make a man unclean.”

–Matthew 15:18 [PHILLIPS]

Every action begins with a thought. Then Jesus mentions a list of evil thoughts. Not *actions* but *thoughts*.

“It is from a man's mind that evil thoughts arise—murder, adultery, lust, theft, perjury and blasphemy. These are the things which make a man unclean.”

–Matthew 15:19 [PHILLIPS]

Did you get that? We usually think of these words as things we do but Jesus refers to them as things we think. This means that we become unclean not when we *do the action* but when we *think the thought*. We sin first in our mind before we sin with our mouth or bodies. Jesus reinforces this in Matthew 5:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You are not to commit adultery.’ But I say to you, anyone who stares at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

–Matthew 5:27-29 [ISV]

The sin of adultery happens first in the head before it happens in bed. The defilement begins inside the mind not outside the body.

MIND MUSCLE BUILDERS

This truth should make us fully sold out students on how to master our thought life for God's glory. If we can win the battle inside our own minds first, we wouldn't have to deal with a messy fight out in the physical world! Why in the world are we not making every effort to make our minds stronger every day of our lives?

This calls for a movement of mind muscle builders that are trained to expel every unclean thought attempting to enter the sacred realm of our minds to pervert our future. We should be aggressive thought bouncers that kick out any twisted and immoral imagination trying to find a nest in our heads. A generation of ripped minded people that speak out and say, *'Murder, you are not welcome here! Adultery, you are not welcome here! Lust you are not welcome here! Theft, lies, and blasphemy, you are not welcome here!'*

ARE THOUGHTS HAPPENING TO YOU?

Be alert when thoughts begin to happen to you. When you start doing things you don't want to, when you don't even know why you're doing what you're doing. When words come out of your mouth that you did not even think about. This is a sign that you are abdicating your responsibility to manage your mind; that something is creeping in your head without your permission.

Wake up! Be alert! Be sober minded!!

“...for your enemy the devil is on the prowl like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.”

-1 Peter 5:8 [NCB]

Do not relinquish the thoughts in your mind to your flesh, the devil, or the world. These natural and supernatural forces will gladly take over for you and start thinking for you unholy, rebellious thoughts. And before you know it, you will be in a foul place with a messy heart. This mighty mental force we have must be mastered and managed diligently by submitting our will to the will of God.

“We capture every thought and make
it give up and obey Christ.”

-2 Corinthians 10:5 [NCV]

Thank the Lord for your God-given ability to have dominion over your thought life to reach your fullest potential and pursue His divine goals with uninterrupted passion. You were given power over your mind to sanctify your life and fulfill God’s purpose.

PLAN

Think and write down three things you have been putting off for a while.

Practice the power God gave you over your mind and tell it what to do about these things. Block 15 or 30 minutes to make progress on those shelved goals. Defeat and overcome those lazy and passive thoughts once and for all.

Think and write down three things you are doing that are causing you to sin against God.

Search and confront the original thought that has led you to sin, for here lies the genesis of your defilement. Rebuke that thought out loud and command it to come under the authority of Jesus Christ. Simultaneously decide to think a clean thought that replaces the unclean one. Whenever the unclean thought shows up again in your head, take authority over it—because you can—and put it in prison so it does not interfere with God’s will for your life. Be intentional. Practice daily.

PRAY

Lord I understand that even though my thoughts can defile me, Your thoughts can sanctify me. Awake my will so it’s quick to slap off any thought that stands against your will for my life. I determine not to let idle or devil thoughts tell my will what to do. Rather, I will use my will to tell my mind what to think, so I can behave in accordance to your perfect plan for me.