



The Good News

October 13th, 2019

Volume 19, Issue 40

Keeping Our Thoughts Pure

By Michael McCleary

We live in a society that, for the most part, has given itself over to the concept of instant gratification. This item joins a long list of problems with society that includes a relatively low threshold for controlling one's own actions which then leads to a refusal to acknowledge responsibility when those actions become harmful or unlawful. When confronted with these issues of society, it would seem pointless to point out that the thoughts of the mind should be kept pure. However, we learn from the Bible that our actions and attitude begin with our thoughts. If everyone in our society gave themselves over to guarding their thoughts, how much less crime and sin would be committed? As Christians, we are to set an example to show how thoughts are to be kept guarded. While some in society may call it mind-control or brain-washing, God asks us to keep our thoughts pure for a reason. Let us consider some things that God has to say on the matter:

1) Our actions come from our thoughts – Matt. 15:19 (Mk. 7:21). We have recorded for us in **Matt. 15:19**, and again in **Mark 7:21**, the words of Jesus as He says, *“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man...”* We realize that Jesus is not speaking about the literal heart but about our minds and the wants and desires that are concocted there. Notice how the first thing Jesus mentions is evil thoughts, and then He mentions the actions that come from those thoughts. How does this relate to our character? We can sometimes observe one's true character and thoughts by their actions; my character determines which thoughts to allow myself, and those thoughts, in turn, determine many of my actions.

2) We can be judged and condemned based on our thoughts – Acts 8:22; Matt. 5:27-28. In **Acts 8:22** we can observe Simon the sorcerer being condemned because he had tried to buy the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit. Peter says, *“Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your*

heart may be forgiven you.” We learn that Simon wasn't condemned just because of his action, but because of his thoughts in this matter. But we learn something else from this incident as Peter continues in **vs. 23**, *“For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.”* Was this observation made possible because of the Holy Spirit? Perhaps, but it seems to be what Peter observed from the actions and words of Simon...that there was an ulterior motive in his desire to obtain spiritual gifts. In **Matt. 5:27-28** this concept goes a little farther by Jesus showing us that we can indeed sin with a single thought. He says, *“You have heard that it was said of those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”* While this should not be taken to an extreme, as by some, that a thought can constitute grounds for divorce, it does serve notice that I can commit sin with my thoughts.

3) We must bring our thoughts into subjection – II Cor. 10:5. As Paul writes the Corinthians in **II Cor. 10:4-5**, he says, *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...”* In a context of dealing with the spiritual weapon that we wield, the Word of God, he refers to the power of this weapon, showing what is necessary to be in obedience – the captivity of thoughts.

As we contemplate this matter, let us strive to be the master of our own minds, allowing the Master of All to direct what thoughts should fill our minds.