

Lesson on "Our Thoughts"

1.) Pray for Wisdom & Insight

2.) **To the Christian** - Do you struggle with impure or negative thoughts? What does the phrase mean? - Garbage in - Garbage Out. This Lesson is about the secret area of everyone's mind - go slow and be honest with yourself by making changes. There is hope for the Doubter!

3.) Introductory Scripture

Titus 1:15-16 (NLT) **15 Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure. But nothing is pure to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, because their minds and consciences are corrupted. 16 Such people claim they know God, but they deny him by the way they live. They are detestable and disobedient, worthless for doing anything good.**

Some people see good all around them, while others see nothing but evil.

****What is the difference between these 2 Groups?** Some people may declare they are "realists" and that the other (pure) people ignore the sin around them. The Purest person just scoffs.

Which Group is correct?

Our souls become filters through which we perceive goodness or evil. The "Purest" (those who have Christ in control of their lives) have learned to see goodness and purity even in this evil world. But the "Realist" finds evil because their minds and hearts discolor even the good they see and hear. Whatever you choose to fill your mind with will affect the way you think and act.

Turn your thoughts to God and his Word, and you will discover more and more goodness, even in this evil world. A mind filled with good has little room for what is evil. Example: Change your TV viewing habits by not watching the 24 hour News Channels and see the positive results.

4.) Thinking About What You Don't Have - Starts Temptation - Sin

Genesis 3:1-6 (NLT) **The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"² "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. ³ "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'"⁴ "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵ "God knows that your eyes will be opened as**

soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.”⁶ The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too.

The Thought: Satan tried to make Eve think that sin was good, pleasant, and desirable. A knowledge of both good and evil seemed harmless to her. People usually choose wrong things because they become convinced that those things or more knowledge is good for them. "Yes, news is negative but I must know what I'm up against in life." **Why enflame your emotions and disrupt your peace, joy, and contentment in life?**

The Look: Notice what Eve did: She looked, she took, she ate, and she gave. The battle with sin is often lost with the first look. Throw out the sales catalogs, put on eye blinders when shopping, don't go to buffets! **Looking is the first step leading towards sin.**

Sin Spreads: The reality of sin is that it spreads. Eve involved Adam. When we do something wrong, often we try to relieve our guilt by involving someone else. **Sin swiftly spreads - often to the ones we love the most!**

This cycle was all started by a thought!

5.) Think Before Speaking

Proverbs 15:28 (NLT) The heart of the godly thinks carefully before speaking; the mouth of the wicked overflows with evil words.

The godly weigh their answers; the foolish don't think before speaking because they don't care about the effects of their words. It is important if you have something to say; it is equally important to think about it first. **Do you carefully plan your words, or do you pour out your thoughts without concern for their impact?**

6.) Rid Your Life of All Wrong, Wicked, & Evil Thoughts

Numbers 12:1-5 & 9-12 (NLT) The Complaints of Miriam and Aaron **While they were at Hazeroth, Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses because he had married a Cushite (Black) woman. 2 They said, "Has the Lord spoken only through Moses? Hasn't he spoken through us, too?" But the Lord heard them. 3 (Now Moses was very humble—more humble than any other person on earth.) 4 So immediately the Lord called to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam and said, "Go out to the Tabernacle, all three of you!" So the three of them went to the Tabernacle. 5 Then**

the Lord descended in the pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the Tabernacle. "Aaron and Miriam!" he called, and they stepped forward.

9 The Lord was very angry with them, and he departed. **10** As the cloud moved from above the Tabernacle, there stood Miriam, her skin as white as snow from leprosy. When Aaron saw what had happened to her, **11** he cried out to Moses, "Oh, my master! Please don't punish us for this sin we have so foolishly committed. **12** Don't let her be like a stillborn baby, already decayed at birth."

Aaron & Miriam were brother/sister of Moses and they had become jealous of Moses. They also questioned why Moses had married a black woman. And they had ignored the friendship Moses had with God. Those thoughts and actions required that God step in to punish them. God was upset about their disunity and challenging Moses' position. Aaron asked that he and Miriam not be punished for their sins.

It is easy to look back at our mistakes and recognize their foolishness. It is much harder to recognize foolish plans while we are carrying them out because somehow then they seem appropriate. To get rid of foolish ideas before they turn into foolish actions requires eliminating our wrong thoughts and motives. Failing to do this caused Miriam and Aaron much grief. **What foolish plan are you currently thinking about and should lay down?**

7.) Your Thoughts Represent Your Character / Nature / Heart

Micah 2:1 (NLT) **What sorrow awaits you who lie awake at night, thinking up evil plans. You rise at dawn and hurry to carry them out, simply because you have the power to do so.**

Micah was warning against those who use their power or position to take advantage of others. King Ahab of Israel had pouted because he couldn't get the landowner (Naboth) to give or sell his vineyard. So his wife, Jezebel had Naboth killed in order to give the garden to King Ahab. (1 Kings 21:1-16) Today the government and speculator's take advantage of people through Eminent Domain or Foreclosure Laws.

But this form of thinking applies to any evil or wicked action. To steal, to get even with someone, greed, covertness, & etc. are examples. A person's Character / Nature / Heart is rooted deeply within their secret and corrupt nature. **What do you think about as you lie down to sleep at night? Do your desires involve greed or stepping on others to achieve your goal?**

Evil thoughts lead to evil deeds! **What do you watch on TV, read, or think about before going to sleep?**

8.) Controlling Your Thoughts

Matthew 5:21-22 (NLT) Teaching about Anger **21 "You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.'** **22 But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.**

Jesus confirmed the Old Testament Law and then gave a fuller understanding of why God made the law in the first place. Moses said, "you must not murder" (Ex. 20:13) - Jesus taught that we should not even become angry enough to murder, for then we have committed murder in our heart. The Pharisees felt they fulfilled the law because they didn't murder anyone. Yet they were angry enough with Jesus they would soon plot his death; though they would not do the dirty work themselves.

We miss the intent of God's Word when we read these rules for living without trying to understand why He made them. Killing is a terrible sin, but anger is a great sin too. It violates God's commandment to Love. Brooding bitterness against someone is a dangerous emotion that threatens to leap out of control, leading to violence, emotional hurt, increased mental stress, and spiritual damage. Anger keeps us from developing a spirit pleasing to God.

Jesus is suggesting that His followers practice mind / thought control and to stop murdering people with emotional out-bursts of Anger.

9.) What Comes From Inside

Mark 7:20-23 (NLT) **20 And then he added, "It is what comes from inside that defiles you. 21 For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. 23 All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you."**

An evil action begins with a single thought. Allowing our mind to dwell on lust, envy, hatred, or revenge will lead to sin. Don't defile yourself by focusing your thoughts on evil.

Paul's solution is stated in:

Philippians 4:8 (NLT) **And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.**

Jesus made the following point:

Mark 7:14-15 (NLT) **14 Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. "All of you listen," he said, "and try to understand. 15 It's not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart."**

While being concerned about what we put into our bodies is a good healthy practice; very few Christians are as stringent about what goes into their minds through reading, social media, TV, movies, and pleasure activities.

Jesus was more concerned about our attitude, mind-set, thought control, and thought processes than what we eat. Do you worry about the mind "junk food" you take into your heart? Garbage in - Garbage Out of your actions. Jesus supports thought control.

10.) Start Thinking Like Christ

Matt 5:21-22 **Murder: It is not enough to avoid Killing. We must also avoid Anger and Hatred.**

Matt 5:23-26 **Offerings / Tithes: It's not enough to Tithe. We must also have Right Relationship with God and People.**

Matt 5:27-30 **Adultery: It is not enough to avoid Adultery. We must also keep our hearts from Lusting and be Faithful.**

Matt 5:31-32 **Divorce: It is not enough to be legally Married. We must also live out our Marriage Commitments.**

Matt 33-37 **Vows: It is not enough to keep a Vow. We must also avoid Casual and Irresponsible Commitments to God.**

Matt 5:38-47 **Revenge: It's not enough to seek Justice for ourselves. We must also show Mercy and Love towards Others.**

Remember: We must fulfill or obey the "intent" of God's Commandants.

11.) Concluding Example: Doubting Thomas

John 20:24-28 (NLT) Jesus Appears to Thomas Alone

24 One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. 25 They told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he

replied, "I won't believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side."

26 Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. "Peace be with you," he said. 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!" 28 "My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed.

Personal Strengths & Accomplishments:

- One of Jesus 12 Disciples ;
- A Thinker with intense Doubts & Beliefs ;
- Today he would probably say - Where is that confirmed in God's Word? ;
- A Loyal and Honest man.

His Weaknesses and Mistakes:

- Along with others, abandoned Jesus at his arrest ;
- Refused to believe the other disciples claims to have seen Christ and demanded proof ;
- Struggles with a pessimistic outlook.

Lesson's from His life:

- Jesus does not reject doubts that are honest and directed towards belief or truth. ;
- It is better to doubt out loud than to disbelieve in silence. Silence rarely finds answers ;
- Find someone or a class where you can share your doubts and get helpful answers.

Summary Insight: Jesus was not hard on Thomas for his doubtful way of thinking. He was like a man who had one foot in the air and was ready to step forward or backward. Despite his skepticism, he wasn't satisfied to let his thinking

lead into apathy. He wanted answers from God, then he would believe, and then follow God's ways.

Some people need to doubt before they believe. If doubt leads to questions, and questions lead to answers, and if answers are accepted, then doubt has done a good work. A willing Mind wanting positive or correct answers helps a person make a correct decision. Let your doubt deepen your faith as you continue to search for the answers.

Deeper Insight:

Have you ever wished you could actually see Jesus, touch Him, and hear his Words? Are there times you want to sit down with Jesus and get his advice?

Thomas wanted Jesus' physical presence. God today has a better plan than in Thomas' time. Even now Jesus is with you in the form of the Holy Spirit. You can talk to Him, and can find His Words to you in the pages of the Bible. He can be as real to you as He was to Thomas.

The Word of God neutralizes negative &/or wrong thought and fills your mind with the pure Truth about God. Become an expert on the Bible! Let your negative thoughts (lies) lead you to the Truth.

Scriptural Advice:

2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV) **We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.**

Psalms 19:14 (NIV) **May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

2 Timothy 2:15 (ESV) **Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the Word of Truth.**