

# "Thinking" Biblically (Part 2)

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 26 July 2020

Preacher: Fred Stone

[ 0 : 00 ] The human mind has been described as being like a giant television that can never be turned off. The idea our mind is always on.

We're always thinking about something, consciously or subconsciously. You think about your life. Throughout the day, there are times when you are just zeroed in on something.

You're thinking seriously, just devoting your mind to the task at hand. There are other times, though, that our mind just sort of drifts and we daydream.

Even when we go to bed at night, our mind does not turn off. Sometimes our mind is so active, it's just sort of racing. We can't lay aside what we've been doing or we can't stop thinking about what's got to be done.

But when we do go to sleep, our mind continues to work. It creates dreams. And, you know, that's where the mind just sort of blows your mind to think.

[ 1 : 12 ] Some of the crazy things that are going on up here that comes out in our dreams. Well, if you think about your mind, it is always, or think about your mind in terms of television, it is always on.

The screen never goes blank. Now, suppose you had a television that could never be turned off. What would you do when something came on that you just hated?

It was not good. It was not something you wanted to think about. You can't turn it off, so what would you do? You'd change the channel, wouldn't you?

That would be the logical thing. Well, as Christians, we are responsible for what we allow to play on the screen of our minds.

In fact, we are called to make sure that our mind stays on channels that are good. As we're going to see some things this morning, things that are pure, things that are positive.

[ 2 : 16 ] Our mind needs to be focused on the kinds of things that would please God. I want you to turn back, if you would, to Philippians chapter 4, verse 8.

And we're going to continue what we started last week, looking at how Paul instructs us, take control of our thoughts. He tells us to think intentionally about certain kinds of things.

Think about right things, such as, let's look at it. Philippians 4, verse 8. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Paul is telling us, in effect, to think like a Christian or think biblically. He says that because he knows we are responsible for what we think.

You ever just dwelled on that for a little bit? We are responsible before God for that which we dwell on. Now, we're not responsible for everything that comes into our mind.

[ 3 : 36 ] All kinds of things can cross our minds. What we're responsible for is what we do with it, whether we dwell on it and especially act on it.

Paul knows very well that what's in our mind, we might even say what's in our heart, is eventually going to come out in our words and in our actions.

Paul learned that from Jesus. I want us to look at a little bit of what we looked at last week from the teaching of Jesus about the importance of what we think. What's in our mind?

What's in our heart? Let's look at just two of the verses from the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus said, you have heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery. But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

The lustful intent takes place in our mind, in our thoughts, in our desires. Jesus is talking about the importance of what's on the inside.

[ 4 : 43 ] It's even more obvious in this verse from Matthew 15. But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. Now think about that.

Those actions, they originate from within. Jesus does not make any kind of distinction between our thoughts and desires.

He's just talking about what's within us. The way that we think is the source of our words and our actions. You know, the way we think matters to the Lord.

It matters a great deal to Him because He knows what we think will eventually come out. And so if what we think matters to the Lord as Christians, shouldn't it matter to us?

[ 5 : 45 ] Shouldn't we care about our thought life? You know, if we're serious about being Christians, living like children of God, then we've got to be serious about wanting to honor God in the way that we think.

And think like one of His children. Let's look now at this verse. Think about how we need to take control of our thought life. And intentionally seek to think like a Christian.

Or think biblically. Let's begin as we did last week. What does it mean to think biblically? And the first thing I want us to see is it does not mean that we deny reality.

The idea of thinking like a Christian. Or thinking biblically. It doesn't mean you don't pretend that there's a lot of junk in this world. A lot of evil in this world.

D.A. Carson explains it well. Look again as we did last week. He says, This is not some escapist demand to avoid the harsh realities of our fallen world.

[ 6 : 50 ] The sad fact is that many people dwell on dirt without grasping that it is dirt. The wise Christian will see plenty of dirt in the world, but will recognize it as dirt.

Precisely because everything that is clean has captured his or her mind. Carson's pointing out the fact. That we as Christians should recognize the dirt of this world.

That would be the opposite of what Paul is saying in terms of what we think. That which is untrue, dishonorable, unjust. That's the dirt of this world.

And we see it. We see it all around us. And we're not to pretend that it does not exist. But God calls us to recognize it for what it is. Call it what it is.

Avoid it. And stay morally and ethically clean from it. Let's think about what thinking biblically does mean. Paul is talking about we need to discipline ourselves.

[ 7 : 53 ] And intentionally think about certain kinds of things. Let's look at it. Think about whatever is true. We looked at this last week.

So I just want to hit the highlights from last week and move on. Broadly speaking, whatever is true is whatever is real. Whatever is accurate. Whatever is proven to be true in any area of life.

Kent Hughes makes a good point that we're talking about anything in this world. Anything, anywhere that is true that is right. Look at what he says. Everything that is true is from God.

Because all truth is God's truth. This applies to every avenue of life. From faith, to science, to relationships, to public life, to business.

When Paul talks about think about whatever is true. He's not talking about just thinking about spiritual things. He's talking about look around in this world. Embrace that which is true.

[ 8 : 54 ] Which is good. Which is accurate. What's true is true. And we need to think along those lines. Instead of thinking things that might be.

Or thinking things that are not true. Even if the world says that it is. More specifically, what is true refers to whatever is truthful or dependable.

Now that implies that we should not think about things. Dwell on things. Focus on things. Focus on things. That are not true.

Things that maybe are deceptive. You know there's much in this world right now. That is a deliberate denial of what is true.

You can read a lot of the mainstream media. Listen to their reports and see. There's a deliberate denial of what we know to be true and right and good.

[ 9 : 53 ] But one of the best examples that I want to address for these next minutes. Is the acceptance of transgenderism. And the reason I want to bring this up under the category of true and untrue.

The world today has just closed their eyes to the real truth. When it comes to the issue of transgenderism.

A transgender person is someone who claims to identify as the opposite gender of their biological sex. For example. A man who claims to be transgender was born a biological man. His birth certificate lists him as male. But he says he thinks of himself as a female. As a woman. He says he feels like a woman maybe trapped in a man's body. Therefore he wants to live and act like a woman.

[10:58] If he's out in public he dresses like a woman. Uses a woman's restroom. If he's an athlete. He wants to compete as a woman.

Against other women. That is a denial of the truth. About himself. It applies to a woman as well. A man or a woman who thinks this way is denying reality. A man who thinks this way is pretending to be a woman. A woman who thinks this way is pretending to be a man.

As Christians we cannot accept such denials of truth. God made human beings male and female. Genesis 1.

26 and 27. 27. 26 through 28. We've looked at that in recent times. We've looked at it many times. God created human beings in his image. God created human beings male and female.

[12:02] A person born as male. A person born as male is to live as a male forever. He is not a female. He will never be a female.

The same holds true for a female. If a person is born female she will always be that way. For a person to deny his or her biological sex is a denial of reality.

It is a rejection of the truth. Christians can and must never accept transgenderism because it is rejection of the truth.

We need to learn to think about whatever is true. Every place in life. And we need to determine what is true where we can based on the clear teaching of God's word.

But before we go to the next one let me just emphasize. The reason why it's so important for us to think about whatever is true.

[13:14] Because it will determine that which we think. Will determine whether we live our lives based on truth. Reality. Or a lie.

Number two. Think about whatever is honorable. Whatever is honorable describes things that are noble. In fact noble is the translation a lot of times used here. Things that should be highly regarded.

Worthy of respect. The idea is if we'll think in ways like this. It will help us to rise above the world's dirt and scandal.

Let's stop here and just think a minute. What are you putting into your mind every day? What are you filling your minds with? What's the source?

Is it things that are honorable? What do you watch? What do you listen to? What do you read? You know what you do so you think of this.

[14:22] Does what you fill your mind with promote honorable thoughts about other people? About yourself?

About life in general? About God. About God. And your relationship with Him. Or. Does the things you put in your mind drag you down?

Take you to some dark place? Maybe even pull you down to the gutter of life. Remember. Remember.

The way we think. Determines how we live. Determines how we're going to talk. What we're going to do. Paul is telling us.

You control what you think. You control what you dwell on. Think about whatever is true. Wherever you find it in life.

[15:26] Think about whatever is honorable. Wherever you find it in life. Number three. Think about whatever is just. Or. Right. Many translations say whatever is right.

I think that's the majority translation. The idea is we need to learn to think in terms of. What is right. What is just. Or even. What is fair.

Before God. And before other people. You know a lot of people in this world today. Think more about what's pragmatic than what's right. In other words.

A lot of people today think more about. What works. As opposed to what's right. Or. What works best for me.

In any given situation. With no real concern about. What's the right thing to do. Now if you're more concerned about just what works.

[16:22] Or what works best for you. You're more prone to lie. When you need to. To cheat someone. To cheat someone. If you're more concerned about.

What works. What works best for me. Regardless of whether it's good. Or right. You're a deceptive kind of person.

You can't be trusted. If you're not concerned about what is right. What is just. You will mistreat people. You will use people.

You will abuse people. For your advantage. Let's sort of shift our thought for a moment. Justice is a hot topic issue right now in this country.

I want to be clear in this. Everyone. All of us. Should be bothered. Upset. Angry even. By a lack of justice.

[17:23] Wherever it is found. We should not just sit back quietly. Meekly. And accept. That which is not right.

That which is unjust. If there's anything in the world. We can do about it. The death of George Floyd. Was nothing but an act of injustice.

It was not right. And every law enforcement official. Across the country. That I have read. Who's commented on that. They all are unanimous.

In saying it was not right. In any way. But. The response of many people. To that act of injustice.

The response of many people. Of rioting. Of looting. Of murdering innocent people. Is equally not right.

[18:23] It's unjust. As Christians. We need to learn. And learn to think. In terms of. What is right. Period.

What is the just. Response. To any. Unjust situation. We need to learn. We need to learn. To think in terms of. What is right.

And just. In our personal relationships. Not just thinking about. You know. What's happening in the country today. But. What's happening in your life. Sometimes we get mistreated.

Sometimes we are dealt with. In an unfair kind of way. How do we respond. We need to learn. To think in terms of. What's right. In every relationship.

In every situation. And respond. Appropriately. Respond. In a way. That is.

[19:20] Going to solve. A problem. Rather than. Create new ones. Most of us. In this room. We would be. Well served.

To learn. To control. Our emotions. In stressful. Situations. In situations. Where we feel. Where we feel. Like we're not being. Treated the right way. We need to learn.

To control. Our emotions. And discipline. Ourselves. To do. What is right. Even when people. Have mistreated us. And not treated us. The right way.

As Christians. In this community. We need to be. Setting the example. We're seekers. Of justice. We are. Administers.

Of justice. And when we're not. Treated justly. We do respond. But we need to learn. To respond. Not emotionally. But appropriately. We need to do.

[20:15] The right thing. Regardless of how. We have been treated. Number four. Think about. Whatever is pure. This is a reference. To moral purity. In every aspect.

Of life. A lot of times. You think about. Something that is pure. In the context. That we're looking at. People automatically. Just think about. Sexual purity. Well that is certainly. True here.

But. What Paul is saying. Is not limited to that. You know. People. Throughout history. Have been exposed. To a lot of.

Moral impurity. Moral impurity. Wherever they lived. It's not something new. Paul was writing. His letter here. To Christians. Who lived in the.

Town of Philippi. And as those Christians. Just lived their lives. All around them. They saw. All kinds. Of examples. Of moral.

[21:12] Impurity. So what we see today. Is not unique. But what is unique today. Is how much.

We are exposed. How widespread. The exposure. Is. To all kinds. Of impurity. We're exposed today. Every time you turn on the TV.

Most movies. A lot of places. On the internet. A lot of forms of media. That we. Are involved in. Exposes us.

To moral. Impurity. What that means is. We. You and me. We've got to put forth. A lot of effort. To guard our minds.

And our hearts. From being exposed. To a lot of the. Moral impurity. In this world. That can really. Capture our mind. Dominate our thoughts. And sooner or later.

[ 22 : 11 ] It's going to come out. In what we say. In what we do. We need to take this. As a warning. You and me. I want to say this.

To men especially. Young guys. If we don't avoid. Filling our mind. With that which is pure. If we don't guard.

Against impurity. Sooner or later. It's going to come out. In some way. And sometimes. That can destroy.

Your reputation. That can destroy. Your marriage. That can cost you. Your job. It does that. Somewhere. In this country.

Every day. Now. Every. Parent. In this room. Every grandparent. Every teacher.

[ 23 : 06 ] Everyone. Who has influence. Over. Children. Or young people. We need to do. Whatever we can. To guard. The minds. And the hearts.

Of our children. Grandchildren. And others. We have influence over. We need to do. Everything that we can. To monitor. What they take.

Into their mind. Through TV. Movies. Through the internet. Through social media. Through their phone.

And I want to emphasize this. Parents. Grandparents. If the child. If the child lives with you. And you're responsible. You are responsible. For what that child.

Takes in. Through the phone. Or tablet. Or computer. You buy for them. You are supposed to be the adult. That's in charge.

[ 24 : 02 ] That's in control. That monitors. That monitors. That allows. Or does not allow. Them to take in. Whatever. God is going to hold you.

Responsible. There's a lot of homes today. In this day. Where children rule. And that's wrong. That's sinfully wrong.

That's a weak man or woman. A pitiful excuse. For a father or mother. To allow their children. To just dictate.

What I will do. What I won't do. And to have unlimited. Unfiltered access. To the internet. Take your responsibility seriously.

Parents. Grandparents. Influencers of children. Children in here. Teenagers. Grown men and women. We need to guard.

[ 25 : 02 ] What we put into our minds. What we dwell on. Because it will. Eventually come out. Sooner or later. I want to say this.

One more thing. I forgot it. The parents. The goal in life. When your children are young. Or teenagers living at home. Your goal is not to be. Their best friend or buddy.

Sometimes to be the parent. You ought to be. To lovingly. Discipline them. Say no to them. Correct them. Punish them. Sometimes they're going to look at you.

And they're going to hate you. I want to encourage you. Don't be harsh. But be firm. Don't be afraid. To take away.

What needs to be taken away. If you bought it. You're paying the bill on it. You got it. I've got two sons.

[ 26 : 03 ] I took away a lot of things. Over the time. And I'm sure they hated my guts. At times. But they're grown men now. They come to church here.

They eat lunch with me every Sunday. We play golf together. We have a good relationship. It didn't ruin anything. For me to be. Tough.

When I needed to be tough. I was sometimes harsh. When I shouldn't have been harsh. But I was never. Never. Afraid. To say and do what I thought was right.

Before God. About these kind of things. And what was in their best interest. Speak the truth. Live the truth. Do it in love. But do it.

You are responsible as a parent. Number four. Think about whatever is pure. That's where I was. I got so tied up here.

[ 26 : 59 ] I lost my place in my notes. Number five here. Think about whatever is lovely. That's just odd. We don't think in terms of that word. Do we?

Well. It is an unusual way to describe. How we're to think. Max Anders points this out. In his commentary. He says. Lovely is a rare word. Referring to things that attract. Please. And win other people's admiration. And affection. Such thoughts. Bring people together. In peace. Rather than separating them.

In fighting. And feuding. The idea is. We need to think in terms of. What will promote healthy relationships? What will help me?

What do I need to put into my mind? What do I need to dwell on? Think about. What kind of mindset. Do I need to develop. That will help me to. To the best of my ability. Promote.

[ 27 : 55 ] Healthy relationships. With other people in my life. And not dwell on negative things. Things that cause conflict. Unnecessary conflict.

Things that cause division. Where we don't have to have. Division. Think about whatever is lovely. Whatever will bring people together. Whether it's the loving thing. That will help us to love God more.

Love people more. And where we have influence. Help people to love one another more. Number six. Think about whatever is commendable. Or admirable. This describes virtues.

That normal people. Value. And speak highly of. I'm going to just give you some examples. It could be anything. Not necessarily something. Spiritual.

But just. Things that are. Commendable. Common courtesy. In treating. The way you treat people. Respect for parents.

[ 28 : 52 ] And older people. Listening. Respectfully. To someone. Who disagrees. With you. And not.

Jumping down their throat. Shouting them down. But learning to. Give and take. Listen. You don't have to agree.

What we used to call. Learning to agree to disagree. Today's culture. Totally rejects. This whole concept. It's not a virtue today.

To listen. To someone. Who you don't agree with. It's not a virtue today. To show common courtesy. To other people. To show respect. For parents. And older people.

But we're Christians. As children of God. We need to think. In terms of these. Common grace.

[ 29 : 49 ] Virtues. That people throughout history. Have admired. Have considered to be commendable. Which has been sort of a backbone. Of civilization.

Among all kinds of people. Not just Christians. We need to learn. To think in terms of that. Which is commendable. That which is something. We can highly value.

Across the board. Now. Paul concludes this list. With summary statement. Think about what is excellent. Or praise worthy. Look at it. If there is any excellence. If there is anything worthy of praise.

Think about these things. Paul is not trying to give us. A complete list. He never does. Any of the virtues. That you see. That Paul lists. In some of his letters. The fruit of the spirit. He is never trying to give us.

An exhaustive list. This is all there is. To the fruit of the spirit. This is all there is. To this or that. Paul is saying here. Sort of a wrapping up.

[ 30 : 46 ] Think about the best. Kind of things. Think about what is worthy. Of praise. By God. And people. But note the last part. Of this phrase. Think about these things.

Paul is not saying. Give it. You know. Give it a little casual thought. He is not saying. You know. When you sort of. Drifting off to sleep. Think about these things. Alec Motyer.

Points out. The importance. Of what he is talking about. The verb. Think about. He cites the Greek word. Means to ponder. To give proper weight. And value to.

To allow the result. Appraisal. To influence. The way. Life is to be lived. In other words. We need to learn. To think deeply. About the kinds of things. Paul describes.

In this verse. Because. If we think like this. It will help us. To live like this. But if we don't.

[ 31 : 42 ] Think like this. If we think. The opposite kinds of ways. We'll live. The opposite kinds of ways. If we're serious. About living. A Christian life. We really.

And truly. Need to get serious. About the way. That we think. That leads us. To the final question.

We looked at. A little bit. Last week. We'll move on. Further today. How do we develop. The habit of thinking.

Biblically. Last week. I said the best way. The first place. But not the only place. Is to think truth. To learn to think truthfully. Is through consistent. Bible reading. And Bible study. I emphasized. Last week. Set a time. When you're going to. Read God's word. You're going to learn. To think the way. God thinks. What pleases him. What doesn't please him. You learn to think about. What should I believe. What shouldn't I believe. How should I live my life. In my home. How should I treat people. As we read the Bible. We learn these kinds of things. But we're busy today. [ 32 : 41 ] Everybody's plates full. It seems. Our minds are filled. With all kinds of things. All of them are not good. Or all of them are not. Wise. Kent Hughes describes. How this.

Busyness. Is our greatest danger. Look at this. The greatest danger. In our busy. Increasingly. Post literate world. Is that we make. Little or no effort. To think God's thoughts. After him. To hide his word. In our hearts. So that we might not. Sin against him. We cannot be profoundly. Influenced. By that which we do. Not know. I want to encourage you. Put forth. Disciplined effort. To know God's word. It's essential. To learn to think.

Biblically. But I want us to. We need to do more. Than just read the Bible. I want to look at one more thing. We must learn. To stop thinking. Mainly. About ourselves. Now stay with me here. [ 33 : 38 ] Most people. Are basically. Selfish. And self-centered. And I'm not talking about. Unbelievers. Most of us.

At least. A lot of times. Most of us. Are basically. Selfish. And self-centered. We think most naturally.

About ourselves. That's why Jesus said. Love your neighbor. As yourself. We don't have to be convinced. To love ourself. We do. Love your neighbor. As yourself. So. We think about. We like to think about. I like to think about. My interests. My problems. My family. Here's one way. You can verify that.

The next time. You tell someone. Something about. What's going on. In your life. Notice how. Quickly. They start talking about. What's going on.

[ 34 : 35 ] In their life. For an example. If you tell someone. About your vacation. It won't be long. Until they're telling you. About their vacation. If you start talking about.

Some of your health problems. You can rest assured. That people are going to tell you. About theirs. They're even going to show you. Their scars. Some people. Now. Some of this. Is just the way. Conversations go. We tell people. Something. And they respond back. We speak. And we listen.

So some of that's just normal. And natural. But some of it. We're just selfish. And self-centered. Truth is.

I don't care about your vacation. I care about my vacation. Truth is. I don't care if you've got. Ingrown toenail. But I care if I've got one.

[ 35 : 33 ] We are. Selfish. Self-centered people. We would all benefit. By consciously. Making an effort.

To not. Think about ourselves. Most of the time. And instead. Think more about God. And other people.

How often do you think about God? About. Loving him. Knowing his will. Doing his will. How often do you think about.

Pleasing God. Serving him. With your time. Your talents. Your treasures. How much thought do you give for.

Other people. And what's going on in their lives. Their problems. Their needs. How often do you think about.

[ 36 : 35 ] How I could help this person. How I could meet a need. Or how I could share the gospel. With this person who's not a Christian. Do you ever think about how you could be a.

A Christian. Influence. Over certain people in your life. Who have no other. Christian friends. We would. We would.

We would all benefit. By making the conscious. Effort. To think. Less about. Ourselves. And not talk about ourselves.

So much. Focus more on other people. And listening to them. Final thought. It is absolutely true.

That what we think. That what we think. Determines what we say. And what we do. Your thoughts. My thoughts. They matter.

[ 37 : 32 ] Because they. Form. They shape. Our lives. Therefore. We all need. To ask God. To help us. To discipline ourselves.

And think more about things. That are true. Honorable. Just. Pure. Lovely.

Commendable. Excellent. And praiseworthy. In fact. Let's go to God right now. And pray. And ask him to help us. To think more. Biblically.

Like this. Would you join me. Father. Help us now. To just evaluate. Our own. Thought life. What is. Filling our minds. What are we. Thinking seriously. And deeply. About. Lord.

[ 38 : 31 ] Help us. If we're allowing. The wrong things. To. Come into our minds. Help us to confess. That is the sin. That it is. Lord.

If our minds. Are more like. Gutters. Or sewers. Help us to confess. That. To truly. Seek your forgiveness. To turn from it.

Help us. Lord. To know that. Our minds. Will never be turned off. And so. We've got to be intentional. To not. Just.

Avoid. The impure things. The impure thoughts. The untruthful thoughts. We've got to. Saturate our minds. With that. Which is. True.

And honorable. And pure. Help us. Father. To start. With your word. Help us. To learn. Dear God. To think.

[ 39 : 30 ] Biblically. To think like a Christian. To think. Your thoughts. About ourselves. About life. About you. About eternal things.

Lord. Lord. Help us. To make the commitment. That on a day by day basis. We're going to exercise. The self-control. And discipline.

To think. Biblically. Help every Christian. Dear God. To have that desire.

To put forth that effort. Day in and day out. Help us. Father. To do the hard work. Of avoiding the wrong.

Kinds of things. To come into our minds. Father. If there are people in this room. Who are not Christians. Help them to see. That they can't just. Do their best.

[ 40 : 32 ] And change the way they think. Help them to understand. That they must first. Humble themselves. Before you. Turn from their sin.

And trust Jesus. As their Lord and Savior. Help them to see. That they need to be forgiven. And cleansed. And filled with your spirit. Lord. Remind every Christian.

Teach every unbeliever. In this room. Right now. That it is only. Through the power. Of your spirit. Who indwells every Christian. That we can.

Discipline ourselves. To think. Biblically. So help us. To seek your help. Help us. Not to just do. The best we can. Help us.

Lord. To seek your help. Help us. To trust you. Help us to obey you. Let's just. In an attitude of prayer. Listen to the Lord. And respond to him. As he wants you to.

[ 41 : 27 ] Right now. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right.

All right. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right. All right.