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“THINK ON THESE THINGS...”

Protect Your Mind; It's Not An Open Field

There are people whose minds are like an open field that anyone (or animal, for that matter) can go through and drop unwanted seed. When you leave your mind open this way, any worthless seed can be thrown in it and it'll grow. It's your spirit that the Bible describes as a field, not your mind. And because your spirit is only accessible through your mind—which is the door to your spirit—nothing can get in there that you don't first allow in your mind.

That's why the Lord instructs us: *“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life”* (Proverbs 4:23).

The word, “keep,” used in this scripture is the same used in Genesis 2:15: “*And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.*” It doesn’t suggest putting or separating the garden away to somewhere safe. It actually implies taking care of it in a protective way and ensuring its security against any external aggressor.

The *Good News Bible* translation puts it clearer. It says, “...*the LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it.*” The word “guard” has a military connotation, which suggests protecting from attack or maintaining in safety from danger.

You’d agree that if there’s no enemy or adversary, there wouldn’t be any need to guard something that belongs to you against an attacker. Truth is, there’s an adversary, and that’s why the Lord instructs you to keep—or guard—your heart with all diligence.

I love *James Moffat’s* delivery of Proverbs 4:23-24. He says in his translation, “*Guard above all things, guard*

your inner self so you can live and prosper. Bar out all thoughts of evil and banish wayward words."

Have you ever heard someone say, "I was barred from joining the team"? It means he was prevented, kept out, blocked, or disallowed from joining the team. That's how the Bible tells you to guard your heart, by barring (disallowing, keeping out) all thoughts that are not consistent with God's Word.

Now, this doesn't sound like the evil thoughts are originating from you, does it? What it simply shows is that there's a devil out there trying to send the wrong thoughts into your heart (through your mind). So you're admonished to bar his evil thoughts and banish his wayward words.

If someone says something to you that challenges God's Word, bar it from your mind! Don't try to accommodate it or reason it out. The Bible says to guard your heart with all diligence, so you must recognise that God is not going to guard your heart for

you. The responsibility is yours. But the good news is that you're not helpless as to what to do. You've been equipped with "the whole armour of God" (Ephesians 6:11), and what you need to do is put it on and never take it off! With your armour in place, you'll be able to bar every evil thought or idea against God's Word that tries to assault your mind (*We'll be looking at this in greater detail in chapter seven*).

God's Yardstick For Measuring Good Thoughts

God didn't just instruct us to mount guard at the door of our hearts and disallow anything from passing through that shouldn't; He also shows us exactly how to place that guard over our minds—by choosing the thoughts we allow passage. In other words, He didn't just

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tell us to renew our minds without showing us how. He told us the files to delete from our minds and the new ones to download and replace them with.

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are TRUE, whatsoever things are HONEST, whatsoever things are JUST, whatsoever things are PURE, whatsoever things are LOVELY, whatsoever things are of GOOD REPORT; if there be any VIRTUE, and if there be any PRAISE, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

How remarkable this is! It immediately shows us God’s yardstick for measuring good thoughts. It says whatever things are consistent with truth [God’s Word], excellent, lovely, of good report, and praiseworthy, focus your mind on these. In other words, let these thoughts occupy your mind and control your thinking-process.

What Are You Thinking About?

Imagine the kind of life you'll live if this verse of Scripture controlled your mind. How many times have you heard something that wasn't true, or honest, or pure, or of good report, but you kept it in your mind and thought about it?

Maybe you heard, saw, or experienced something that made you unhappy, and it kept you up all night, musing and tossing in your bed. Every time you closed your eyes, you saw those negative images and relived the nasty experience again, which only served to upset you even more. Why do you let yourself worry so? Free your mind of such self-inflicted, internal conflicts.

Why have you been thinking of something that's not true, honest, pure, or just? Why dwell on it if it's not lovely, virtuous, or praiseworthy? Why hold on to something that's a connection to unhappiness? Did you know that negative thoughts could reconstruct your face and cause you to look older than you actually

are? This is the reason some folks look ten years older than their age!

You walk into the office and you see some colleagues huddled together, trading tales about another colleague, and you pull up a chair and join in the discussion. Then you wonder why you're unhappy, turning

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around in cycles, or going one step forward and two steps back. Well, it's because you've been dwelling on things that are not of good report!

God's Word has shown you what to dwell on as His child. It says it must be HONEST, JUST, PURE, LOVELY, OF GOOD REPORT, VIRTUOUS, and PRAISEWORTHY. Now, you may hear something that sounds honest or true but isn't lovely or of a good report; don't dwell on it, because it falls short of the measure of God's standard of thoughts to allow.

Some folks like to set their minds on news or information that's not praiseworthy. Worse, they get others to join in with them, and together they form the "grumpy group." Refuse to be a dumping ground for their trash.

I believe you want to live a successful and brilliant life, filled with outstanding results and remarkable accomplishments. For that to happen, you cannot afford to be small in your mind. When you have big things to do, and you have a world to take, you can't afford to focus on frivolities and mundanities.

What God Expects You To Think Of Yourself

Perhaps, you're experiencing some challenges with your health, or the doctor has diagnosed you with a deadly sickness or disease. Now you're troubled and wondering what to do about your condition. I want you to realise that in the eyes of God, such a report

isn't true, because it's not in line with His provisions for you revealed in His Word. That condition doesn't fall in line with God's definition of truth. So refuse to dwell on it. Reject it in Jesus' Name. Don't think on it, and don't voice it.

The doctor, by virtue of his training, may tell you the facts, but the Word of God is the truth (John 17:17). Fact and truth are two different things. Something may have been proven or verified as a fact, but if it doesn't align with the Word of God, it isn't truth.

The Bible already says, *"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (2 Corinthians 5:17). That means even if you were born with a sickness, now that you're in Christ, you don't have it anymore; it's passed away. You now live in divine health. So sickness or disease no longer have a place in you, praise God!

This is the consciousness that God wants you to have. This is how He wants you to think about yourself.

You Can Do It!

Now you may be reading this and thinking, “But this isn’t realistic.” Well, it’s realistic and normal in God’s Kingdom where I live! Remember, God’s Word is “truth,” meaning “verity” or “reality.” So in our Kingdom, these are the realities by which we live. We don’t participate in any kind of negative communication. The Lord said to me several years ago, “Son, look from the mountaintop.” That’s where I live, and it sure is no dumping ground for trash talk or thought!

“...Whatsoever things are JUST, whatsoever things are PURE, whatsoever things are LOVELY, whatsoever things are of GOOD REPORT; if there be any VIRTUE, and if there be any PRAISE, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8). God isn’t telling us to do something He knows we can’t. We’re His children, and this is the life He’s called us to. If He said these are the things we should think on, it means we can and we must, if we’re

to enjoy the full benefits of the life He's given us.

What you do with your mind is so important. Remember, you're the expression of your mind, and the quality of life you'll live here on earth isn't a function of the quality of your spirit but of the character of your mind. Your mind can make you poor or rich. It can place you on the pedestal of glory and greatness or dump you in the dust of suffering and shame. Choose glory. Choose life. Choose to use your mind right.