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THE POWER OF THOUGHTS

You must have observed that we've been talking a lot about thoughts. That's because there can't be any meaningful discourse on the mind without constant reference to the material with which it functions—thoughts.

In the second chapter, I defined thought as the creation, recalling, reviewing, and processing of images, for meaning, reason, language, and expression.

Now as we delve further into the subject, you'll see that thoughts are *pictures of the mind with constructive or destructive possibilities, functioning with or within human emotions*. In other words, they have the ability to influence your emotions.

Sometimes they are imaginations, but they're more than that. Thoughts are conscious, mental constructions of your mind based on imaginations, information, or stimuli.

Thoughts, therefore, are a stream of images that create meaning. You can't think without meaning;

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if you do, it just means you're not thinking. Real thinking is creating or setting one's mind on a stream of images that create or have a meaning, and thus give a message.

A man's thoughts, if wrongly employed, can keep him in bondage and clog the wheels of his success and progress. On the other hand, he can experience glorious liberty as a result of his thoughts. That's why the Bible in Philippians 4:8 counsels us to choose and think the right thoughts

only.

Many times we underestimate the power and possibilities of our thoughts. Until you change your thinking, you can't change your life; you can't change your state, and therefore, can't change your estate. Your life will always go in the direction of your thoughts. Your life will never be different from the character of your thoughts.

You're a reflection of your thoughts. Your life is the outward manifestation of the inner workings of your mind. That's why understanding the importance of your thoughts and how to use them rightly is very vital.

Where Do Your Thoughts Come From?

By now, I trust that you must have understood the latent power of your mind and the importance of cultivating your thinking processes and creating the right pictures about everything that concerns

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you. I'm certain that you also now know how to effectively channel your thoughts in the way that God wants you to.

However, you mustn't be ignorant of the fact that there's an adversary (the devil) out there who's constantly devising tricks to rob you of God's blessings. The Bible describes him as mimicking a roaring lion that prowls around, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). And one of the ways he'll try to sway you is by planting all kinds of wrong thoughts and pictures in your mind. He will try to mislead you into believing damaging thoughts that can put you in bondage. That's why, before you accept and dwell on any information that comes to you, you must first discern its source so you don't allow the wrong stuff get into your spirit.

You need to know how to distinguish the thoughts that come to you, because if you're not mindful of where the thoughts you process emanate from and examine them with God's Word, they could lead you astray.

Understanding The Different Sources Of Your Thoughts

1. Your Own Reasoning:

These are thoughts that emanate from you based on the information you've acquired. Such information, a lot of times, is conditioned by the happenings in your environment: what you've studied in school, read in the newspapers, listened to on radio, seen on TV, browsed on the Internet, or heard from someone else.

2. From God:

Thoughts can also come to you from God. God,

sometimes, communicates His thoughts to you through your mind, which is the doorway to your spirit.

3. From Satan:

Evil or negative information, opinions and suggestions, if allowed, can be thrown to your mind by the devil. And all the thoughts he brings are to pollute your mind, blind you from God's truth, and rob you of the glorious life you ought to be enjoying. This is mostly done through imagination, pictures, and inaudible voices (2 Corinthians 4:4).

You may wonder, "How then can I distinguish the thoughts that come to me?" How can I know the thoughts I should or shouldn't accept? It's simple.

If you're born again, the Bible says you have the mind of Christ: "*For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ*" (1 Corinthians 2:16). Though

you had a certain way of thinking before, now that you're God's child, your mind has been enabled and empowered to think like Him.

Before the new creation came, God said, "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord*" (Isaiah 55:8). But now that you're born again, you have His life now; you're now a partaker of His divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4), glory to God! There's only one way of thinking and you're in that way now—in Christ.

Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life*" (John 14:6). So every thought that is good for God and good for people is from heaven, and God's heaven is operational in your heart. Every thought that makes you resent or despise someone else, or makes you work against the purposes of God, is from the devil, not from you. When you find yourself thinking thoughts that frustrate or contradict God's plans for you, or for the Church, which is His Body,

understand that they're not from you or God, but the devil. When such thoughts come to you, immediately discern and reject them.

Your thoughts are basically from the Lord's standpoint. He has declared you good, and so evil, unhealthy, or negative thoughts can't emanate from you.

You're Responsible For Your Thoughts

Scripture records in Genesis 6:5 that God looked at man's life, the way he lived, and how he related with his fellow man, and

*"...GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every IMAGINATION of the THOUGHTS of his HEART was only evil continually"
(Genesis 6:5)*

"Imagination" is the word I want you to notice

here. Some versions render it as “inclination.” In other words, “every inclination of the thoughts of man’s heart was only evil continually.” This means man was constantly inclined to thinking and imagining evil. Wickedness was in his heart continually. So the Lord said, “...*I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them*” (Genesis 6:7).

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God held man responsible for his thoughts. Otherwise, He wouldn’t have pronounced this judgment upon him.

Some folks say, “Well, you know, these negative thoughts just come to my mind; I don’t know how they come.” Well, God holds you responsible for processing such thoughts.

Remember we defined “thought” as the creation, recalling, reviewing, and processing of images for meaning. Creating, recalling, reviewing, and processing are all up to you. It’s up to you to process or not to process the images that you get. If you don’t process them to have a meaning, they can’t give you a meaning by themselves. You’ve got to give them a meaning, just as those disciples in Luke 24:37 gave ghosts a meaning (recall the narrative in Chapter 2).

They’d never seen anyone attacked or destroyed by a ghost, but they’d heard stories, and the fear of ghosts had become registered in their minds. So when they saw Jesus—the Healer of the broken hearted, the Kindness of God, the Expression of the love of God—they were afraid of Him, because they thought He was a ghost.

Just imagine that Jesus hadn’t said anything to them to allay their fears? Think what would have

happened if He had frowned at them. Maybe they would have passed out or even died from fear. Then the news would have gone around that a ghost killed them, when, in reality, they died of fear.

So with our minds we give meaning, interpretation, and reason to the images we receive and process. You can give reason to whatever you create in your mind, and also give it a language for expression.

Change Your Way of Thinking

I just told you that God holds you responsible for your thoughts. **Jeremiah 17:9** says,

*“The heart is deceitful above all things,
and desperately wicked: who can know
it?”*

Until a man is born again, this is the description of the state of his inward man. No wonder Jesus

said you must be born again, because the natural man's heart is desperately wicked.

Isaiah 55:7 also says,

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

These all show that God holds every man, even the unrighteous and unsaved, responsible for his thoughts. What then should the unrighteous do about his state, since, according to Jeremiah 17:9 and Genesis 6:5-6, his heart is desperately wicked and his thoughts are only evil continually? Jesus gives us the answer in John 3:3. He says he must be re-created; he must be born again and receive a new nature and a new heart.

But the question of his negative, evil thoughts still remains, even after he instantly receives a new

heart by the miracle of salvation. And God still holds him responsible for his thoughts, in spite of his new nature. That's why Isaiah 55:7 says, *"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."* In other words, change your way of thinking. The Lord holds you responsible for your thoughts, and He expects you to change your way of thinking to conform with His Word.

Your Thoughts Affect Things Around You

Did you know that your thoughts can also affect things around you? That's because thoughts release signals, and those signals can be received by things around you and people connected to you.

You've probably had this experience where you were thinking about someone and that person suddenly showed up, or called you, or sent you

a message. Or maybe you were thinking about a particular thing and even though you hadn't said anything about it to anyone, someone near you started thinking the same thing and actually voiced that thought. Science calls it telepathy: *a transference of thought from one mind to another by extrasensory means*. But if you understand the spirituality behind the science, you'll become ever more careful about the thoughts you allow.

I don't allow just any thought in my mind. If I don't want to create certain thoughts in someone near me, I won't think them, because I know I can transmit those thoughts.

We all transmit thoughts, and sometimes we inadvertently transmit negative thoughts into our environment that cause it to turn on us and attack us. Did you know, for instance, that your room has thoughts from you? The walls, furniture, clothing, etc., in your room are made from materials that have

memory and can receive and retain information from you, and whatever they've gotten from you can remain in them. That's why you've got to be careful the kinds of thoughts you let run through your mind, so you don't make something happen that you don't want.

“Fear Not”

Why do you think the Lord so often tells us, “Fear not”? It's because if you allow thoughts of fear, they'll affect your mind and stop the power of God from flowing in your direction.

You're going to have to discipline your mind so you can use it correctly. Start learning to think happy thoughts. Practise it until you become good at it, such that whenever negative thoughts of discomfort, frustration, anger, annoyance, bitterness, etc., come to you, you can easily say no to them and change your mind.

Change your thinking; start by saying the right things, uttering words of gratitude, and singing songs of praise to God.

This is how you can use your mind to cause good things to flow in your direction and stop the wrong, negative, or evil things from happening around you.