

# Higher Thinking

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Thinking is reserved for humans. Dogs and cats do a primitive form of it, but not like humans. Humans have the ability to assimilate information, then discriminate and decide in regard to it. All the mental faculties come into play in thinking– the intellect, the will, even the emotions. The intellect is the area for pondering facts and the will is for the making of choices as a result of what the intellect has done. The emotions, in turn, subordinate to the will and intellect. Thinking is natural to humans but it is a very complex procedure.

The ability to understand God and His will is based on proper thinking. For instance, the recognition of God is a matter of faith, not of sense perception. Faith, the faculty for seeing the unseen, for knowing the unknown, is based on thinking. Paul says, “Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17). Faith is achieved by thinking, weighing information and coming to a decision after having done so.

God has never forced man to think in a certain way, although He does give him the opportunity to think very high thoughts and entertain sublime, spiritual ideas. What a man entertains in his mind is up to him; it is part of his free moral agency. But the mind will not function well on low, base thought and; conversely, it will function at a high level when entertaining the higher, spiritual information. God does recommend to man what kind of thinking will help him and make him better.

For instance, He says, “Finally...whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be anything praiseworthy— meditate on these things” (Phil 4:8). Thinking on high things, things of piety and goodness, has a predictable effect. Moral excellence is the product. “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7).

All immorality is the result of poor thinking. Jesus said that a man will not commit adultery who does not first lust. Most of today’s immorality is astoundingly simple; it is based almost entirely on self-justification. The thief steals because he thinks he has been mistreated; the fornicator commits fornication because he feels unloved or because he thinks it does no harm; the embezzler steals from his employer because he

thinks he has been poorly compensated. All of it is rationalizing, the result of poor thinking.

Poor thinking results from a lack of exposure to the higher information in God's word. Believe me, the less the people of this or any other culture contemplate the high ideals and methods of inspiration, the further their degeneration, the deeper their decadence. You cannot have a strong culture based on poor thinking; and you cannot have good thinking when the fodder used is low, crass, and self-serving.

It is possible to think evil thoughts in the midst of what is seemingly a religious service. Men in all ages have done that. The Middle Ages produced all manner of evil and ungodly actions in the name of religion. Thousands were killed in the name of the church; all kinds of evil was performed as result of religious fervor out of control. The same kind of thinking is being done today. People can be so wedded to a cause, so involved in a party, that the end comes to justify the means. The party becomes the icon and suspicion the *modus operandi*.

Good thinking is an act of the will. One decides to do it. We would all do well to cultivate the ability to entertain thoughts that edify instead of those that merely satisfy. It takes considerable discipline to squelch the tendency to think about evil and replace it with good. It often takes more than one try. But habits are formed by small steps and good thinking can only come to those who are willing to make the effort.

Good thinking is extremely beneficial because of what it produces. If it is so that a man becomes what he thinks it is very advantageous for one to think on the higher plane. True religious fervor, the kind that seeks the best interests of all concerned, is the result of true religious thinking and cannot come any other way. Brotherly love is dependent on good thinking, so is every good deed; and whoever sacrificed anything for the cause of Christ did it because he thought it was good to do so.

Three things are necessary to make good thinking into habitude: 1) Decide you want to. Every person does what he decides to do; and good thinking is no less a product of the will than any other decision. 2) Search and find good thoughts to occupy your mind. Read the Bible; it will give you fodder for contemplation that is higher, more noble. 3) Obey the law of displacement. You cannot fill up your mind with the higher kind of thinking until you have first divested it of the lower variety.