

PART 13 - CONNECTING MY MIND WITH MY LIFE

❖ HOW DO YOU LIKE PEOPLE'S HOT BUTTONS?

How do you like other people's hot buttons? Probably not too much. I know some people that if you say just one little thing in a way that they do not like, off they go in some tirade. I know one person that is so over sensitive to everything that you say that I feel like I am always walking on egg shells around them. I knew one person that was like this and I could say something in a very light-hearted way to kind of relieve the tension they had created and they would give me the dreaded "look".

Everyone probably has some kind of "hot button" that we would be well off not to push. Right now you know what **your** "hot buttons" are and what someone else's "hot buttons" are – especially your marriage partner's. A "hot button" is an annoying behavior in someone else that generally angers you in some way. When pushed, it can become very emotional and intense. Think of a "hot button" as an **emotional trigger** that when someone pushes yours, in all likelihood it generally will cause you to react in a very negative way. These "hot buttons" are at the center of many arguments and conflicts.

However, you would be much better off not having any "hot buttons" for someone to push – right? Let me say it a different way. *"Do you think that hot buttons are biblical? Yes or No?"* Your hot buttons are **NOT** something good, but something that God wants you to remove. It would actually be a good practice for you to simply write down on a sheet of paper all of your known "hot buttons" so that you can get rid of them. You could start with something like *"It makes me angry when they...."* Once you have your list, what this study will help you do is to get rid of those "hot buttons". I say it again. "Hot buttons" are not good for you or for anyone else. If you have some "hot buttons, then you need to see them as a part of your life that is not yielded to God.

The issue may seem complicated for the lost person, but it is really a very simple one for a Christian. The battle that you face is that of "**God's will vs. my will**". Nothing is more important than knowing God's will for your life, but when you know it, you have to implement it into your life for His will to benefit you. Your "hot buttons" are **not** on the list called "God's will". There probably is this spiritual battle that is often taking place in your mind. The battle goes something like this: *"I know God's will, but I just cannot obey it right now."* Or it may be like this: *"I know God's will, but I think I will do it my way."* This is subtle and you would never say that you think like this, but I suspect that you often do. I certainly have. I can remember time after time when God's Spirit was prompting me *"Gary, do not say what you are about to say"*, but I was determined that I was going to say what I wanted to say, so I did. I have no recollection that it has ever turned out good.

So, when you stand at that spiritual crossroads, what will you be inclined to choose? Will you choose **God's will** or **your will**? If you are fully transparent, I imagine that many times you decide to do it your way and to say or do what you want to say or do. When that continues to happen, here is what is taking place. Because you have thought that way for so long, you have built a **neural pathway** in your brain and it just comes natural and instinctive for you to react and respond this way. If you are ever going to be able to overcome these areas of your life that are hindering your spiritual growth and your relationship with other people, then you must know what God's Word says about what you are doing. There are clean clothes and dirty clothes – right? So, if you do not know God's Word, what that means practically is that you will not know God's will and therefore you will not obey it in your life. **Biblical ignorance**

inevitably leads to biblical disobedience. So many Christians just nod at the truth -“un huh, okay, okeydokey, yep.” What is life changing for other believers never impacts them. They never grasp the truth so that it can help change their life for the better. Let me say it in two different ways, so listen carefully. This is super important. First, **the less time you are in the Word equates to less receptivity to the Word.** Secondly, **the less time you spend in Scripture the more time you will spend in sin.**

KEY PRINCIPLE 31: THE MORE YOU IGNORE GOD’S WORD, THE MORE YOU WILL IGNORE GOD.

Ephesians 1:15-19 is very important because it says that God wants to help you understand His Word.

Eph 1:15 (NKJV) Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

❖ I LOVE MY GPS

I cannot imagine having to go through some large city where I have never been without the GPS on my truck. That thing is a lifesaver. I have trouble navigating my way in the Walmart parking lot, nevertheless some large city I may be in. Could you imagine driving through downtown Chicago or New York or Dallas without a GPS? I would be completely lost no matter what kind of directions someone gave to me. I remember a number of years ago when Brenda and I went back to Fort Worth, Texas where I was in the seminary, and we did not recognize one thing. So many things had changed since 1972. The problem was that we did not have a GPS at the time and we really struggled to find our way around. There were so many new roads and buildings and neighborhoods.

So, here is what I want you to do. **I want you to think of the Word of God as your spiritual GPS.** It is important to realize that the devil makes wrong thinking available to everyone, and it is free of charge. He is a master at creating wrong mindsets in people’s lives. So, the enemy is going to do whatever he has to do to get you to think the wrong way, to think the opposite of how God thinks. If you lose sight of this simple reality, the enemy will win. His strategy is simple. He wants to control your life by controlling your thoughts. He is a copycat because that is exactly how God controls your life. It is by teaching you to think like He thinks.

Just think about your life for a moment. This is so super important. **Whatever you do is always a thought before it is an act.** “Where the mind goes, the man follows”. What you do is always a direct result of what you think. Any action that you take in your life first begins in your mind. If you are impatient, it is because you have developed a neural pathway in your mind that has become a bad habit. If you are an angry person, it is because you have developed a neural pathway in your mind that has become a bad habit. **If you think wrong, you will live wrong. If you think right, you will live right.** So, here is Key Principle 32.

KEY PRINCIPLE 32: YOU CANNOT LIVE A GODLY LIFE IF YOU HAVE AN UNGODLY MIND.

A godly life and an ungodly mind cannot coexist together. They are direct opposites of one another. One will always cancel out the other. John MacArthur said that “*The greatest victories in your life will be when God’s thoughts supersede and replace your thoughts.*”¹ So, **the mind of God on any issue has to become your standard of what and how you think.** Isaiah said it this way in [Isaiah 55:8-9](#),

Isa 55:8 (NKJV) **"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. ⁹ "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.**

So, if you want your life to conform to what God wants it to be, then you have to use God’s GPS. God’s GPS is His Word. This is very simple and should be intuitive to any believer. **The more time you give to the Word of God, the more the Word of God will give to you. You can only get from the Word what you put into the Word.** As a believer you have such an advantage. Why? It is because you not only have the Word of God, but you also have the “**mind of Christ**”. [1 Corinthians 2:16](#) says,

1Co 2:16 (NKJV) **For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.**

Someone is going to ask the question, “*How do I have the mind of Christ?*” You have it in the Bible. The Bible is your GPS so you do not get lost. It is your roadmap, your guide, and your standard for all of your behavior. God has created your brain and your mind so that you can know Him intimately. He has created you so that you can think like He thinks, but it is all found in His Word. He has created your brain in such a way that you can develop a way of thinking, mindsets, and neural pathways that can help you get through any and every difficulty that may plague your life, and it is all found in His Word. However, you must have the spiritual mindset that God’s will is much better for you than your will.

The world is filled with lies, deception, and misinformation, and the devil is the father of those lies and deceit. Everything that Satan is doing in your life is to get you to NOT think like God thinks. He knows that if he can convince you like he did Eve that what he is saying is correct, then he can lead you to do exactly what Eve did. She quickly abandoned God’s Word to her and disobeyed God. With that one decision, she lost everything of value in her life. [2 Corinthians 11:3](#) reiterates this when it says,

2Co 11:3 (NKJV) **But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.**

The word “**craftiness**” refers to trickery, to subtlety.² It means to be shrewd. **The problem that Eve had is that she let the serpent do her thinking for her.** Once he had planted his ideas into her mind, she added some of her own, and her conclusions were the **exact opposite** of what God had told her. The problem is simple – **many believers are prone to simply accept the lies of the devil, merge those with their own ideas, and then discard what God says on an issue that is troubling them.** Your mind is the battlefield. Your mind is where the spiritual war is being fought and won or lost. [James 1:14-15](#) says,

¹ MacArthur, 45.

² Strong, *panourgia*, #3834, ep.

Jas 1:14 (NKJV) **But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.**
15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

On a daily basis, you will be tempted by the spiritual forces that surround you not to believe God and not to trust His Word. Certain unbiblical thoughts and ideas will subtly enter into your mind. James calls it being “**drawn away**”. What James clearly says is that when this happens, ungodly “**desires**” are created in your mind and they give birth to sin, and when that sin is finally finished with you, it brings forth emotional and relational death, and eventually physical death. It “**gives birth**” to what you were not expecting and what you now are not able to overcome. **Habitual sin always creates a spiritual stronghold in your life.** It is the law of sowing and reaping.

❖ I WOULD NEVER LIE TO YOU

Have you ever had someone lie to you? Certainly you have. If there is anything that gets to me personally, it is when someone lies to me. It is like, “Why are you dishonest, why can’t you just tell me the truth?” I have a rule that I live and die by when doing counseling. If someone lies to me and I find out about it, I will not counsel or meet with them again until they are willing to sincerely repent of their dishonesty. It is almost impossible to help someone who will not tell you to the truth.

So, here is the issue. If you are ever going to win the war for your mind, then you have to know the one that you are fighting and what are his tactics. You can never win a war if you do not know who the enemy is. Please be assured that Satan has a simple battle plan to defeat **YOU**. His plan is to deceive you and to tell you his lies so much that eventually you will believe him. [John 8:44](#) says,

Jn 8:44 (NKJV) **You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.**

Please appreciate that the devil is never in a hurry. He is one of the most patient creatures in the universe. He is willing to keep lying to you for years and years. He wants to create a stronghold in your mind. I will talk about this in detail towards the end of this series, but a stronghold is also translated as a “prison”. That is his plan – to put you into a “**mental prison**”. He creates a war, a battle in your mind. Will you believe his lies or will you believe God’s truth. The battlefield is ALWAYS your mind.

Let me tell you how the enemy sizes you up. First of all, he does not know what you are thinking. He does not just randomly know your thoughts, so you have to tell him what you are thinking. You have to verbalize your thoughts out loud. [Luke 6:45](#) says that “**out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks**”, and he knows that. Just suppose that you are in a conversation and you mention that you do not like someone or something about them. At that moment he knows exactly what you are thinking. He watches your life, where you go, who you hang out with, what you watch, where you waste your time and money. This is not brain surgery. This is similar to bird watching. He just watches your life. Eventually he knows what you like and do not like, who you like and do not like. He knows your weaknesses, your anxieties, and your fears. He knows what upsets you and what discourages you. He knows your “hot buttons” and how much you can take. So, once he has gathered all of that information on your life, then he develops a strategy built just for you. It is all about what he places into your mind

and how he can cause you to think. So many people are no more than puppets just doing whatever the enemy puts into their mind. They have no idea how to think like God thinks. Once he knows your weaknesses, he will attack you with his lies where you are ignorant and where you are confused. He attacks you where you are not willing to believe God.

KEY PRINCIPLE 33: THE STRENGTH OF SATAN IS HIS LIES AND OUR WEAKNESS IS THAT WE BELIEVE HIS LIES.

We believe the devil's lies because we do not believe God's truth. Satan strategy is to always be casting doubt on the Word of God. He is always saying things to discourage you from trusting God – and you take his bait. This is exactly why you become discouraged. You must understand that God is never trying to discourage you unless you are doing something wrong. Everytime that I read God's Word, I never finish what I have read and think to myself, "*I wish I had never read that!*" That never happens. Everytime that I read God's Word I leave encouraged and built up in my faith. He is always telling me what is right and what is true. He is always telling me what is best for my life and how I can have what He calls "**life...more abundantly**".

Just think about it for a minute. No one would ever believe a lie if they actually knew that it was a lie. If you overheard one of your children telling one of their friends of a scheme where they were going to lie to you to get what they wanted, you would not believe them when they told you that lie. The following are just a few of Satan's lies. See if you believe any of them.

1. He will tell you that you are "stuck where you are" and that things are never going to change.
2. He will convince you that you are a victim and have never been the problem.
3. He will get you to doubt your salvation.
4. He will tell you that the struggle is greater than what you want to go through.
5. He will tell you that God's Word does not really work at all.
6. He will tell you that Christianity is a waste of your time.
7. He will encourage you to seek riches and pleasure.
8. He will tell you that it is okay to keep going into debt.
9. He will get you to want what everyone else has.

His list is endless. This is what your battlefield looks like. What the enemy wants to do is to get you to think that what you are going through is just too difficult and that you just cannot make it. That is a lie. Why is that a lie? It is because [Philippians 4:13](#) says,

Php 4:13 (NKJV) I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Do you see what the battlefield looks like – Satan's lies vs. God's truth? So which are you going to choose? Listen very carefully. **You will choose the ones that you believe**. If you are not grounded in God's Word, you will rarely choose God's truth. So, when you find yourself in this negative spiral that the enemy creates in your mind, you have to examine your thought life and what you have been thinking. You have to **reset your thoughts** so that you are thinking like God thinks. The Bible calls it "**casting down strongholds**". [2 Corinthians 10:4-5](#) says,

2Co 10:4 (NKJV) **For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,**

So, who are you going to believe – God or Satan? **Whoever you believe is who you will follow.** [John 10:27](#) says,

Jn 10:27 (NKJV) **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.**

Jesus will always tell you the truth and what is best for your life, and the devil will always tell you a lie and what is the worst for your life. So, at some point in your life, you must decide who you are going to believe – the One who tells you the truth or the one who never tells you the truth. You would think that would be a no-brainer, but that is very far from reality. Many believers have much more of an affinity for listening to the lies of the devil than the life transforming truths of God.

So, let us just assume that your life is not very fulfilling for you and that you believe you are suffering through some undeserved struggles. You feel trapped, hemmed in, stuck, and almost imprisoned in your little world. The harder you try, the more frustrated you become. Nothing is working. Listen to what Jesus said in [John 10:10](#),

Jn 10:10 (NKJV) **The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.**

The devil wants to destroy your life. He will do anything to hurt you, disappoint you, confuse you, and eventually kill you if you will let him. On the other hand, Jesus has the exact opposite goal for your life. He wants to give you a life that is overflowing with strength, wisdom, peace, grace, and joy. The word for “**abundantly**” means superabundant and uniquely superior, and by implication excessive.³ The Amplified Bible says “**to the full, till it overflows**”. The problem is that the enemy has convinced everyone that what the world offers is much better than what God offers. Nothing could be any further from the truth. The pain and misery that many people are unnecessarily suffering through in their life is abounding, and it is all because they have bought into the devil’s lies. What Jesus offers to you is an abundant and overflowing life, but it all begins in your mind and what you believe about Him.

PRINCIPLE 34: WHO YOU BELIEVE AND WHAT YOU BELIEVE WILL SHAPE AND DETERMINE THE DIRECTION OF YOUR LIFE.

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³ Strong, *perissos*, #4053.