

PART 14 - CONNECTING MY MIND WITH MY LIFE

❖ YOUR AMAZING BRAIN

As we get started on this part of the study, I want to talk about your brain and how God has created it to work. I will be talking about the brain over an extended period of time, and some of it will be repetitive in nature. We will be addressing both the positive and negative aspects of your brain that impact your life and how you think, as well as how God uses His Word and its influence on your mind to change your life. As we progress, we will address “neural pathways” and how they impact your life spiritually. This is so super important to understanding how God actually changes your thinking and how you are able to participate with Him in that process. The verse that actually prompted much of this study is [Psalm 139:14](#) which says,

Ps 139:14 (NKJV) I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and *that* my soul knows very well.

None of us even come close to understanding the reality and extremities of this verse. For the most part, we all just take for granted how we are made. Our understanding of the complexities and intricacies of our actual bodies, and specifically our brain as it relates to this study, are extremely minimal at best. As we move through the studies I will identify what I want to call “Brain Facts”. They are just for your information. The brain facts will help you to better understand what it means to be “**wonderfully made**”.

BRAIN FACTS:

1. Your brain can successfully perform 400 billion operations per second – 400 billion!
2. Every thought that you think impacts every single one of the nearly 100 trillion cells in your body at quantum speed.¹
3. 90% of your brain operates unconsciously to you. It is performing functions in the background that you know are happening, but you are not conscious of them happening. For instance, I know that my body digests the food that I eat, but I never tell it to do that. It is unconscious to me. So, 90% of your brain’s and body’s functions are being performed at an unconscious level to you personally.
4. Your brain is approximately 77-78% water, composed of organic material, and only weighs about 3 pounds. It is not much larger than a grapefruit, but what it can do is beyond imagination. There is nothing else in God’s created universe that even compares to it.

My disclaimer is that I am NOT a neuroscientist or a neurologist. I am a pastor, a professor, a reader, and hopefully a learner. I have read many books on the brain and on the mind. Some books are by Christians and some are by non-Christians, so I have to be somewhat selective and discerning as to how I take worldly information and place it into a biblical study. However, my goal in this section is simple – to help you have a deeper appreciation for how God has designed your brain and your mind to function in a way that glorifies and honors Him the most. If you think wrong, you will live wrong, and that will not honor God in any way. If you think right, you will live right, and that will honor God.

¹ Leaf, Think, 210, 222.

❖ WHAT'S DRIVING YOU?

So, it is critical that you **develop an “intentional biblical mindset”** that consistently helps you to honor God in your thinking and in your life. **There are many different ways to fail in your life, but the only way to succeed spiritually is to be intentional.** You do not change by accident. Change takes effort.

KEY PRINCIPLE 35: WHATEVER YOU ARE THE MOST INTENTIONAL ABOUT IN YOUR LIFE WINS.

Obviously, there is great difference between being intentional and being well-intentioned.² If you are not intentionally committed to thinking how God wants you to think, then you will not change. You need to always want to be growing spiritually, and this always requires a strong and unwavering commitment to change what God wants you to change. **Something or someone is driving everything that you do in your life.** The rich young ruler in [Luke 18](#) was driven by his desire for possessions and status, and in the process he got to keep his possessions and status, but he lost his life. What is happening when you are being intentional about changing how you think to think like God thinks is that you are allowing God to exert His influence over your life. This should be seen as a lifelong process of growing into the likeness of Christ. **You have to start somewhere**, and I pray this series will help you make that decision.

In some sense, at best we are only able to touch the hem of His garment regarding an understanding of how Christ has made our brain. Many authors have written that outside of man as a whole that the brain is the second most spectacular of all of God's creation. It is that unique. The Brain Facts, or the technical information we will review, should strategically impact how you change your thinking to think like God thinks. When you grasp how you change your thinking, it will change your life. This is so super important to grasp and to understand because so many believers are living in spiritual, mental, and relational bondage and chaos that is completely unnecessary.

I have come to a very settled conclusion about what and how you think. It is that **you can have joy and be filled with God's peace no matter your circumstances.** Jesus said the following in [John 14:27](#),

Jn 14:27 (NKJV) Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

You can overcome discouragement, anxiety, frustration, and irritation just by thinking how God wants you to think. God has literally designed your brain to function in such a way that you can both recognize and choose the right things to think about. If your thinking is wrong, you can observe that reality and then change what and how you think. You may not want to change anything about your life, but God has designed your brain and your mind in such a way that you can do exactly what He wants you to do.

KEY PRINCIPLE 36: IF YOU CHOOSE NOT TO THINK LIKE GOD THINKS, THEN YOU BECOME RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT CHOICE.

² Carlson, xiv, 3.

Is it not fairly obvious to you that so many people seem to find a way to blame God when life does not go the way that they want it to go? Why is that? It is because they chose not to think like God thinks, but to think like they wanted to think. They chose not to live like God wanted them to live, but to live however they wanted to live. Well, no wonder things did not work out as they may have wanted. So, to overcome this fatal tendency, what you want to do is to develop a lifestyle and a mindset where you learn how to renew your mind to God's truth. **Once you know His truth, then you intentionally choose to align your life with His will so that the divine purposes for which He has created you can be fulfilled.** There is no higher calling for your life than what I just expressed – that you live your life to fulfill God's purposes for your life.³

❖ THE MIND AND THE BRAIN ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS

Now, I want to make a very critical distinction about the difference between your brain and your mind. They are not the same thing, and I do not want you think of them as being synonymous.

BRAIN FACTS:

1. Your brain is matter and substance. It can be measured, dissected, and quantified.
2. Your brain is 77-78% water, lipids (fatty acids) and fats compose 10-12% of your brain mass, proteins comprise 8%, soluble organic substances comprise 2%, and carbohydrates make up 1%.

Your mind, however, is uniquely different from your brain. It is not substance or matter. It is intangible and invisible. It is not measureable, dissectible, or quantifiable. No one knows where it is or where it resides. It is a part of what Scripture calls your soul, your spirit, and your heart, and no one knows where they reside. When a believer dies, the brain stays in the body that is buried, but the soul and spirit of that person lives on forever. In [Luke 10:27](#) Jesus gave a very important command. This is considered the greatest command in the Bible.

Lk 10:27 (NKJV) So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'

This is no small thing that Jesus has said. To say it another way, He wants you as best as you can to use your mind as effectively as possible. He wants you to use all of your mind in every way possible. God wants you to evaluate, reason, wonder, imagine, think, meditate, judge, reflect, resolve, consider, learn, read, assess, decide, conclude, answer, study, estimate, discuss, persuade, influence, analyze, solve, and who knows what else. You do every one of those activities with your mind and with your brain. It is all day, every day, 24/7. God has made you to think and to think deeply.

BRAIN FACTS:

1. Intentional, deliberate, biblical thinking changes your intellectual, cognitive, emotional, social, and academic performance. Right thinking makes you smarter.
2. The more intentional and deliberate your thinking process is, the more intelligent you become.

³ Leaf, Switch, 25-27.

3. Neurological research shows that when you stop learning that it becomes toxic to your brain tissue. Your brain grows neurologically through deliberate and intentional deep thinking.
4. What and how you think literally changes the **physical** make-up and neurological structure of your brain. You grow new neural pathways in your brain that house more and more information.

The bottom line is that when you make good, sound, biblical choices in your life, it enhances how your brain functions. It helps your brain to be neurologically healthy. It would be similar to eating the right foods. When you do, it helps your body to be physically healthy.

❖ WHAT ABOUT THE WORDS THAT YOU SPEAK

Now, why would I even talk about your words at this point in the discussion. It is because your words are a direct by-product of what you are thinking. [Luke 6:45](#) says,

Lk 6:45 (NKJV) A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

You will always verbalize what is in your heart and what you are thinking. I love my wife and children more than I can tell you, and I am always telling them how much I love them. Sometimes I am startled at how flippant some people are with their words. Their words are simply a reflection of what they have been thinking. They speak caustic, abrasive, impatient, demeaning words that place other people in a very defensive posture. The problem is that it does not even register to them that they could have phrased what they were saying in a different way to be more calming and affirming to the person they were addressing. Let me say it in a stronger way. **THEY ARE NOT THINKING LIKE GOD THINKS!** [Proverbs 29:20](#) says,

Pr 29:20 (NKJV) Do you see a man hasty in his words? *There is more hope for a fool than for him.*

I.e., this is the man who just says what he wants to say. He reacts negatively to everything said to him that he does not like. He does not think deliberately and therefore he speaks abrasively. There is more hope for a fool than for this man.

[Proverbs 17:27](#), however, gives us the picture of a godly man who is biblical in his thinking and therefore biblical in what he says.

Pr 17:27 (NKJV) He who has knowledge s pares his words, and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit.

This is a man that is the exact opposite of the [Proverbs 29:20](#) man. This man “**s pares his words**” because he has “**a calm spirit**” and does not let people upset and agitate him with their words or accusations. [Proverbs 16:24](#) tells you what happens when you speak with grace and deliberation before you speak.

Pr 16:24 (NKJV) Pleasant words *are like a honeycomb*, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.

This is always a choice. It is an intentional biblical choice that you have to make.

BRAIN FACTS:

1. When you react to something difficult and just speak your mind without thinking about what you are going to say, that choice triggers **degenerative processes in your brain and your body.**

Proverbs 10:19 says,

Pr 10:19 (NKJV) **In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise.**

James 1:26 makes this even more serious when it says,

Jas 1:26 (NKJV) **If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.**

Why read your Bible or come to church or pray if you never “**bridle**” your tongue? As far as God is concerned, your negative and abrasive speech makes your Christianity worthless, “**useless**”.

KEY PRINCIPLE 37: WHEN YOU LACK SELF CONTROL IN YOUR SPEECH, IT MEANS THAT YOU LACK UNDERSTANDING IN YOUR MIND.

In this scenario, it means that God cannot use you. Anger and undisciplined speech never work. In fact, expressing anger produces destructive consequences. **Proverbs 29:22** says,

Pr 29:22 (NKJV) **An angry man stirs up strife, and a furious man abounds in transgression.**

If you want to stir the pot, then just get angry with people. Just say angry, indignant, and annoying words to someone, and you will achieve strife. **Ecclesiastes 7:9** declares,

Ecc 7:9 (NKJV) **Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools.**

Colossians 3:8 says,

Col 3:8 (NKJV) **But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.**

The bottom line is that if you are an angry person, God cannot use you. Anger is so destructive in the body that it generates a constant flow of harmful stress hormones throughout your entire body.

BRAIN FACTS:

1. Anger releases destructive neurochemicals that damage your brain. Anger damages the emotional and regulation centers of your brain.⁴

What God wants you to do is to reshape your thinking so that you do not become angry, frustrated, or irritated. Reshape your thinking to provide a **spiritually based direction** for your life that is not negative. **Research has shown that one of the very best ways to prevent being negative is to express gratitude and appreciation to the person who is frustrating and irritating you.** This is how God wants you to think. Neurological research also shows that the way that you speak to someone actually impacts the genes within your body that regulate both physical and emotional stress.⁵ Your words not only can stress out other people, but they will stress you out. What you speak is simply the evidence of how you are thinking. For instance, when one of your children is annoying you and you want them to

⁴ Newberg, Words, 17.

⁵ Newberg, Words, 3.

stop, you can yell at them and say “STOP!!” or “NO!”. If you say it that way, it negatively impacts the genes in your body and in theirs as well. However, you can reshape what you are saying in such a way that it brings peace and respect to the person to whom you are speaking. Let me say this in a different way. **When you carefully arrange and compose what you say to someone, it helps you to achieve your goals.** It helps you to bring your dreams to fruition. **If you want to destroy your dreams and hopes, then just say what you want with no reflection on what you are saying. Your words have a profound emotional impact on other people** – either good or bad. All you have to do is to just watch and listen to what you have said to them. How they react to what you are saying will let you know whether or not you chose your words properly.

Let me make a simple suggestion that may help you. **Speak to people warmly, slowly, and softly and see how they react to you. Express appreciation and gratitude to people and see how they react to you.** If you will do these simple things, it will eliminate conflicts before they ever happen. Neuro scientists call this “neural resonance”.⁶ This is so fascinating to me.

BRAIN FACTS:

1. “Neural resonance” is when your brain literally aligns itself with someone else’s brain because your words, facial expressions, hand gestures, etc. created an environment for that to happen.

I.e., if you are relaxed, it makes them relax. If you are cheerful, it makes them cheerful. If you are angry, it makes them angry. If you are confident, it gives them confidence. The Word of God is filled with Scripture on guarding what you say and how you say it before you speak. [1 Peter 3:10](#) says,

1Pe 3:10 (NKJV) For "He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit.

When your words are compassionate, understanding, patient, and gracious, they create a similar environment in others that defuses their natural tendency to become defensive. However, when you use the wrong words, the tone of your voice actually changes and it generally reflects both irritability and frustration. When that happens, the listener will immediately become defensive and it will be very difficult to have a meaningful conversation just because of the tone of your voice. [Proverbs 15:4](#) says,

Pr 15:4 (NKJV) A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

Your careless words break the spirit of the person hearing you. [Proverbs 15:1](#) tells you what your mindset should be when it says,

Pr 15:1 (NKJV) A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Here is what you do. Get calm before you say anything to anyone. Then, speak softly, speak slowly, and speak graciously. Speak with great understanding. The issue is that to do this, you have to develop a certain mindset that simply will not allow you to speak abrasive, harsh, and demeaning words that cause people to become defensive. What you want to do is to build people up, even when they are abrasive to you.

⁶ Newberg, Words, 6.

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