

## PART 15 - CONNECTING MY MIND WITH MY LIFE

### ❖ THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU SPEAK ONCE

*Have you ever gotten into a somewhat heated and difficult conversation with someone, and before you know it, you have blurted out something to them that you deeply regretted saying. It is like you knew that it was wrong before you said it, but you just said it anyway. It is the idea that “I am not going to let them say what they said to me without responding with what they need to hear.” If you think like that, then most of the time you will not be happy with the results. A wise man or woman guards their tongue. Sometimes the emotional and relational damage that comes from those kind of outbursts can be very severe.*

I have always heard it said that you need to “*think twice before you speak once*”, so let me make a very practical suggestion at this point. Before you say something to someone, determine if they will hear what you are saying **without** becoming upset with you. If you know, or even suspect that you are going to upset them, then if at all possible, it would be best not to say anything at all and to wait until the circumstances were better. Let me give you one obvious example. Think of the person who has worked all day, had a very difficult and stressful day, and is just plain tired. No matter how well you may communicate something, chances are excellent that they will not be in a frame of mind to hear you. **If someone is physically tired, then they are also mentally and emotionally tired.** Most arguments occur at night when people have had a long, stressful day. So, if you know that someone is very tired, then do not try to resolve some difficult or emotional issue. You probably will not like the results. This should always be happening in the home, and especially at the end of the day.

#### **BRAIN FACTS:**

1. When people are very physically tired from a stressful and difficult day at work, their physical exhaustion literally slows down what neuroscientists call the “**compassion circuits**” in their brain.

What this practically means is that the person you are addressing an emotional issue with is much more likely to be impatient with you and with what you are saying. When someone is in this frame of mind, the tendency is for them to make negative comments back to you because they simply **do not have the mental energy** to turn off their negative comments. They are too tired. If you do not recognize this neurological reality, then you may be setting the table for a great deal of unnecessary stress that can easily become a major roadblock to your relationship with someone. So, think twice about bringing up and talking about difficult subjects when you know that people are physically tired. When you are mentally and physically drained from a difficult day, neurologically you will not be as patient or as understanding as you should be. The “compassion circuit” of your brain has been compromised. That is not an excuse to be abrasive with someone, but it is a reality. Your brain becomes very tired when you are physically tired, so it takes a lot of emotional energy to be engaged in a difficult subject. Some people use the term “brain dead” when they get to this place. So, just wait to address something difficult until you know the other person is rested. Neurologically, they will be much more inclined to talk with you without becoming negative towards what you are saying if you address them with grace. Remember that a “**soft answer turns away wrath**”.

What you want to do is to be continually renewing your mind with the Word of God. When you do, it is like taking a refreshing bath. The Word of God has the supernatural power to cleanse your mind and soul of toxic and abrasive thoughts and emotions that hinder your life physically, emotionally, spiritually, and relationally.<sup>1</sup> The more time that you spend in the Word of God, the more discerning you will be relative to the timing of having an emotional conversation with someone and how your speech should be governed by the Word of God. If you know that you are going to have a difficult conversation with someone, then your tendency should be to listen a lot more than you speak.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 38: WHEN YOU ALLOW GOD'S WORD TO CONTROL YOUR THOUGHTS, IT WILL ALSO CONTROL YOUR SPEECH.**

**Right thoughts + right tone + right time = right results.**

***BRAIN FACTS:***

1. Neurological research shows that meditating on the Word of God enhances the neural functioning of the brain in ways that improve emotional health and strengthen a specific neurological circuit that enhances peacefulness and compassion for others. This same neurological circuit also calms harmful feelings and emotions.<sup>2</sup>

When the Word of God is approached in confident faith, it neurologically **detoxes your brain and your body**. **God has designed your mind to be the control center of your life**. So, the more of God's Word that you place into your mind, the greater control you will have with your words and your volatile emotions. When you control what and how you think, it keeps you from losing control of how you live and how you respond to difficult circumstances. If you are always saying impulsive and harsh things to people, and especially those that you love, what that indicates is that your thinking is out of control. God does not want you to be talking to people in an abrasive way and without an understanding of what may be their frame of mind when you are talking to them.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 39: THE RIGHT WORDS SPOKEN THE RIGHT WAY AT THE RIGHT TIME PRODUCE THE RIGHT RESULTS.**

Tattoo that on your brain. Build a neural pathway for that principle and then learn how to practice it in your life with everyone that you meet. **Right words are always a result of right thinking**. You must **want** to think like God thinks. Why? It is because God's Word represents how He thinks, and how He thinks will be life to your life. So, if someone sees you being indiscriminate, undisciplined, and impatient in what you say to other people, what they will quickly discern is that you are not thinking like God thinks. If that is the case, then why would they ever want to listen to you?

❖ **THINKING LIKE GOD THINKS IS HEALTHY**

*Everyone wants to be healthy, but many people are not willing to do what it takes to be healthy. Every doctor is going to tell you to eat healthy and to exercise regularly, and few people do. Unfortunately,*

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<sup>1</sup> Leaf, Think, 44, 55.

<sup>2</sup> Newberg, How God, 6-7, 14.

*however, no doctor ever tells you that you also need to think right to be healthy. I have never had a doctor tell me to think like God thinks so that I can be healthier than I am. Clinical research is crystal clear that the more your thought life is aligned with Scripture, the healthier you become both physically and mentally.*

I know this may sound awkward, but think of reading God's Word as eating healthy food. The only correct response to God's truth is for you to incorporate His truth into your life by faith. **The Christian life is to be lived by faith in accordance with what God says is true and right.** If God says that something is wrong – anger, laziness, adultery, bitterness, drunkenness, and the like, then they are wrong. If God says that something is right, then it is right. If you choose not to believe God's truth and incorporate it into your life, then you will believe the lies of the enemy and he will keep you in bondage to those lies. Think of Satan's lies as just a simple thought that are always in the first person singular.

*"I think I need a smoke." – "No you don't."*

*"I think I need another drink." – "No you don't."*

*"I just cannot get along with this person." – "Yes you can."*

*"I just do not have the time to go to church." – "Yes you do."*

*"I wish they would just shut up."*

*"I am tired of trying to be Mr. Nice Guy."*

These are exactly the kind of "personal" thoughts that the enemy whispers to you in your thought life. What you need to know, however, is that the wrong thoughts that he so often places into your mind have no power and no control over you unless you believe them. For instance, if you accept the lie that you cannot get along with someone, then you never will. The enemy wins. If you think you need another drink, then you will get another drink. The enemy wins. Every win for the enemy is just his way of creating strongholds in your life that will eventually bring great harm to your life. So, the more of God's Word that you place into your mind, the easier it will be to recognize the lies of the enemy. The only meaningful defense that you have against the enemy's deception is to know God's truth. [John 17:15-17](#) says,

**Jn 17:15 (NKJV) I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.**

[In John 8:31-32](#), Jesus gave you a remarkable truth when He said,

**Jn 8:31 (NKJV) Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. <sup>32</sup> And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."**

As a believer, you are set free by God's truth, but you have to place His truth into your mind and then intentionally apply it to your life for it to ever make a difference in your life. In [John 16:13](#), the Holy Spirit is called "**the Spirit of truth**" who "**will guide you into all truth**". Jesus said this in [John 6:63](#),

**Jn 6:63 (NKJV) It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.**

Just think for a moment about what Jesus said in this verse. This is a phenomenal statement. Jesus said that His words "**are life**". Stated in another way, **God's words create His life in you**. When you choose

to think like God thinks, then the life of God will be working deeply in you. This is what you want – God working in your life. His truth will set you free from all that is hindering you at this very moment.

### ❖ **THE MORE YOU KNOW, THE MORE YOU GROW**

*You cannot grow spiritually if you do not know the Word of God. Trying to live successfully without knowing God's truth is just a fantasy, a dream, maybe what we should call a nightmare. The less time you spend in the Word of God, the less spiritual growth you will experience. It is the old adage that "input determines output". If you choose, you can rest on the spiritual experiences that you may have had in the past, but if you do that, then at that point you have stopped learning, and when you stop learning, you stop growing. When you stop learning, your brain literally stops growing.*

The neat part is that you have more information available about your brain than any other generation who has lived before you, and what you can know about your brain can greatly benefit you in overcoming the spiritual trials and struggles that you invariably will face because you can understand how God has made your brain to work for His glory.

#### **BRAIN FACTS:**

1. Your brain and your mind influence how you actually feel physically. The more negative your thought life, the greater will be the deterioration of your health. The more godly your thought life, the more your physical health will be enhanced.
2. Your thought life is what creates your moods and your emotions. Both destructive emotions and healing emotions are a direct by-product of your thought life.
3. How and what you think is what creates the expectations that you have about your life – both good or bad. So many people have no hope. Why? It is because they have never learned how to think like God thinks. The person who has no hope has no future. [Romans 15:13](#) says,

**Ro 15:13 (NKJV) Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

4. Your mind is what shapes how you see people, evaluate people, and relate to people.
5. How and what you think can create tension and stress in your life, or it can produce peace and calm in your life.<sup>3</sup> I would deeply encourage you to just go ahead and choose God's best for your life. Make the choice to learn how to think like God thinks. Let your brain work for you, not against you. I hope you can sense how important it is to think right, to think like God thinks.
6. The average person has about 30,000 thoughts each day. That represents about 1900 thoughts per hour in a sixteen hour day, or about 32 thoughts each minute, or one thought every two seconds.

Just think of all of the decisions that you make after you wake up in the morning.

1. Do I sleep for five more minutes?
2. Is the dog ready to go out?
3. Should I turn the heat up?

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<sup>3</sup> Leaf, Think, 37.

4. Do I have any appointments today?
5. What am I going to wear today?
6. What should I fix the kids for breakfast? Cereal, eggs, toast, milk, juice, oatmeal?
7. Do I have time to read the Bible?

At this point you are just 5 - 10 minutes into your day! Just going to the grocery store can be a nightmare.

1. Where do I park?
2. Do I get a buggy or a basket?
3. Do I get the produce first or go to the milk section?
4. Where is my shopping list?
5. Do we want green, red, or black grapes, and should they be seedless?
6. Should I get organic vegetables?
7. What kind of eggs do I get – small, medium, large, 12 or 18, organic, free range, or local eggs?<sup>4</sup>

Just making decisions can make you dizzy on some days.

### **BRAIN FACTS:**

1. Neuroscientists have determined that 70% of the average person's thoughts are negative.<sup>5</sup>

That is staggering to me. Their research indicates that because the majority of people's thoughts are negative, that that is why they are so plagued with mental, emotional, and physical illnesses. I would add that for the negative believer that their spiritual growth is deeply hindered. If you are not careful, you can quickly get into a kind of negative spiral of thinking that leaves you feeling helpless and overwhelmed.<sup>6</sup>

### ❖ **WHY NOT CONSIDER GOD'S WAY?**

*Honestly, do you not believe that how God thinks is just so far superior to how you may think that it is not even up for discussion? I keep asking myself a silly question – “Why wouldn't someone want to think like God thinks?”*

As an example, consider what it means to be “**thankful**”. [Colossians 3:15](#) says,

Col 3:15 (NKJV) **And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.**

To “**be thankful**” can actually be translated as to “**be grateful**”. [Psalm 100:4](#) says,

Ps 100:4 (NKJV) **Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.**

When you make a conscious decision to begin living your life with a godly mindset of gratitude, it has a tremendous impact on your brain, and it will have an amazing impact on your relationship with people.

### **BRAIN FACTS:**

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph, 11-12.

<sup>5</sup> Allen, 50.

<sup>6</sup> Allen, 10.

1. When you are thankful and express gratitude, you literally receive a surge of various neurotransmitters such as dopamine and other chemicals that strengthen you to be alert and to have greater understanding and empathy in your mind. This is just because you express gratitude and appreciation.
2. When you are not a grateful person and tend to have a negative attitude, then you are creating neural pathways that produce future negativity in your life. Why be negative all of your life? There is not one verse in the Bible that supports being a negative person – not one single verse.
3. Being verbally negative releases destructive neurochemicals throughout your body and brain.<sup>7</sup>

Just think for a moment of the impact that becoming a grateful person would have in your relationships. It means that you would always be finding ways to thank people for how they are benefiting your life. This is exactly how God wants you to think and to live out the Christian life – with constant expressions of thankfulness and gratitude. Tell everyone you know how thankful you are for God allowing them to be a part of your life. Tell your marriage partner, your friends, your boss, your co-workers, your waiter, even those people who may not like you that much. Listen to how Jesus said this in [Matthew 5:44](#),

**Mt 5:44 (NKJV) But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,**

What the phrase “**But I say to you**” means is that Jesus is REVERSING the way they think. If you will practice this one attribute of becoming a grateful and thankful person and sincerely expressing that gratitude to others, your entire life will change. This is thinking like God thinks.

So, there are two points you should be learning from these Brain Facts and neuroscience. The first is that when you have a negative thought life, you are releasing damaging chemicals into your body and brain. No wonder people are sick. Research validates that **wrong thoughts in your mind create unhealthy results in your body**. Secondly, when you have a godly thought life, you are releasing healing chemicals into your body and brain. Research validates that **godly thoughts in your mind create healthy results in your body**. So, the more you learn to think like God thinks, the greater will be your spiritual well-being and your physical well-being. Why would you not want this for their life?

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<sup>7</sup> Leaf, Think, 40.