

PART 22 – JUST ONE GODLY TRUTH

BRAIN FACTS:

1. Neurological research clearly indicates that most all of your decisions are greatly influenced by your **emotions** and your **appetites**.

It is critical to understand this Brain Fact. Why? Just think through this for a moment. It is because if you do not control your emotions and your appetites (and I certainly am not talking just about food), they will quickly override and suppress your ability to even make a good decision.¹ Let me give you a very simple example concerning the kind of people who make really bad financial decisions.

Take the young couple that buys a brand-new car that they cannot afford because they just had to have it. They were already strapped with debt and there is always too much month left at the end of their money. They drove the new car with the new smell, and to make it worse, it was loaded with all of the extras that everyone must have. Then on top of that, the salesman was so nice and offered them a 72-month loan with no money down and no interest. What a great deal – right? Not really. Unfortunately, after driving it off the lot they became completely stressed out for the next 72 months because of a \$650 monthly payment they have to make that does not fit into their already stressed-out budget. Well, duh!

It was a very, very bad decision, and before they know it, their being stretched out financially causes them to become stressed out physically and emotionally. It is definitely a lose / lose scenario. For many couples, their financial struggles often lead them to a divorce. I did some research and found that money issues is the second leading cause for divorce behind infidelity. In fact, 2/3 of all new marriages start out in debt. For some reason **this young couple simply was not willing to look at the obvious**. Why? **It is because their emotions and their appetites were much larger than their God given common sense**. This happens every day to really smart people who are prone to make really bad decisions. They just ignore the obvious.

KEY PRINCIPLE 66: BAD DECISIONS WILL ALWAYS TAKE A TOLL ON YOU BOTH PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY.

That really is quite obvious – right? This imaginary couple was not in debt and financial bondage because of a lack of money, but because of a lack of contentment. They allowed their emotions and appetites dictate a really bad life choice. [Philippians 4:11](#) lets us know how God thinks when it says,

Php 4:11 (NKJV) **Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:**

[1 Timothy 6:6-8](#) says,

1Ti 6:6 (NKJV) **Now godliness with contentment is great gain.**⁷ For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out.⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

¹ Stanley, Better, 7-8, 10.

The principle is really very simple. It is that **spiritual progress is impossible without changing what needs to be changed**. Those people who are not willing to change how they think so that they think like God thinks, can never really change anything. Think of this idea of bad choices and bad decisions this way. First of all, what you think is what you become. Every decision that you make impacts your ability to guard your mind and your thinking in the future. Why? It is because you are always a by-product of your decisions – either good or bad. Decision making **IS** thinking – right? In fact, you should classify decision making as critical thinking. Your decisions are simply a reflection as to whether or not your life is in harmony with God. This is important to appreciate because most people’s lives are not in harmony with God, and they are suffering the consequences of bad choices. Everyday you are making multiple decisions.

1. You make financial decisions.
2. You make relational decisions.
3. You make simple decisions like what clothes to wear or what to eat.
4. You make spiritual decisions as to whether or not you will follow Christ.
5. You make life-style decisions to live in your means or out of your means.
6. You make dietary decisions. If you eat junk food, you will have a junky body.
7. You make exercise decisions. If you never get any exercise, you will suffer physically.
8. You make employment decisions to work hard or to be lazy.

So, the reality of how your brain works is really very simple. If you think wrong, your brain physically creates a neural pathway that reinforces you making more bad decisions. On the other hand, if you think the way that God wants you to think, your brain physically creates a neural pathway that reinforces you making godly decisions. **Both bad decisions and godly decisions will impact you physically, emotionally, and mentally**. You have to trust the way that God has wired your brain to function. Listen to what God says you have. This is great! [2 Timothy 1:7](#) says,

2Ti 1:7 (NKJV) For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

When people live junky lives, it is not because they have a lot of junk, but because they have a lot of junky thoughts. The culture in which you live literally bombards your mind with pure junk. Your mind becomes cluttered, overwhelmed, and very distorted, but when you begin to think like God thinks, your life will become uncluttered and simplified, and you will enjoy your life so much more. What God has given to you is the spirit of “**a sound mind**”. The word “**sound**” refers to a mind that is **disciplined, sober, and makes good judgments**.² This is the kind of mind that God has created in you. You can easily change ungodly thoughts to godly thoughts and wrong thinking to right thinking. You can choose to make life hard and complicated, but it is not difficult. You just have to change how you are going to think. However, there is one major thing that you have to do. If you want to get rid of discouragement, anxiety, anger, ugly speech, bad habits, unbelief, frustration, and you want to make the kind of changes that will help you grow as a Christian and enjoy a quality life, **then you MUST CHOOSE to think like God thinks**. This must be intentional, deliberate, planned, and purposeful.

² Zodiates, *sophronismos*, 1363.

KEY PRINCIPLE 67: YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE WHAT YOU WANT FOR YOUR LIFE – GOD’S BEST OR YOUR BEST.

I will take God’s best everytime. My best is way too flawed, but His ways are perfect. [Psalm 18:30](#) says,

Ps 18:30 (NKJV) *As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.*

You must always keep before you that **what and how you think will always have a direct impact on how much you actually enjoy life.** You cannot escape that reality. For instance,

1. If you think angry thoughts, you will become an angry person.
2. If you think negative thoughts, you will become a negative person.
3. If you think godly thoughts, you will become a godly person.
4. If you determine to make good decisions, you will make good decisions.

What I am going to say to you next is utterly profound, so please pay close attention.

Even though you may not be able to control every single thought that comes into your mind, you can LEARN to take just one biblical thought captive, and that one thought can impact every other thought that you have.

In [Philippians 2:5](#), Paul said these astounding words,

Php 2:5 (NKJV) (YOU) Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

I think that you could just as easily say “(YOU) Let this mind-set be in you...” I.e., YOU make a deliberate choice that you are always going to think like God thinks. This is your personal mindset – everyday, with everybody, everywhere. You are going to say to me “*Gary, this is way too hard for me*”. Well, then you will never learn to think like God thinks. What you make of your Christian life is always a choice – always. This is not difficult, but it is deliberate and intentional. If someone says something ugly to you, what are you going to say, how are you going to respond to them? Well, [1 Peter 2:23](#) says exactly what Jesus would do.

1Pe 2:23 (NKJV) who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

I refer to this as “**the power of just one truth from God**”. This is how you intentionally are able to change your life. This is a mind-set that you have to develop in your life – to think how God thinks. It is like you are constantly saying to yourself – “*This is how I intend to live. This is how I intend to talk. This is how I intend to make a difference.*” It is always evaluating every area of your life by God’s standards. Listen to what Jesus said in [Matthew 11:30](#),

Mt 11:30 (NKJV) For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

I made a short list of all of the things that I want God to completely control in my life – my thinking, my attitudes, my emotions, my words, how I express my love and appreciation to everyone, how I spend my time, how I make decisions, and my personal commitment to Jesus Christ. I only need the power of just

one truth from God to set everyone of these in motion. I certainly have not arrived, but I am pushing toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, and I find it to be more than exciting. In [Philippians 3:14](#) Paul said,

Php 3:14 (NKJV) I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

That is it right there – “**pressing toward...the upward call.**” Your Christian life and your faith is something that you must see as being intentional and deliberate. It is not just a good idea. You do not grow spiritually by accident. To the contrary, you have to manage your life. You have to put some feet on your faith. You have to make good choices and be very deliberate and intentional in the process.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 68: JUST ONE GODLY TRUTH HAS THE POWER TO OVERCOME
MANY UNGODLY LIES.**

- Just one godly thought has the power to overcome many ungodly thoughts.
- Just one godly habit has the power to overcome many ungodly habits.
- Just one godly conviction has the power to overcome many worldly convictions.
- Just one area of confidence and faith has the power to overcome many anxieties.
- Just one godly belief has the power to overcome many ungodly doubts.

I want you to think of what I am addressing in a very simple way. Let us assume that you are struggling in some specific area of your life. It could be anything – your speech, your eating habits, being overly lazy, being negligent in some area of your life, neglecting meaningful time with God – it could be anything. If that is the case, and it is for most believers, I want you to say to yourself “*I am just one thought and one truth away from how God wants me to think*”. It is the idea that you can live how God wants you to live, and it is not difficult, but it is intentional.

You must recognize that living intentionally is the only way to live the Christian life. I know that you may not always be able to make large life changes overnight, but that does not change the reality that you still have to commit yourself to just doing one small thing at a time. What you will quickly find is that **small choices make a big difference**. Trust me, but there are many ways to fail in life, but the only way that you will ever succeed is by being intentional and deliberate in your decisions.³

If you do not live intentionally, then your bad habits and bad thinking will always prevail. They will always be your default position – to just keep doing what you have always done. We have stated it before, but that is the definition of insanity – always doing what you have always done, but expecting to get different results. If you want something in your life to change, then something has to change – right? I have said it over and over, but growing spiritually is never an accident. When you come to Christ, you make a very deliberate and intentional decision to follow Christ and to trust Christ.

The one thought that will help you drive out your negative thoughts is this – “*I have a choice*”. You **CAN THINK** like God wants you to think. Do not believe the enemy’s lie that you cannot. God has made you this way. You have something wired into your spiritual DNA that is a God-designed, God-given, and God empowered ability to make godly choices. You can choose what you think about, and

³ Carlson, xiii-xiv

you can do this in the most difficult of situations. God has made you to be an “**overcomer**” who possesses powerful spiritual weapons that destroy “**strongholds**” and everything else that “**exalts itself against the knowledge of God**” ([2 Corinthians 10:4-5](#)).⁴ My question is whether or not you actually believe that spiritual truth? You can say that you do, but never implement it into your life. If you do not implement God’s truth into your life, then it is for one of two reasons.

1. The first is that you do not believe God or His Word.
2. The second is that you willingly choose to disobey what you know is right.

Neither one of those are good choices that create good results. Listen to [Romans 8:5](#),

Ro 8:5 (NKJV) For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

This is the essence of the Christian life and nothing less. It is setting your mind on the things of the Spirit, on the things of God, on what the Bible says. Paul goes on to say in [Romans 8:6](#),

Ro 8:6 (NKJV) For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

You have to choose what you really want in life. I would suggest that you choose “**life and peace**” rather than spiritual, emotional, and intellectual death. Think of it this way.

Just one God-honoring thought has the potential to change the entire trajectory of your life – just one thought.⁵

Maybe it just changes the trajectory of just one day. What and how you think is that powerful, and that one thought that you have is able to erase all of the negative thoughts that you had that were actually controlling your life. In the same way,

Just one lie that you believe can change the entire trajectory of your life – just one lie that you believe from the devil.

Satan knows full well that you are what you think, so this is all about taking your thoughts “**captive**” to who God is and what He desires for your life.

The Christians that stand out to me are those who have chosen to trust God and His Word more than their own feeble thinking. **They have implanted into their mind this strong and enduring belief that if they are yielded to Christ that He will take care of them no matter what may be their circumstances.** All of their thinking revolves around Christ and how He wants them to think and live. When something difficult or unpleasant arises in their life, they automatically fixate on how Christ would want them to respond. You can easily identify what consumes your thought life and your reactions in these difficult circumstances by what you think about during that time. Everyone can know exactly what occupies your mind by what you say and by how you react. Are you afraid, are you angry, are you anxious and worried, are you disappointed, are you visibly upset? Are you peaceful, are you calm, are you kind, are you patient, are you gracious? It is always easy to see what or who is controlling your life.

⁴ Allen, 39-40.

⁵ Allen, 62.

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