

PART 25 – REJECT, THEN REPLACE

❖ CANDY, COKES, AND CARBS

I want you to think for just a moment about what our culture is consuming? We live in a “culture of consumption”. I did some research on how much Americans consume versus the rest of the world. The figures are fairly staggering. We represent 5% of the world’s population, but consume 25% of its resources. What this means is that it would take 4 ½ earths to sustain the planet if everyone lived like Americans. Just consider how much garbage we throw away each day. Americans dispose of 5.7 pounds/person/day (the most in the world), whereas China disposes 2.2 pounds/person/day (second in the world). We consume more energy resources than any country in the world per person. For instance, one American consumes as much energy as 13 Chinese. China has 1.4 billion people and consumes 20 trillion barrels of oil each year. The United States has .33 billion people and consume 16.2 trillion barrels of oil each year. Let me tell you what we hear all the time. This is every day, every commercial, every ad, every billboard. We hear things like this:

1. You need this. Really?
2. Everyone has one. Are you sure?
3. This thing will change your life. I doubt that!
4. Buy it now. Why?
5. You need more stuff. I am already stuffed with stuff.

Listen to what Jesus said in [Luke 12:15](#),

Luke 12:15 (NKJV) And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

It should be more than obvious that our culture is not only constantly consuming natural resources, but worse than that we are putting garbage into our minds. We have clearly seen that bad input leads to bad output. Garbage in, garbage out – right? The principle is simple - what you consistently put into your mind is what consistently comes out of your life. Just think of all of the people who spend half their day just scrolling through social media feeds like Facebook or Twitter. It is mind-boggling to me how much time people spend on Snapchat, Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, WeChat, Instagram, TikTok, Pinterest, and Twitter. This is just a few of the ones that are available.

People may not see it this way, but that is what they are consuming in their mind. It is like the person who just eats “junk food” all day – candy, cokes, and carbs. It is not good for their body. If you eat junk food all day, you will have a junky body. Then on top of all of the social media sites, it is shocking what the different channels on television offer to people – virtually nothing but mental, emotional, and spiritual trash. The content is spiritually horrific. The days of “The Andy Griffith Show” are long gone and so are the Barney Fife’s and the Gomer Pile’s of the world. The news sources are toxic and full of calculated misinformation. The problem is simple – the constant content that you consume in your mind is what shapes how you think, and how you think determines how you live. Think of it this way. If you eat pecan pie and ice cream every day, it will not be long before you look like a large balloon with two legs and a head. Consuming all you can may seem like the right thing to do to most people, but in the

end it never really satisfies. Going for all of the gusto is just another way to end up with a miserable life. [Proverbs 14:12](#) says,

Prov 14:12 (NKJV) There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. ¹³Even in laughter the heart may sorrow, and the end of mirth may be grief.

KEY PRINCIPLE 76: WHAT CONSUMES YOUR MIND CONSUMES YOUR LIFE.

The issue is that your life is always being conformed to what you put into your mind. Junk in, junk out. Your life is always following the direction of what and how you think, and what you think is what and how you think is what shapes your life. What you think about today will determine who you become tomorrow. [Proverbs 23:7](#) reinforces this when it says,

Prov 23:7 (NKJV) For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.

Everyone needs to ask a really simple question – “*Do I really like where my thoughts are taking me?*” If you do not like where your life is headed, then it may be time to change your thinking – right?¹ I have good news. God can really help with that. How He thinks is outstanding. He knows full well that **whatever you think about the most is what you will eventually become**. This is unavoidable and inevitable.

Now, here is what Scripture tells us in no uncertain terms. It tells us that with God’s help that you can transform your mind to think like God thinks. The more you place God’s Word into your mind, the more you will begin to think like God and see life from His perspective. You have to make a determination for your life as to what you are going to feed on, what you are going to consume and place into your mind. Just for a beginning, I would suggest reading [Psalm 1](#) and [Psalm 119](#) to get an idea of what God wants you to be putting into your mind.

I want to encourage you to do what I want to call a “*Personal Consumption Inventory*”. You may think this is silly, but let me just make the suggestion – okay? If you will actually do this, I think the results may surprise you. Just be honest and for a week, and at the end of each day, write down all of the things that you allowed to occupy your mind that day. Be honest with yourself so you can make some spiritual progress. As best as you can remember, you have to include everything and everyone. It includes your good friends and your bad acquaintances, good news and bad news, good coworkers and bad coworkers. Everyone and everything should be considered “input”. All of the kinds of thinking that you know that God wants to eliminate or reinforce in your life should be included. It includes what you watch. It includes what you listen to during the day. It includes what you daydream about. It includes what you wanted to do, but did not have time to do it.

Let us just assume that you had a really bad day. [Ephesians 6:13](#) says that there are actually “evil days”.

Eph 6:13 (NKJV) Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

God knows that some days will be much more difficult than other days. The point of this is that it is not unreasonable that you may have a really bad day sometimes. If that is the case, you can almost identify

¹ Groeschel, *Winning*, 3.

where things got off to a bad start just by evaluating what triggered the bad day. Maybe it was several things like you got to bed really late and had to get up really early. It may be that you got frustrated with the kids getting ready for school and said something ugly and irritating to them. Maybe you missed getting your morning coffee, or maybe you had a flat tire on the way to work. It could be that when you got to work your boss was real unhappy with what you were doing and let you know about it. Maybe one of your fellow workers said something ugly to you and it made it you mad. Listen carefully. Knowing what caused your bad day is a great way to be prepared to avoid one the next time that it happens.

In all likelihood, the same things that frustrated and irritated someone today are the same things that will frustrate and irritate them tomorrow.

Why is that? Well, the answer is simple.

KEY PRINCIPLE 77: BAD BEHAVIORS ARE SIMPLY BAD HABITS THAT YOU HAVE DEVELOPED IN YOUR LIFE.

Your initial bad thinking that you were not willing to change just became a bad habit. The good news is that your brain has been so designed by God that you no longer have to be a prisoner to your bad habits. Before I became a Christian, I took drugs, I drank, I smoked, I cursed. However, the moment I received Christ, I never took drugs again. I stopped drinking, I stopped cursing, and I stopped smoking. Why? It is because God changed the way I was thinking, and so my entire life changed and has never been the same since that night in 1971. The principle is simple. If you want to change your life, you have to change your thinking.

Now, this “*Personal Consumption Inventory*” may seem like a lot of work, but it will greatly benefit your life to simply see what your mind is consuming. **What your mind and body consumes greatly impacts what you think and what you become.** For instance,

1. If you consume a lot of carbs and sugars, most likely you will be a fairly grumpy and unpleasant person to be around. It is fairly accepted that this new thing called an “Attention Deficit Disorder” in children is no more than the brains response to an excessive amount of sugar in the diet. If you feed them sugar filled Lucky Charms and Pop Tarts on the way out the door, no wonder they cannot pay attention to anything once they get to school. Their brain is in sucrose shock for several hours.
2. If you watch immoral programs on TV, you will struggle with temptation. If you place immorality into your mind, you will reap what you sow. What goes into your mind is what comes out of your life.
3. If you listen to the news all day, you will become discouraged and anxious.

Okay, let me change gears for a little bit and look again at what is always happening in our brain. I want to give you a very simplistic explanation of the three main building blocks in your brain – neural pathways, neurons, and microtubules. All three are part of the other two and they work together to help you function mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

BRAIN FACTS:

1. When you think about something **new** for the first time, your brain creates a neural pathway to **record** and **retain** what you are thinking about. It may be something new that you saw or something new that you listened to on YouTube. It may be something new that you read in a book, or something new that you learned in school or at work. It might be something new that you tried to do for the first time in your life. However, if you have already thought about something previously, then your brain has already created a neural pathway for that thought.

I will never forget how my oldest son Andrew learned how to ride a unicycle. If you have never tried, then it is hard to appreciate how difficult it really is. Andrew would open a closet door, sit on the unicycle, and just go back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. This went on for days until he started to really gain his balance, and then he would go outside and try to ride the unicycles. It was tough at first because he did not have anything to hold on to, but once he learned how to balance himself, there was nothing to it. His brain was learning, recording, and retaining, and I guarantee you that he could ride a unicycle today with no problem. It would be similar to you riding a bike today. You can still do it.

Have you ever tried to ride a hoverboard? If you are over 18 years old, I would suggest that you not ride a hoverboard. It is a good way to break your back or your hip. Smart adults do not ride hoverboards. Why is that? It is because it takes much more balance than you think it does. What has to happen is that you have to build a new neural pathway in your brain, then practice, practice, practice until it becomes second nature to you. You cannot just get on one and ride it.

The point is simple. Whatever you do over and over is exactly what your brain is recording and retaining. Think of it as programming, as “fixing” the way that you are going to think in the future. So, what you are doing or thinking over and over can quickly become a habit – either a good habit or a bad habit. You can know for sure that you have created a neural pathway and made it stronger and stronger because of how much you have thought about something.

2. The building block for all of this is called “**neurons**”. Neurons are the means by which the brain directs information and input to other parts of your body. It tells your hand how to sign your signature or your body how to stay balanced when you are walking or riding a bike. It tells your fingers how to play the piano or how to play the guitar. The average brain has about 100 billion neurons.

My youngest son Benjamin can really play the guitar. He can do things with his fingers on the guitar strings that I simply cannot do. He can do it without even looking at the guitar. He knows exactly how far to come down on the neck of the guitar and where his fingers are to go, and what strings he is to hit with his pick. The neural pathway has developed this for him and when he plays the guitar, the neurons are literally telling his hands what to do.

3. Inside each neuron is what are called “microtubules”. I want you to think of the “microtubules” as the construction that is constantly going on in your brain. The “microtubules” are constantly building, tearing down, reconstructing, adjusting, shifting, stopping, starting again in accordance with – listen carefully - your every thought. They are like the beams and columns and walls that support every thought that you have. Every thought that you have actually physically changes your brain. When you are thinking, it activates and strengthens neural circuits that you have

already developed, and some of the neural pathways that you are not thinking about begin to die off. Some neurons come awake and others go to sleep. I took some courses in college that I have no idea today how to use. Why. It is because I have not even thought about them for nearly 50 years. What I knew has been erased and removed. The neural pathway is still there, but it is basically non-functional. Because you have thought about something recently or have not thought about something for a long time, it is like one part of your brain has become an entire micro-tubular city and another part has become a ghost town.²

When Paul wrote in [Philippians 2:5](#) to “**Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus**”, he was very serious. In our vernacular, he was simply saying “*I want you to think like God thinks*”, and he was saying that you can actually do exactly that. It is always a choice that you have to make. Here is the great news that God has for you no matter who you are and no matter what you have gone through in your life. God knows that the more you think the right thoughts, the more your brain physically builds that neural structure into your mind.

KEY PRINCIPLE 78: THE MORE YOU THINK LIKE GOD THINKS, THE MORE INSTINCTIVE AND INTUITIVE HIS THINKING BECOMES TO YOU.

It is like walking. You put one foot in front of the other. You have been walking for so long that you never even have to think about what you are doing. I walk several miles around the field in front of our house on a regular basis. I am not even conscious of the fact that I am walking. I am always thinking about something or listening to something, but I am not thinking about walking. I am not saying to myself “*left foot, right foot, left foot, right foot*”. My brain intuitively knows exactly what to do because my neurons are communicating to the rest of my body what I have learned about walking since I was a child. So, here is the piggy back principle to Key Principle 78.

The more you think like God thinks, the more intuitive it becomes to recognize a negative thought that is not from God.

You can be assured that not every thought you have is a good thought or one that is from God. You have to “train” your brain to think like God thinks, so that when some negative or toxic thought enters your mind, your brain has trained itself to say “*Nope, that is not from God*”. So often I am talking with someone and I know that they are not thinking the way that God wants them to think. So, they will say something, and I will say, “*That simply is not the way that God wants you to think.*” How God thinks is what you are after so that eventually thinking like He thinks becomes intuitive, instinctive, and natural to you. If you do not reverse the wrong patterns of thinking that you have, then you will just continue in wrong thinking, and we know that bad thinking creates bad results. It is the old adage that if you always do what you have always done you will always get what you have always got. If you really want something in your life to change, then you have to change how you have been thinking about what you want to change.

Now, I want to give you what must happen in your mind.

² Allen, 207-208.

KEY PRINCIPLE 79: YOU MUST LEARN TO REJECT WRONG THOUGHTS AND THEN REPLACE THEM WITH GOD'S THOUGHTS.

You reject, then you replace. I have always called this and taught this as the “Principle of Replacement”. This is when you reach a place in your thinking where you instinctively replace your wrong thoughts with God’s right thoughts. Once you discipline yourself to do this, then temptations become so much easier to handle. The enemy tempts you to do something wrong or to say something ugly or to get frustrated with someone, but you have become strong in the Word of God and you simply replace a wrong thought with God’s right thought. This is learning to think like God thinks. As an example, assume that the enemy or your flesh tempts you to say something ugly to someone who said something ugly to you. However, you know God’s Word, and specifically [Ephesians 4:29](#) which says,

Eph 4:29 (NKJV) Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

Because you have been in the Word of God, you know that God does not want you to say something ugly or reviling, but something which edifies and imparts grace to the other person. You simply replace the wrong thought with God’s Word and just do what God’s Word tells you to do. You will be much more satisfied with the results. This is not rocket science or brain surgery. This is knowing what God says to do and then doing it.

The problem for the average Christian is that they have not spent enough time in God’s Word to build the kind of mindset to know how God wants them to think. Once again, **you have to train your mind to think like God thinks**. This takes some level of mental energy until it simply becomes the way that you think, your mindset, and how you live. If you “think” that the view is not worth the climb, then you will not do this. You will make excuse after excuse until the micro-tubular structure that you have built in your mind from making excuses, which is physically and neurologically there, will become your intuitive way of thinking. You have literally talked yourself out of thinking like God thinks. Not good. The process is simple, so please do not make it complicated. **You reject your wrong thoughts and replace them with God’s right thoughts.**

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