

PART 29 – THE BEST WAY TO GET THE WORST RESULTS

❖ YOU CANNOT FIX STUPID

I have always heard it said that you cannot fix stupid, but I also wonder if you can fix lazy. My family gave me this shirt that I do not wear in public because what it says is really much truer than I am willing to admit. It says “*If a man tells you that he will do something, he will. There is no need to remind him every six months.*” Unfortunately, I think this may be the way that many people live out their Christian life – “*I will start working on my Christian life, but it will have to be later*”.

Now, I want to give you another brain fact. This one is very important.

Brain Fact:

1. Once a neural pathway has been created in your brain, the easier it becomes for you to strengthen, to adjust, and to maintain a certain direction for your life.

You can easily fix being lazy or not maintaining a good diet or becoming angry or driving too fast or never reading your Bible. God has designed you, your mind, and your brain in such a way that you are very fixable. This is really good news that should offer hope to anyone who is struggling in different areas of their Christian life. God would never ask you to live a certain way or to communicate a certain way or to respond a certain way if His request was not readily doable.

❖ REPEAT, REPEAT, REPEAT

What your brain builds on, however, is very simple - **repeat, repeat, repeat**. Replicate, reiterate, repeat, remind, restate, reinforce. If you want to learn how to ride a unicycle or a hover board, you have to keep getting on it and falling off until your brain figures out how you can stay balanced. Once your brain learns it, you are good to go. **Repeat, repeat, repeat** is the way to becoming good at something. Every good athlete knows this so well. The spiritual side of this is very important and can be defined as follows,

Repetition is the key to building a strong biblical mindset and a strong neural pathway.

This is not without effort, so do not think that you can get something for nothing. Just so we can think of it in a different way, you could call the neural pathway a “mental trench” or a “mental channel” that has been developed in your brain. This trench or channel can be either good or bad. We will refer to the negative trenches as “*mental and spiritual ruts, ditches, or gullies*” that people develop in their life. When someone gets into a really bad habit, you might hear someone else say “*He’s gotten into a really bad rut*”. Why would they say that? Well, it is because they know how hard it is to get out of a bad rut.

Have you ever been somewhere on an old worn-out road? Most likely that road had some big ruts in it, and once you get into a bad rut, it is very difficult to get out of it. You just stay in the rut. Unfortunately, people get into very negative and caustic neural ruts in their life. Maybe they are always angry or they are just unpleasant to be around. Some people just like to argue about everything. If you say up, they say down. If you are making a good point, they are interrupting you. They are always finding fault in everything that you do. It is their way or the highway. Over time, these people have literally created this neural rut in their brain. So, the more often you think a particular kind of thought – good or bad, the deeper the brain trench for that neural pathway becomes. Eventually, unbiblical thinking becomes a spiritual rut, and finally becomes a gully.

Think of having a biblical mindset and a parallel neural pathway as doing something over and over until it just becomes normal to you – like driving your car or writing your name or taking a shower. You keep repeating the process until it becomes something that you do unconsciously. Just think if you got into a car with someone you did not know very well, and they turned and asked you “*Now, where are the brakes?*” Just about that time I would be opening my passenger side car door to exit the vehicle. Every time that you get into your car, you do not have to think about how to turn it on, or where the brakes are, or how to operate the steering wheel, or where to sit if you are driving. You have done it so many times that you no longer have to think about how to physically operate the vehicle. Now, I have mentioned this before, but I want to tell you again so that you can see how powerful the lack of a neural pathway can be in your life.

When we visited my son Andrew and his family in Darwin, Australia, it was the weirdest thing because they drove on the opposite side of the road and everything in the car was on the opposite side. The steering wheel and brakes were on what we would call the passenger side. I had seen this in the movies, but I had never been in a car like this where driving on the wrong side of the road was normal. When you cross the street in America, you always look to the left to see if any cars are coming, but in Australia, you have to look to the right, because the cars are on the opposite side of the road. I almost got run over crossing the street one day!

All of this was so confusing to me! Why? The answer is simple. It is because I did not have a neural pathway for looking the opposite way when crossing the street. How stupid does that sound – that a perfectly intelligent individual did not have enough sense to look for cars coming from a different direction. When I started to walk out into the street, I just normally looked left. Why? It is because I have always looked for oncoming traffic on my left side – always. I actually have a well-developed neural pathway for that, but it almost got me run over in Australia.

What we are talking about is why it is so important to develop strong spiritual habits in your life – praying, reading the Word, attending church, speaking gently, being kind, being faithful. You need strong biblical and mental trenches in your life. Think of it this way. If you are not developing godly neural pathways in your brain, it is because you have developed a neural rut in your brain that says that these disciplines are not that important. I.e., you have developed a neural rut that has gotten stronger and stronger over time. Just think of what Jesus said about the Laodicean Church in [Revelation 3:17](#),

Revelation 3:17 (NKJV) Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing – and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.’

What was their problem? Well, they had no idea how to think like God thinks. In reality, they were thinking **the exact opposite** of what Jesus was thinking. That is **not** a good place to find yourself. What they were wrongly thinking in their mind had become physically strong in their brain.

Think of this another way. Let us say that you may want to do the right thing – say pray more often, but you never do. Why? It is because your existing neural rut has a greater influence over your decision than what you may want to do at the moment. Please do not forget that “**as a man thinks in his heart, so is he**”. **You ARE what you think. You do what you think.** Even if you want to do the right thing, your neural rut may be much stronger and exercise more influence on you than your will to do it exercises on you. That is why most New Year’s resolutions last less than one week. If you really want to be

spiritually successful in your life, if that is truly important to you, then you have to understand the way that God made you. I believe this is one very significant reason why God repeatedly says that He wants you to meditate on His Word both “**day and night**”. It is because He knows what that simple discipline of being in His Word “**day and night**” does for your spiritual life. It builds neural pathways that honor Him and that strengthen your life spiritually.

KEY PRINCIPLE 93: SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES CREATE NEURAL PATHWAYS THAT GREATLY STRENGTHEN YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE.

❖ **RIDING A LAWNMOWER**

So, the more you do something, the more natural and easier it becomes. I will never forget when we got our ZTR riding lawnmower. It was a very different animal than the conventional riding lawnmower with a steering wheel. I had a lot of trouble just trying to back it down off of the trailer when I brought it home. However, it did not take very long to learn how to drive it, and now I could never go back to a traditional riding mower. The ZTR does not have a steering wheel or brakes or a clutch. It only has two handles that both go backwards or forwards independent of the other handle. So, my wife wanted to learn how to drive it. It was one of the funniest things I have ever seen in my life. We laughed so hard that my side was about to split open. Even Brenda thought it was hilarious. She could not figure out how to go forward, backwards, stop, slow down – nothing. She and that ZTR were totally out of control. Today, however, she actually enjoys cutting the grass with it. It has become much more natural to her like driving a car or riding a bike. Do you know what happened? She developed a neural pathway in her brain for this new thing called a ZTR, and the more she drove it, the more she reinforced her ability to drive it. The point is simple.

The more you think like God thinks, you will develop godly neural pathways in your brain, and doing what God wants you to do will go from seemingly being very difficult to being very easy.

This is how the Christian life works. You put God’s Word into your mind, you learn to trust God’s Word, you depend on God’s Word for direction and wisdom in your life, and it will build a physical entity in your brain that will stabilize and strengthen your life more than you could ever imagine.

This is why the Christian life often seems so hard for some believers. It is because they have the wrong neural pathways to be successful. A lifetime of wrong thinking and defaulting to their own preferences and inclinations has created neural ruts in their brain. Living the Christian life, being a fully devoted follower of Christ, becoming a faithful disciple – none of this should be that difficult. I know you may dislike me saying it this way, but **just do what God says to do**. Convince yourself in your mind that how He asks you to live and how He asks you to respond to what happens in your life is the very best path for your life. If you do not do that, then you will by default develop a strong mindset and a neural pathway that is not inclined to either believe God or trust God. Please, do not reach a place like those in the Laodicean Church where they thought they knew better than God did. No one ever does, and none of us are the exception. **The Christian life is not difficult**, but believers have made it difficult because they have developed way too many unbiblical brain ruts.

KEY PRINCIPLE 94: YOU MUST CHOOSE TO DISCIPLINE YOURSELF TO THINK LIKE GOD THINKS.

Just keep reinforcing your mind and your thoughts with God's Word. Repeat this, repeat this, repeat this both "**day and night**" and you will begin to reap the spiritual fruit of what you have sown.

My daughter has two dogs that kept wandering away from home each day and going to someone else's house that had horses and other dogs. So, almost every day she was getting a phone call that the dogs were at this person's house and she needed to come get them. Eventually, they installed what is called an "invisible fence" around their yard. The way it works is that you put a collar on the dog and the closer they get to the invisible fence, the collar begins to beep. If they ignore the beep and keep going, the collar eventually shocks them and the dogs turn around. The closer they get to the invisible fence, the louder the beeps and the stronger the shocks. Well, it seems that dogs may have these same neural pathways because my daughter can take the collars off of the dogs and when they get close to where they know the shock is going to happen, they just stop. My daughter reconditioned her dog's brains and with or without the collar, the dogs now avoid where the invisible fence is located.

What you need to biblically do in your life may seem difficult right now, but the more that you do the right thing, the easier it becomes to do the right thing.

So, when it comes to your problems, the goal is to always choose to think like God thinks. That is always your road to success. If you leave God's Word which reveals His perfect will out of your decision-making process, I do not have much hope for how things may turn out for you. God always knows best, so trust Him. Make that your spiritual mindset so it can build your neural pathway. Write that in your book of declarations. God created these neural pathways to be a good thing for your life, so once you realize how your mind and brain actually work in conjunction with each other, the easier it will be to see the importance of what we are addressing. The issue should be obvious. You get better (and or worse) the more and more you do something. The old adage that practice makes perfect is wrong. Practice makes permanent. Repeat, repeat, repeat doing what God wants you to do, and it will become permanent in your life. This is not God making you a robot, but this is God developing you to be the best Christian you can possibly be. Do you remember when you took your course on how to type. You could not see what letter each key was supposed to represent. I now can type without thinking.

Just think of the believer that you know who never gets into God's Word and is always struggling with living out the Christian life. They have never learned how God works. They always seem to default to what they want to do and not what God clearly wants them to do. For a long period of time, they have not developed any spiritual disciplines and seem to have no real spiritual convictions. Well, all of that goes together. So, I have a question for you? It is a very simple question.

❖ **WHY DO PEOPLE NOT CHANGE?**

Why do people who know what is the right thing to do, never really do it? In essence, the more that you think a certain way, good or bad, godly or ungodly, what is happening is simple to understand. **You are conditioning and training and teaching and coaching your brain to continue to reinforce that particular thought or idea in your life.** Stated another way, your mindset, your way of thinking, and

your perspective becomes **permanently entrenched and ingrained** into your actual brain. This is a physical reality that can be very good or it can be very bad.

It is just as easy to reinforce a bad thought or habit as it is to reinforce a good thought or habit – maybe easier.

So, over the years, probably decades, people have created these neural pathways, these thought patterns and ways of thinking, these negative brain ruts that reinforce how they are going to actually think. They have so reinforced the wrong pattern of thinking in their mind that thinking negative about someone or something is automatic, involuntary, and very natural to them. What we are addressing is why people choose to ignore God, to be disobedient to God – **they are not reinforcing God's Word into their heart and mind**. They have chosen to think like the world thinks, or how their friends think, or how the culture thinks. What happens, though, is very simple to see.

1. Wrong thinking produces wrong results.
2. Bad habits produce wrong results.
3. Being a lazy person becomes a way of life.
4. Being pessimistic and sarcastic unfortunately becomes normal.
5. Making bad decisions becomes a lifestyle.
6. Being an angry, bitter person becomes normal.

Why does this happen? It is because a believer has refused to take God's Word seriously for so long that now they have a literal, physical neural pathway that reinforces and strengthens their wrong thinking and corresponding wrong behavior. For a long, long time they have simply refused to think like God thinks, and probably have no intention to ever change.

This is why it is so difficult for some people to change. Whenever something negative happens, they already have a default rut for that circumstance. If you know them well, you can actually anticipate how they will respond to the negative circumstance that they do not like. You might tell someone that "*they have always been that way*", and they have. You might say that they are "*just set in their ways and will never change*" – and they might not. Why is that? It is because they never made any mental adjustments and probably do not even want to change. I have heard people say "*I like me just the way that I am*". I feel deeply sorry for those people.

The problem they have when they think that way is that they are living with a negative brain rut that they actually seem to enjoy. So, when you hear a believer say "*This is just the way that I am and I do not care to change*", what they are saying is that God is not big enough to actually help them change. If you know that there are obvious areas of your life that need to change, but you have no interest in changing them, then I would say that you have no idea what it even means to be a Christian. **In a very practical sense, the issue of this entire study is the will of God.** I.e., are you willing to obey the clear will of God for your life, or will you simply default to your own personal preferences and your unbiblical neural pathways that you have allowed the enemy to develop in your life through his lies and deception?

If you clearly know the will of God, but consistently refuse over an extended period of time to integrate it into your life, it may be an issue of salvation. [**1 John 3:6-9**](#) is the passage related to this issue of continued, consistent, habitual sin with no remorse and no effort to change. It is a very strong passage

and basically says that someone who knows the will of God, but habitually refuses to obey it, that that person is not saved. The passage reads as follows,

1Jn 3:6 (NKJV) Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. ⁸ He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

Let us assume, though, that the person is genuinely saved. Then in that case it is clearly a matter of sanctification, and of not being willing to allow God to change their life. My concern with this passage is that John is not saying that everyone who is struggling in an area of their life is lost, but he is saying that if someone always refuses to do what God commands him to do, that the chances of that person being saved is really very marginal at best. You can read your Bible all day, every day and consider that to be the evidence of your salvation. That is a bad assumption, and probably a well-defined bad neural pathway in your mind. Why? It is because that is the wrong gauge to measure that reality.

The correct gauge is whether or not you are actually willing to obey what you read.

What good does it do anyone to know what God's will is for their life, but never be willing to do it? That is self-deception at the highest level. This should be clear to all of us. I.e., what good does it do anyone to read the Scriptures, but then refuse to integrate and assimilate God's truth and God's commands into their life? It does them no good, and brings forth a greater degree of reluctance to obey God in their life. No one listening to these studies wants to be like the people in [Matthew 7](#) who called Jesus "**Lord**", but He said that He never knew them. Obviously, that is going to happen or it would not have been a part of the Sermon on the Mount. How many professing believers have you ever known who "**say**" that they love God, but it is more than apparent that their life is not in alignment with what they profess.

The truth is that God can and will help you change anything in your life that is not in alignment with His will – anything. It can be your speech, your attitudes, your habits, and especially how you think, anything. Either you believe God or you do not believe God. Either you believe that He is strong and mighty or you believe that He is weak and impotent. If you do not think or believe that you can change, then you will not change. Being spiritually successful is a mental pathway, a neural trench that you have to develop in your life. The pathway is to constantly be reaffirming and declaring to yourself that bringing your life into alignment with God's perfect will is the very best thing for your life. It is both good and necessary.