

PART 39 – THINKING RIGHT ABOUT DOING WRONG

❖ THAT’S NOT WHAT I NEED

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you thought that you needed something, but you come to find out that what you thought you needed was not what you really needed? Just recently my lawnmower would not crank. When I turned the ignition switch I got the dreaded “hummmm”. I charged the battery, turned the ignition switch on, and got the same old “hummmm”. So, being the handy dandy lawn mower mechanic that I think I am, I decided that I probably needed a solenoid, so I went and bought one and installed it - \$20. When I turned the ignition switch, I got the same sound – a long drawn out “hummmm”. Since I had already charged the battery, and it said it was fully charged, I decided it may not have enough cold cranking amps to start it, so I bought a new battery - \$74. Does anybody want to guess what happened when I turned the ignition switch again? Yep, same old “hummmm”. Then, just by the pure process of elimination, I knew it most likely had to be the starter, but I then remembered that sometimes a starter can get hung, and all that you have to do is just take a wrench, tap it a few times, and it will start. Being the wise handy dandy mechanic that I think that I am, I took one of my largest wrenches, gave it several good knocks, turned the ignition switch, and lo and behold – varoommm! All I needed was a wrench and a few taps, but I spent \$94 before I realized that what I thought I needed was not what I needed.

Now, I think that a lot of life is actually like that – striving so hard to get what we think we wanted or needed only to find out that it is not what we needed at all. In fact,

One of the greatest lessons you will ever learn in your life is that one of the worst things that can happen to you is when you resist God in different areas of your life and He simply lets you have what you want.

This happens when we repeatedly override God’s Word and God’s clear direction for our life with our own silly little ideas. It is like God says,

1. Do you want to talk a certain way to people, then go ahead. I will not stop you.
2. Do you want to always have your way, then go ahead. I will not stop you.
3. Do you want to continue to be an over-reactionary person, then go ahead. I will not stop you.
4. Do you want to remain an angry person, then go ahead. I will not stop you.
5. Do you want to ignore my clear instructions, then go ahead. I will not stop you.
6. Do you want to do your own thing, then go ahead. I will not stop you.

All that you have to do is to read [Romans 1:20-32](#) where it says three times that “**God gave them up**” to do what they wanted to do. In our vernacular, He was simply saying that if you want to live in sin, I will not stop you. One of the worst things that you can do is to ignore, disregard, discount, overlook, and / or just casually snub what you know God says is not right in your life. That is a mindset that is easily developed if you are not careful, and then it becomes a neural pathway which will become a lifestyle, and in that process it ultimately destroys many parts of your life.

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| <p>KEY PRINCIPLE 135: WHAT YOUR MIND IS THINKING IS WHAT YOUR BRAIN IS BUILDING.</p> |
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When you resist God, it destroys your fellowship with Him and it destroys your relationship with people. As a Christian you can remain stubborn and resistant to what you know to be His will, and in that process reach a point where God says to you, *“If that is how you want to live and if you just have to do your own thing with no regard for Me or My Word, then go ahead”*. In reality, what God says in [Romans 1](#) is a very strong form of judgment on people who decided that they knew more than God did, but for a Christian, it would be considered an incredibly strong form of discipline, and [Hebrews 12:11](#) clearly teaches that when God does discipline you that it is very painful.

Heb 12:11 (NKJV) Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

The word **“painful”** means grievous, distress, sorrowful. I have no interest in continuing to resist God in my life. His will is always better than mine and it is always better than yours. This has to be your mindset, your way of thinking, what you are developing in your brain. The worst thing that can happen to you is for God NOT to intervene in your life when what you are doing is wrong. That is a very bad place brought on by some very bad thinking. This is when you can know that you clearly are not thinking like God thinks. In fact, and this is very important to understand, is that if you are willing to knowingly and continually as a lifestyle to resist God in your life, to rebel against what you know that He has stated in His Word, the chances of you not being saved are greatly elevated. For instance, [Hebrews 12:8](#) says,

Heb 12:8 (NKJV) But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

Listen to these verses in [1 John 3:6-9](#),

1Jn 3:6 (NKJV) Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins (*habitually, continually as a habit of life*) 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 (*habitually, continually as a habit of life*) 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 (*habitually, continually as a habit of life*), for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin (*habitually, continually as a habit of life*), because he has been born of God.

Willful sin against God’s clear will for your life is a very difficult place to find yourself and it creates the worst of results in your life. I am reminded of the story in [Genesis 27](#) where Rebekah wanted her son Jacob to deceive his father Isaac so that he could receive Isaac’s blessing before he died. Jacob actually questioned what she was doing in v12. She knew that what she was scheming was wrong, but she followed through with it. In fact, in v13 she said **“Let your curse be on me”**. Little did she know that that was exactly what would happen. Unfortunately, her little scheme worked. It was like God said, *“You know this is wrong and I will not stop you, and you will suffer the consequences.”* You know the story. She cooked the meal that Jacob had asked Esau to prepare and she successfully got Jacob to deceive and lie to his father and receive the blessing for the first born. Remember that Jacob was the second born, and he was also willing to steal what he knew was not his. When Esau found out what had been done and how he had been defrauded of his rightful blessing, he determined that he was going to kill Jacob as soon as Isaac died. On learning of his plan, Rebekah told Jacob to flee to her brother

Laban's house for a short while until Esau's anger calmed down. Now listen very carefully. **Little did Rebekah know that she would never see Jacob, her beloved son, ever again.** What she thought she wanted and so diligently schemed to get was not even close to what she got. **SHE WAS NOT THINKING RIGHT ABOUT DOING WRONG, and her plan for what she thought would be the very best actually turned out to be the very worst.** I call this "nightmare thinking" – thinking that what is wrong will somehow turn out right. It never will. She was building her life, not on God's truth, not on what was God's best for her life or her family, but on what she wanted, and in the end what she received was far worse than what she thought that she would ever get. Apparently, she never understood what it means to think like God thinks.

So, let me ask the obvious question from a spiritual perspective, and let us see if we can figure out the right answer. *When you are not sure how to handle a difficult circumstance in your life, what do you do, where do you go for your answers, how do you make your decisions?* Do you just rely on your instincts, maybe your gut feeling, or something you recently read in a worldly book somewhere? Are you like Rebekah and Jacob where you are willing to do something that you know is both wrong and very displeasing to God? You can apply any of those to how you want to handle your difficult circumstances if you want, but in the long run, I doubt that your odds for long term success will be very good. This is a mindset issue, a thinking like God issue on how you are going to deal with the difficult moments in your life. You **MUST** change how you think if any of the kind of areas that we have addressed are a propensity and inclination in your life. You can keep thinking however you choose or want to think, but in the end, you will never be pleased with the results.

KEY PRINCIPLE 136: YOU CANNOT IGNORE GOD AND HIS WORD AND HAVE HIS BLESSING ON YOUR LIFE.

So, let me give you a biblical answer. I doubt that for many Christians that this verse will even come close to satisfying them, but in the long run, it really is their **ONLY** hope for success – and most Christians never even see that reality. Jesus said the following to His disciples 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.

Now, I am going to let you wrestle with the phrase "**the flesh profits nothing**", but I will say that the ISV and the NRSV translate it as "**the flesh is useless**". I love that translation. My silly little ideas and notions are **useless** in a spiritual war with an invisible enemy who is very skilled in deception. There may be sometimes when worldly thinking may suffice for a little bit, but nothing can compare to the words that Jesus spoke – no words, no ideas, no philosophies, no opinions, no schemes, no brainstorming, no theories, no whims, no nothing! The words that Jesus spoke are spiritual words, words that are life transforming, words that change a person's life. You can try to work everything out on your own if you so choose. You can devise your different approaches to what people call "conflict resolution", but I doubt that in the long run that any of that will really work that well for you. It seems that Solomon understood something critical when he wrote [Proverbs 3:5](#),

Pr 3:5 (NKJV) Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;

I like the way that the AMP Bible translates this verse. It says,

Pr 3:5 (AMP) Lean on, trust in, and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding.

In [John 6](#), Jesus is saying that His words are supernatural words and that they give you the life, the wisdom, the understanding, the strength, the hope, and the help that you need in your difficult moments. Listen very carefully if you really want to grow in your spiritual walk as a Christian. This is so super important.

You must bring God into every difficult moment of your life, and you do that by allowing His Word to govern your every thought, your every response, and your every decision in those difficult moments.

If what and how you are thinking is something that you know is contrary to God's Word, then you have to change your thinking to align with how God wants you to think and what God wants you to do. What you think is what you will do, so you have to discipline your mind to think right about your being willing to do what you know is wrong. It is very rare that you immediately experience the end result of doing something wrong. You can lie, you can cheat, you can ignore God, you can choose the path of least resistance, you can be immoral, you can curse, you can always be angry with people, you can develop bad habits, but generally it takes a while for these arrows trajectory to fall to the ground – and then, it may way too late to repair.

You have developed a mindset that his built a neural path in your brain that has now become a stronghold in your life, and the stronghold becomes stronger that you are.

So, if you do not develop this habit of bringing God into your life, then the enemy will quickly build multiple “**strongholds**” in your life, and they will be very difficult to remove once they are established, especially the more that you accumulate. The word “**strongholds**” is only used once in the New Testament in [2 Corinthians 10:4](#) and it says,

2Co 10:4 (NKJV) For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

In this context, “**strongholds**” is specifically referring to bad things, wrong things, ungodly things, wrong thinking, bad attitudes, bad morals, caustic speech – anything that is contrary to what God desires for a man or woman's life. Just think of a “**stronghold**” as any idea, any philosophy, any ungodly person, any wrong thinking, literally anything that has a “strong hold” on your mind, on your mindset, on your way of thinking. I want to give you just a short list of what creates “**strongholds**” in people's lives. Please understand “**strongholds**” as being the lies from the devil that people believe and act on. It does not matter from where or from whom the lies may come, but be assured that every lie originates with and is prolonged because of Satan. Some examples would be as follows:

1. *It's okay for me to get angry. It's not.*
2. *It's okay for me to yell at my children. It's not.*
3. *It's okay for me to curse. It's not.*
4. *It's okay for me to watch immoral movies on TV. It's not.*
5. *It's okay for me to talk ugly to people. It's not.*

6. *It's okay for me to be impatient. It's not.*
7. *It's okay for me to not read my Bible. It's not.*
8. *It's okay for me to do my own thing when I want to do my own thing. It's not.*
9. *It's okay for me to ignore my relationship with God because I have other priorities. It's not.*
10. *It's okay for me to hold a grudge and be bitter if I so choose. It's not.*

The list is endless. I could write page after page of these kind of non-biblical, useless strongholds that people have allowed to be developed in their lives. Here is the problem, so listen carefully.

Every one of these kinds of lies that you accept in your mind and act on become neural pathways and the more you act on them, the stronger those neural pathways become in that particular area of your life.

Anyone who is willing to forsake God and His Word can easily have all of this list of 10 strongholds that I just gave you in their life – and many, many more. I do not want you to think that you can only have 1 or 2 strongholds. Listen, you can have an endless number of strongholds where you have allowed the enemy to penetrate your mind with his lies, and you have believed them and acted on them. The less attention that you give to any personal strongholds that you may have, the more strongholds the enemy will develop in your life – and before you know it, your life is out of control.

KEY PRINCIPLE 137: EVERY STRONGHOLD YOU ALLOW THE ENEMY TO CREATE IN YOUR LIFE, THE GREATER CONTROL YOU GIVE HIM OVER YOUR LIFE.

This is inevitable and unavoidable when you do not think like God thinks. No wonder people are struggling so much in their life. The devil has deceived them, built a fortress in their mind and brain, and then he proceeds to build another one. So, the longer that you allow this to keep happening in your life, the more difficult it becomes for you to defeat the enemy and his lies, as well as to defeat sin in your life. When you start to make some progress in your life, he just goes back to the strongholds that have the greatest strength in your life, and he is able to defeat you.

Please do not forget that a stronghold is not just something unspiritual in your mind, but it is also something growing in your brain in a neural pathway.

Just as an obvious example, let us assume that someone has become addicted to becoming angry when things do not go their way. What they have done is create a strong neural pathway in their brain for becoming angry. They may decide at some point in time that they really want to change their life, but the problem is that when a conflict arises that displeases them, the enemy will keep taking them back to their anger stronghold and completely defeat them. He has a temptation that he can use against them almost any time that he pleases, and they will yield and be defeated in their desire to change.

When you choose to think however you want to think and you leave God out of your thinking, what you are actually doing is building a “**stronghold**” in your mind and a neural pathway in your brain that can ultimately destroy your life and your soul. Most people tend to think of a “**stronghold**” as something like getting drunk all the time or taking drugs or watching pornography or stealing money from someone – and they would be right. However, as obvious and correct as that may be, not everyone drinks, or takes drugs, or watches pornography, or steals money, but they are still very deceived by the enemy and

their life is filled with multiple strongholds that are destroying their relationships with people, damaging their families, and ultimately destroying their life. For the lost person, the more of these strongholds that they allow Satan to develop in their life, the greater the chances are that they will never enter into God's kingdom. For the saved person, the greater will be their struggle with sin, and it is doubtful that they will have any kind of meaningful relationship with God or other people.

KEY PRINCIPLE 138: THE MORE YOU ACCEPT SATAN'S LIES, THE MORE HIS LIES WILL DICTATE AND CONTROL YOUR ENTIRE LIFE AND BEHAVIOR.

I am convinced that they will also control your eternity. However, the opposite is true as well and is what you are after. **Once you accept God's truth, His truth will dictate and control your entire life, behavior, and eternal destiny.** Here is what you want to happen, so listen carefully.

You want to see your Christian life as one of always adjusting and changing your thought life to align with how God thinks.

I want you to think of the Christian life as one of always adjusting, always realigning, as always correcting, fine-tuning, and modifying your life to be aligned with God's truth and God's will. In whatever may be happening in your life personally, you always want to ask the very simple question of "*Am I responding how God would want me to respond?*" The only answers are "Yes" or "No", so please do not make any of this difficult. The moment you start to rationalize, justify, and make excuses for making the wrong choices, you immediately know in your heart and mind that the answer you are giving is "No". At that point, you are rejecting the perfect will of God for your life. I doubt that will work out very well for you.

So, if this adjusting is not happening in your life and in your mind, and if your life is rarely, if ever, making godly changes and adjustments, there is something strategically missing in your life. My humble opinion, and that is all that it is, is that you may not be saved. I honestly believe that Satan's greatest victory is when he convinces someone that they are saved, when in reality they are not saved at all. He says to them that they made a "decision" at some point in time, or that they were baptized, or that they believe some peculiar idea, and his primary tool for this is religion. He is a very skillful opponent and he has a very subtle way of telling people that they are saved when they are not actually saved. Listen carefully.

God Almighty in heaven is the only source of life that there is, so you must yield your life to Him.

The words that Jesus spoke are the only words that can save, and the Scriptures are your only hope for godly success and salvation.