

CONNECTING MY MIND WITH MY LIFE

❖ WHERE'S THE LIFE PRESERVER

I remember a number of years ago when three men had a boating accident at the lake. They were fishing at night and were going to another part of the lake, but they hit something in the water, and because they had such a small boat, the boat was capsized. Unfortunately, they were a good ways from the shore, the water was very cold, and they did not have any life preservers. They never thought they would need them because they were good fisherman and had done this many times. Of the three men in the boat, only two made it to the shore. The other man was fairly large and simply could not make it. He drowned.

Now, you may know that you need to take a life preserver with you in a boat, but if you leave it at home, the life preserver will have no value for you whatsoever – none, zero. That man drowned and his life jacket was just hanging up in the garage. It may still be there. It is no different with God's Word. Putting all of this into a spiritual perspective, you have to put the Word of God into your life if it is going to have any value for your life. You have to put on God's life preserver. In exactly the same way that you must put the life preserver in the boat with you, you must put the Word of God into your mind.

[James 2:26](#) says

Jas 2:26 (NKJV) **For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.**

When you **consistently** put God's Word into your mind and into your thought life, it is at that point that your faith in God and His Word will begin to become your normal mindset, your normal way of thinking. When that happens, God's truth will begin to regularly manifest itself in your life. [Hebrews 11:6](#) says,

Heb 11:6 (NKJV) **But without faith *it is impossible to please Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*.**

The principle is simple - **what you continue to put into your mind from God's Word will eventually become something that you ACTUALLY believe.**

KEY PRINCIPLE 7: WHAT YOU CONTINUE TO PUT INTO YOUR MIND FROM GOD'S WORD WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME LIFE TRANSFORMING TRUTH THAT YOU BELIEVE.

❖ I'M NOT SURE I CAN BELIEVE THAT

I do not know about you, but I simply cannot watch the morning or evening newscasts any more. We live in a culture of deliberate misinformation. There is an old adage that says that if you keep telling someone a lie long enough that they will eventually believe it. Well, that is exactly what the devil does. He keeps telling you his lies, and if you have not trained your mind to reject those lies, then eventually you will believe them. You have to train your mind to believe the truth of God's Word and not the lies of the devil.

For many, many years I have placed the biblical truth of the sovereignty of God into my mind. For me personally, it was a life transforming truth from which I have never recovered. It is entrenched and solidly imbedded into my mind. I know that I have built strong neural pathways in my physical brain that constantly bring me back to God's sovereign care over my life and over everything that happens in

my life. I truly believe and have faith that as the writer of Hebrews said, “**He is**” and that He is sovereign over all things – good things, bad things, unpleasant things, toxic things, incredible things, everything.

So, here is what happens spiritually. Once you believe what God’s Word says, then you will be prone to act on it. At that point, faith has been activated, has become real to you, and it will begin to detox your mind of all of the negative thoughts that the enemy has placed into your mind. It will detox your mind of all of his deliberate and well-planned misinformation schemes. [Ephesians 6:11](#) says,

Eph 6:11 (NKJV) Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

The word “**wiles**” is actually translated as “**schemes**” in the Greek Interlinear, NASB, ESV, and NIV. The AMP Bible says “**the strategies and deceits of the devil**”. It is the Greek word “*methodeia*” from where we get our English word “method”. I want you to think of the devil’s scheming as his main craft and what he is the best at doing. If you want to think like God thinks, then you **MUST** learn to discern his deceitful lies. This is clearly a part of the process of [2 Corinthians 10:5](#) which says,

2Co 10:5 (NKJV) casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

Think of it as giving your mind something to work with, as feeding your mind with biblical food. Every day you feed your physical body with physical food. In the same way, you need to feed your spiritual being with spiritual food. When you do that, what will begin to happen is more than amazing. **The more you place God’s Word into your mind, the more you will believe God. The more that you believe God, the more you will begin to ACT on the Word of God.** You will begin to **ACT** on the truth that God gives to you. How does this work? Well, if you know that you should forgive someone who has wronged you, then you will actually forgive them. It will be real forgiveness. You will finally act on God’s Word and begin to reap the amazing benefit of obedience. You know that you should not talk negatively and use toxic words around those you love, but now because you believe God’s Word, you are willing to **ACT** on that truth. By simple faith you choose to no longer talk negatively no matter how much the enemy tempts you to do so. When you consistently spend time in God’s Word, you are developing a lifestyle of “**renewing your mind**” to God’s life transforming truths. [Romans 12:2](#) says,

Ro 12:2 (NKJV) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Remember what [James 2:26](#) said. It said that “**faith without works is dead**”. Saying that you believe God, but never implementing His Word into your life is spiritual make-believe. Your faith “**is dead**”. Why read your Bible, why come to church, why sit in a pew on Sunday if you never implement into your life what you hear and know to be true. **Until you actually ACT on what the Word of God says, God’s truth has no practical value for your life – none, zero.** If you leave the life preserver in the garage, it will never be of any benefit to you when the boat is turned over and you are thrown out. If you put God’s Word into your mind, but you never **ACT** on it, it will never be of any benefit to you when you need it the most.

For the most part, **everything about your life has been built around how you thought in the past and how you are thinking in the present.** After I graduated from high school and went off to college, I had

so much freedom being away from home that I did not know how to control it. I did what I wanted to do, and began to develop very bad habits in my life. With all of the bad habits, my entire life was fast becoming a disaster. Then I got saved, and do you know what happened? I began to **think the exact opposite** of how I had been thinking. Before I never wanted to go to church, and now I wanted to go to church every night. Before I never read God's Word, and now I could not stop reading it. Do you know what happened to my life at that point? I literally began to think like God thinks and everything in my life changed for the better. I love [2 Corinthians 3:17-18](#) which says,

2Co 3:17 (NKJV) **Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.**

18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The words “**are being transformed**” are just one word in the Greek and it is in the present tense, passive voice, and indicative mood. What that means is that when you are allowing the Spirit of God to work in your life that it is a constant and ongoing transformation that the Holy Spirit is working into your life. This transforming work never stops if you stay yielded to Him. Here is the principle. **Your future, either good or bad, will be a by-product of how you think right now.** So, this study is designed to help you think like God thinks, designed to help you think differently than you may currently think. Stated in another way, you need to be prepared to make some changes. Why? It is because **wrong thinking always leads to wrong results**. If you continue to think in the opposite way that God wants you to think, you will continue to be disappointed with the results. **You cannot improve on how God thinks.**

KEY PRINCIPLE 8: YOUR FUTURE, EITHER GOOD OR BAD, WILL BE A BY-PRODUCT OF HOW YOU THINK TODAY.

Now, you think a certain way for a lot of different reasons. How you currently think is generally a by-product of many different factors in your background that includes how you were raised, where you lived, and what kind of church you attended or did not attend. It includes your personality type, your temperament, your natural disposition, your likes and dislikes, your hurts and disappointments, your successes, your failures, and your education. It includes your friends, your enemies, where you have worked, and how old you are. It includes all of the biases and prejudices that you have developed over your lifetime. You are in favor of this, but not in favor of that. You like here, but not there. You love this and hate that. You struggle in this area, but not in that area. So, the bottom line is that **you think a certain way for a lot of different reasons**. Some are good, some are bad. You cannot escape your background, much of which you had no control over, but you can escape the negative effects that some of that may have had on your life.

❖ REPORT CARDS

After every semester of teaching my students, I have to give them their final grade for the course. Some like their grades, and some do not. Some have worked hard, and some did not put much effort into the semester. Their grades only reflect what they gave to me. I get good essays and I get bad essays. Some make 100 on their tests and some make C's and some fail.

No matter who you are, everyone has areas of their life and their thinking that need to be changed and improved. None of my students make 100 on everything. It has never happened. Let us assume that I gave you a “Self-Assessment Report Card” that you filled out based on where you currently are in your spiritual life. I wonder how you would grade yourself. Would you be in the top percentile of people who think that they are okay and do not need to really make any kind of significant changes in their life? Would you be that person who knows that you need to make some adjustments in both your thinking and your life, but you just do not know how? Would you be the transparent person who is desperate to make some changes in your life and you know that you need some serious help. How would you grade yourself? [2 Corinthians 13:5](#) says,

2Co 13:5 (NKJV) Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you are disqualified.

The word “**examine**” means to scrutinize, to make an assessment. The word “**test**” is concerned with proving whether someone or something is worthy or not.¹ There simply comes a point in your life when you have to make a spiritual assessment of where you are and where you are not.

So, I wonder if you would see yourself as one of the really high spiritual achievers in your self-assessment, or would you find yourself a little lower on the grade report? My assumption is that if you do not believe that you need to make any, and certainly not many, changes in your life and your thinking, then these studies may completely bore you. Why is that? Well, it because these studies are about changing. **This study is about changing your thinking so that you can change your life**. If you have no interest in changing anything in your life, then you simply will not find much value in these studies.

At a personal level, the closer that you draw to Christ, the more changes you will realize that you need to make. It should motivate you to make the greatest effort at making those necessary changes and adjustments in your life. I say this as graciously as I know how, but if you are a Christian and have little to no desire to make spiritual changes in your life, then there is something critically missing in your understanding of what it even means to be a Christian. **The Christian life always demands that your life keeps making adjustments and changes to become more like Christ**. It always demands excellence. No one has arrived. So, if you can stick with me for the duration of these studies, I think your life will change and that you will be grateful and thankful that you decided to make the effort to stay with this so that your thinking can change.

❖ FEELING HELPLESS

Have you ever felt helpless? I remember coming up on a horrific car accident one night. There were seven people involved in the accident. This man was trying to outrun a highway patrolman, but unfortunately, he ran head on into a family of six people. When I arrived, people were scattered all over the road in every condition imaginable. I am not built for those kind of events. I cannot stomach something like that. I felt utterly helpless. Helplessness is such a rotten feeling because you do not think that you can do anything to help either someone or yourself. It is like the wife of a coal miner whose husband is trapped underground, or someone who has fallen into a deep well and is hurt very bad. There is nothing they can do. They feel utterly helpless.

¹ Zodiates, dokimazo, 475.

Well, some of you may feel helpless to change. First of all, you know that something in your life needs to change, but you simply are not quite sure of what you need to change. It is as if you are not sure where you would actually start and how you would go about making some change in your life. You may already have tried a few things and they did not work at all, so that raised your frustration level even more. Maybe you just cannot get along with somebody, and you have tried to get along with them, but nothing seems to work. Listen. You are not helpless – not at all. To the contrary, the spiritual resources that God has for you are virtually limitless, and they are very powerful. This is something that you must grasp and cling to in your life – that you have a powerful God who is right there to help you.

In my mind, **not changing** is not even an option. The personal mindset you need to have is simple – **God what do you want me to change?** This is one of the most important questions that you can ever ask yourself. You have to be willing to actually change. You have to want to change. That is the point that you have to arrive at if what I am going to teach you will be able to have any impact on your life. You will also need some endurance. Why is that? It is because **change does not happen overnight**. Making godly adjustments to get rid of bad habits is never easy. It would be nice if it was easy, but making changes is difficult for most people. Just admitting that you need to make some changes is generally very difficult. You have always heard it said that “*bad habits are hard to break*”. Well, there is a reason that people say that. It is because bad habits are really hard to break. Let me say it a different way just to keep us on track – “*bad thinking is hard to break*”, and there is a reason for that and I will teach you about why it is often so difficult.

❖ **PUSH, PUSH, PUSH HARDER**

*We have a friend who is into body building. One of the things that he is always saying on his Facebook page is that he is constantly “**pushing himself**” to the next level. He not only has himself, but he also has both friends and trainers who are there to “**push him**”. One day he works on this set of muscles, and the next day he works on another set of muscles. He uses different weights and different machines each day. He is always pushing himself to become stronger.*

Now, one of the best ways to grow as a Christian is to grow in a new spiritual area of your life, i.e., to push yourself in a new area. I want you to think of these studies as a “**pushing**” series, and that I am your trainer who is here to keep pushing you to spiritual excellence. The principle is simple - **you grow spiritually by allowing your life to be stretched, to be pushed, and to be enlarged in different areas**. This series is designed to stretch you, to push you. If you are more interested in staying comfortable with where you are, then once again, you will probably become bored as we continue. However, if you decide to take this journey that we are going to be on, then there will be many things that I will challenge you to do that will make you uncomfortable. Each area of change will be based on the Word of God and whether or not you both understand it and are willing to obey it. Each area will be designed to push you and to make you uncomfortable with where you may currently be in your Christian life. It may feel like you are in a spiritual boot camp.

KEY PRINCIPLE 9: YOU GROW SPIRITUALLY BY ALLOWING YOUR LIFE TO BE STRETCHED, PUSHED, AND ENLARGED IN DIFFERENT AREAS.

So what have we addressed today? What were the key points of this study today?

1. **KEY PRINCIPLE 7: WHAT YOU CONTINUE TO PUT INTO YOUR MIND FROM GOD'S WORD WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME LIFE TRANSFORMING TRUTH THAT YOU BELIEVE.**
2. **The more you place God's Word into your mind, the more you will believe God.**
3. **The more that you believe God, the more you will begin to ACT on the Word of God.**
4. **Until you actually ACT on what the Word of God says, God's truth has no practical value for your life.**
5. **Everything about your life has been built around how you thought in the past and how you are thinking in the present.**
6. **KEY PRINCIPLE 8: YOUR FUTURE, EITHER GOOD OR BAD, WILL BE A BY-PRODUCT OF HOW YOU THINK TODAY.**
7. **You think a certain way for a lot of different reasons.**
8. **The Christian life always demands that your life keeps making adjustments and changes to become more like Christ.**
9. **The personal mindset you need to have is simple – God what do you want me to change?**
10. **Change does not happen overnight.**
11. **KEY PRINCIPLE 9: YOU GROW SPIRITUALLY BY ALLOWING YOUR LIFE TO BE STRETCHED, PUSHED, AND ENLARGED IN DIFFERENT AREAS.**

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