

CONNECTING MY MIND WITH MY LIFE

❖ NO GOALS, NO SUCCESS

*Do you know people who have no goals to achieve in their life? I feel so sorry for those people simply because their life will always lack purpose. It will be no more than get up, go to work, come home, go to bed. People who have no goals to achieve never achieve much of anything. You can never achieve a goal by just talking about it. To achieve a goal, you must develop some practical steps that help you achieve the goal. If you want to be unsuccessful, then simply procrastinate on setting any goals for your life. Why is that? It is because **success always requires a target**. If you are ever going to achieve your goals, they have to be specific and measurable. They cannot be general.*

I have specific goals that I am working on in my life. For instance, one goal is to always see God's hand in every part of my life. When something negative or unpleasant happens, I want to see God working in my life to help me to be more Christlike. When something is difficult and trying, I want to see God working in my life. At the end of each day, I want to be grateful that God's blessings on my life are always much greater than my problems. When you begin to think the way that God thinks, then you will quickly see that **the struggle that you are going through today is developing the strength that you need for tomorrow**. This is how God works, so it must become how you think. **When you change the way that you think about something, the thing you are thinking about changes**. This is an amazing spiritual reality. As an example, unpleasant moments will quickly change to "growing" moments – and you will see them that way. Trials will create spiritual strength in your life, and you will see them that way. Tense moments with someone will help you to develop self-control in your life. Every trial is a good thing because God says that it is. [James 1:2](#) says,

Jas 1:2 (NKJV) **My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,**

That is exactly how God wants you to think. [1 Peter 4:12](#) says,

1Pe 4:12 (NKJV) **Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;**

That is exactly how God wants you to think. Do you see the connection between your thinking and His Word? His Word is what should always be driving your thinking.

❖ GETTING JUMP STARTED

It is very rare that we ever use my wife's car. It is older, so we just let it sit in the garage. The bad part about that is that if someone did need to use it, there is a good chance that the battery will be dead. When that happens, we have to jump start the car. I get out the battery cables, hook them up to my truck, attach them to her car, and off she can go.

So how do you get jump-started? Where do you begin? Well, **you must set spiritual goals for your life**. Why do you need to set spiritual goals? Listen very carefully. It is because **you never grow accidentally**. **You grow intentionally**.¹ **If you are not changing, then you are not growing**. Spiritual growth is never an accident – never. It is always intentional on your part. You do not just wake up one day and shazam, poof – you are a better husband or wife, or you are a kinder person, or you are a better

¹ Groeschel, *Urgency: Part 1*, podcast.

employee, or you are more faithful to God. Spiritual success necessitates intentionality. It necessitates discipline. It necessitates setting goals. [Joshua 1:8](#) says,

Jos 1:8 (NKJV) This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night (*intentional goal*), that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it (*intentional goal*). For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Just remember that **what you stay focused on will grow**. Having godly spiritual goals will keep you focused on the outcome and not the obstacles. The problems and the stressful moments will always be there, and if you are not careful, they will become a great distraction that occupies your mind more than what God is wanting to achieve in your life through those obstacles. The following will really help you if you will take it to heart. **The more stressful the situation, the more focused you must become**. THIS IS LEARNING HOW TO THINK LIKE GOD THINKS. This is changing your thinking so you can change your life. God tells us in [2 Timothy 1:7](#) that He has given us a “**sound mind**”.

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.

God giving you a “**sound mind**” means that you have the spiritual power from God to think the way He wants you to think. The AMP Bible says that you **have** a “**calm and well-balanced mind and discipline and self-control**”. You cannot blame God for not thinking the way He wants you to think simply because He has made you so that you can make the right choices. **The way you think is always a choice that you make**. You must learn to **choose** to think the way that He wants you to think. Those Christians who appear to be more spiritually successful are the ones who know what God desires for their life and they are always pursuing those goals. **If you do not know where God wants you to go, you will surely end up somewhere else**. [Colossians 3:2](#) says,

Col 3:2 (NKJV) Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

The phrase “**set your mind**” means to have a certain mindset that governs how you think. It is a word that involves your will and your willingness to choose how God wants you to think.

So, what happens if you are not intentional in setting important spiritual goals in your life? First of all **you will become complacent and indifferent**. Secondly, and because of number one, **you will stop growing spiritually**. Think of it this way. **If today you are satisfied with where you are spiritually, then tomorrow you will have no motivation to change**. Why would you? You will simply become complacent. **You never want to be satisfied with where you are spiritually**. If that happens, **your spiritual contentment will quickly become spiritual indifference** – and you will stop growing.

You have to have spiritual goals that will challenge you to go beyond what you are doing. **If you have a goal that is not challenging you, then that goal will never change you**. Think of it as trying to achieve something that you do not think that you can achieve. You must appreciate that right now, today, that God has many areas of your life in which He wants you to be stretched, for you to go beyond what you are doing. The goals have to be achievable and something where you can measure the results. For example, you could say “*I am going to lose 5 lbs. in 30 days*”. That is both achievable and measurable. You could say “*I am going to speak softly this week to everyone who may be upset, irritated,*

or frustrated". That is both achievable and measurable. You could say "*I will not say anything negative to anyone all this week*". That is both achievable and measurable. These are the kind of goals that stretch you. They do not have to be big, but you must have some. You must have the ones that you need.

Here is what I would suggest for you. **Concentrate on any area of your life in which you are currently having a difficult time.** Write it down. Put it in a journal so you can keep track of any progress that you need to make. Then **make a specific, measureable goal** that will help you overcome that struggle in your life. Every day matters, every trial matters, every person matters, every conversation matters.

❖ DO YOU HAVE ANY OLD KEYS?

Are you a pack rat? Are you that person who simply cannot let go of something? Are you actually afraid to give something away to somebody who may need it because you think that you may need it within the next 20 years? Well, if you are a pack rat, then you have probably amassed a lot of old keys. Over the years I have accumulated so many old keys that today I have no idea what they unlock. I am sure that in most cases that I have actually thrown away what they did unlock, but unfortunately I kept the stupid key. So, when I need to unlock something, I get out all the old keys and start the process of elimination. Here is what I have found to be true – most of the time none of the old keys work.

My youngest son Benjamin has a great saying that he loves. It says "*Old keys do not unlock new doors.*" If you want your thinking to make a difference in your life, then you cannot continue to use the "old keys" that you have been using that never unlock anything for you. You have to find the new key that is designed for the new door that you want to open. You have to find **God's key** that unlocks your problems for you, and those keys are **ONLY** found in the Word of God. I love **Proverbs 3:5-6** which says,

Pr 3:5 (NKJV) **Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;
6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.**

The HCSB says "**He will guide you on the right paths**". The NLT says "**He will show you which path to take**". The point is simple. If I lean on my personal inclinations and preferences, I will most likely miss God's best. If I trust God's Word for direction, He will lead me in the way that I should go. **Psalm 32:8** says,

Ps 32:8 (NKJV) **I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.**

If you are looking for the world's wisdom to unlock your problems, then you are destined for disappointment. Listen to what God thinks about the world's wisdom in **1 Corinthians 3:19** says,

1Co 3:19 (NKJV) **For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "*He catches the wise in their own craftiness*";**

That has to become your thinking. So, it would be wise on your part to look to God and His wisdom for the keys that He knows will work in your life. The key to solving your relational problems, marriage problems, financial problems, workplace problems, family problems, and spiritual problems is the wisdom of God, and that is found solely in the Word of God. **Whatever God's wisdom is, it is a very simple solution that is never complicated.** You can have multiple problems in your life, but God can

literally erase them with just one specific truth that you implement into your life. Every problem has a root cause, and God is going to deal with the root cause in your life. You must see that, you must understand that, you must embrace that reality.

Just as an example, if you have trouble controlling your tongue, your anger, or your faithfulness, then the key to resolving all of those issues is a matter of exercising simple self-control. One day you are spending time in the Word of God, and you read a verse on self-control and you see something in that verse that you had never seen before and you respond to it. The result is that many of the multiple issues that you are having in your life can be solved by just your understanding of that one verse and the truth that it contains.

For instance, if you have an issue with bitterness, the “key” to overcoming bitterness is **a specific truth** found in the Word of God. If you have an issue with anger, the “key” to overcoming anger is **a specific truth** found in the Word of God. If you have an issue with loving your marriage partner, the “key” to overcoming that problem is **a specific truth** found in the Word of God. If you have an issue with forgiving someone who has wronged you, the “key” to forgiveness is **a specific truth** found in the Word of God. I want you to see this **“specific truth”** that you need for some problematic area of your life as being directly connected to the grace of God. Why? It is because **the grace of God will always lead you to the truth of God**. The grace of God will never lead you in the wrong direction, so because of that it has to lead you to the truth.

The grace of God has two specific attributes. The first attribute is God giving you the **desire** to do His will. **You will never do the will of God until you want to do the will of God.** Now, I want to ask you a simple question and you need to think about it before you give yourself an answer. Here is the question - ***“How deeply do you really want to do the will of God in your life?”*** Think about it before you answer. What are you willing to sacrifice in your life to do the will of God? Think about it again. How far are you willing to actually go to ensure that you will do what God wants you to do? For most believers, this is a real issue that they have never been willing to face.

If right now you are struggling with doing what you know God wants you to do, **it is simply because you do not want to do it**. You have other ideas that you think are better. You always do what you want to do. If you want something, you go buy it. If you want to go somewhere, you go there. If you want to say something, you say it. If you do not want to go the church, you will not go to church. If you do not want to read your Bible, you will not read your Bible. You always have a reason, an excuse, a justification, a rationalization – and in every case, your reasons and justifications will **ALWAYS** lead you further away from God. So, you must want to do what God wants you to do. You must have that desire and God is the One who gives it to you the more that you seek His face. This is an absolute must. This is something that happens in your **mind**, and what happens in your mind will lead you to making a choice. **Every act, every choice always begins with a thought**.

So, let us assume that you know what the will of God is, but you choose **NOT** to do it. You know what it is. You have read it, you have seen it, you have heard it, but you choose to ignore it. You read it, you ignore it. In fact, you read over it quickly and never look back or even think about what God is asking you to do. Maybe you are too lazy or just plain stubborn. Maybe you simply are not willing to believe God or His Word. You think the solution is way too simple. Well, if you choose not to do God’s will,

at that moment, you have chosen to **reject the grace of God for your life**. The principle is simple – **you have to first want to do God’s will**. You must have a strong desire that will not let go of you. This is what you have to say - “*When I know what God’s will is for my life, I am going to do it.*” Resolve to do this. It really is that simple. You do not want to reject the grace of God. Why? Well, **James 4:6** says,

Jas 4:6 (NKJV) But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Trust me, but you do not want God resisting you, and in many cases that is exactly what He is doing. No wonder things may not be working out for you. It very likely can be because He has been pushing and stretching and convicting you to do something specific, but you keep resisting doing what you know He wants you to do. He does not want you to talk the way you talk to people. He does not want you to be irritable and grumpy every day. He does not want you to be an angry person. Unfortunately, though, you keep resisting addressing that area of your life. You are the one who is making the wrong choice. You must begin to think like God thinks. Talking the wrong way, being irritable, being angry, resisting what God wants you to do - who do you think placed those thoughts into your mind. I can assure you that it was not God, so you have to remove those thoughts from your mind. You have to fully focus on what God wants you to do. This is not difficult, but it does take a mindset that wants to be obedient to God’s Word and God’s ways. His solutions will bring peace and grace into your life.

The second attribute of grace is God giving you the **power** to do His will. Here is how it works. You have been in the Word of God, and you finally see and understand what God wants you to do and how He wants you to implement His wisdom into your life. Remember that it is always very simple. So, as you **actually begin to implement God’s specific truth into your life**, at that moment God gives you His power to do exactly what He wants you to do. **God giving you His power to overcome your problems always has a direct connection to you applying His wisdom in your life**. Think of it this way. **The key to God’s power being released in your life is your willingness to implement His wisdom into your life.**

As my son Benjamin has reminded me, a very little key will open a very big door. **Just one truth from God’s Word applied to your life can be the key that really changes your life**. The problem that you may have is that **you do not really believe that God’s specific truth is your key**. That is certainly foolish. God owns all of life’s keys, and until your life reaches a place where you both see and embrace that reality, all you will find is that “your keys” will fail you. You do not have to look anywhere else. God not only has the answers, but He has the right answers for your problems. As I taught earlier, you will most likely be perplexed by the simplicity of God’s answer and not be prone to implement it into your life. At that one point, you will enter into unbelief and try to find another solution to your problem. His solution just seems too simple – like “**look at the birds**”. This is the beauty of God’s wisdom – it is NEVER complicated. Here is the principle. I am calling this the “**KEY**” Principle.

“KEY” PRINCIPLE 12: THE “KEY” THAT UNLOCKS THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD FOR YOUR LIFE IS ALWAYS A SPECIFIC TRUTH IN THE WORD OF GOD.

So, whenever your mind begins to spiral off in the wrong direction, it will do you well to get it back on track. To really win this war going on in your mind, **you have to always be focusing on what God**

would want you to do. If you forget that one simple reality, then you will never be victorious over your thought life and negative thinking. Please understand that the more that your mind is focused on how God thinks, the greater will be your influence in people's lives. Charles Spurgeon once preached a sermon called "Working Out What is Worked In". I think that he understood that the more you input God's thoughts into your mind, the more influential your life becomes. Your Christianity can literally become contagious to those who surround you.

My role is to provoke you to think about those areas of your Christian life that you may never have addressed, or have never even wanted to address. Why? It is because your life is always a by-product of what or how you think – always. This is true for everyone. What you are thinking and how you are thinking right now, this day, is what is making you into who and what you are. It can be very good or it can be very bad, but it is all related to what and how you think. Here is Key Principle 13 and it is very important.

KEY PRINCIPLE 13: YOU THINK A CERTAIN WAY AND THEN YOU BECOME A CERTAIN KIND OF PERSON.

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

1. **Success always requires a target.**
2. **The struggle that you are going through today is developing the strength that you need for tomorrow.**
3. **When you change the way that you think about something, the thing you are thinking about changes.**
4. **You never grow accidentally. You grow intentionally.**
5. **If you are not changing, then you are not growing.**
6. **What you stay focused on will grow.**
7. **The more stressful the situation, the more focused you must become.**
8. **If you do not know where God wants you to go, you will surely end up somewhere else.**
9. **If today you are satisfied with where you are spiritually, then tomorrow you will have no motivation to change.**
10. **You never want to be satisfied with where you are spiritually.**
11. **If you have a goal that is not challenging you, then that goal will never change you.**
12. **Old keys do not unlock new doors.**
13. **You will never do the will of God until you want to do the will of God.**
14. **Every act, every choice always begins with a thought.**
15. **God giving you His power to overcome your problems always has a direct connection to you applying His wisdom in your life.**
16. **The key to God's power being released in your life is your willingness to implement His wisdom into your life.**
17. **Just one truth from God's Word applied to your life can be the key that really changes your life.**

- 18. “KEY” PRINCIPLE 12: THE “KEY” THAT UNLOCKS THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD FOR YOUR LIFE IS ALWAYS A SPECIFIC TRUTH IN THE WORD OF GOD.**
- 19. KEY PRINCIPLE 13: YOU THINK A CERTAIN WAY AND THEN YOU BECOME A CERTAIN KIND OF PERSON.**

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