

## CONNECTING MY MIND WITH MY LIFE

### ❖ REALLY BAD DAYS

*I am convinced that everyone has really bad days. It is just a normal part of life. The lesson you have to learn, though, is that you have to mentally fight through those days to earn the best days of your life. One old adage says “Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors”. Just inhale, then exhale. God is right there to help you. From a biblical perspective, a bad day can tell you much more about yourself than a good day. Trust me, but there are some people who would love to have your bad days.*

Just think of all of the difficult days that Jesus had. Everywhere He went, the religious ruling class just hated Him. Everything He said was disputed in some way. Everything that He did was challenged in some way. He would cast out a demon and they would accuse Him of doing it through the power of Beelzebub, or in our vernacular, through the devil. He would heal someone and they would chide Him for doing it on the Sabbath. His disciples ate some grain from a field and they scolded Him for that. He read some Scriptures and commented on them in a synagogue and they threw Him out. This was every day, but you never heard Him complaining, getting angry, backbiting at someone, or whining about what a bad day He had. Even when they nailed Him to a cross He asked His Father to forgive those who were doing it. Every circumstance in His life was lived as a moment to glorify His Father, and He lived that way every day. Do you want to know why? It was because He thought differently than we do. He always thought like God thought. His mindset was fixated on His Father. There was not one single moment in His life when He was worldly in His thinking – not one single moment.

Here is my question to you. “*Do you think that you can just simply fix your bad days?*”. The answer is “*Probably not*”. It is the idea mentioned previously that there are many things that will happen to you that you cannot control. So, what I want you to do is to **think** of a bad day a little differently than maybe you do now. Every day is filled with challenges, with difficult moments, with trials, with stressful moments, and with things that you cannot change. No one is exempt. I remember when Brenda and I were going to Covington for a couple of days and we were sitting at a stop light in traffic and some young boy driving way too fast hit us and totaled my truck. We had no one to come get us, the police would not take us anywhere, we have suitcases and books and computers with us. It was not what you would probably call a “good day”. So, the real issue is whether or not you **think** that God wants you to develop a mindset where you see what you call “bad days” differently than you currently do? I cannot even imagine Jesus saying to His disciples “*Wow, this was a really bad day! So thankful this day is over.*” The difference between me and Jesus and you and Jesus is in how we **think** – T H I N K.

Here is what has to happen. You have to figure out if something is a problem or an opportunity. If you **do not think** like God thinks, then most anything can become a problem and you will rarely if ever see it as an opportunity. On the other hand, **if you learn to think like God thinks, then you will begin to see an opportunity in every problem**. At a personal level, I cannot remember the last time that I actually had a “bad day”. I can easily remember days when bad things happened to me like someone totaling my truck, but that did not mean that it had to be a bad day. **The absolute worst day that Jesus ever suffered became the greatest day of His life and the greatest day in eternity.** I remember when my urologist told me that I had Stage 4 metastatic cancer. It was a difficult thing to hear, and on the way to the truck Brenda and I kept fighting back our tears. However, once we got back to the truck, we cried

for a while, and then we offered our lives afresh to God and everything took on a completely different perspective. Today I believe that God has performed miracles on my behalf. In every problem that you face, in every “bad day” that you **think** that you have, what and how you want to think is that God has created a great opportunity for you to honor Him. **When God’s honor becomes greater than your problems, then that is where you can know that your mind is thinking like God thinks.** You want to see every trial and every difficulty as an opportunity to honor God. [1 Samuel 2:30](#) says that God honors those who honor Him. So, here is our next principle.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 19: WHAT GOD IS DOING IN YOU IS MUCH GREATER THAN WHAT IS HAPPENING TO YOU.**

Just think of Joseph for a moment. What God was doing in the life of Joseph was much greater than anything that Joseph could ever have imagined. Notice what he said to his brothers in [Genesis 45:5](#) and [Genesis 50:20](#).

Ge 45:5 (NKJV) **But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.**

Ge 50:20 (NKJV) **But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive.**

Those are two of the most sublime statements I know anything about concerning the sovereignty of God. What God was doing in the life of Joseph was much greater than what was happening to Joseph. This is exactly how God wants you to think – to see His hand in every problem and difficulty of your life, and then to honor Him in the problem.

❖ **STINKY PROBLEM**

*Have you ever had to change a really stinky diaper? I imagine that you have. If my son Benjamin ever has any children, I doubt that he will ever change a diaper. He would just gag and gag and gag. I have been with him when he had to clean up where his little dog Maddie had made a mess, and it was not good. I remember when our kids were young and in diapers. We could not afford the disposable diapers they make today, so we had to use cloth diapers. Cloth diapers are a “yuk”. Can I get an Amen? What we had to do was to first dump everything in the commode, flush the commode, wash the diaper in the commode, then wash it in the washing machine. I just hated that whole process. It was very stinky. We had a rule that my wife forced on me. The rule was “Finders, Keepers”. What a dumb rule. So, when I would see the diaper kind of “hanging down” (everyone knows exactly what I am talking about), then I would try to find a place to hide. It was stinky business.*

So, let us assume that you have some “personal” problems that you are not willing to address. They are old “stinky” problems that you have just refused to correct. You have tried to find a place to hide from them. You know they are not what God wants for your life, but for whatever reason, you have chosen to ignore what God wants to change in your life. Please trust me, but that is a really bad decision. In this series we call it “bad thinking”. Here is what God wants for your life. This is how God wants you

to think. **He wants you to be at your best when things are at their worst.**<sup>1</sup> When things are getting stinky, He wants you to be the perfume.

Let us assume that you know that you are going to have an incredibly busy day tomorrow. You have much more to do than one person can accomplish and you are already overwhelmed before the next day even gets here. So, what do you need to do when you know that things may be very demanding and difficult. Well, you should know the answer already. He wants you to think like He thinks. He wants you to say that *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”*. He wants you to say *“The Lord’s mercies for me are new and fresh each morning”*. He wants you to say *“When I am weak, Christ in me is strong”*. He wants you to say and to believe that *“Today is going to be a great day in the Lord”*. He wants you to say *“Today I will be strong in the Lord”*. He wants you to say *“Today I will be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”*. This is how God thinks.

You want to see yourself the way that God sees you and the only way that you can do that is to know how God thinks. No matter where you are in your life or what you may be going through, God is right beside you. I love to tell people this simple little phrase – *“You’ve got this.”* Why can I say that to a believer? It is because *“greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world”*. It is because Jesus said *“I will never leave you or forsake you”*. It is because you can be *“strong in the Lord and in the power of His might”*. It is because *“God’s strength is made perfect in your weakness”*. What you want to do is to frame your life around the truth of God. This is NOT “positive thinking”. This is “God thinking”. This is renewing your mind so that you can think like God thinks. This is how you win the battles in your mind. This is how you build your life on God’s unchanging truth. This is exactly what God wants you to do.

Think of all of this in a negative way. If you think that you are going to have a lousy day, I would bet money that you are going to have a lousy day. If you think that you cannot do something, I doubt that you ever will. If you think that you cannot do what God asks you to do, chances are excellent that you will not do what He wants you to do. If you think that you just do not have enough time to be in God’s Word, you will rarely if ever be in God’s Word. If you believe that you simply cannot get along with someone, you will always be struggling in your relationship with that person. If you are inclined to always do what you want to do, then you will rarely do what God wants for you to do. Every area of your spiritual life and your physical life is a direct by-product of how you think, of what you put into your mind. Remember that input determines output. What goes in is what comes out.

Let us assume that you are not very physically healthy and you want to change that part of your life. Well, almost any good doctor that you go to is going to tell you two things. First, he is going to tell you that you probably have a very bad diet and that you do not get enough exercise. Secondly, he is going to tell you that you need to change your diet and you need to get some good exercise. Think of it this way. If all you eat is junk food, then you will quickly get a junky body. You will get fat, be prone to sickness and disease, clog your arteries, and destroy your immune system.

Well, it is really the same way with your mind. Most people have a very poor mental diet. They constantly look at and listen to junk for their mind. They have never learned how to exercise or shape their thought life in the way that we have been addressing. So, how do you fix your bad thinking which

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<sup>1</sup> Groeschel, 144.

leads to bad habits which leads to bad relationships which leads to a bad life. First, you change your mental diet and constantly renew your mind to God's truth so that you can think like God thinks. Then secondly, you apply God's truths to every area your life. You frame your mind in such a way that you will always be inclined to choose to live exactly how God says He wants you to live. If you can discipline your mind to think like God thinks and train your will to choose what God wants, you will become spiritually healthy. To have a healthy mind, you must have healthy thoughts.<sup>2</sup> So, what I want you to do is to learn what are healthy thoughts and what are unhealthy thoughts. To help you do that, I want to give you a verse to get you jump started. It is [Philippians 4:8-9](#),

**Php 4:8 (NKJV) Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things. <sup>9</sup> The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.**

Think of these verses as your cheat sheet for discerning whether or not you are having a healthy thought or a junk food thought. Is your thought "**true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, commendable**", and/or "**excellent**"? If it does not fall into one of those categories, then the chances are excellent that is a junk food thought.

So, what I want you to take away from this is that **you can never fix a problem that you do not believe to be a problem**. Think about that for a moment. What if you never think that you have a problem or you ignore the problem that you know you do have - which is just as bad? If you get angry all the time, but you do not really believe it is your fault, then you cannot be fixed. If you are self-centered, but do not think that you are, then you cannot be fixed. If you cannot control your tongue, but you think that you do, then you cannot be fixed. Why? It is because you will never fix something that you do not believe is broken. You cannot fix a sinful life if you do not believe that you are a sinner. If you never think that anything is your fault, then there will never be any resolution for your problem. I have said this repeatedly, but the person who will not enjoy or benefit from these studies is the person who is satisfied with everything about their life and who really does not believe they have any problems. This series is about changing. From a personal perspective, the closer my walk with God, the more areas of my life I am convinced He wants to change. Paul, who was the most spiritual man on the planet said that he was "**the chief of sinners**". If you can always find everyone else's fault, but never see your own, then that is a serious thinking problem. So here is the principle you must grasp.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 20: YOU CANNOT RESOLVE A PROBLEM UNTIL YOU ACCEPT IT TO BE A PROBLEM.**

Let me offer you a word of encouragement. It is critical that you "**learn**" how to be spiritually successful. If all that you care about is what this world can give to you, then you will never be motivated to learn what God has for you. It takes time and effort that many believers are not willing to give to it, but I am going to keep pressing you to do so. You have to "**develop**" and "**build**" a spiritual mindset. This does not happen overnight. If you are not willing to take the time and make the effort to develop and build a

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<sup>2</sup> Toler, 23.

spiritual mindset, then you will become a worldly and carnal Christian. Paul was writing to some very carnal believers in his letter to the Corinthians and he said this in [1 Corinthians 3:1](#),

1Co 3:1 (NKJV) **And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.**

You do not want this to be you. You do not want this to describe your life, so you have to make sure that you follow God's directions.

#### ❖ I DON'T THINK I NEED THE INSTRUCTIONS

*I cannot tell you how many times in my life that I decided to put something together without using the instructions. Thinking myself to be intelligent enough to put something simple together, off I ventured into just pulling all of the parts and pieces out and then beginning the assembly process. In most cases, that has turned out to be a disaster. I have learned a simple lesson. The company that made the product knows a lot more about the product than I do. That is why they thought it would be a good idea to give me some instructions to follow. They knew that if I followed their instructions that I would be a lot better off than if I ignored their instructions. I thought I was able to go it alone, but soon found out that was not the case at all.*

Spiritually, you would be a lot better off just following God's instructions. Obviously, this is a joint effort between you and God. I would say it is a mindset and a way of thinking that you have to reach in your life. The mindset is simple – **since God made me, He knows a lot more about what I need than I do.** You may think that you know how to be happy, but most people do not. You may think that you know how to solve all of your problems, but I doubt seriously that you do. You may think that you can get by without reading His instructions for your life, but if that is the case, you will eventually be very disappointed. You will look back on your life and ask the question "*I wonder why nothing worked out the way that I thought that it would?*". It is because you thought that you were smarter and wiser than the One who made you. Trust me, but life will prove that to be a very bad assumption and a very unfortunate mindset. I love [Colossians 3:2](#) which says,

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

This verse must become your mindset, your way of thinking, and your way of life. Why? It is because if you never think about spiritual things, then your life is going to suffer spiritually. It is inevitable. **Input dictates output.** Your personal mantra should always be "*How does God think?*" As we have seen over and over, what you think controls how you live. When reading this verse, you should read it as "**(YOU) set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.**" The reason is because the verb for "set" is in the present tense, imperative mood, and active voice. What that simply means is that you as a believer are commanded by God to constantly be "**setting your mind on things above**". We could call it a way of life, a living mindset, and a deliberate way of thinking. When something difficult happens in your life, what does God want you to do? He wants you to "**set your mind on things above**" so that you can think like He thinks.

When you read the Scriptures, you are actually reading the mind of God.<sup>3</sup> God is always telling you what He thinks about something and why you should think the same way. He is never asking you “*What do you think about this verse? Do you think this will work?*” [Psalm 18:30](#) says,

**Ps 18:30 (NKJV) *As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.***

[Psalm 19:7](#) says,

**Ps 19:7 (NKJV) The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;**

So, if you want to think like God thinks, then you must know His Word. Why is that so important? It is because to be victorious over your struggles and problems, you must think like God thinks, and you can only know what and how He thinks by what He has told you in His Word. Apart from His Word, you cannot know how God thinks, so you must know His Word and what it says. Spending time in His Word is the single greatest investment that you can ever make in your life.

Here is where you must come to in your life. You must come to a place where you humble yourself and say “*Lord, you know a lot more than I do, and what You instruct me to do will never harm my life, but only improve it. Your ways are not my ways, so I am going to yield myself to your clear instructions. I will stop following my impulses and I will follow your instructions.*” This is God’s plan for your life and you cannot improve on it. Listen carefully. You cannot get spiritually stronger by doing what you want to do. You become spiritually stronger by doing what God wants you to do – and that is only found in His Word. Let me ask you a simple question. “*In comparison to God, how smart and how wise do you really think you are?*” I am sure that everyone is going to say, “*Gary, certainly God is smarter and wiser than I am.*” Then why do you keep trying to outsmart God by following your flawed intuitions and instincts rather than His clear instructions? They will not hurt you. To the contrary, when you choose to obey the Word of God as much as you know how, you will experience the immeasurable blessings of God on your life. This is a way of thinking that you have to literally build into your mind. This is a neural pathway that you want to get stronger and stronger and stronger. This is what truly makes you a genuine follower of Christ – and nothing less. So, here is our next Key Principle.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 21: YOU CANNOT IMPROVE ON GOD’S SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR PROBLEMS.**

You may think that you can improve on God’s solutions, but that is just another one of the devil’s lies that he has gotten you to believe, and it will leave you empty, discouraged, and without any hope. If for any reason you think that you are smarter and wiser than God and the principles found in His Word, my heart goes out to you. That is very bad thinking and you are destined for much disappointment. You have to change how you think. You have to build new and stronger neural pathways in your brain.

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

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<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, 43.

1. **If you learn to think like God thinks, then you will begin to see an opportunity in every problem.**
2. **The absolute worst day that Jesus ever suffered became the greatest day of His life and the greatest day in eternity.**
3. **When God's honor becomes greater than your problems, then that is where you can know that your mind is thinking like God thinks.**
4. **KEY PRINCIPLE 19: WHAT GOD IS DOING IN YOU IS MUCH GREATER THAN WHAT IS HAPPENING TO YOU.**
5. **God wants you to be at your best when things are at their worst.**
6. **KEY PRINCIPLE 20: YOU CANNOT RESOLVE A PROBLEM UNTIL YOU ACCEPT IT TO BE A PROBLEM.**
7. **Since God made me, He knows a lot more about what I need than I do.**
8. **Input dictates output.**
9. **KEY PRINCIPLE 21: YOU CANNOT IMPROVE ON GOD'S SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR PROBLEMS.**

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