

## Bringing Every Thought Into Captivity

Written by David Wise

Monday, 11 May 2020 15:09 - Last Updated Monday, 11 May 2020 15:12

---

*“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”* (Philippians 4:8)

For the disciple of Christ, it is absolutely vital for us to control our thought process, to bring our thoughts into captivity to honor the Lord. We have to be very purposeful to control our thought process because our minds are prone to drift to vain, unprofitable things of this world. We have to make a committed decision to think on these “true, honest, just, pure, lovely, good, virtuous, and praiseworthy things”.

The heart and the mind are linked in scripture. While the heart and mind are distinct and different, for the spiritual man, they are very close and linked. Therefore, to a large degree our internal thoughts in our mind/heart will manifest itself in our external actions, such as our speech – *“out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh”* (Matt. 12:34). However, our thought life does not just manifest itself in our speech, but it manifests in all the actions of our life. I think we could honestly say that every sinful external action we commit begins with a sinful internal thought. Therefore, if we are going to live a godly life, this must begin with a godly thought process.

It is true that while we are awake, we are essentially always thinking about something. We cannot ever clear our mind completely and just not think for more than just a few minutes. We are always thinking, so the question then becomes what are we thinking about? What consumes our thoughts? Therefore, we have to make a committed choice to think about good things instead of bad, vain, or unprofitable things. We have to learn to “bring every thought into captivity” to honor God with our thoughts. *“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that*

## Bringing Every Thought Into Captivity

Written by David Wise

Monday, 11 May 2020 15:09 - Last Updated Monday, 11 May 2020 15:12

---

*exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*” (2 Corinthians 10:5) Our mind is prone to drift to things of this world – “imagination” and “high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God”. For the child of God, part of our spiritual warfare is controlling our thoughts, mortifying bad thoughts and bringing them into captivity unto the obedience of Christ. We have to purposefully put away evil imaginations and vain, idolatrous thoughts and choose to focus on godly thoughts. We have to “bring every thought into captivity” and honor the Lord.

We need to honestly evaluate what we are filling our mind and thoughts with. Are our thoughts consumed with the things of this world? Consumed with news, politics, entertainment, sports, or in our current time, the supposed breaking news about the corona virus? Do I fill my thoughts with vain things from scrolling through social media, listening to talk shows, watching ungodly television shows, or a multitude of other bad influences on our thought process? An honest inventory of what we consume and let into our minds and thoughts should emphasize how purposeful we have to be to bring every thought into captivity. I am sad to say most evenings my natural tendency is to rather watch television for a few hours each night instead of studying my Bible during that time. Is that a good consumption and influence upon my mind and thoughts? There’s certainly nothing wrong with a brief, relaxing respite of watching television from time to time, but that should not be the main influence upon our thoughts during the day. Instead, we need to be reading God’s word or other godly influences or devotionals and “meditating” upon the word of God.

We tend to want to be “amused”. Let us consider that word for a minute. To “muse” means to think carefully or thoroughly about a subject. The prefix “a” means “not”. Therefore, when we seek “amusement” we are trying to “not think”. We engage in activities where we think we can “turn off our brain”. That is why I often enjoy watching a little television in the evening. After I have had to engage my brain all day at work, I want a little “amusement” and to supposedly not think for a little bit. However, during that time, am I really “not thinking”? No, I am thinking, except that I am filling my brain and thoughts with things that are pretty vain and “not praiseworthy”. Not all “amusement” is bad. We need an occasional respite and not think about the cares and stresses of this life. However, I think a better respite would be found in thinking and meditating upon Jesus Christ and God’s word than simply trying to be “amused” and “not think” by watching a television show or something of that regard.

## Bringing Every Thought Into Captivity

Written by David Wise

Monday, 11 May 2020 15:09 - Last Updated Monday, 11 May 2020 15:12

---

Since our minds and natures are so prone to wander to vain things, what do we need to think upon then? Here we are given 8 characteristics of a godly thought process. Think on things that are: 1) true, 2) honest, 3) just, 4) pure, 5) lovely, 6) of good report, 7) virtuous and 8) praiseworthy. Primarily, we need to make a concerted effort to think upon Jesus Christ every single day. To just think about how great and holy and loving and gracious God is, and to praise him in our mind for all his kind, unmerited blessings upon us in our lives. If we make a commitment to think about Jesus Christ, everything else kind of takes care of itself in our thought life. Jesus is “the truth” (John 14:6), so when we think about Christ, we will then meditate upon things that are “true”. Also, when we think about Jesus, we will desire to read his word which is “truth” (John 17:17). We desire to fellowship with the saints in the church which is the pillar and ground of “the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). Jesus is “honest” (or can mean “noble” or “reverend”), so we will not think about deceptive or false things when we focus upon Christ. Jesus is perfectly “just” (righteous, virtuous, holy), and therefore our minds will gravitate to just and righteous thoughts. Jesus is perfectly “pure” (chaste, undefiled) and our mind will be purified by the Lord. Jesus is “altogether lovely” and our thoughts will follow his lovely, beautiful theme. Jesus is not just “of good report” but “of perfect report” and he is perfectly “virtuous”. The last thing really summarizes the rest – “if there be any praise, think on these things”. We need to think about things that are “praiseworthy” unto the Lord. Ask myself, are my thoughts praising and honoring to the Lord? That is a great filter to sift and test our thoughts through. If our thoughts are “praiseworthy” to the Lord, we need to think on these things, but if not, we need to realign our minds with Jesus Christ.

We don't just have a passing, singular thought about these godly, praiseworthy things. The word “think” here means “to meditate; to take an account of, to examine with careful attention; to take an inventory of a thing”. We need to meditate and “examine with careful attention” these praiseworthy things. In Psalm 1, we are commanded to not walk, stand, or sit with the ungodly (v.1). Then we are told of the man who forsakes those ungodly influences: *“But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”* (v.2) Remember that our external actions manifest the internal condition of the mind and the heart. I believe the reason the godly man seeks to forsake the influence and assembly of the ungodly is because of his “godly thought life” in meditating upon the word of God. His greatest joy and delight is in constantly revolving the law of God in his mind, meditating upon the word of God. Therefore, the actions of his life follow his thought life. Because his thoughts are centered upon the word of God, he has no desire to engage or spend time around the ungodly of this

## Bringing Every Thought Into Captivity

Written by David Wise

Monday, 11 May 2020 15:09 - Last Updated Monday, 11 May 2020 15:12

---

world. This shows how crucial having a godly thought life is to living in a godly way. Our actions will primarily follow our thought life – whether good or bad, godly or ungodly.

We have to be purposeful to think on good, true, just, virtuous, and praiseworthy things because our minds are so prone to wander to the foolish things of this world. We must bring our thoughts into captivity unto the obedience of Christ. Robert Robinson penned the great hymn “Come Thou Fount”. He started out very successful in the ministry, but later fell away into apostasy. He knew his nature was so prone to wander. I believe we can all say the same thing regarding our thought life. “Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it; prone to leave the God I love; here’s my heart, O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts above.” Our thoughts are so prone to wander, and we need the Lord’s guidance to seal our mind and thoughts. Isaac Watts seemed to share this struggle in his thought life too, and he was blessed to pen the focus of my desire in his hymn “Lord How Delightful Tis To See” when he wrote, “With thoughts of Christ and things divine, Fill up this foolish heart of mine.”