

MENTAL

WELLNESS

SABBATH

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Sermon Notes

How to Keep from Losing Your Mind



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How to Keep from Losing Your Mind

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Suggested Scripture Verse

Philippians 4:6-9

Sermon

Developing the Mind of Christ

The average person has about 48 thoughts per minute, according to the Laboratory of Neuro-Imaging at the University of Southern California. That adds up to a total of 70,000 thoughts per day. That's a whopping 25,550,000 thoughts a year.

The average human brain weighs about 3 pounds and continues to grow from conception until the person is about 18 years old. Human brains contain around 100 billion cells, which can live for an entire human lifetime, making them frequently the oldest living cells in the human body.

The thoughts in a human brain are powered by neurotransmitters, which in turn are powered by copious quantities of blood flowing through the brain every minute. The brain can only survive without oxygenated blood for 4 to 6 minutes. After that time, brain cells begin to die off. A person will lose consciousness after only about 10 seconds without oxygenated blood.

Neurotransmitters Develop Brain Pathways

These neurotransmitters develop pathways in the brain based on our thinking processes. Just as water forms a river by repeating the same **path, our thoughts** create a reality by going down the same frequency in **our brain** over and over. **Our**

thoughts carry electrical impulses that fire repeated messages down a **pathway** in **our brains**. The more we think a certain **thought**, the deeper the electrical **pathway** becomes.

Here is a vital truth that impacts our thinking. The human mind is so constructed that it will always set itself upon something. It is a law of life that if we think about something often enough and long enough, we will come to the stage that we cannot stop thinking about it. Our thoughts will literally be in a groove. Once our thoughts are locked in that groove our attitudes and actions follow. It is of paramount importance we guard our minds.

Paul in a Roman Dungeon

Writing from a dark, damp, dungeon in Rome, in extremely difficult circumstances toward the end of his life, Paul wrote a masterpiece in the letter to the Philippians that some have titled, "The Epistle of Joy."

The words joy or rejoicing are mentioned around 20 times. He concludes the epistle with these memorable words, "**Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice.**" (Philippians 4:4)

Paul's positive frame of mind is illustrated throughout the book of Acts. You will recall that earlier he was thrown in prison in Philippi. But surprisingly enough, Acts 16:25 records, "**But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.**"

The question needs to be asked how do you rejoice when you are in prison? How do you rejoice when your body is racked with pain? How do you rejoice when you are separated from those you love? How can you resist negative, melancholy, depressing thoughts when facing a crisis?

In one short powerful passage the apostle Paul gives us the key to maintaining healthy thought patterns.

Philippians 2:5: **Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

The word let means allow, or permit. In other words, if we surrender our minds to Christ and allow Him to shape our thoughts, He will transform our thinking.

Remember if you think of something long enough it will impact both your actions and your attitudes.

In this presentation we will share insights from the apostle Paul on how to keep your mind when the world is losing theirs to negative thoughts, unhealthy attitudes and depressing feelings. These eternal biblical principles will make a powerful difference in your thought life.

1. Thoughts Repeated become thoughts Engrained.

The word engrained means firmly fixed or established. They become indelibly written in our mental or moral constitution. We become like what we think about most.

This is why the apostle Paul states in Colossians 3:1, "If you then are risen with Christ seek those things which are above where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on earth."

Notice two words...seek and set. If you want to change your thought patterns make a conscious choice to seek the things of heaven and set your mind to be fixed upon them.

If you want to change your thoughts change your focus. Change what you are paying attention to most. You cannot expect to think heavenly thoughts if you are not filling your mind with them.

Paul emphasizes this point again in 1 Corinthians 3:18... **For by beholding we become changed.**

Ellen White adds,

"It is a law of the mind that it gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is trained to dwell. If occupied with commonplace matters only, it will become dwarfed and enfeebled. If never required to grapple with difficult problems, it will after a time almost lose the power of growth. As an educating power the Bible is without a rival. In the word of God the mind finds subject for the deepest thought, the loftiest aspiration." (Patriarchs and Prophets, page 597)

If you want to change your thoughts change your focus. Repeated actions become engrained thoughts.

2. Don't accept every thought that passes through your mind as true. Merely because you think something does not make what you think reality.

The Bible is clear that simply because we think negative thoughts about ourselves, others or the circumstances we are facing does not make those thoughts a reality.

a) Thoughts about ourselves: The apostle John makes this point plain in 1 John 3:20 "If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things."

What is John saying here. Simply this. Don't believe every thought that runs rampant in your mind.

When the devil tells you, that you are a guilty sinner, tell him Jesus is a mighty Savior and you are a child of God.

When the devil tells you that you are too weak to overcome some cherished sin, tell Him He is right, but Jesus is a mighty conqueror and in His name, you will be victorious.

When the devil tells you that your family is falling apart and there is little hope, tell Him Jesus is a mighty healer and in Christ there is hope.

Don't listen to the devils lies about yourself because He is a liar and the Father of lies. (John 8:44)

Merely because you think something does not make that something true. This is true regarding thoughts about ourselves and also thoughts about others.

b) Thoughts about others: Merely because you think something about someone else does not mean what you think is true. Our perceptions of another are not always reality.

Turn to 1 John 4:6-8:

"We are of God: he that knows God hears us; he that is not of God does not hear us. Hereby we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. Beloved let us love one another: for love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knows God. He that loves not knows not God for God is love."

As thoughts pass into our minds it is vital that we ask the Holy Spirit to help us distinguish between truth and error. We sometimes criticize others unfairly. We don't know all their circumstances, nor their motives. Only God, who is aware of all the facts is able to judge people righteously. The thoughts we have toward others often are not true at all. To allow them to dwell in our minds is to allow the devil to ruin relationships.

John Wesley's Experience

John Wesley told of a man he had little respect for because he considered him to be miserly and covetous. One day when this person contributed only a small gift to a worthy charity, Wesley openly criticized him.

After the incident, the man went to Wesley privately and told him he had been living on parsnips and water for several weeks. He explained that before his conversion, he had run up many bills. Now, by skimping on everything and buying nothing for himself he was paying off his creditors one by one. "Christ has made me an honest man," he said, "and so with all these debts to pay, I can give only a few offerings above my tithe. I must settle up with my worldly neighbors and show them what the grace of God can do in the heart of a man who was once dishonest." **Wesley then apologized to the man and asked his forgiveness.**

Remember merely because you think something about someone else does not make the thing you think true.

c) Thoughts about Life's Circumstances

The devil often tempts us with thoughts like these. This situation is impossible. Life is so unfair. Why did this happen to me? I don't deserve this.

When the thought dominates our minds that life has treated us unfairly it is very easy to become doubt God's loving intentions toward us, or worse yet become angry at God.

This leads us to become anxious, worried and fearful.

1 John 4:18,19: **There is no fear in love for love casts out fear.**

There are many things we do not fully understand about the circumstances of life. We are often perplexed and sometimes confused but this we know for certain, when things seem out of control, Christ is still in control.

In Christ, life's circumstances do not overwhelm us because we have One who has cast out all fear of failure. We know that the One who loves us holds us in His hands and in Him we are secure.

Remember your thoughts do not always reflect reality.

Here is the third principle in guarding your thoughts.

3. Replace old thoughts with new ones... The idea of emptying the mind comes from Eastern mysticism and is not a biblical concept. The truth is the mind can never be "empty". It must be renewed.

Romans 12:2 puts it this way, **"And be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God."**

Remember the story Jesus told about casting out the demon from the house and it remained empty and seven came back. What Jesus was saying is this: if you cast an evil thought out of your mind and do not replace it with a good thought seven more evil thoughts will come flooding into your mind.

Fill your mind with good thoughts and you will drive out the evil thoughts. If good things do not fill empty spaces, evil things will. All empty spaces will be filled with something. Our minds are renewed when we fill them with eternal truths. The scripture urges us to bring every thought into captivity to Christ. The apostle Paul puts it this way in:

2 Corinthians 10:5... **Bringing every thought into captivity to Christ**

The Daily Devotional, "My Life Today" provides this encouragement,

"When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, **the thoughts are brought into captivity** to Him; we live His life." (My Life Today, page 25)

Fill your mind with eternal truths and the principles of the kingdom of God and the Holy Spirit will drive out unwanted thoughts, unholy desires and unchristlike attitudes.

4. Place a screen on your mind. We keep screens on our minds to keep the bugs out. It is not to pleasant to be trying to sleep and have five mosquito's buzzing around your head biting you.

God has given us a divine screen for our minds.

Philippians 4:8: **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.**

Let's analyze the seven filters in our passage:

a) True: As opposed to false. The world promises what it never can deliver. The promises of God are true. If we fill our minds with that which is false, we substitute the false and artificial for the real and genuine. Eternal truths often have little appeal to a mind filled with falsehood. Fill your mind with what is true.

b) Honest: A better translation is honorable, reverend or worthy. One writer expresses this thought as the "dignity of holiness" as opposed to what is cheap, sensational and artificial. Fill your mind with the high and holy thoughts of heaven.

c) Just: Justice has to do with righteousness or doing what is right, fair or equitable. Ask yourself this question often, am I treating others righteously, fairly, equitably.

d) Pure: So clean that it is fit to be brought into the presence of God. Can I bring this activity safely into the presence of God.

e) Lovely: That which brings forth love as in kindness, sympathy and forbearance

f) Good Report: Something fit for God to hear. Not ugly, false, cheap or impure.

Virtue: Excellence, Raises you to be the best you can be in Christ.

Jesus is the divine, all powerful thought changer. Romans 8:5 declares, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Through the power Holy Spirit Jesus changes our carnal thoughts to spiritual ones, our selfish thoughts to loving outgoing ones,

Our greedy thoughts to giving thoughts, our impure thoughts to pure thoughts, and our critical thoughts to caring thoughts. Will you let Jesus do this for you and in you so changing the current of your thoughts He will work powerfully though you to be a testimony of His love and a witness of His grace in this sin-polluted world.

Here is Christ's promise to you.

"The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him."

You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him. (Steps to Christ, page 47)

Will you give Him you will just now as we pray and ask Him to mold you into His image and give you as Paul says, "the mind of Christ."