



THE HEALING OF THE MIND

Quest Lesson A-10

The Problem: Good or evil actions begin with good or evil thoughts. As a person “thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). We are all aware that the hardest battle in life is the struggle to think straight. The person who wants to give up smoking has great difficulty getting the thought of cigarettes out of his mind. The alcoholic cannot stop thinking about drinking, and the lustful person cannot get his mind off sex. The proud person allows his mind to dwell on himself, and the dishonest person spends time hatching his schemes.

The direction of our thoughts will be the direction of our lives. Of course, bodily appetites and passions, as well as external forces, often influence our minds very strongly so that we dwell on that which is attractive or appealing to us. If only those influences could be successfully resisted and our thoughts kept in channels which we know are good and productive, we would be able to achieve so many more of our goals in life. But how do we govern our minds to turn away from destructive and evil things, and only dwell on those which are wholesome and worthwhile? The struggle is intense! In fact, most people will admit that there are some modes of thought which they cannot overcome, even though they recognize them as counter-productive. Mind training has some value, the exercise of the will achieves some results, but the basic problem persists; the mind is not completely controllable in respect to some very attractive objects. We don't like to admit that we are somewhat like animals, following the strongest stimuli. Yet that is what we tend to do because our minds and our wills are just not capable of pursuing in every area of life only those objects which we recognize to be for our best good.

Is there a solution to this dilemma? Can the thoughts ever be brought under complete control? We turn to the Scriptures for the answer.

Objectives

First, we will study the mind of the person who does not know Christ.

Second, we will discover how transformation or healing of the mind can occur.

Third, it is important to consider the state of mind of the true believer in Christ.

Fourth, purity or holiness of mind is what the Bible calls “sanctification.”

Fifth, we will discover what kind of minds will be possessed by the people who inherit the kingdom of heaven.

I. The Mind of the Person Who Does Not Know Christ

The mind which is functioning without divine power is not completely controllable. When your thoughts are ungovernable in regard to some things, you know you need a strength that comes from some external source. You know that you need help. That is the clear teaching of Scripture.

The Word

1. How does the Apostle Paul describe the mind which is uncontrollable? Romans 8:5,7; Titus 1:15.
2. What power is actually in control of the mind that will not think pure thoughts? Ephesians 2:2-3.
3. Who are you alienated from when your mind is not under control? Colossians 1:21; Philippians 3:18-19.

Explanation: Our minds are either under the control of Satan or of God. It is not possible to maintain neutral ground. If Christ is not directing your thoughts, you don't have the power to prevent Satan's control. His evil mind and will are stronger than yours. He will dominate our thoughts and direct them in evil ways if we do not submit to divine power.

Relevance: The first step is to admit our weakness. When we are prepared to say, "In respect to this particular thing, I cannot control my thoughts," we have taken the first step towards the solution. Self-deception leads to failure. Mind training, psychological techniques are not enough. We need a divine power to make us overcomers.

II. Transformation or Healing of the Mind

Healing of the mind is the work of Christ. We cannot change our own natures. No amount of autosuggestion will cure our habit of wrong thinking. Only God can implant the purity which we crave.

The Word

4. What does the Bible say can happen to our minds? Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:22-24.
5. Who did Paul find to be the solution to the inner struggle with sin? Romans 7:18-25; 13:14.
6. Whose mind must we accept if we would have transformation? 1 Corinthians 2:12-16; Philippians 2:5.
7. What does the Holy Spirit do for our minds? Romans 8:5-14.

Explanation: Putting on Christ is entering into fellowship with Him. It is inviting Him into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Then our minds are renewed because we are given the mind of Christ. We become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), "partakers of his holiness" (Hebrews 12:10). Christ's righteousness is His holiness. When He bestows His righteousness upon us by giving us the Holy Spirit we become holy people, not because we are basically or intrinsically better than other people, but because Jesus is now the ruling power in our minds.

Relevance: Are you willing to allow Christ to transform your mind, by bestowing His righteousness or holiness upon you?

III. The State of Mind of the True Believer

Because his mind has been transformed by the Holy Spirit the true believer in Christ has thoughts, 'desires, and motives which are implanted from above. He is pure, humble, unselfish, kind and loving because Jesus is this way. The gift of Christ's righteousness every day makes him a holy person. He is the last to claim holiness for himself, but he extols Christ's holiness, and knows that Christ is living in his life. He knows that now his thoughts have a new direction. There is habitual victory over evil, whereas before there was regular defeat.

The Word

8. What does the mighty power of God do for our thoughts? 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.
9. On what kind of things does the believer allow his mind to dwell? Philippians 4:7-8; Proverbs 12:5.
10. What principle reigns supreme in the mind of the believer in Jesus? Matthew 22:37-39.

Explanation: The mind that is under the control of the Spirit of God is in conformity with the divine will. Evil thoughts cannot dwell there. The holiness of Christ received into the life by faith results in habitual thoughts that are true, honest, just, pure, and lovely (Philippians 4:8).

Relevance: Your mind can be habitually holy because Jesus is with you always.

IV. Holiness of Mind Is Called "Sanctification"

The Greek word for "holiness" is *hagiasmos*, The same word also means "sanctification." Holiness sanctification are synonymous terms. Sanctification is often thought of as growth in holiness. And so it is! But it is also the experience of holiness enjoyed by the believer now. There are more passages in the New Testament which use the verb "to sanctify" in

the sense of present holiness in Christ than there are passages which use it in reference to spiritual growth. This is not to depreciate the great importance of spiritual growth. Nevertheless, it is very important to accept the Bible truth that the divinely indwelt Christian has the holiness (sanctification) of Christ now. Many times in the New Testament sanctification is spoken of as an experience already given to the believer.

The Word

11. What phrases used in the following passages indicate that sanctification (holiness) is already enjoyed by believers? (Look at various translations).
 - a. Acts 26:18
 - b. Romans 15:16
 - c. 1 Corinthians 1:2
 - d. 1 Corinthians 6:11
 - e. Colossians 2:10
 - f. Hebrews 10:10
12. How are believers sanctified or made Holy? 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:1-2.

Explanation: The texts cited under question (11) speak of Sanctification as an experience bestowed in the past, the results of which still remain. Acts 26:18 refers to "those who have been sanctified." The perfect, passive tense of the Greek verb is correctly translated in that way. The Greek of Romans 15:16 speaks of those "having been sanctified by the Holy Spirit." | Corinthians 1:2 refers to the Corinthian Christians as "having been sanctified by Christ Jesus, called saints." Sanctification was a blessing they had already enjoyed. The tragedy was that they were destroying God's work in their hearts by harboring bitter, divisive thoughts towards one another.

The glorious truth is that when Jesus bestows Himself upon us in justification (see previous lesson) we have the gift of His righteousness or holiness. Justification is Christ bestowed; sanctification is Christ possessed. Justification is Christ's gift of Himself to us every day. Sanctification (holiness) is Christ possessed in our hearts every day.

This is why justification and sanctification cannot be separated. There is a causal relationship between them, Justification causes sanctification. You are made holy when the holy Savior comes into your life. When Christ bestows Himself upon you in justification you are made holy:

What do you do when you are thirsty? You hold an empty glass under the faucet and turn it on. The water flows into the glass until it is full. Our lives are the empty glass. Jesus pours His Holy Spirit upon us (Titus 3:5-7; Romans 8:9-10). That is justification. Then we are full of the Holy Spirit. That is sanctification or holiness.

So how do you become holy in mind? How are you sanctified? It is by opening your heart and letting Jesus come into your life. Then He gives you His holiness. This does not happen once or twice, but every day as we come to Him and ask for His presence in our lives. As Paul states it "the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16).

V. What Kind of Minds Will Be Possessed by Those Who Inherit the Kingdom of Heaven?

Christ will only take holy people to heaven. This is why the experience of sanctification is so important. If our minds are full of impure thoughts, Jesus Christ cannot take us to be with Him when He comes the second time. He wants to heal our minds by bestowing His holiness upon us so that we can be qualified for a place in the heavenly kingdom.

The Word

13. What does Paul say is the end result of Christ's gift of righteousness or holiness to us? Romans 6:19-23.
14. What kind of holiness (sanctification) does the Lord want to see in our lives by the time of the second advent of Jesus? 1 Thessalonians 4:13; 2 Peter 3:11-14; Ephesians 5:25-27.
15. What promise did Jesus give the thief on the cross? Was he, therefore, a sanctified man? Were his thoughts holy from then on? Luke 23:39-43.

Explanation: Holiness in Christ now is the qualification for heaven. This gift is bestowed upon every believer at the moment he accepts Christ. Of course, we still retain fallen humanity, and are still subject to strong temptations. Sometimes we may fall, because we rely on self instead of Christ. Even so, in so far as we confess our sin and receive the presence of Christ in our hearts we have the "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).

The dying thief accepted Jesus as his Savior. He was at that moment both justified and sanctified. He was justified because his sins were forgiven and the Holy Spirit came into his heart and mind; he was sanctified because the Holy Spirit's presence was the holiness of Christ in his life. He was qualified for heaven, and a few hours later died a saved man.

Relevance: Our minds are healed when we are born of the Spirit. Our struggle to think pure, holy thoughts is then resolved, because the Holy Spirit gives us the victory.

Our need is the Spirit of Jesus in our hearts. How do we obtain that wonderful gift? Jesus explained that the heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit "to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13). He instructs us, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (verse 9).

Will you join us in praying for the Holy Spirit to take charge of our minds right now?

Review Questions

1. True or False
 - a. The mind of the person who does not know Christ is not controlled at all times.
 - b. We can transform our own minds so that we will not ever have a problem with evil thoughts.
 - c. The true believer in Christ, in whose heart Jesus is living, thinks pure thoughts.
 - d. Sanctification is an experience of present holiness in Christ.
 - e. You are never sanctified; you are always growing towards it.
2. Discuss: Since God promises us that "every thought" can be brought into obedience to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5), it really is not necessary for us to sin at all. If He offers us the power to be holy to that extent, why can't we always be victorious over sin?