

CONTROLLING/CONQUERING IMPURE THOUGHTS

Introduction:

One of the most universal problems Christians admit to having is their difficulty with their THOUGHTS! The New Testament teaches that our thoughts are to be "obedient to Christ" (II Cor. 10:5). We are exhorted to THINK on such things that are "true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy" (Phil. 4:8). Our problem is "How can we focus our minds on the right things and then keep them there?" Let us consider what can help us in this area.

I. THE REASON THAT PEOPLE HAVE PROBLEMS WITH THEIR THINKING

- A. Psychologists tell us that much of our thinking is shaped by our surroundings. What we think about right and wrong behavior is formed from early childhood by our *parents*, by conditions in our *school*, by *family members*, by accepted standards of the *community* and *nation*...
- B. At the period of our lives when we had *no control* over our environment, thought patterns were developed. See Eph. 4:17
- C. When FEW moral restraints were placed upon us by family, school, society, etc., and MANY ungodly ideas and examples were presented to us at that stage of life, it was inevitable that SOME impure thinking would develop. See II Tim. 3:8
- D. Besides the above, the influence of Satan had free course in our lives to develop impure thinking. See Eph. 2:1-3; II Cor. 4:4

II. THE EFFECT THAT BEING CONVERTED TO CHRIST HAS ON OUR THINKING

- A. What happens to our minds and our THOUGHTS when we are converted to Christ?

They are renewed...Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:20-24

They are redirected...Col. 3:1-2

They are transformed...Rom. 12:1-2

They are refocused...Phil. 2:5

- B. What element enters our minds that changes our thinking?

God's laws...Heb. 8:8-12 (especially verse 10)

God's love...Romans 5:1-5

III. HOW THE DECISIONS WE MAKE NOW AFFECT WHAT WE THINK ABOUT...

- A. Pure thinking comes about through the *constant use of our senses* in making decisions about right and wrong . Heb. 5:13-14
- B. Pure thinking comes through *making right decisions* about:
 - Our choice of companions...I Cor. 15:33; Psalm 1:1; Prov. 22:24-25
 - What we see and hear...Job 31:1; Psalm 101:2-4
- C. Pure thinking comes through deciding to *listen to, read and meditate* upon the Word of God...Psalm 1:2-3; Psalm 119:11
- D. Pure thinking comes through *prayer*...Psalm 139:23-24

Discussion questions:

1. Can you trace your impure thoughts to any of the following?
 - Early childhood or adolescent conversations or experiences?
 - The influence of your family's standards, values and/or conduct?
 - The influence of the companions you have chosen to associate with?
 - The effects of what you have chosen to watch, read or listen to?
 - Your lack of reading and thinking about Jesus and God's word?
 - Your failure to maintain associations and fellowship with godly people?
 - Your neglecting to pray earnestly about the matter?
 - Your failure to have been genuinely converted to Christ in the first place?
2. Is it possible that certain impure thoughts will continue to plague us intermittently throughout our lives?
3. If we can't control impure thoughts entering our minds for a fleeting moment, can we control dwelling on and meditating on them? Should we?