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## THINK ON THESE THINGS

*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 (Phil. 4:8, KJV).*

I consider Phil. 4:8 to be one of the most important verses in the Bible. What occupies your mind and what you think means more than anything else in your life. Your thought life will determine how much you earn, where you live, and what you become in life.

Your life today is a result of your thinking yesterday. Your life tomorrow will be determined by what you think today. During a question-and-answer period in a recent ministerial conference, a pastor spoke up and said, “I think I can build a church to average 200. What do you think?”

I said, “I agree—you can build one to that size.”

Another pastor, without raising his hand, blurted out, “I think I can build a church up to 500. What do you think?”

I replied, “I agree—you can build a church up to that size.”

The first pastor stood up and said, “That doesn’t seem fair. Why do you think he can build a larger church than I can when you don’t even know our abilities and talents?”

<hr/> <p><i>What enters our mind and occupies our thought process will somewhere, sometime come out of our mouth.</i></p> <hr/>	<p>My reply to the protesting pastor was, “It doesn’t matter which of you has the greater ability. That which determines the success of your church’s growth more than any other ingredient is what you <i>think</i> you can do. If you think you can, you can. If you think you are, you are.”</p>
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Words have never been more true than those of the proverb “As he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7, NKJV).

We've all heard the comment about a man who lacks tact in his conversation: "He says what he thinks." That comment could be made about each of us as well. Although we may not instantly blurt out our initial reactions, they will come out sooner or later if we continue to think about them. What enters our mind and occupies our thought process will somewhere, sometime come out of our mouth.

My father is an example of the preceding statement. He has been successful in church leadership throughout his adult life, as a pastor, district superintendent, and for many years as president of Circleville Bible College. One of the reasons for his success has been his ability to study and concentrate on church-related subjects. Since this specific area has occupied his thinking process for several decades, he opens his mouth, and out come church growth principles. He has become what he thinks about.

It has been said, "Be careful about what you set your heart on, for you'll surely get it." Be careful about what occupies your mind, because it will greatly determine what you'll become tomorrow.

Much of my counseling with people centers on their desire to make changes in their lives. I share with them a simple two-step formula that will help make each one a different person.

First, I have them read 2 Cor. 5:17—“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (KJV). The new birth that Jesus said we all must experience to be assured of going to heaven not only determines our eternal destiny but also changes our life right now. Forgiveness of sins removes much heartache and all guilt from the past. The love, joy, and peace that Jesus gives when one becomes His child will without question make a change in any individual’s life.

But I know many Christians who still need radical transitions in their homes and in their daily lives. The second step to becoming the person you want to be is changing your thought life. You can literally change your life by beginning to think different thoughts. If you desire a mental “spring cleaning,” I suggest you check the following areas.

### ***1. In what type of environment do you live?***

Each one of us is a product of the environment that surrounds our lives. It is no accident that people who tend to be negative are often found in the same household. Two people can live in the same county, under the same law, with the same privileges, and yet turn out to be drastically different in their values, priorities, and lifestyles. Why? Because their environment, especially at home, was drastically

different. Their thoughts reflected what they were given by their environment.

## ***2. What are you doing in your free time?***

How you spend the time that is your own will greatly determine what you think about. No doubt about it—Satan brings his greatest temptations to people when they have time on their hands. It takes discipline of character and proper goals to handle correctly the extra hours given to an individual in our society.

My parents were very concerned about what we children did in our spare time while we were growing up. They were careful to make sure my brother, sister, and I had plenty of games at home so that our friends could come to our house to play. This enabled them to watch over our activities and relationships. I will forever be indebted to them for encouraging me to read the Bible and good Christian material for a half hour daily. They understood the importance of filling my free time with tools that would help me think right.

## ***3. Who are your closest friends?***

The people you associate with will greatly determine how you think. One of the positive values of attending church is that the Christian receives encouragement from other believers there. It's possible to know the characteristics

of a person by knowing his or her friends. Peer pressure is often the greatest influence upon the life of an individual.

To sum it all up, you can change your life by changing your thinking. You can change your thinking by changing your environment, the use of your free time, and your associations. Use Phil. 4:8 as the guideline to be applied in your thought life. Do your best to make it your standard for selecting friends, filling your free time, and changing your surroundings.