



Volume 11, No. 8, August, 2023



*There is a Place of Quiet Rest  
There is a place of quiet rest,  
Near to the heart of God,  
A place where sin cannot molest,  
Near to the heart of God.*

*There is a place of comfort sweet,  
Near to the heart of God,  
A place where we our Savior meet,  
Near to the heart of God.*

*There is a place of full release,  
Near to the heart of God,  
A place where all is joy and peace,  
Near to the heart of God.*

**Refrain:**

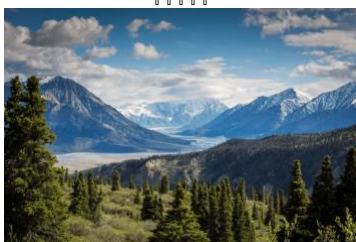
*O Jesus, blest Redeemer,  
Sent from the heart of God,  
Hold us, who wait before Thee,  
Near to the heart of God.*

**WORDS: Cleland B. McAfee (w. 1901)**

**MUSIC: Cleland B. McAfee (w. 1901)**



*The steadfast of mind you will keep in perfect peace,  
because he trusts in you. Isaiah 26:3*



**Fred Willmon**



## Productively Thinking On Things

By Wilburta Arrowood

Controlling our thoughts may be one of the most difficult tasks we are given as Christians. We are bombarded with sexuality all around us. We get angry at times, and there are myriad issues that we worry about. When we get to know one another as we should, we see brothers and sisters suffering with money issues, women with infertility issues, the older members with diverse health issues, and even the teens with coming-of-age angst. So how do we cope?

How do we turn our worries off? Matthew 6:31 gives a good idea. "Do not worry then, saying, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear for clothing?'" That sounds like a great idea, but how do we do that? First, we must trust God to provide all the things we need. Do bear in mind, God promises all we need, not what all we may want. Second, we need to fill our minds with other things, rather than the things we worry about. Philippians 4:8 gives us a list of what we should think about. If we do that, we won't have time to worry.

A good Christian sister once told me she has trouble sleeping and at times it is brewing anger, and other times all her concerns ambush her when she lies down to rest. She developed a "secret formula" for conquering those problems. She said she visualizes the auditorium as we worship. Like most congregations, we all tend to sit in the same pew, or at least the same general area of the auditorium each week. She starts at a side section, and she thinks about each person in "their pew." She prays a specific prayer for that person. She then moves to the next, and the next, working her way to the back. She then moves to the middle section and goes row by row

praying for each person. If she is still awake, she moves to the opposite section. Most nights she is asleep long before she finishes the whole room. The next time she has trouble sleeping she starts on the opposite side of the room. Thus, every member gets prayed for at some point.

Her method serves at least two purposes. Prayer is always needed and appreciated; and as she prays for others, she has no time to brew her anger or worry about her own issues. She is thinking about others and their needs. She says as she prays, she often realizes there is something she can do to help that brother or sister. It might be a phone call, or a card of encouragement. It might be she knows a good recipe to help address a newly diagnosed diabetic. Maybe she knows about a website to help someone DIY a washing machine repair. She may know someone else who can be of help where she cannot. It might be as simple as recommending a good clean TV series that could be streamed to ease a bedridden patient's boredom. Whatever it is, her mind is filled with helping others rather than fretting about herself and her problems. She is thinking about honorable and commendable things.

Training the mind like this is hard. We are by nature self-centered, and we tend to try to fix things on our own. It takes practice to learn to do all we can to help ourselves and then let God handle it from there. I have found this sister's method to be helpful. I pray it will help you too.



*Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.  
1 Corinthians 14:20*



### THINK ON THESE THINGS

What do you think about most? Some might say they think about family, especially if there are grandchildren. Some think about their goals for the day, week, month, or year. Students may think about their homework or the upcoming test. Some people spend lots of time thinking about money and/or politics.

Some people have a great memory for baseball stats or for Super Bowl winning teams, or other sports records. Our son began memorizing scripture as a young child, and he has an excellent recall – especially for scriptures, but also for dates, places, people, and so on.

Early in the history of the world mankind demonstrated deceitful thinking. In Genesis 6:5, *"The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every*

*intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* Naaman thought the rivers in his country would be a better place to wash himself than in the Jordan (2 Kings 5:11). His own thoughts deceived him until one of his servants reasoned with him. When he did what Elisha told him to do, his leprosy vanished.

Abraham's fear led to deceiving thoughts when he and Sarah encountered Abimelech, Abraham thought Abimelech would kill him if he knew Sarah was his wife. Because of his fear, he lied and said, "She is my sister." Even though Abraham lied, Abimelech took Sarah anyway. Abraham focused on his fearful thoughts and forgot his faith. Our hearts and minds must be constantly focused on God's word and on serving Him.

We must continually guard our thoughts. Hebrews 4:12 tells us how powerful the word of God is, *"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."* The writer of Proverbs 23:7 (NASB) *"<sup>7</sup> For as he **thinks within himself**, so he is."* Our thoughts must be in accordance with Bible teachings.

Frequently thinking worldly thoughts can eventually cause us to stray. The Bible tells us to think on what is really important, as in Philippians 4:8, *"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."* It is easy to get distracted by the world, but we must remember to think on what is most important.

We are what we think. Bad can (and most likely will) fill my heart if I think on bad things. Paul warned in 1 Corinthians 14:20, *"Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature."*

There are some things we are not to think, such as in Acts 17:29, *"Being then God's offspring, **we ought not to think** that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man."* Also, Romans 12:3, *"For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned,"* And see Galatians 6:3, *"For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself."*

God knows our thoughts as we are told in Psalm 94:11, *"The LORD knows the thoughts of man, that they are but*

*a breath.” Psalm 139:2 says, “You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.”* We cannot hide our thoughts from God. We are what we think.

Jesus frequently introduced principles to his disciples by asking, “What do you think?” (Matthew 18:12, 21:28; 22:17, etc.) His questions challenged their thinking on what is important. Jesus knew the thoughts of those around Him, as in Matthew 9:4, “*But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, ‘Why do you think evil in your hearts?’*”

Evelyn Waite, Rolla, Missouri



## GOD CREATED US IN HIS OWN IMAGE

Our brains are the seat of all our reasoning and thinking – all of who we really are. The brain has been the subject of much study by physicians and scientists, yet it remains a mystery. It is said that we only use a small portion of what our brains are capable of. Our memories lie there. As part of the normal aging process, the brain loses some ability to think and remember as it once did. But there are deadly diseases of the brain—cancers, encephalitis, and meningitis. Meningitis is a deadly inflammation of the lining that surrounds the brain and spinal cord. Parkinson’s is believed to stem from a neuro-degenerative condition in the brain. There are different kinds of dementia that can affect the brain. Accidents can cause severe injury. Drugs and alcohol can injure the brain beyond repair. Brain cells do not regenerate. When the cells are destroyed, they are gone for good, making it a very delicate organ in our bodies.

Our thinking processes will determine whether we are positive or negative. Since we are made in God’s image, that means He created us with a brain that can think, reason, remember, and choose. No other animal has that type of brain. We are God’s special creation!

What do I do with the special organ God has given me? Proverbs 23:7 says, “For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” What do I think about every day? Proverbs 4:23 says, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” In other words, be careful how you think. Your life is shaped by your thoughts.

My thoughts can either harm me or fill me with joy. Negative thoughts have been proven to cause physical and mental problems. We know from scripture that anxiety and worry is not pleasing to our Lord. However, positive thoughts act on our bodies exactly the opposite.

Philippians 4:4-9 are wonderful verses: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near! Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me (Paul) – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.” Think of that! Can anything be more wonderful than the assurance that the God of peace is with us?

Do not think about the world with all its troubles. Keep your thoughts higher than the heavens, always looking up. Think about the things that are good and lovely in our lives—the love of God, the love we have from our physical families, then for the wonderful love we have from our brothers and sisters in Christ. Even through our woes and sorrows, we can think positively. Kindness given is kindness received. A smile causes others to smile. Gentleness will help others who are hurting and angry. Both Proverbs 25:22 and Romans 12:20 talk about “heaping coals of fire on their heads.”

Do I always keep positive thoughts? I try, but satan is always interfering. The world can keep us in negativity and get our thoughts off track. I am always fighting to keep my thoughts on the positive side, especially when I’m dealing with the severe flareups of fibromyalgia. The pain and exhaustion make it hard to think good thoughts all the time. But, my struggle is not new, and it’s not mine alone. When I am struggling and get off course, He gently pulls me back into His path.

Our thoughts will make us or break us. Life is not easy. Satan interferes so often. That is why we need a good prayer life and study habit every day to keep us in a positive mode.

Mary Anna Melton, Rolla, Missouri





***Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. Philippians 4:8***



### **The Example We Set**

*"...Set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).* Influence is something we exert all the time, whether we realize it or not. The words we speak and the lives we live reflect who we are and our value system in action on display for others to observe. Depending on your relationship with others, the example your influence shows may be imitated by others, such as friends or family. Especially young children are very impressionable and open to input in shaping their morals and ideals. This is perhaps realized no better than when we reach adulthood and say something that was repeated to us many times by our parents, and remark, "I've become my mother (or father)!"

Certainly, not every behavior is attributable to the influence of someone's example, as each person is a unique individual and will grow up to make his or her own choices about how to live life. However, one's example, whether for good or bad, can and often does factor into the process of shaping the lives of others. I remember a police officer relating a story to me, having taken a juvenile home for breaking and entering, only to have the child's parent lecture the officer and then tell the child he didn't have to do anything the officer said. Should we wonder where that child had learned criminal behavior was acceptable?

The same principle applies spiritually as well. Statistics indicate that children, whose parents attend all services faithfully and who are involved in the work of the church, are more likely to be faithful themselves. Conversely, those parents who attend only once in a while and are not involved in the work of the church will find their children less motivated to be faithful in their own lives as adults. How many stories could be related of uninvolved parents, or parents who allowed physical pursuits to always take precedent over the spiritual, where their children drifted away and have no interest in the church as adults? Certainly, even parents who do their best to live faithful lives and so instruct their children to do the same will be challenged by the influence of the world in which we live. Yet, what are the percentages for these young people when their parents and other influential

examples in their lives are not faithful to the assembly, to the work of the church, and to Christian living in the home?

How easy it is to shake one's head at the way things are but refuse to look at one's own influence and example. If you show no respect, you shouldn't be surprised when those around are disrespectful. If you show no love, don't be surprised when others are unloving. If you reject the authority of others, don't be dumbfounded when others reject your authority regarding them. If you aren't an obedient child of God, don't blame others until you have first looked at yourself. Most psychologists affirm it is difficult for children to rise above their parents, as the power of their example works to help shape their lives.

As a young man, Timothy, in the above Scripture, was encouraged by Paul to set a proper example to others, as well he should have. How about those who are older in the faith? Paul urged Titus to remind older men and women to be positive in their relations with others (Titus 2:2-3). We cannot imbibe the spirit of the world and expect those who see us to learn anything different. While words of encouragement are important, lives of encouragement are just as important. John reminds us, *"Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth."* (1 John 3:18).

What is the heritage our lives will leave for those following us? Just what kind of example do YOU set?

Robert Johnson, Longview, Texas  
Via Voice of Truth International, Vol. 111  
[www.housetohouse.com](http://www.housetohouse.com)



***If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. James 1:26***

The header for the Sunrise newsletter features a scenic background of a snowy mountain range with evergreen trees. Overlaid on this is a stylized logo for "Sunrise" in a large, elegant script font. Below the logo, a dark blue banner contains the text "The Newsletter For Women By Christian Women" in white. Below the banner, a text box provides information about the newsletter.

*Sunrise* is a monthly newsletter written and/or assembled by members of the Rolla Church of Christ. Sunrise is printed and distributed (primarily via email) to individuals and congregations around the country. All previous issues can be accessed by going to <http://www.seekgrowserveLove.org>. Click on the Resources tab, then on Sunrise Newsletter. You will find the current issue plus all previous issues.

