

How to Think

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • September 2, In the year of our Lord, 2012
Scripture Reader and Reading: Carl Peugh – Proverbs 1.1–6

Prelude:

I. The title of my sermon could have been, “How to Think Correctly.”

- A. We all think, but
- B. we may not all think properly, or correctly.
 - 1. Sometimes we do things
 - 2. that show we did not give much, if any, forethought.

II. We should think instead of feel.

**26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool,
But whoever walks wisely will be delivered.
(Pro 28.26)**

- A. Remember feeling expresses emotion or physical sensation.

III. What we think shows up in our lives,

- A. the way we speak,
- B. the way we act,
 - 1. which Jesus taught during His ministry.

20 And He said, “What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within and defile a man” (Mark 7.20–23).

- 2. The reverse would also be true.
- 3. Solomon had said,

23 Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it spring the issues of life.
(Pro 4.23)

Persuasion:

I. Things to Avoid to Insure Proper Thinking

A. Avoid Gossip and Rumor

1 This will be the third time I am coming to you. “By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established” (2Co 13.1).

B. Avoid Personal Bias

1. Do not draw a conclusion because
2. it favors what you already believe,
 - a) either for something or
 - b) against something.

61 But He kept silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” (Mark 14.61).

C. Avoid Fear

1. You have to not care what the results are.
2. You have to not care what your friends think.

42 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God (John 12.42, 43).

D. Avoid hastiness

20 Do you see a man hasty in his words?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.
(Pro 29.20)

11 I said in my haste, "All men are liars."
(Psa 116.11)

II. Think with Balance

A. What is thinking?

1. Getting information
2. Processing that information
3. Making a decision
4. Acting on it

B. Get all the information you can, or that is necessary.

1. Get both sides

13 He who answers a matter before he hears it,
It is folly and shame to him.
(Pro 18.13)

2. Consider bias

6 Most men will proclaim each his own goodness,
But who can find a faithful man?
(Pro 20.6)

2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes,
But the LORD weighs the hearts.
(Pro 21.2).

3. Remember the first one will always seem right.

**17 The first one to plead his cause seems right,
Until his neighbor comes and examines him.
(Pro 18.17)**

4. Even as you listened to your children in conflict, so

- a) listen to adults,
- b) listen to evidence, et al.

C. Process information

- 1. Compare it with a standard
- 2. Compare it with experience
- 3. Compare it with testimony
- 4. Compare it with other things you have learned
- 5. Compare it with Scripture

D. Make a decision

**7 ...always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth
(2Ti 3.7).**

E. Act on it

- 1. What good is thinking,
- 2. if we do not use what we have thought upon?
 - a) This is true in the world and
 - b) in the Scriptures,

**22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.
23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man
observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes**

away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does (Jam 1.22–25).

III. Attitude Affects Thinking

A. Self-fulfilling prophecies

1. If you believe you are defeated, you are.
 - a) Remember the ten spies.
2. If you believe you are victorious, you are.
 - a) Remember the two spies.

B. Think Humbly

4 “Do not think in your heart, after the Lord your God has cast them out before you, saying, ‘Because of my righteousness the Lord has brought me in to possess this land’; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out from before you” (Deu 9.4).

7 “Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed” (Luke 7.7).

C. Think soberly

3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith (Rom 12.3).

1. Be accurate
2. Be humble
3. Be scriptural
4. See everything from God’s perspective

IV. Test All Things

21 Test all things; hold fast what is good (1Th 5.21)

A. Do not be gullible

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world (1Jo 4.1).

V. Think Simply

A. We have the tendency to complicate things.

B. We think the complex is better, smarter

C. Remember Naaman

D. Paul's fear

3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ (2Co 11.3).

VI. Be Reasonable

A. Do not be ridiculous.

1. Do not be naive.

2. Just because it was on television does not make it true.

3. Just because it was published, does not make it true.

4. Just because many people believe it, does not make it true.

5. Just because your favorite [fill in the blank] says it, does not make it true.

B. The countless conspiracy theories about almost everything illustrates my point.

C. Think about things that are said about presidents.

1. If you believe everything that the opposition says about a president,

2. you are naive.
 - a) People believe things, regardless of how outlandish the claim is, because
 - b) it is against someone they despise.

D. For example, consider the atheistic explanation for humanity's existence, and

1. while there are thousands, if not millions of things that had to be in place,
2. let us narrow down to these four:
 - a) Something had to come from nothing.
 - b) Order had to come from chaos.
 - c) Life had to come from non-life.
 - d) Life had to change itself into the various kinds.
 - (1) Is that reasonable?
 - (2) Does that make sense to you?

E. Avoid the world's thinking, especially the national media

F. God says,

**18“Come now, and let us reason together,”
Says the Lord
(Isa 1.18)**

VII. Think Spiritually

A. Philippians 4.8

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things (Phi 4.8).

1. These affect the way we think.

2. These affect the way we see the world, people, things,

VIII. Think Scripturally

6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other (1Co 4.6).

Exhortation:

I. Read and Meditate on the Bible Daily

A. This is God speaking to you.

1. We live in a God-created world and
2. He gave the Bible to show us how to live here.
 - a) Romans 1 shows what happens when we abandon God and
 - b) what that does to our thinking,

21 ...because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things (Rom 1.21–23).

B. Proverbs is rich in showing us the basis of proper thinking

1. Proverbs 1.1–6
2. Then notice what it first teaches,
 - 7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.
(Pro 1.7)**

C. Psalm 119 is also rich

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.
(Psa 119.105)

II. What can we do for you?