

MIND GAMES

Proverbs 4:23; Ephesians 6:10-13

Woodland Park Church of Christ

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*More than anything you guard, **protect your mind, for life flows from it.** Proverbs 4:23 CEB*

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, **that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.** ¹² **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,** but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. **Ephesians 6:10-13**

*For I delight in the in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, **warring against the law of my mind**, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Romans 7:22-23*

BACKDROP

Received the following thought-provoking question in a text message earlier in the week --

If you place my mind in a box, how do you expect my body to remove itself?

So many are limited, enslaved and entrapped because their minds are in captivity and/or disarray.

This topic is always en vogue (in style or an appropriate matter for discussion).

FLEA EXPERIMENT – MENTAL CONDITIONING

- A scientist placed a number of fleas in a glass jar. They quickly jumped out.
- He put the fleas back into the jar and placed a glass lid over the top.
- The fleas began jumping and hitting the glass lid, falling back down into the jar.
- After a while, the fleas, conditioned to the presence of the glass lid, began jumping slightly below the glass lid so as not to hit it.
- The scientist then removed the glass lid as it was no longer needed to keep the fleas in the jar.
- The fleas learned to limit themselves from jumping beyond the height of the lid even if the lid was removed as they had been conditioned to the fact that they cannot escape from the jar.

The mind is akin to a generator because it jump starts thoughts, emotions and behavior/conduct.

In other words, the mind is where our conduct takes form and begins to formulate the course(s) we take.

*Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For **out of the abundance of the heart** the mouth speaks. ³⁵ A good man out of the **good treasure of his heart** brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the **evil treasure** brings forth evil things. **Matthew 12:34-35***

THINGS THAT CAN HARM OUR MINDS (BRAINS)

- Drugs and other mind-altering substances (See I Pet. 5:8)
- Diet (too much salt, sugar and fat)
 - Sugar: slowed cognitive function and deficits in memory and attention; studies suggest that elevated levels of sugar inflames the brain
- Negative and limited thinking
- Exposure to unwholesome environments – be mindful of where we spend our time and allow to handle our children
- Lack of mental gymnastics and physical activity – exercise increases oxygen to brain; stimulates growth of neuronal connectors in cortical areas of the brain; the mind needs stimulation as well

MOAB'S DEMISE – II Kings 3:15-25

- Jehosphaphat, Jehoram and king of Edom set to battle Moab
- God's people had no water
- God instructs Israel and Judah to dig ditches, and He filled them with water
- Moab mistakes the water for blood, thinking the three kings had turned on each other
- Unprepared for battle, Moab marched right into the teeth of the three kings' offensive to their demise!!

Impact of Smoking

- Faster cognitive decline (reason, think, exercise judgment)
- Increased risk of dementia (memory, thinking ability, language skills, behavior)
- Loss of brain volume

Unhealthy ways of thinking and reacting to things can cause depression and anxiety, prolong stressors and create chronically stressed states of mind that can lead to heart problems and immunity issues.

When your head is in a “bad place,” the world around you can become toxic and hold you back from living an inspired and productive life.

*A **merry heart does good, like medicine**, but a broken spirit dries the bones. Proverbs 17:22*

Devil and naysayers tell you “That’s too hard” –

- No one can be expected to love their enemies, do good to them that persecute and despitefully use you.
- It is unrealistic for a young man or young woman to remain chaste and pure; we all have desires for sexual intimacy
- Bearing crosses daily (routinely practicing good behavior and exercising discipline) is too extreme. **See Galatians 5:24**

....*For as a man **thinketh in his heart**, so is he.*
Proverbs 23:7

Young man working at Ross Bridge in its restaurant and banquets area dreamed of becoming a certified chef.

To get designation requires the passing of an industry-sanctioned/administered examination.

Young man's supervisor cautioned him about the "difficulty" of the examination and how bad it would look if he failed. The examination purportedly has a high failure rate.

So, the supervisor advised the young man not to take the test.

- Fortunately, the young did not heed the “advice.”
- He took the examination, passed with flying colors and is now a chef at Mountain Brook’s Grand Bohemian Hotel Restaurant!!!!
- **KEY → He did not allow the negative counsel/advice to rule his mind and thwart his desire.**
- Unfortunately, this outcome is not always the result because the adverse message often rules the mind.

Reminiscent of Jeroboam's Evil

Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "**It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem.** Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!" ²⁹ And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. ³⁰ Now this thing became a sin, for the people went *to worship* before the one as far as Dan. ³¹ He made shrines on the high places, and **made priests from every class of people**, who were not of the sons of Levi. I Kings 12:28-31

Surround yourself
with the dreamers and the
doers, the believers and
thinkers, but most of all,
surround yourself with
those who see greatness
within you, even when you
don't see it yourself.

- EDMUND LEE -

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.* ² And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Romans 12:1-2

Lord's Invitation Extended to All

- **Be added to the Lord's body --**
 - Hear the gospel (Acts 15:7);**
 - Believe the gospel (Acts 8:37,15:7);**
 - Repent of sins (Acts 2:38);**
 - Confess Christ (Acts 8:37);**
 - Be baptized for the remission of sin (Acts 2:38).**

Lord's Invitation (cont'd)

- Be reconciled unto the Lord (1 John 1:8-9); or
- Desire prayer. (James 5:16).