

MIND YOUR MIND
Ephesians 6:10-17

Woodland Park Church of Christ

4 December 2022

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. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with **truth**, having put on the breastplate of **righteousness**, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the **gospel of peace**; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of **faith** with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of **salvation**, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **word of God**;

BACKDROP

- I often get the sense that God's people do not realize how Satan strategizes and attacks.
- We see the effects of his handywork –
 - Spiritual apostasy;
 - Homosexuality (sexual impurity);
 - Murder (senseless violence);
 - Deceit (lying);
 - Racism;
 - Abuse of all types
- All of these acts and predispositions have their origin in our minds – not a physical proposition, although the results have physical ramifications and spiritual consequences.

**The United Negro College Fund used to famously warn –
“A mind is a terrible thing to waste.”**

Carrying it further, “The mind is a terrible thing to allow to be contaminated with the filth of this world and/or to allow to become controlled by Satan.”

My daddy would frequently ask us, “What’s on your mind?”

- **He understood that what was on our minds (in our hearts) would ultimately come to life, materialize, and be displayed in what we said or how we acted.**

Proverbs 4:23

- Guard your heart above all else for **it determines the course of your life.** (NLT)
- Above all else, guard your heart, *for everything you do flows from it.* (NIV)
- Guard your heart above all else, *for it is the source of life.* (CSB)
- Keep your heart with all diligence, **For out of it spring the issues of life.** (NKJV)
- Be careful how you think; **your life is shaped by your thoughts.** (GNT)

The mind (heart) is akin to a manufacturing plant or facility.

Our actions and words are formed in our minds. Our tongues, hands, and feet simply carry out the intent and content of our hearts.

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 [NKJV]**

With the mind (heart), we --

- Engage critical thinking and analysis;
- Discern between good and evil;
- Resolve problems and issues;
- Plan and take action.

The enemy and adversary (the one we read about in **1 Peter 5:8**), our opposition, and competitors like to attack our minds.

They realize that if they can infiltrate, pollute, and contaminate our minds, they can control us, throw us off our game, set us back and make it easier to defeat us by *intimidating us, infuriating us, frustrating us, diverting our focus, or having us dwell on folly and inconsequential matters!*

- We must be very careful about what we allow to enter and remain implanted in our minds.
- We should carefully vet (and be hyper-vigilant about) what we read and watch – the world is always trying to indoctrinate and influence us.
- Hollywood and the media are master craftsmen at shaping societal norms and having the world embrace certain views and ideals.
- Unclean and impure thoughts should be quickly vanquished before they fester, mature, and materialize (in awkward, inexpedient, limiting, or evil acts or words).

The opposition can weary us with worry and anxiety to make us feel insecure with doubt and fear!

Have us focusing on the size of our problem instead of the magnitude and breadth of God's grace, mercy, and power!

“There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and ***we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.***” So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. ² And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! ³ ***Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims?*** Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” ⁴ So they said to one another, “Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.” **Numbers 13:33-14:4**

But, notice the reactions of settled mind(s); the heart(s) staid on the Lord and standing firmly on God's promises.

Caleb & Joshua →

If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' ⁹ ***Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land,*** for they *are* our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD *is* with us. Do not fear them." (Number 14:8-9),

Often the frenzy and lure of what's vogue or permitted by power structures can have our minds embracing certain practices!

And ***the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank***, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of *that time* they might serve before the king. ⁶ Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. ⁷ To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel *the name* Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego. ⁸ ***But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank***; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. **Daniel 1:5-8 (NKJV)**

And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies.

Daniel 1:15 (NKJV)

Four (4) things we can all do to MIND OUR MINDS / GUARD OUR HEARTS!

1. Oversee the Content of Your Mind Consciously
2. Pray Ceaselessly
3. Vet Friends and Associates Carefully
4. Read and Study God's Word Consistently

I. **Oversee the Content of Your Mind Consciously**

- We need to be effective gatekeepers and landlords over what we allow to enter and take up residence in our minds – **good filters**.
- Companies and executives have gatekeepers and barriers to keep out the riff-raff.
- If it does not look or sound right it should be given the boot.

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**. **Philippians 4:8 [NKJV]**

We see horrific, tragic, and deadly consequences of people not zealously and diligently protecting against what enters their mind.

- The constant stream of negative and disastrous news can add to one's stress levels that will increase symptoms of anxiety and depression.
- Indoctrination by Hollywood and media outlets – “If you see or hear it enough, you will embrace it,” irrespective of what they have been taught. Seemingly every advertisement displayed the rainbow during so-called gay pride month.
- Social media is one of the biggest contributing factors of depression in adolescents (ages 10-19).
- Dangerous TikTok challenges – e.g., Blackout Challenge

II. Pray Ceaselessly

- We will be challenged in this life.
- There will be times when we have so much on our minds that we feel that one more bit of unfavorable news will breach our tipping point and cause us to explode.
- Prayer can declutter our minds, keep us focused on what's important, and help ensure we KEEP THE MAIN THING THE MAIN THING.
- In prayer, we focus on the Father, cast our cares upon Him, and look to Him for strength, endurance, clarity, and direction.

Rejoice always, ¹⁷ *pray without ceasing*, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 [NKJV]**

III. Vet Friends & Associates Carefully

- Develop a stringent process for determining who you label “friend” or with who you choose to associate.
- Their issues and ways of thinking could very well become yours.
- Some try to poke holes in the efficacy of a heterosexual two-parent household by arguing that their offspring too go astray. However, generally what happens is those children start to mingle and associate with others who do not share the same wholesome values and principles.

The man of *too many friends [chosen indiscriminately]* will be broken in pieces *and* come to ruin, but there is a [true, loving] friend who [is reliable and] sticks closer than a brother. Proverbs 18:24 [AMP]

“Well Brother Beeman, that’s my friends, not me.” → A dangerous and treacherous proposition

Can a man take fire to his chest and his clothes not be burned? ²⁸ Or can a man walk on hot coals, and his feet not be scorched? **Proverbs 6:27-28**

Do not even associate with a man given to angry outbursts; or go [along] with a hot-tempered man, ²⁵ Or you will learn his [undisciplined] ways and get yourself trapped [in a situation from which it is hard to escape].

Proverbs 22:24-25 [AMP]



IV. Read and Study God's Word Consistently

Blessed is the one

who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,

² but *whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.*

³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers. **Psalm 1:1-3 [NKJV]**

Reading and studying God's word leaves little room for occupation of naughty, unproductive, evil thoughts. The more we focus on God's word and will leaves less room for Satan to enter and control our hearts.

My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is . . .

My mind to me a kingdom is;
Such present joys therein I find,
That it excels all other bliss
That earth affords or grows by kind:
Though much I want that most would have,
Yet still my mind forbids to crave.

No princely pomp, no wealthy store,
No force to win the victory,
No wily wit to salve a sore,
No shape to feed a loving eye;
To none of these I yield as thrall;
For why? my mind doth serve for all ... **Edward Dyer***

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);

or

Lord's Invitation (cont'd)

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