

## Think

“Think! Use your head. T-H-I-N-K! Think about what you are doing. Think about your decisions.”

As a child and teenager, these words from my mother often cut like a knife. Especially when she started spelling: “T-H-I-N-K!” Advice like this usually followed times that I had done something so incredibly insane, that it showed little if any forethought on my part.

It was my mother's way of leading me to understand that proper thinking leads to proper actions. From an early age she encouraged me to think for myself. She also encouraged me to surround myself with people, books and activities that challenge me to think.

Today, in my forties with a family of my own, a phone call or conversation with my mother still includes a reminder to “T-H-I-N-K.” And yes, there are times I hear my mother's words coming from my own mouth, while teaching my own children.

Paul and Timothy, writing back to the Christians in Philippi said it like this: **“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.”** (Philippians 4:8)

It is real easy for us to allow ourselves to be so bogged down in the day to day activities of our lives that we do not give adequate time to thinking. Our society is so action oriented that we almost feel guilty if we are not doing something. Some of us go so far as to avoid thinking altogether.

Henry Ford once said: “Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is the probable reason so few engage in it.”

Critical thinking seems to be a skill that few people practice. When it comes to Spiritual matters, critical thinking seems more rare.

I enjoy doing things that cause me to think. I find that I have a hearty desire to be with people that challenge me to think and look at things from different perspectives. I want to listen to pastors, teachers, friends and opinions that force me to think.

Shallow preachers are like “sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.” Their words barely leave their mouths and are lost or forgotten. As such, the message has little effect on our lives.

I love a pastor that is bold enough to take deep dives into God's Word. Preachers like that, cause focused concentrated thinking and lead to practical application of Biblical truths.

Perhaps it is a fear of thinking that causes so many Christians to have trouble articulating what they believe. Even worse, many of us have trouble expressing why we believe what we believe. The question then becomes: “How can you believe what you believe, if you don't know why you believe what you believe?”

I have a few friends that enjoy stretching each others thinking ability by associating two or more seeming disassociated thoughts with a rhetorical question. Sometimes we will reword the statements to a new statement that secures a life lesson.

Here is an example of how that process might go:

All people are sinners. Christ loves all sinners. Christ died to save sinners. Christ arose to give saved sinners eternal life. Therefore, it is fair to say: **“Christ loves us to death, for life.”**

We need to take our brains out of their sheltered existences and exercise our thought life. The writer of Proverbs said, “As a man thinks in his heart, he is.” Maybe if we improved our thinking, the rest of our lives would follow.

I will leave you with a couple more disassociated associations to think about:

### **On the Other Hand...**

God made men in His own image. Some men are right handed and some left handed. Which hand does God favor and why? (The answer to this one is actually found in the New Testament.)

### **Scientific Wonders...**

A number of years ago, scientists claimed that their “scientific study” had proven that humans use less than 10% of their brain capacity. About that same time another group of scientists claimed that their “scientific study” had proven that humans were descended from monkeys. Given the fact that God created man in His own image, I have to ask a question. Might the scientists that performed the second study been the test sample for the scientists that performed the first study?

Giving us the ability to think is one way God distinguishes us from every other part of His creation. Exercising our thought life is as much a part of worship as any church service. Thinking on the things that Paul described in Philippians, better prepares us for worship, for service, for life.

Thinking, worship, service, life...There is a combination worth the thought.