

Our Mind: Friend and Foe

I think back upon the course of my life, the defeat I have lived in, and the things I have done and can remember so clearly at times asking myself, "What on earth am I doing? I don't even know why I am making this decision." Have you ever asked yourself something like that? Have you ever caught yourself doing something diametrically opposed to the person you really wanted to be? Ever asked in a state of complete bewilderment, "What am I doing?"

Knowing what you are doing and why is a sign of the renewed mind. We can see this clearly depicted in our Father. I love the wording of Jeremiah 29:11. It says, "'For I know the **thoughts** that I think toward you,' says the Lord." The wonder of all wonders is that God, seated on His throne, is actively thinking thoughts toward us, and He knows the thoughts He is thinking about.

We were created in His image, and part of what sets us apart from the animals is our **intellect**, to know what we are thinking and why. Renewing our minds is almost impossible if we are not able to zero in on what's going on in our heads. Created in His image and invaded by His Spirit if we're in **Christ**, we can—and if we're to be victorious, we must—think about the thoughts we are thinking.

It is a fight against destructive thought patterns and a fight against distracting thought patterns. There are a million new ways to distract myself every day. I love my MacBook. Like you, I never stop checking my iPhone. And Twitter is like my best friend. With all of these distractions, I am never forced to take the time to really think about anything. I brush over the surface of important things without really investing myself. But we will not be able to discern the **will of God** unless we focus ourselves on the will of God.

I've learned this the hard way: When God speaks, He rarely yells. He often speaks in a small, still voice, and if we had any idea the joy and insight and direction and intimacy with Him that we stand to gain, we'd be desperate to hear it.

Psalm 27:4 says, "One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple." In these days of multitasking and abundant distractions, there is one thing that should rise to the top. Some of the greatest minds in your generation may never bring the impact they could because their minds will never be renewed enough to be still and focused before God. Our God is a jealous God. He wants to be your one thing. We need the discipline in this undisciplined culture to shut ourselves off from every voice so we can hear and know the one thing.

As you think, a physiological reaction is happening in your brain. A chain reaction is firing off in those billions of neurons residing in your head. When you think the same way repeatedly, that chain reaction burns a path through those neurons. For example, if a woman looks at a man and thinks a certain thought about him, the next time she sees him, she will most likely have that same thought.

I'll throw out a stupid example to make the point so you'll know it doesn't have to involve attraction. Maybe she decides the first time she sees him that his ears are uneven. The next time she sees him, she stares harder at that same anomaly and, lo and behold, they're even worse than before. From then on, unless she changes her mind, she'll mostly see a pair of unmatched ears coming straight toward her every time he's within eyeshot. See what I'm saying?

It burned a path of thinking in her brain. The more we repeat our thinking patterns, whether destructive or constructive, we not only hatchet a path through our brains, but we pave it as well, creating a thinking superhighway where the thinking

becomes automatic.

Some of us have laid highways in our minds that have taken us places we never meant to go. I come from a background of **abuse**. It began with my earliest memory and happened on and off in my young life until I reached middle school. Naturally my mind was filled with devastation, bitterness and resentment. It caused me to be the world's most foolish person in relationships and in big decisions. It occupied an enormous amount of my thinking—mental images of all that happened flashing through my mind, stuck on repeat. I would get so desperate, I would cry out to God and say, “Lord, as of today, I’m never thinking about it again.” Any chance you’ve ever said that to Him too? But I always would. Then I learned what it meant to renew my mind.

I began to think new thoughts about an old thing. And guess what happened? Its power and hold on my life began to wane. Then I began to get a genuine glimpse of God’s redemption: that He could use me to reach out to other young women who had been through what I had been through.

I have heard people say these words over and over again: “I cannot **change** the way I feel.” Oh, that may be true, but you can indeed change the way you think, and that will change the way you feel. We can know the thoughts we think. We can change our minds, and that will change our hearts.

This article is an excerpt from Louie Giglio’s new book, Passion: The Bright Light of Glory, which released Feb. 25.

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