

whatsoever things are **honest** <sup>honourable</sup>, whatsoever things are **just** <sup>right</sup>, whatsoever things are **pure**, whatsoever things are **lovely** <sup>acceptable</sup>, whatsoever things are of **good report** <sup>well-spoken of</sup>; if there be any **virtue** <sup>excellence</sup>, and if there be any **praise**, **think on these things.**"

- 3) When a thought enters our minds, we need to pause and ask ourselves whether it pleases the Lord. Does it pass God's proving? (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22) "**Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.**" If not, stop it!
- 4) Make a list of the kind of thoughts with which you struggle, and ask the Holy Spirit to help you plan a proper response for each situation. The next time you are tempted by that evil thought, do as you pre-planned.
- 5) Your thoughts feed on what you see and hear. Avoid things that make it easy to think evil (e.g., TV, Internet sites, magazines, novels, ungodly parties, ungodly friends, video games, ungodly music, etc.). (Romans 13:14) "**But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.**" Install an Internet filter like **Qustodio** on all your devices, including those of your children. Have your wife maintain the password. **Accountability is also important.**
- 6) Train yourself to "bounce" your eyes, as a ball immediately changes direction when it hits something. Immediately bounce your eyes away from evil. Do not linger and think about it.
- 7) Replace evil things that your eyes and ears have been feeding on with wholesome things (e.g., AbidingRadio.org, Godly reading, wholesome entertainment that Jesus would enjoy, etc.).

**Conclusion:** Ruling our thoughts is a big task, but if we will follow the steps just outlined, we can do it. Do not wait. Begin this very evening.

**Song:** Yield Not to Temptation - 364

# Ruling Your Spirit: Thoughts

25 September 2022 PM – Proverbs 25:28 – RuleSpirit22 – Scott Childs

**Introduction:** A preacher once wisely said, "If you think about something long enough, eventually, you will do it." That ought to put fear in our hearts if our thoughts are not pleasing to God.

Read Proverbs 25:28. **If we do not rule our spirit, it will rule us.** This is certainly true when it comes to our thoughts.

**Transition:** This evening I want us to see what God has to say about our thoughts and learn how we are to rule them God's way.

## 1. Our Thoughts Can Cause Problems

### a. The human mind is amazing.

- 1) God created man with the ability to think, reason, plan, dream, organise, design, and much more.
- 2) Thinking is good, but after Adam and Eve sinned, even thinking lost its incense.
- 3) **Virtually every sin begins in the thoughts.** If we could rule our thoughts 100% of the time, think how many sins we could avoid!

### b. All too often, our thoughts do not please God.

- 1) We have selfish thoughts, greedy thoughts, self-righteous thoughts, mean thoughts, lustful thoughts, bitter thoughts, vengeful thoughts, dissatisfied thoughts, covetous thoughts, fearful thoughts, anxious thoughts and a host of others. The list is nearly limitless since we think about things we desire and do.
- 2) Bad thoughts may be private, but they are **not innocent**. Evil thoughts are sinful, even if we never physically fulfil them.
- 3) Godless media twists the thoughts of society. TV and videos that are indecent, immodest, or homosexual, desensitise the thoughts of the unsuspecting. Pornography corrupts the thoughts of millions every day. Violent video games enrage the thoughts of multitudes. Filthy music perverts the thoughts of billions.
- 4) Without question, our thoughts are under attack. Satan

knows that if he can control our thoughts, he can control our actions.

## 2. The Bible Often Speaks of Our Thoughts

### a. The problem with thoughts is not new.

- 1) (Genesis 6:5) "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." For this, God sent the Noahic flood.
- 2) Job vowed, (Job 31:1) "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?"
- 3) David failed. (2 Samuel 11:2) "And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon." David's lustful thoughts degenerated into adultery and murder.
- 4) Solomon said that our thoughts tell the truth, (Proverbs 23:7) "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: ..."
- 5) Jesus said, (Matthew 5:28) "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Jesus called this lust adultery, even if it was only in the mind.

### b. God knows all of our thoughts.

- 1) In 1 Chronicles 28:9 God tells us that He "understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts."
- 2) (Psalms 94:11) "The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity."
- 3) (Psalms 139:1-2) "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off."
- 4) (Hebrews 4:12) "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a

discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

## 3. If God is displeased with your thoughts, admit it.

### a. As we have read, God knows all our thoughts.

- 1) We cannot hide any thought from God.
- 2) As God searches your thoughts, what does He find? If he finds lust, bitterness, hate, revenge, rage, perversion, greed, or any other sin, do not deny it.

### b. Admitting your guilt is the first step to victory.

- 1) The devil will tell you that your sinful thoughts are not hurting anything because they are only in your mind. You are not acting them out, and no one else knows.
- 2) The devil is lying to you. Sinful thoughts will hurt you.
  - a) They hinder your prayers. (Psalms 66:18) "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:"
  - b) They offend God, as we have already read. We must confess them and forsake them (Pr 28:13).
  - c) They drive wedges between you and your spouse or parents (Amo 3:3).
  - d) As the preacher said, "If you think about something long enough, eventually, you will do it." Evil thoughts always precede murder, rape, fornication, adultery, and theft. You are no exception!

## 4. Now You Must Rule the Problem

### a. Believe that God hates evil thoughts

- 1) God destroyed the world with a flood because of man's evil thoughts, so we know that God hates them.
- 2) Say to yourself, "If God's against evil thoughts, so am I".

### b. Depend on the Holy Spirit for help.

- 1) Remember that temperance or self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). In other words, ruling your spirit is a result of yielding to the Holy Spirit and depending on Him for help. Let Him control your spirit so that He can enable you to control your soul (mind, will and emotions).
- 2) Discipline yourself to think on good things. (Philippians 4:8) "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true,