

What are your thoughts?

This may be a little longer than most of my messages but read it through. Then give me your thoughts.

Too often lately we have heard “You are in my thoughts and prayers.” We all know what prayers are. How can thoughts help? No one offered me a penny, but here are my thoughts anyway. (Why do you offer a penny for someone’s thoughts, but if they give an opinion it’s 2 cents worth?) Everything we do begins with a thought. Even when we don’t think we are thinking, we have thoughts.

As adults our thoughts are often guided by our “environmental upbringing”. By that I mean our learning experiences from childhood through our adulthood. You know the old cliché “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.” By the time we are grown and in adulthood, this thinking can become so ingrained in us that we don’t even realize our thoughts are not our own. That is not necessarily a bad thing. But it is a thing. When it becomes a bad thing is when those engrained thoughts take over our rational.

Also, as adults, we need to form our own thoughts completely separate and independent of our upbringing. How often have you heard someone say (especially regarding a young adult’s behavior) “I know they weren’t raised that way.”?

From the beginning, Satan has manipulated our thoughts. Convincing Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit through deception. Causing her to doubt God’s word. Which resulted in shame...

And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And He said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Genesis 3:9-11a

Adam did not know they were naked, or didn’t associate it with anything shameful, until his thoughts were changed when sin entered the world.

In Genesis 6: 5 & 6, God reveals His disappointment in mankind and their thoughts leading to the great flood.

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. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

Through His prophets, we are told that our thoughts can never be close to what God has thought for us. And, the thoughts He has for us are good ones.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:8-9

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Jeremiah 29:11

Recently I heard several people say, “Change your thoughts - change your heart”. (I think Pastor Gary was one of them.)

How do you do that? Right now, today, in this world, in this country, in this place, our thoughts are being pulled and tugged in so many different directions it’s a wonder that all of our heads haven’t exploded. 😊

Our hearts need to be full of love. Love for not just those who look as we do (however you look) or think like we do (however you think) or are politically aligned as we are (however you are aligned), but, for ALL of God's people. For we are all His! We ALL fall short of His glory and are saved through Him,

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Romans 3:23

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

Being questioned by the pharisees, Jesus said it 2,000 years ago and it is still true today...

*And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand":
Matthew 12:25*

How do we combat any of it? The same way inhabitants of this planet have done it for millennia, turn your eyes upward upon the Lord.

Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Psalm 123:1-3

And, how do you do that? Read God's word, the bible. Something that they did not have back in the time of Noah or Moses or even David to an extent. Not just in book form, but available for every electronic device a person could own. Instead of clicking on a social media app, click on your bible app when you are looking to kill time.

I will confess I use the search and reference materials in my app quite a bit when I'm preparing to write. Or, even just in doing personal study. For instance, I searched "hate" and "love" in the King James Version. (Biblegateway.com) In one form or another, "hate" came up 179 times, "love" came up 442. Love is used approximately 2/3 more than hate. So, what does that tell us? Hate is overcome by love. It's simple mathematics. Change your thoughts to love and your heart will follow.

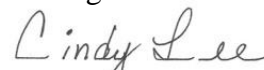
When your thoughts get away from you read the [23rd Psalm](#). When you are anxious, [Matthew 6:25-34](#). Feeling hopeless and lost, [John 3:17](#). (Click the links to read.)

We may not always feel in control of our thoughts, but we do not have to be a captive of them either.

Read. Think. Pray. Love. Repeat.

Give me your thoughts. I'd love to hear from you.

Be of good heart until next time!


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