

Chapter 12

THE POWER OF GODLY THINKING

As we have discussed in past chapters as Christians we have been regenerated through the power of the Holy Spirit into new people, providing the capacity to change ourselves to positive and biblical actions.

However, to behave in a scriptural manner we first must know how to think correctly. Even Christians can fall into unhealthy thinking habits such as lust, envy, jealousy, and anxiety. Further, in the church people may regard others and situations in less than biblical ways. Unfortunately, such non-biblical thinking may incite destructive speech and actions that can hurt and adversely influence others.

*Further, people may mistakenly depend on their emotions or conscience, thinking this is God's leading. However, scripture does not indicate He leads in this manner (please see 'God's Leading and Freedom' chapter in *Confirm the Bible*).*

Christianity is a religion of facts and understanding (Colossians 1:9-10; Ephesians 1:17). Scriptural thinking is productive and healing. How then do we do it? Below is a biblically based process to help us change how we think, and ultimately how we act.

1 GOAL – BE HOLY AS GOD IS HOLY

(1 Peter 1:16) – Our objective on earth is to change our behavior to act and think as God.

2 BASIS OF BIBLICAL THINKING

The ground rules for how we can improve our thinking are based on scripture and understanding its message. Further, we cannot begin to serve as God desires unless we do it according to the guidebook which is the Bible (Colossians 1:9-10; Ephesians 3:4; Ephesians 5:17).

Indeed, scripture indicates godliness is based on the knowledge and understanding of scripture. This is our guide to a holy life! Further, we should develop a sober and alert mindset being careful what we do and say. These thought patterns pay dividends in creating spiritual maturity (Ephesians 1:16-17; Ephesians 5:15-18; Hebrews 5:13-14; Colossians 1:9-10).

3

PROCESS

We are to transform our minds to create a biblical outlook. We do this by testing the word of God in our lives. A key verse regarding this process is:

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

ROMANS 12:2

- The word “prove” in Greek (the original language of the Bible) is δοκιμάζω (dokimazo), meaning to examine or prove, denoting a positive inference. It was used for a warrior being tested in battle. Otherwise, God’s word is truth and so we can depend on it to work in our lives. As we depend on the Bible and see it function, we grow in confidence that we can trust it and enjoy the good fruits of living obedient and faithful lives.
- *So what is the process? Learn the word!* The key is prospectively learning and understanding God’s word. This means learning beyond even a great Sunday sermon or beloved devotional to examine carefully the Bible yourself, so you fully comprehend and know it. This is freeing and transformative. However, no one can do it for you. Here are some simple suggestions that you can easily implement in your life.

1. Use a simple [Bible study method](#) such as found on the Teleios website.
2. Arrange your life for free time to start reading and asking questions in applying verses in an efficient New Testament epistle, such as Ephesians or Colossians, that will most quickly teach you the fundamentals of Christ and the Christian life.
3. Don't be legalistic. Learning the Bible is fun! The goal of grasping God's word is long-term. It is not meant to be studied by predetermined 5, 15, or 30-minute intervals of time, but approached in love with joyous anticipation to how it will assist you!
4. Be patient and the knowledge and the fruit will come over time.
5. Use a trusted general commentary like Barnes or Darby on [eSword](#), or a good theology such as from [Ryrie](#), to help assure yourself you're not off base. Your pastor or an elder or mature believer, educated in the scriptures, might also help you.
6. Discuss what you learn with others to enrich them and to practice articulating what you have learned from scripture.

4

ATTITUDE

Once we have a basis of correcting our thinking, as described above, then what attitudes do we cultivate as Christians?

- **Servant** ([Romans 6:10-23](#); [Romans 12:1-2](#); [Romans 13:8-14](#)) – We ought to have the perspective of being servants of God and to love other Christians.

- **Humility** – A humble person is modest, without thinking too highly of themselves and without excessive expectations for others. Generally, our only expectation for ourselves and others should be seeking God. This applies not only to ourselves, but also to our marriage partners and Christian friends. Everything else is up for discussion! We serve God and do good to all men (Galatians 6:1-3,10; Romans 12:3; Romans 14:4).
- **Faith** – This is the foundation for a believer's lifestyle. Romans 14:23 says what is not done in faith is sin. Therefore, we can have peace and joy in the decisions we make done in faith, not condemning ourselves. God is our help!
- **Obedience** – Adhering to God's word and His wise precepts is vital. As Christ said they are not burdensome (Matthew 11:28-30). Obedience gives the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and ultimately causes a rich love for God's word because of its wisdom and action in promoting healthy thinking and lifestyle (Romans 12:1-2).
- **Thankfulness** – We should be people constantly thanking God for all the blessings He has given us from our salvation to the smallest elements of our lives. This is key to healthy thinking. We should not have expectations but work to achieve our goals, created in faith and trust in God. When we expect certain results, whether it's from God, ourselves, spouses, family, friends or work, we will never be satisfied (1 Thessalonians 5:18; Colossians 3:15).
- **Hope** – This attitude is essential because it protects our mind, not only from fear of death but even when we're young, from fear of failure. When we know our future is secure, we can possess confidence as our identity is in God and not whether we succeed or fail. This attitude assists us in avoiding despondency and developing a healthy perspective towards life that allows us to prosper (Ephesians 6:17; 3 John 1:2).

PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL TEACHINGS

(use the acronym 'Peas in the bag', Ponder, Praise, Prayer, Behavior, Above, and Good)

PONDER THE WORD

As we gain biblical knowledge, we should ponder how we should think. This is an active, prospective process, not just when we have problems and need to correct ourselves, it is a daily habit of healthy thinking ([1 Timothy 4:16](#)).

PRAISE

Keep a habit of commending and thanking God. He deserves it ([Hebrews 13:15](#))! Also, praise keeps us from having unreasonable expectations of others and thinking too highly of ourselves. We should remember God's goals above our own ([Romans 12:1-2](#)).

PRAYER

We should have a mindset of going to God for all our needs ([Hebrews 4:14-16](#)). Instead of complaining or ruminating over situations we should turn instantly to prayer and have a faithful attitude that God will help us ([1 Peter 4:12](#)).

Consider your own

BEHAVIOR

The passage in 2 Peter 1:4-10 is vital for it encourages us to evaluate our own life to assure it is consistent with biblical behavior. If our actions are consistent with God's precepts, then it adds confidence to our own assurance of salvation.

Consider things

ABOVE

We should think routinely about our Savior and godly things derived from scriptural knowledge. When we engage in considering the Bible, we contemplate less over sinful things. Contemplating what is true and excellent produces positive fruit in our lives (Colossians 3:1-4; Hebrews 3:1). When we fill our thoughts with God's word the Holy Spirit uses it to mature us into godly individuals (Ephesians 5:18).

Think on

GOOD THINGS

This perspective is imperative to force our minds to think about things that are positive, pure, full of praise and wholesome (Philippians 4:8). Remembering healthy thoughts will keep us from becoming discouraged and help us to see the good and the potential in all situations and people.

To assure that our conduct is consistent with God's desires, take Peter's self-test (2 Peter 1:3-10)! This passage suggests building **eight attitudes and actions to your life:** *faith, virtue, knowledge, patience, self-control, godliness, fraternal love, and giving love.*

These wonderful verses indicate when our lives are consistent with these eight characteristics, we know that we are useful to God. Indeed, our thinking processes are the basis of a healthy mindset as well as a fruitful relationship with others and with God.

PRACTICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BIBLICAL THINKING

There's not one proven technique but here are some suggested steps to implement.

STUDY SCRIPTURE PROSPECTIVELY

Many people turn to God only when they have trouble. Yet the key to avoiding difficulties in our lives is to go to God before problems arise. That means studying scripture and implementing it, not just using the devotional or reading down the text, but actually taking time to learn what the words and phrases mean in context.

Please visit our Bible study method (<https://teleiosresearch.com/bible-study-methods/>) to learn better how to do this. Such a study brings rich rewards.

STUDY FREQUENTLY

Do not limit yourself in scripture to 15 to 30 minutes a day in a legalistic manner, as this method almost always fails. The goal is not to accomplish a time period but to know our wonderful God! Plunge into scripture to change how you think to conform to His ways and develop wonderful fruit in your life. Find ways to spread the verses around your life so you will remember them. Study the Bible in several short periods in a day. No one method works for everybody. Do what you need to do to know God!

**RECOGNIZE NON-
BIBLICAL THINKING**

Stop yourself when you're pondering negative thoughts about yourself or other people. In these instances, pray for yourself or for those people using scripture. Be thankful for them! These actions applied persistently, will transform your mind to think about yourself and people the way God does; very important!

**DISCUSS WITH
OTHER PEOPLE**

The verses that you read will help you, and cause you to pray for others, be thankful for them desiring good things for them; be sure to share this with other people. This will help you articulate your faith and build good habits in encouraging others and will help them as well.

SUMMARY

Developing routine mental habits consistent with the Bible will create in us a godly mindset to view life and people the way God desires and help the Holy Spirit bear fruit in your life and others.

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GOT QUESTIONS?

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