

Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The TREE OF LIFE is a weekly teaching summary.

Tree of Life 05/10/98

The Doctrine of The Mental Attitude. Part 2.

Phi 2:2 "Bring to completion my happiness by thinking the same things...". Paul's desire for the Philippian church was that they would all think in the unity of divine viewpoint, which is the mind of Christ, 1Co 2:16, Phi 2:5. The emphasis he placed on thought back then is just as important today. No one advances in the Christian life by "doing", but by thinking. Unfortunately most Christians subscribe to the teaching put forth by Satan that thinking and concentration is not what is important in the spiritual life but rather, feeling! In order to worship God we must do so via the enlargement of thought. How we feel is never the issue in the Christian life. What we think is who we are at any given moment. In God's eyes we are who we are based on the thought content of the soul. Therefore this week's study has stirred us into a closer look into the Doctrine of the Mental Attitude. Under point one, definition and description, we noted that the mental attitude (M.A.) refers to the function of human thought.

Your M.A. is what you think at any given time. And because it is the thought content of your soul which God views as the real you, it is the thinking of the soul that becomes the theater for the battleground in the angelic conflict. The life of every believer has to do not with what he is doing, but with what he is thinking. In keeping with this doctrinal premise, the life of

every believer is experientially determined by two main principles:

- (1) what one thinks,**
- (2) what one decides.**

Each alone is not enough in the spiritual life, the two must be combined. How is this dynamic combination arrived at?

A mental attitude of divine viewpoint (the thinking of God) is part of the greatest delegation of divine power in human history! It is the power of divine viewpoint in the right lobe of the soul which is the essence of the spiritual life, yet most Christians care instead about their overt impact. This lack of attention to the thought pattern is based on a lack of knowledge concerning the plan of God. Whether it's the lust of the have-nots or the dissatisfaction of those who have, such believers in Christ have failed in the dynamic viewpoint of life. Micah 4:12 tells us why, they do not know the thoughts of the Lord nor understand His purpose. What is needed is a change of viewpoint, and such a change is a gradual advance. Rom 12:2 commands the believer in Christ to be transformed by the renewing of the mind. The mind is renewed and united with the thinking of Christ through the word of God accurately communicated by one's pastor-teacher, thereafter concentrated on by the positive believer. The mind is not renewed by way of some emotional retreat or through an experience which leaves one feeling good. We all know that "feelings" fluctuate with one's circumstances and are therefore unstable. If feelings are what the Christian was commanded to rely on in the spiritual life then our spiritual life would only be as strong as the best feeling that we could sum up. This would be a direct contradiction to the expiating work the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished at the cross. At the cross all sin was judged and all human good was rejected! Therefore, to enlarge on any deed or feeling based on human power is worthless in God's plan. This is not to say that our emotions have no part in spirituality. If the emotions respond to the mentality of one's soul then it is a part of God's plan. But what we find today is that most Christians have nothing in the mentality of their souls concerning the mind of Christ and therefore respond to foolishness.

Satan has so many distractions today geared to deaden one's thinking. he wants mindless imbeciles puttering about, struggling through a meaningless life. The believer's life should come to be, not what he is feeling, but what he is thinking. Luk 12:37 warns us that we need to be alert! We need not be mindless and emotional but alert, Act 20:31; 1Co 16:13; Col 4:2; 1Th 5:6; 1Pe 5:8. Without the proper M.A. our souls will be easily lured away from the plan of God. Our system of thinking must include more than what the world system offers as truth. The believer in Christ must take his relationship with God seriously else no advance will be gained. In the face of any problem you may have, what makes or breaks you is what you think. And, thinking is either the application of doctrine to life or the (false) application of arrogance and ignorance found in human viewpoint. We never lose when we apply the mind of Christ even if it does not seem to go in our favor. Divine viewpoint is always the winning side. The difference between living in the cosmic system and advancing to spiritual maturity via divine viewpoint is one's thinking; one's mental attitude! Sloppy thinking only gets worse over time. Procrastination often becomes the undoing of a thing. Merely thinking to do a thing but not following through with the thought will not prosper the believer in any way.

God has given us the power but it still requires that we make the proper decisions and then act on them. The surpassing greatness of His power noted in Eph 1:19 comes through the filling of the Spirit and the inculcation of Bible doctrine; the word of God. Joh 4:24 informs us that this is the only way in which to worship God who is spirit. God must be worshipped in Spirit (Act 1:18; Eph 5:18) and in truth (Heb 4:12). The word of God does not state that God is to be worshipped in feelings and tears, but in Spirit and Truth! When our emotional response is a result of the filling of the Spirit and a mind filled with metabolized doctrine that is wonderful, but our emotions must have something substantial to respond to. If you do not share the mind of Christ, God will reveal that to

you. Whether or not the believer accepts God's instruction is another story.

The delegation of divine power, i.e., the surpassing greatness of His power is three-fold:

- 1) The content of thought, with emphasis on the mystery doctrine of the church age.**
- 2) The communication of this thought via the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher, Eph 4:11-13; 2Co 10:18; 1Th 5:11-12; Heb 13:7,17.**
- 3) The concentration of the believer on doctrine as it is being taught.**

Concentration on the teaching of doctrine reflects 4 things in your life:

- 1- The values in your life.**
- 2- Your motivation in life.**
- 3- Your mental attitude in life.**
- 4- Your spiritual status quo.**

Putting your brain systematically to work becomes power. Concentration is a matter of your priorities in life. Worship demands concentration whether in learning, applying, praying, or in the communion service. Again, worship is not a feeling but a system of thinking. Good decisions are made from thinking divine viewpoint. To neglect the discipline needed toward learning the word of God ultimately leads to the rejection of the word of God itself. A sign of worship is that we are humble and do not let distractions keep us from the plan of God. To accept advice from the cosmic system's human viewpoint, whether through your own stupid decisions or from the bad advice of others, only leads to the believer entering into the arrogant skills. It starts with self-justification, moves on to self-deception, ending in self-absorption. Jam 4:6 and 1Pe 5:5 tell us that God makes war against the arrogant but gives grace to the humble.

Obedience to the truth produces unity in the souls of believers. This unity is based on divine viewpoint which is the thinking of the believer who is positive to Bible doctrine. Divine viewpoint requires three functions of thinking:

- 1) Cognition, both the act and the process of inculcation of Bible doctrine.**
- 2) Thinking, that is, the application of metabolized doctrine.**
- 3) Solving, by way of understanding and using the problem solving devices by which we make accurate and correct application to experience.**

The thinking of mature believer is different from the generally accepted thought pattern prevalent in the world. Uniqueness is reflected in the mature believer's thought, actions, and observation of the honor code of the royal family of God. One's mental attitude is based on the principles one operates by in life and hence becomes one's motivation. It also serves to establish one's priorities in life. Thought, speech, and action are all a reflection of the mental attitude and that is why the greatest battle we have in life is stationed in the soul. And, without the problem solving devices deployed around the soul we sit unprotected against the infiltration of human viewpoint.

Most believers today are confused in their thinking. Their confusion erupts out of their ignorance concerning what the word of God clearly states. The importance of the believer's mental attitude is emphatically documented to reveal the exact thought pattern we are to advance in. This brings us to our second point which is the scriptural documentation revealing the importance of the mental attitude. Your M.A. determines your true human personality, Pro 23:6,8; 27:19. A good system of thinking requires vocabulary. One's personality will never be well-rounded with a limited vocabulary. It takes words to establish a healthy thought pattern and a sense of humor. In order to cultivate and express your character and personality you must be able to think. And, any spiritual system which demands technical thought improves the mind, the personality, character, and eventuates in honor, integrity, and occupation with Christ. All that we are rises and/or falls with our thoughts. Hence, sooner or later false thinking brings wrong conduct. Gal 6:3 warns us about this, "If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself."

Arrogance is the system of thinking encouraged by the kingdom of darkness and comes in many forms of mental attitude sins, such as, jealousy, bitterness, vindictiveness, implacability, hatred, self-pity, inordinate ambition, and inordinate competition. Self deceit is a disastrous obstacle not only in relation to the spiritual life but for unbelievers as well! God says of the arrogant that His thoughts are not their thoughts, and His ways are not theirs, Isa 55:8. Doctrine in the soul of the believer will serve to stage a conflict in the soul waging divine viewpoint against human viewpoint, and this conflict is not resolved until the believer reaches spiritual maturity. Only in the advanced mental attitude of spiritual maturity we find that happiness is no longer based on overt stimulation in life or getting what one wants, but happiness now resides in the mental attitude. We each have a choice in life, either we think with God or against Him by thinking the world's way. Rom 12:2-3 warns us to stop being conformed to this world. Being conformed to this world is simply thinking like Satan, the god of this world. Thinking like Satan is not manifested in drinking, dancing, smoking, and so on, but in independence from God's word and plan. Thinking human viewpoint has nothing to do with how you conduct your social life, while thinking divine viewpoint has everything to do with how you conduct your spiritual life. The spiritual life must be constructed on the word of God, the mind of Christ. Human rationality, though it appears solid to the uninformed, is layered with illusions and is therefore not reality. The only true reality is God's reality and that comes over time by learning, metabolizing, and applying what His word states.

Bible doctrine in the soul is designed to eliminate the subjective thinking of arrogance. Neglect or rejection of doctrine puts the believer in the cosmic system, and only renovation of thought can get the believer out. This renovation begins with 1Jo 1:9. Our capacity for life is based on our mental attitude. Hence, Paul commands us to "keep on having this mental attitude in you which was also in Christ Jesus.", Phi 2:5. The mental attitude of Christ can be our mental attitude! He was full of grace, (grace orientation), and truth

(doctrinal orientation), Joh 1:14. So great was the mental attitude of our Lord Jesus Christ that when He was on the cross bearing the sins of the world He still retained His perfect happiness, Phi 3:15. It is a common human habit to blame life upon one's environment. In reality, environment may modify life but it does not govern life. The soul is stronger than its surroundings, God designed it that way. Thinking clearly and effectively is the greatest human asset! And though doctrinal thoughts have been thought thousands of times, to make them truly yours you must think them over and over again until they take firm root in your personal experience and establish your daily decisions. Col 3:2 tells us to keep thinking objectively about the things above. This does not point to star gazing but rather, divine viewpoint applied to life from the metabolized doctrine in your soul. That is the positive believers Mental Attitude!

[Click here to download](#)

[Return to list of trees](#)

[Return to main page](#)
