

What Were You Thinking?

By Wendy Wood



“What were you thinking!?!” As a mom of teenage boys, I often think and ask this question when my boys do something that defies my sense of reason. I am desperately searching for purpose in what seems like an act of random insanity. When we ask, “What were you thinking?”, we are asking the individual to explain and account for their words and actions. We are trying to figure out the motive and reason behind a choice that has been made. Proverbs 23:7 says “For as he thinks within himself, so he is”. Our thoughts are important. They determine who we are and what our words and actions will be.

So, what are you thinking? Stop for a minute and think about your thoughts? What consumes your mental energy and what does your mind go to when the world around you is quiet? Take a day and think about your thoughts. Take inventory of what your mind dwells on. God cares about our minds and thoughts and repeatedly gives us directions on what to think about in scripture.

God tells us that we should love Him with our whole mind. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). We should renew our minds. “... be renewed in the spirit of your minds” (Ephesians 4:23). We are to be transformed in our minds. “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...” (Romans 12:2). Scripture tells us to take our thoughts captive and

make them obedient to Christ. “We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). Philippians 4:8 tells us specifically what to think about. “**Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.**” So, what are those things?

Think about whatever is **true**. Something that is true is something that conforms to reality and fact. We need to think about the truth of who we are - sinners, created beings, dependent and needy. We need to think about the truth of who God is - all-powerful, all-knowing, omnipresent, creator and sustainer of all things, good, gracious, loving, just, etc. When we think true thoughts, we see our need for God. We put into perspective our lack of ability and God’s complete ability to handle our situation. We go to God in prayer and fervently declare praise and ask for help. Allowing your thoughts to be true drives you to the One who cares for you and who is able to act for you.

Think about whatever is **noble**. Something that is noble is distinguished, magnificent, or of an exalted moral character. When we allow our minds to dwell on the nobility of God we are thinking about His holiness and perfection. We are thinking about His infinitude and complete reign over all things, everywhere, forever. Noble thoughts remind us that God not only created every single atom and molecule, He is sustaining every single one in place at all times. God is “holy, holy, holy”. It is the utmost of who God is. Holy is “other”. We have no word to describe God’s holiness. We can only say that he is “other”, or so different from us our minds cannot accurately conceive Him. Do you spend time thinking about our noble God? Let your mind meditate on His magnificence and holiness. All the worries and concerns of your day pale in comparison to the One who is sovereign over all.

Think about whatever is **right**. Right refers to God’s actions. God is righteous because He always does what is best. God not only sees the best possible outcome for you (Jeremiah 29:11), He knows and does the best possible course of action every step of the way (Psalm 139:16). Because God is righteous, He desires us to be righteous. The moment we confess Jesus as Lord and Savior, we receive Jesus’ perfect righteousness in exchange for our sin. But because we are human, and still have the fleshly sin battle within us, the process of being made more righteous, also called progressive sanctification, continues on for our entire lives. God desires us to be ones who live according to the Spirit by setting our minds on the things of the Spirit (Romans 5:5). When our minds are on the righteous acts of God, He transforms us bit by bit to take on more characteristics of Christ. Do you recount the awesome and mighty works of God to yourself and to your children and friends? Do you think about how faithful God has been to you and your family? Set your minds on things that are right and allow it to transform you into the image and actions of Christ.

Think about whatever is **pure**. Purity is often associated with how much something is or is not contaminated with other substances. For example, the Ivory Soap company used to boast of its

soap being 99 44/100% pure. The company thought this was so amazing (still 66/100 away from complete purity) because we live in a contaminated world. Nothing seems to be 100% pure in our daily existence. Everything has some impurity in it as we live in the fallen world. Hypocrisy is a good antonym for pure. A hypocrite is not as pure as they pretend to be. However, Jesus was completely pure and authentic. He wholeheartedly, without any imperfections, loved and obeyed God. John 5:19 tells us that Jesus said, "Truly, truly I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise." Do you think about the perfection of Christ. Do you think about how He was pure in thought, motive, word, and action. Jesus did only that which He was sent to do. David's prayer in Psalm 86 is that God would "unite" his heart to fear God. Do you have an undivided heart to fear God? Do your thoughts reveal a pure desire to live authentically for Christ? When God tells us we cannot serve both God and money, He shows us our need for purity. Any duplicity in our hearts is impure. Is there a gap between who you say you are and what you actually are? Think about God's purity. Dwell on Christ's pure devotion to His Father. Allow your heart to be united to fear God.

Think about whatever is **lovely**. Lovely things attract us. They are beautiful and grab our attention. Do you think about God's loveliness? We live in an amazing part of the world. God's loveliness is seen in the snow capped mountains, the sunset over the water, the sounds of different birds, the height and strength of the trees, the sound of spring frogs, and the power of rushing wind. The ultimate beauty in this world is seen in the ugliness of the cross. Christ's horrific death brought the most beautiful and attractive aspect of God to us. We have forgiveness, redemption, and life because of the loveliness of the cross. We are drawn to Jesus because of the beautiful example of sacrificial love seen on the cross. Lovely things attract us. What are you attracted to? When you are stressed and feeling anxious, what draws your attention? Do you run to the refrigerator or the TV? Do you run to a favorite hobby or distracting entertainment? Or are you attracted to the most Lovely One? Psalm 27:4 tells us that David prayed that he would dwell in the house of the Lord and gaze upon the beauty of the Lord. David knew that thinking intently on the beauty of God would lead to peace and righteousness. We, too, need to think about God's lovely character. That is what should attract our thoughts and hearts. A life that reflects God comes from a mind that dwells on His beauty.

Think about whatever is **admirable**. People we admire are people whose actions are well spoken of and who are regarded highly in general. People who are admirable are people we want to emulate and we aspire to be like them. When we think about Christ's conduct on earth, we truly see an admirable Man. Christ was humble and served others. He spoke truth with love. He gave freely of His time and energy. He approached the lowest of society and cared for the sick and poor. He took pity on the lame and took time to teach and re-teach patiently. When we think about Christ's actions, we want to be like Him. Do you take time to meditate on Christ's admirable work? Do you think about how He treated others and how He loved and served? As you think about Christ's example, you will be transformed in the renewing of your mind and you will desire to be more like Him.

Why does it matter what you think about? Because, “For as he thinks within himself, so he is” (Proverbs 23:7). What you think about becomes a reality in your life. Your thoughts dictate who you are and what you do. Scripture is clear that we are transformed into Christlikeness by transforming our minds. What you think about matters - A LOT!

So, what are you thinking?

For more on this topic, check out Timothy Z. Witmer’s book [Mindscape](#).