

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

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Stinking Thinking

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Introduction

Many years ago when I was a sales manager for a large company, “stinking thinking” is what we called a negative view of things or negative talk about things. The goal was to always be positive and speak the right things with a positive mental outlook. Some of this has come over into the Church with the positive confession adherents. However, from the scriptural perspective “stinking thinking” has a completely different meaning. This Teaching Letter will focus on our thinking processes and how they affect our daily walk.

Example

We have a very good example of “stinking thinking” on Peter's part when Jesus spoke of His coming death.

Mat 16:21-23 NASB

- (21) From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.
- (22) Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid *it*, Lord! This shall never happen to You."
- (23) But He turned and said to Peter, "**Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.**"

We know that it was God's purpose for Jesus to be killed and raised from the dead. This was a central concept of the purpose of Messiah. However, when Peter heard Jesus speak plainly about this he rebuked Jesus with a denial of what Jesus had just said. Jesus' response shows us that He considered Peter's words to be from the Devil. But the key to why was “you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's”. His thinking processes were oriented toward man's purposes and not toward God's purposes. In other words, Peter was spouting “stinking thinking”. When

our minds are set on man's goals, plans, desires our thinking processes are not compatible with God's plans, purposes or desires. So stinking thinking is thinking like our old man, natural thinking without thought of God.

The Heart of the Problem

We have been told by many teachers that we need to change our thinking and speaking. We need to think good thoughts and speak good things. This is the essence of the positive confession adherents. However, the problem isn't *what* we think but *how* we think. The way we think has to change. The Scriptures refer to this as “renewing the mind” and it is extremely important for us even though it seems to be a neglected area of teaching.

Why is renewing the mind important? Because the mind is a major component of who we are. When God created us He created us in His image, a triune being. We are comprised of body, soul and spirit. In the fall of man, our spirit died and the process of sin causes our body to deteriorate and die and our soul was corrupted. In the work of the Lord to redeem us, He gives us a **new** spirit [*Eze, 35:26; John 3:3*] and in the resurrection a **new** body [*I Cor. 15:42*]. However, we do not receive a new soul which consists of mind or intellect, will or volition, and emotions. It is our souls which are unique to each one of us and makes us different from one another. Jesus came to save souls. So, our souls undergo a renewal process called sanctification which includes the renewing of the mind.

Before knowing the Lord our condition was very clear. We were alienated from God; cut off by our sin. We were hostile in our minds against God which led us to engage in evil things that are contrary to God.

Col 1:21 NASB

(21) And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds,

Eph 2:3 NASB

(3) Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

And because of our condition before knowing the Lord, we lived according to our flesh by indulging the desires of the flesh and the desires of the mind.

This condition continues in us after we are born again because we do not get a new mind. Our old mind must be renewed, which is a process and not a single event.

Rom 8:7-8 NASB

(7) because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*,

(8) and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

After knowing the Lord, if we continue to keep our minds occupied with the desires of our flesh and minds we will continue to maintain a hostility toward God from our old life. The Scriptures make it very clear that we can continue to live our lives according to the habits and thought patterns of our old life. However, for us to do so is not pleasing to the Lord. We must have our

minds renewed.

Eph 4:17-19 NASB

- (17) So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,
- (18) being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;
- (19) and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

But those things in the scriptures above are not the things that we learn in Christ. Notice that in the following verses we must learn Christ. This is not automatic but involves our willingness to be renewed in the spirit of our mind.

Eph 4:20-23 NASB

- (20) But you did not learn Christ in this way,
- (21) if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,
- (22) that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,
- (23) and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

The remaining verses of Ephesians chapter four tell us some of the things that change as our minds are renewed:

1. we lay aside falsehood and speak the truth with each other [verse 25]
2. we can be angry and yet not sin if the anger is dealt with quickly [verse 26]
3. we stop stealing and go to work in order to be able to give to others in need [verse 28]
4. we stop talking filth and speak grace and wholesome words [verse 29]
5. we stop all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander and malice. [verse 31]

Transformed

The sanctification of our souls is a transforming process that begins with our minds.

Rom 12:2 NASB

- (2) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Before knowing the Lord we lived like the world, indulged our desires like the world, thought like the world and acted like the world. However, after knowing the Lord we are not to be conformed to the world any longer. We are no longer like the world and no longer need to think or act like the world. As our thought processes, our minds, are renewed we are transformed from glory to glory into the image of Christ.

To do this, our very thought processes must change. The habits and thought patterns from our heathen days must be torn down. Any fortresses of prejudice, sensuality, reasonings, or any other thing which has achieved a high place in our minds must be torn down.

2Co 10:5 NASB

(5) *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

Every thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. This is the essence of a renewed mind. Our thought processes are changed and we stop our stinking thinking. And this is what is sorely lacking among believers in our modern western church.

For more in depth teaching along these lines you might want to consider these articles:

[Foundations of the Inner Man](#)

[Salvation of the Soul](#)

[Basics of the Process of Change](#)

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