

Ruin To Renovation - Sermon #2 - *Beyond Within*
Study Questions for Groups & Individuals

Proverbs is Wisdom Literature & in chapter 4, v23 it instructs us to guard our *hearts*, which is synonymous with our *thoughts* or *thinking*, given our thoughts control our lives. What & how we think shapes & forms our character. Your thoughts determine the course of your life. In light of this fact, consider the following questions...

1. Self evaluate your thought-life...what is it that your mind centers on most? What are the thoughts & feelings (which accompany your thoughts) which occupy your mind most?
2. How much of your thinking would you say is godly? In other words, how much of your thinking revolves around the things mentioned in Philippians 4:8?
3. With what do you feed your thoughts? Think of people, places & things (entertainment & information): music, tv, news, talk radio, books (what kind?), places you frequent & with who, etc. Who are the voices you allow to guide your thoughts?
4. What is your reaction to Jeremiah 17:9?
5. Is it amazing to you that we're the only creatures who can evaluate our own thinking?
6. Has your own heart ever deceived you? Led you down wrong paths? What was the situation & result? What did you learn from it?
7. How does wrong thinking lead to wrong decisions in your life? And think on how quickly those decisions pile up and become overwhelming...is there a better way?
 1. What do you think of Dallas Willard's words, "*A carefully cultivated heart will, assisted by the grace of God, foresee, forestall, or transform most of the painful situations before which others stand like helpless children saying, 'Why?'*"
 2. Do you believe that is possible for your life if it isn't already?

Consider the fact that we cannot cloister ourselves away from the world. We're to be in the world, but not of it. As Jesus prayed for his disciples (including us) in John 17:15-17, "*My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.*"

So, Jesus knew we're left to live in an environment hostile & contrary to godly thought.

1. Considering that, are the things we typically fill our thoughts with spiritually & emotionally healthy for us?
2. If they were a food, what kind of food would they be (potato chips, ice cream, milk, chocolate, steak, gummy bears)?
3. What has Jesus left us with which we can be sanctified (transformed or changed)?
4. How often do you 'feed' yourself by the Scriptures (The Word of God)? And how?



5. How often do you pray for His Holy Spirit to guide you in your decisions?
6. Read prayerfully at least two times through 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 highlighting words, phrases & thoughts which stick out to you. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you about it, journal what you hear and share these thoughts with someone else.
7. Thinking about Colossians 2:8, what are some of the hollow & deceptive philosophies of our world, the things which depend on human tradition & elemental spiritual forces of this world? Who are their proponents, teachers & gurus we listen to in society?
8. In light of these things, how do we practice 2 Corinthians 10:5?