

Such As A Man Thinketh

Proverbs 23:7: *For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.*

There was a research study performed a number of years ago by two people named Shachter and Singer. Psychologists at the time were trying to determine the nature of emotions in humans. The doctors set up a test case wherein they had a number of college sophomores for study.

- To one group they gave an injection of adrenaline.
- To the other they gave an injection of a placebo.

They then split those two groups into three more groups:

- One group was told that they would experience no side-effects at all
- One group was told that they would experience a mild headache
- One group was told that the medication would make their heart race.

The groups were then further broken down by the addition of a stooge to the student:

- One stooge tried to get the student to play with some toys in the room.
- One stooge began to complain about the study, the doctors, etc.

The result of the study was that those people who had adrenaline (which causes their heart to race) and were told that would be the side-effect were more likely to act like people who had been given the placebo. If the doctors had given them a reason to explain their physical reaction in advance, then the subjects were immune to the effects of the stooge. People who were given the adrenaline but were misinformed about its effects, however, were more likely to be influenced by the stooge. That is, *when their bodies started to have a physical reaction, their brains began to look for a reason for the reaction*. If the stooge was happy, then the subject was happy. If the stooge was angry, then the subject became angry.

In psychology this is known as the two-factor theory of emotion. That is, in order for someone to describe themselves as “happy,” they need to both be thinking happy thoughts *and* have a positive physical reaction from their body.

We are emotional creatures. For all our pretending that we are not, we definitely are. Our thoughts and our emotions are intimately linked like two hands attached by a rubber band. If we think bad thoughts, our emotions will follow. If our body feels down, it will tend to drag our thoughts with it.

But if our bodies feel down and we think happy thoughts, it may have some effect in lifting our spirits. Just as Rogers and Hammerstein said, "When the dog bites, when the bees sting, when I'm feeling sad I simply remember my favorite things and then I don't feel so bad."

David knew the supreme value of our thoughts when he prayed:

Psalms 19:14: *Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight O Lord.*

He was saying, "God help me to think correctly." This is not only purging our thoughts of lust and evil towards others, we need to purge our thoughts of bad feeling towards ourselves. We need our thoughts to become one with the Lord's.

1 Peter 1:13: *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

The loins are the reproductive area of the human body and so our mind is the reproductive area of our spirit and it must be girded up with the word and the Holy Ghost. If we can learn to control our thoughts and harness the power of our emotions, then we can be guided by the Holy Ghost to do His will.

I read an interview with an author named Michael Crichton some time ago. You might know him as the author of such books as *The Andromeda Strain* and *Jurassic Park*. He is highly regarded in the fiction author community because of his ability to create highly nuanced characters that react the way real people would react. One reason he is so good at creating these characters is because Mr. Crichton is a student of human behavior.

In this interview, Mr. Crichton was discussing how he observed the development of his daughter over the course of her life. When she was

young, his daughter would say, “Daddy, I want that.” He would ask, “Why?” She would just look back at him and say, “Because I want it.”

As she grew older, however, the dialog would change. “Daddy, I want this.” He would again ask, “Why?” As an older child, however, she would say, “Because if I have this then I can pretend that I am doing this or that. I can use this thing with this other toy that I have.” Mr. Crichton realized, however, that the justification had nothing to do with her desire; she still wanted the toy because she wanted it.

For all the claims to the contrary, it is the rare person that make a truly logical decision. Almost everyone makes emotional decisions which they justify with logic.

There is an old saying in advertising, “Sell the sizzle, not the steak.” When you read ads for almost anything, they claim grandiose effects if only you will purchase the product.

- Shampoo will not remove dirt from your hair; it will make you young, sexy, and beautiful.
- An SUV is not a big means of getting from point A to point B; it is freedom to explore the great outdoors, off-road and unencumbered.
- A hybrid vehicle is not a small car with better gas mileage; it is a way for you to personally save the planet.
- Steak is not a food product to fill your stomach; it is a feast for the eyes, the ears, and the mouth. Eating steak makes you more of a man – the kind of man that women find sexy.

General Motors recently started a program they call the “24 hour test drive.” The idea is that you take the car home and drive it around for 24 hours. Why would they do this? Because they know you are more likely to purchase the vehicle if you make an emotional attachment to it. **If you want the car, you will find an excuse to buy the car.**

So what does this have to do with us?

We Pentecostals are sometimes accused of being “too emotional.” They say that our worship is nothing but emotions. They say that the “Spirit” we claim to feel is nothing but a heightened emotional state that we work ourselves into with our upbeat songs. If we would only be more logical, then we would have more people in our churches.

That is a complete falsehood.

In fact it is only through a demonstration of our belief that we have any hope of reaching the lost. We can not talk someone into believing in God. We can not debate someone into church. If we get distracted into a debate of religion we have lost. I work with computers all day. Computers are utterly and completely logical machines. But if logic could form the basis of a religion then computers would be our high priests.

Humans are thinking and feeling creatures. We think, yes, and I am not going to say that intelligence and education are not without merit. But I am going to say that a life filled only with thoughts and logic will leave you unfulfilled. As feeling creatures we will seek out emotions in an effort to try and fill the void in our lives. It is only if we show people something they want, something they need, something they have to have that they will seek us out.

Consider the fact that the people who implicitly claim that logic is the solution to all ills likely subscribe to completely non-logical things such as art. So by their actions they show that logic is not the answer to all problems. Even logic itself proves this. There's something in mathematics called Gödel's theorem which states, “In any system there are things which can not be proven and therefore must be assumed.”

As Bible believers, we state this as:

Hebrews 11:6: *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*

So both logic and the Bible agree; it is impossible to logically derive God. You can not state “because of A, therefore God.” Rather God is the improvable and a belief – an assumption – of Him is required at the outset.

Once that assumption is made, then all other parts of our thoughts and our actions derive from that belief.

It is not, “because world, therefore God;” it is “because God, therefore world.”

It is not a surprise to me that as we have removed more and more of God from our society that we have also seen an increase in activities such as bungee jumping and snow boarding. People need to feel something, no matter how fleeting, and will seek out sources of emotion for their lives.

So our emotions are not something that we should attempt to purge from our worship. Rather it is only through our emotional worship that we are able to seek the Mind of God. We can ask God for things, but the fulfillment only comes through our worship.

James 2:20: *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*

James 2:26: *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

I am here to tell you that faith without emotions is dead also. Worship feeds our emotions. When we feel good, we shout for joy. If we shout first, the joy will follow. If we feel the joy, then our thoughts follow the joy.

(stand)

When you speak to someone about the Lord, do not be afraid to tell them how you feel. Your relationship with God has to be something you not only believe, but something you feel. Something you are passionate about. Something that you are glad you have, but you don't mind sharing.

There are thousands of people at the Super Bowl today. Logic would dictate that fans should avoid the traffic and sit at home watching the game. Yet people paid \$500 per seat or more to be there. Why? Because they want to feel the excitement of the game. They want to feel the emotion of the crowd. They do not want game statistics; they want an experience.

Remember that people do not make logical decisions; they make emotional decisions which they justify with logic. Make them want what you have. Tell them what the Lord has done for you. Show them that your life is different from the one they lead. Do not tell them the facts and figures, tell them about the experience.

But you can not effectively share the joy of the Lord if you have not felt the joy physically in your body. Do not be offended if you are asked to praise or shout when you do not feel like it. It is the doing of it that will drive your feelings of joy. It is your feelings of joy that will make others want what you have.

Phillipans 4:4-6: *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known unto God.*

Phillipans 4:4-6: *Rejoice in union with the Lord always! I will say it again: rejoice! Let everyone see how reasonable and gentle you are. The Lord is near!. Don't worry about anything; on the contrary, make your requests known to God by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving.*

So why are you here? Are you here by habit, or are you here to see the Lord?

I have news for you: the Lord is not in your thoughts; the Lord is in your emotions.

1 Kings 19:11-13: *And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: ¹² And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.*

In preparing for this sermon I found yet again that the Lord did not speak to me verbally. The Lord comes to me in a still small voice, a feeling in the pit of my stomach. God speaks to me through my emotions and I speak to Him through mine. I have found on more than one occasion that if I do not want something from the Lord enough to cry for it, I will not get it.

Romans 8:26: *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

Our groanings, our praises, our tears are how we communicate with the Lord. Our leaps of praise are how we tell him we love him. Don't tell the Lord you love Him, show Him.