#1AS A MAN THINKS Jan 2017

This study is based first and foremost on the word of God. But along with it I have studied a variety of sources. One of the more noteworthy is a book by Dr. Caroline Leaf, a communication pathologist specializing in the field of cognitive neuroscience, *Switch on Your Brain.* It is an excellent book and I would highly recommend it but only to those of a more technical slant.

Let me say up front that I make no claims at being a neuroscientist, pathologist or psychologist. I am a theologian, a minister of the gospel who is fascinated by how the brain works, why and how we think the way we do, and how that affects who and what we are.

As humans we are triune beings, we are made up of Body Soul and Spirit. All three of these were affected by The Fall. Our body was condemned to die, our spirit died and our soul, our personality or our mind became corrupt and was subjected to the corrupting influences of sin.

The mind is what we will be discussing over the next several weeks. The mind is the battlefield, it is the mind that controls who we are and who we become**. It cannot be overstated the importance of how or what you think. As a man thinks in his heart so is he.**

The most difficult thing you have to control is your mind. Your tongue is controlled by your mind. Your emotions are controlled by your mind, your actions are controlled by your mind. Nothing is more powerful than your mind.

#2 Draw a triangle. At one corner write “thoughts” at the next corner write “emotions” at the other corner write “actions.” Draw arrows going both ways between all words. Actions affect emotions, emotions affect thoughts, thoughts affects actions etc…

#3 Ps 139:13 says we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

Of all of God’s creatures He made none like man for man alone was made in the image of God, Gen 1:26-27. This uniqueness gave him great privilege and great responsibility (Gen 1:28,29, 2:8,15-17)

While we know and understand that many species of the animal kingdom have the ability to learn and even reason to a degree, ***only man has the ability to change the way he thinks*** because he chooses to and thus control or change his destiny.

*#4 Proverbs 23:7 – “As a man thinks in his heart so is he.”* This will be the theme verse for this teaching series. There is a simplicity and yet great profoundness in this statement. As fallen creatures who place a great deal of emphases on the intellect (to be like God so as to not need God) we often make things of the mind more complex than they need to be.

I do not want to be guilty of over simplification but I do want to stress that it is not nearly as complex as modern psychology would have us believe. It does not take years of counseling or psychotherapy and thousands of dollars to correct faulty thinking. Sometimes it does take the help of trained professionals, #5 but **mostly** it takes personal responsibility and determination to put the right stuff in so that you can get the right stuff out!

You don’t get biscuits from cornmeal or cakes and cookies from collard greens!

*#6 Luke 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. NKJV*

**#7We are the sum total of our thoughts**.

Some say we are the product of our environment

Some say we are the product of our experiences

Some say we are the product of our choices

All of these are true to a point, but what we really are is a product of our thoughts.

*Proverbs 23:7 – “As a man thinks in his heart so is he.”*

Our brain is the most advanced, complex and amazing organ in our body. It and the heart are the only two organs that are connected to every cell in our body.

#8Romans 8:5-7 (For larger view see Rom 7:13\_8:14)

#9 Pic of neural pathway connection

The brain is not some metaphysical object. It is a real organ made of tissue that can be seen, touched, weighed and dissected. Every thought creates a chemical reaction and an electrical impulse, which in turn, creates physical neural pathways in the brain. The average human brain contains approximately 100 billion neurons 100 trillion connections. Create enough of the same neural pathways and you create a highway where you no longer struggle to do a certain thing, good or bad, it just comes naturally.

**The amazing thing is that just like a muscle the brain can be trained, changed and transformed.**

#10--Show pictures of people who transformed their body through focus and intense effort.

(bring a guy up who lifts weights and ask him how he got his muscles)

#11--If we can change our bodies why should we think it so amazing that we can change our brain?

#11--If we can spiral down by continual negative thinking we can spiral up by continuous positive thinking.

#11--What we say and what we do is not just a random act or event. It is the result of thoughts --- either something we heard or something our mind thought.

*Luke 6:45 – “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”*

When God made us He made thinking beings. We are made in God’s image. God is a thinking being. Adam was given the task of tending the Garden and naming the animals --- both required thought. (Gen 2)

With this gift of thought also came the gift and responsibility of self-determination. *Proverbs 23:7 – “As a man thinks in his heart so is he.”*

#12 triangle pic Thoughts Emotions Actions

You are designed with a powerful mind to think and to choose at will. You are influencing the spirit and the body --- the soul directs both. You are not a victim of your biology. While genetics and D.N.A. play a role in many aspects of the brain’s activity, we are not bound by that. As creatures with a free will --- that is self-determination --- we have the ability, the power to change who we are by changing or controlling the way we think. **Your ability to think and choose can change your brain**.

We process thought at 400 billion actions per second. As you are thinking you are changing your D.N.A. --- does that not amaze you? People want to use D.N.A. as an excuse --- alcoholism, sexual deviance, temper, suicide, etc. --- as they were made that way and can’t help it. Not so! (Generational Curse—we will talk more about later)

We are either building life or building death by what we think.

**Close:**

You are fearfully and wonderfully made

You have the power of self determination by controlling the way you think

You are either building a life in Christ or a life that leads to death. You choose, you make the decision.

**Closing Prayer:**

*#13--****Rom 12:2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. NKJV***

**#14--2 Cor 10:3-5**

**For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, NKJV**