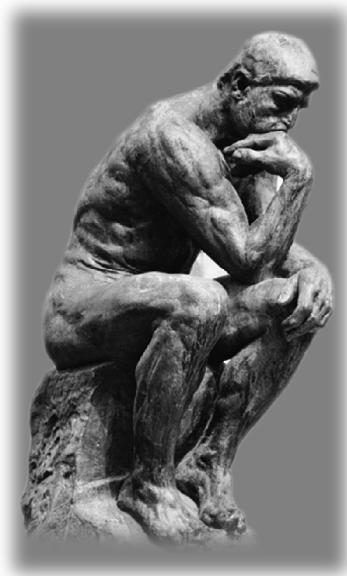




# THINKING





## **How not to Think**

**1**

Do not think too much of yourself.

**2**

Do not be overoccupied with earthly things.

**3**

Do not desire forbidden things.

**4**

Do not overcrowd your mind.

**5**

Do not keep your mind passive.

**6**

Do not be overanxious about anything.

**7**

Do not exclude God in your thinking.

**8**

Do not think aloud in all matters.

**9**

Do not rush into conclusions.

**10**

Do not be thinking too much about the past.



## How not to Think

### Introduction

- The super-importance of this subject —
  - a) “*As a man thinks, so is he*” ... Prov 23:7a  
You are not more or less than what you think.
  - b) “*The heart deceitful **above** all things*” ... Jer 17:9,10
  - c) The saddest text in the Bible ... Gen 6:5,6  
“*every thought ... only evil ... continually*”  
Because the heart of man was so bad,  
the heart of God became so sad!
  - d) The thought-life is the **root** cause of both good & bad  
Lk 6:43-45 ... *good ... evil ... heart*

If you are a good man, that means your heart is good ...  
And, if you are a bad man, that means your heart is bad.

Do not throw the blame on any man —

“You” are responsible for who you are!

- “Right living begins with right thinking.” — Bruce Milne  
“The spiritual battle is always in the thought-world.”  
— Francis Schaeffer  
“Thoughts are the seeds of actions.” — Richard Sibbes  
“The secret of clean living is clean thinking.” — John Stott
- Thoughts are the roots of “words” and “deeds”—  
Rom ... 11:16b ... *roots ... holy ... branches ...*

We waste time in cutting off the leaves/branches;  
the “*axe*” must be laid at the “*root*”—

Mt 3:10 ... The message of John the Baptist

- Thoughts lead to words;  
words lead to deeds.

Mt 12:34 ... *out of the abundance of heart ...*

i.e. Thoughts are foundational for a man's behaviour.

That can be dealt with only by the Word of God —

Heb 4:12 ... *Word ... discerner of thoughts and intents*

- Scientists and Physicians have found out that many of the physiological diseases can be traced to some psychological or mental illness.  
Thank God for psychology and psychiatry for treating mental illness.  
But the ultimate solution is in the Bible —

Heb 4:12

- 2 Types of thinking —
  - a) Natural thinking  
(that of the unregenerated man)
  - b) Spiritual thinking  
(that of the regenerated man)

The regenerated man has the **capacity** to think spiritually;  
but his thinking faculty must be trained by God thro' His Word and His Spirit.

eg) Jesus rebuked Peter though he was an apostle:

Mt 16:23 ... *mindful ... men ... God ...*

## How not to Think

### 1. Do not think too much of yourself.

- Repeated teaching of the Apostles —
  - Rom 12:3 ... *everyone ... not to think more highly*
  - 2 Cor 3:5 ... *not to think ... as from ourselves*
  - Gal 6:3 ... *thinks to be something ... deceives ...*

A supernatural transformation of mind is the only solution—

  - Rom 12:1,2 ... *renewing of your mind ...*
- Practical guidelines:
  - a) Do not think you know everything.
    - know-it-all attitude
    - 1 Cor 8:2 ... A learner's attitude
    - 1 Cor 13:9 ... *Our knowledge imperfect*
    - What I know is much less than what I ought to know!
  - b) Do not boast of whatever you have.
    - Family status ... Mt 3:9... *Do not think ... axe at the root*
    - Skills/Talents... 1 Cor 4:6,7... *"Who makes you to differ?"*
      - Nothing inherent ... only imparted
      - Personal appearance ... body ... physical
    - Position ... Centurion ... (Lk 7:1-7)
      - Lk 7:7 ... *"I didn't even **think**..."*
      - cf) officials with preachers of today ...
    - Preference/Success/God's favour
      - Dt 9:4,5 ... *Do not think ... your righteousness*

**c) Do not set mind on high things.**

Rom 12:16 ... *associate with the humble ...*

Psa 131:1,2 ... *not things too high for me ...*

- A triple challenge for intellectual arrogance —

Rom 11:34,35 ... *who? ... who? ... who? ...*

- Lowliness of mind like Jesus

Phil 2:3-8 ... *made Himself of no reputation*

- The only way to experience continuous revival

Isa 57:15 ... *lofty ... lowly ... revive ... humble ...*

- An ancient Irish hymn:

*Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,*

*Be all else but naught to me, save that Thou art;*

*Be Thou my best thought in the day and the night,*

*Both waking and sleeping, Thy presence my light.*

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## **How not to Think**

### **2. Do not be overoccupied with earthly things.**

- *Seek ... set your **mind** on things above*

Col 3:1,2

Why? ... *we are dead* ... (v3)

What are flowers to a dead man?

- What happened to Solomon?

Overoccupied with earthly and sensual things —

*Wine* (Eccl 2:3)

*Works* (vv 4-6)

*Workers* (v7a)

*Wealth* (vv7b, 8)

*Music* (v8b)

*Wisdom* (v9)

*Women* (v10) 700 wives + 300 keeps (1 Ki 11:3)

End?

Suicidal thoughts! (v17) Just "*wind!*"

eg) Several millionaires and actors come to this stage.

The apostolic teaching:

1 Jn 2:15 ... *love not ... world ... things ...*

*opposed to the love of the Father*

- Does it mean we cannot enjoy the legitimate pleasures of life?

No, overuse is condemned —

1 Cor 7:29-31 ... *use the world ... not misusing it ...*

Do you have things, or do things have you?

■ Love of Money —

1 Tim 6:9,10 ... *those who **desire** to be rich ...*

Prov 23:5 ... *“why set your eyes on what is not”*

i.e thinking/imagining

Contentment is a state of **mind** — 1 Tim 6:6-8

■ Suppose you have riches —

Psa 62:10 ... *do not set your **heart** on them*

Lk 12:16-20 ... *The rich fool... **thought** within himself*

1 Tim 6:17 ... *not to be haughty ...*

■ A learned Professor advised me years ago:

“Simple living ... high thinking!”

This is where many preachers have failed...

Result: Lots of Money but no Message.

But the Apostles —

2 Cor 6:10 ... *“Poor ... but made many rich”*

■ Because thoughts and money are so interconnected,

**giving** must be out of a willing **mind**

2 Cor 8:11,12 ... *first a willing mind*

9:2a,7 ... *willingness ... heart ...*

(See also Pages 52-54, 104-106, 563-565, 676-679, 755-758)

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## How not to Think

### 3. Do not desire forbidden things.

- The root cause for sin ... *“in the heart”* Rom 1:21,22

The darkest sin list in the Bible —

vv 23 to 32

Because they did not seek God’s help,  
they were given over to *“a debased **mind**”* (v28)

The first defiler of the heart:

Mt 15:19 ... *out of the heart ... evil **thoughts***

The stages —

Js 1:13-16

First ... *desires*

Next ... *temptation*

Finally ... *sin*

The warning: *“Be not deceived”*

That’s why Jesus equated

lustful **thought** to adultery (Mt 5:27,28)

- Satan primarily targets our “minds” —

2 Cor 11:3 ... *serpent ... corrupt ... minds*

eg) He could not corrupt the mind of Job;

that’s why he touched his body.

Victory over sin means victory in thoughts —

Rom 7:23 ... *law of mind ...*

8:5-7 ... *mind ... flesh ... carnal*

No rule over spirit

= *City without walls* Prov 25:28

- Backsliding begins in the mind —
  - eg) Heb 11:15 ... *“If they had **remembered** the country ...*
  - On the other hand, those who failed ...
    - Num 11:4-6 ... *yielded to intense craving*
  - Affected by the bad company: *“mixed multitude”*
    - Psa 26:2-5 ... *try my mind ... hated evildoers ...*
    - Psa 50:18-21 ... *Cast My words ... consented*  
*with thieves*
  - That’s why frequent self-examination is necessary —
    - Psa 139:23,24 ... *search me ... try me ...see if ...*  
i.e. evil things that are not so apparent
  - This will lead to cleansing of our “conscience” by the blood—
    - Heb 9:14 ... *purge your conscience ...*
  - No effort must be spared to keep our conscience clear—
    - eg) Paul ... Acts 24:16 ... *“strive ... void of offense”*
- The result/outcome?
  - Oil of Gladness ... Heb 1:9*
  - ... love righteousness ... hate lawlessness ...*
  - i.e. A life overflowing with gladness!

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## How not to Think

### 4. Do not overcrowd your mind.

- Everyday we receive lot of “junk mail.”

Similarly, “junk thoughts!”

Throw them away/Delete them!

Psa 119:113 (KJV)— *I hate “vain” thoughts*

*vain* = may be harmless but unnecessary

Vain thoughts lead to vain words —

Mt 12:36 ... *“every vain (idle) word ... judgment ...”*

Letters in the mail—

Many letters not worth replying!

Some letters not worth reading!

Certain things not worth remembering!

- Flush out the rubbish and retain the worthy —

Phil 4:8

Ask: Is it *noble*?

Is it *just*?

Is it *pure*? etc.

This is like a “sieve.”

Let not your mind become a garbage.

Don't be a rag-picker!

Filter out!

You cannot prevent eagles flying over head;

but you can certainly stop them from building nests

on your head and lay eggs!

- If an unedifying thing enters the mind, let it not stay long—

eg) Psa 4:4 ... *anger ... sin ... bed ... still*

... “still” = *relax!*

Eph 4:26 ... *angry ... sin not ... sun go down*

:27 ... *Do not give place to the devil*

Check & chuck things out at the thought level itself!

- Do not waste your mental energy  
thinking on all that people talk (Eccl 7:21,22)  
especially “gossip” —  
Gandhiji’s three monkeys —  
See no evil ... Hear no evil ... Speak no evil  
Eyes closed ... Ears closed ... Mouth shut

- Mind your own business —

Not a busybody in others’ matters —

1 Thess 4:11 ... *quiet life ... mind your own ...*

2 Thess 3:11,12 ... *busybodies ... work in quietness*

Here lies the secret of avoiding turbulence in life

In the office of a CEO:

Talk of business.  
Finish your business.  
Leave me to do my business.

- **Young** men ... *be sober-minded* Tit 2:6  
eg) David told Solomon ... (1 Chr 28:9)  
*heart ... mind ... intent ... thoughts ...*

Beware of distracting thoughts!

eg) Love affairs during student days

What is the priority?

Dt 20:5-7 Battle vs. House dedication

Harvest

Marriage after engagement

Don't think you can do both!

Your efficiency and effectiveness will go down!

Concentration will become less in any one matter!

■ Positive Counsel:

Sufficient rest.

Good sleep (Recharging of brain cells)

eg) Mobile phones

Holidaying — to unwind!

Enjoy the beauty of nature:

Jesus: “*Look at the birds...flowers...sky*” (Mt 6:26-29)

If you overcrowd your mind during daytime,  
even when you sleep at night your system,  
especially the brain, will not be resting!

Eccl 5:3 ... *dream ... much activity ...*

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## How not to Think

### 5. Do not keep your mind passive.

- The two extremes to be avoided:

Neither overcrowding nor passivity.

An idle man's mind is the devil's workshop.

eg) Unoccupied house (Mt 12:43-45)

*... unclean spirit ... more wicked spirits ...*

The very next chapter—

eg) Unguarded field (Mt 13:25)

*... while men slept ... sowed tares*

That's why —

*“Be sober ... vigilant ... devil ... lion”*

1 Pet 5:8 ... *Sober-mindedness is the safeguard.*

- Submission to God does not mean passivity.

The Bible does **not** teach that.

- Christ repeatedly appealed to minds:

eg) Matthew's Gospel (written to religious Jews)

*“What do you think?”*

Mt 17:25 ... Regarding tax payment

18:12 ... 100 sheep ... 1 sheep ...

21:28 ... two sons ... disobedience

22:42 ... Son of whom?

- Apostolic Practice

eg) Peter *thinking about the vision*

Acts 10:17,19,20

eg) Jude, while *considering* the subject of his Epistle

Jude 3

□ Apostolic Teaching

Heb 5:14 ... *Exercise for discernment... good and evil*

1 Pet 1:13 ... *loins of mind*

Similar to wearing the belt and trimming up!

■ Common sense a must:

eg) Arranging marriage for daughter

1 Cor 7:36,37 ... *if a man thinks ...*

eg) Long hair for men!

1 Cor 11:14 ... *Does not even nature teach?*

■ State of neutrality

= Double-mindedness

Js 1:8 ... *double-minded man ... unstable*

4:8 ... *purify hearts ... double-minded*

■ Passivity does not mean yielding to God's will.

Psa 16:7 ... *God counsels me ...*

My heart also *instructs me!*

Rom 12:1,2 ... **"reasonable"**

*"renewal" of mind, not "removal"*

Strong exercise to find out

what is the *"good ... perfect ... acceptable" will of God!*

Passivity is not spirituality;

it is stupidity.

A wrong quote:

1 Thess 4:11 *"quiet" life*

This does not mean idleness but *"active" in work.*

■ When there are successive failures, **pause** to think —

*"Consider" your ways ..."*

Hagg 1:5,7; 2:15,18

*"Healthy" imaginations welcome!*

## How not to Think

### 6. Do not be overanxious about anything.

- Overanxiousness or worry is a serious matter.

It gives foothold for Satan —

- Paul: Depression

Phil 4:6,7 ... *anxious ... peace ... minds ...*

- Peter: Roaring lion

1 Pet 5:7,8 ... *anxieties ... adversary ... devour...*

You will get “swallowed” up!

It’s putting your head voluntarily into the lion’s mouth!

- Isaiah 30:15-17

“*quietness + confidence ...*”

“*strength*” for the mind.

But, if you *run*, the enemy chases fast!

The chasing dog takes advantage

over the running dog!

- That’s why Jesus said:

*Take no thought (= anxiety) ... tomorrow ...*

Mt 6:31,32 It’s paganism!

- A Bank’s slogan: Tomorrow starts today!

But the Bible says: “*Sufficient for the day ...*” (Mt 6:34)

- Do not cross the bridge before coming to it!

Herbert Lockyer, in his book, *Sins of Saints*:

70% of what we fear never happens!

- Do not premeditate a solution before a crisis comes:

eg) *Arrest ...* Mk 13:11



- Overcautiousness leads to pessimism.
  - Pessimism does not take risks.
  - Pessimism does not venture to do anything.
  - Pessimism does not act in faith.
- Abraham's overcautiousness in Gerar (Gen 20:11)
  - Because, he forgot God's Promise:
    - Gen 15:1 ... *fear not ... I'm your shield!*
    - i.e. Attacks will come, but protection guaranteed.
- Timothy ... "*Not a spirit of fear but sound mind*"
  - (2 Tim 1:7)
  - i.e. don't be afraid of imprisonment (v8)
- After reading Newspapers and watching TV news,
  - our hearts at times get filled with fear
  - for "terror" and "troubles;"
  - but Prov 3:24-26 ... "*sweet sleep*"
  - Psa 4:8 ... "*lying down in peace ... safety*"
- When you suffer,
  - do not **think** it's unique ... *strange ...*
  - Why (a) 1 Pet 4:12,13 ... *Sufferings of Christ*
  - (b) 5:9 ... *Sufferings of others*
- The future is not in our hands —
  - God** holds the future! Js 4:13-15 (Can you catch the "*smoke?*")
  - There may be "multitude" of troubles;
  - but God's comfort—
  - Psa 94:19 ... *multitudes of anxieties ... Your comforts*
  - First Comforter up in Heaven **for** us! (Rom 8:34)
  - Second Comforter down in our hearts **with** us! (Rom 8:26)

That old hymn depicts this truth beautifully —

*Abide with **me**, fast falls the eventide;  
The darkness deepens, Lord with **me** abide;  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, O abide with **me**.*

— Henry F. Lyte, 1793-1847  
(An Anglican Pastor who  
battled tuberculosis all of his life)

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## **How not to Think**

### **7. Do not exclude God in your thinking.**

- This is a scientific era.

Ours is a world of Science.

Let's thank God for Science.

Let's respect Science.

Let's use Science.

But we cannot ever worship Science.

It's **God** who gives knowledge —

Prov 1:7a ... *The fear of the Lord ... wisdom ...*

Any knowledge opposed to God is “false” —

1 Tim 6:20,21 — *what is falsely called knowledge ...*

“O Timothy!” — especially youngsters

- Failure to retain God in mind/knowledge results in —

a) Corrupt mind

Rom 1:28-32 ... *debased ... mind ...*

what a sin list!

Psa 14:1 ... *fool has said ... no God*

*... corrupt ... abominable*

b) Confused mind

Jer 6:19 ... *calamity ... their thoughts ...*

On the other hand,

when “*mind*” is fixed on God —

Isa 26:3 ... “*Perfect peace*”

In Hebrew: “*Peace! Peace!*”

i.e. day and night thinking about God — (v9) ...

... *soul ... night ... spirit ... early*

Other supports are vain (vv 12,13,14)

... *other masters ... dead ... deceased ...*

■ Practise the Presence of God —

Psa 16:8a ... *"I" have "set" the Lord always before me*

The Lord is always with us, but are we conscious of it?

It's this God-consciousness that saved Joseph from temptation.

Gen 39:9 ... *How can I sin against God?*

One of the unusual Names of God —

*"El Roi"* — Gen 16:13 ... *"The God who sees"*

We cannot run away from His Presence —

David's confession: Psa 139:7-12

... *heaven ... hell ... sea ... darkness ...*

*such knowledge too wonderful (v6)*

■ What's wholehearted devotion to God?

OT: Dt 6:5 ... *heart ... soul ... strength*

NT: Mk 12:30 ... *heart ... soul ... strength + **mind***

Jesus said it!

i.e. nothing of what we think can exclude God!

This is our obligation to the Creator!

The OT Law was written on stones.

Under the NT, God's Laws are written *on our **minds***

(Heb 8:10)

What a blessing!

■ Why do we exclude God in our thoughts?

A distorted view about God —

He is not a tyrant or a despot.

The God of the Bible is love! (1 Jn 4:8b)

He is good ... all the time! (not just at times!)

eg) Jer 29:11 ... *His thoughts for our good ...*

Therefore, He calls us for intimate fellowship —

(vv 12,13) ... *call ... pray ... seek ...*

Only thing,

*His thoughts higher than ours!* (Isa 55:8,9)

■ Satan targets our **mind** to twist it to think against God —

Similar to what he did with Eve in Eden

(Gen 3:1-5; 2 Cor 11:3)

Don't entertain it,

but subdue it! (2 Cor 10:4-6)

... *casting down arguments... captivity to Christ*

If we are careless here, backsliding begins —

Prov 14:14 ... *The backslider ...*

*filled with his own ways ...*

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## **How not to Think**

### **8. Do not think aloud in all matters.**

- Some folks are too closed, whereas others are too open!  
Both the extremes to be avoided.

In general,

we are not to open up before others all that we think —

Prov 14:33 ... *wisdom rests quietly* ...

Prov 29:11 ... *fool vents all his feelings* ...

- Do not speak by impulse.

Take time to **think** an answer —

Prov 15:28 ... *study how to answer*

Don't pour out everything!

You cannot take back your “words” spoken in haste,  
even though you may “think” differently at leisure —

what's spoken is spoken!

Mt 12:37 ... *by your words justified ... condemned* ...

- Jesus a perfect Example —

Jn 2:24,25 ... *did not commit ... He knew* ...

If Jesus had said anything in appreciation of the faith  
of this group (v23), this would have been a mistake!

- This “*self-control*” is one of the *fruits of the Spirit* — (Gal 5:23)

eg) Joseph identified his brothers ...

but he “waited” for the appropriate time!

Gen 42:24; 43:30

Even when he could not control his feelings, he wept secretly!

- Another OT example was Nehemiah —

Neh 2:12 ... (first) *I told no one ...*  
:16,17 ... *then I said to them ...*

- Between “Revelation” from God and “Proclamation” to others there must be a time for “Meditation” within ourselves —

- Daniel:

Dan 7:28 ... *I kept the matter in my heart*

- Mary:

Lk 2:19 ... *But Mary kept in her heart ...*

2:51 ... *But His mother kept ... in her heart*

When God reveals something to you by a dream or a vision or a word of prophecy, don’t broadcast it immediately. Take time to “consider” and “discern”

— if necessary with “a few” elders/seniors —

eg) 1 Cor 14:29,30 ... *revealed ... keep silent ...*

“Keeping Silent” — the 10th Gift of the Spirit !!!

- Not only “what” we speak but also “to whom” we speak is important —

Mt 7:6 ... *“Don’t throw pearls before swine”*

eg) Gal 2:2 ... *revelation ... communicated privately ...*

We can open up **only with** highly reliable and mature people—

2 Cor 7:2,3 ... Apostles: *“Open your hearts to us”*

Condition: a) 6:11 ... Mutual openness

b) 7:3 ... Selflessness

- Then what’s the meaning of

*“walking in the light?”* 1 Jn 1:7

*“as He is in the light”*

— God does **not** reveal all His thoughts.

*“The blood cleanses us ...”*

— Primary reference to **sin**

- Beware of secretly designing evil against a fellow-brother!
- Beware of anyone trying to “manipulate” you  
by demanding so called “openness!”  
eg) Some false apostles demand confession of sins  
to them.

It’s actually a cult.

Do not allow/give room for anyone to “read” your mind!

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## How not to Think

### **9. Do not rush into conclusions.**

- We normally rush into conclusions  
either in matters concerning —

a) ourselves

or b) others

eg) Psa 31:22 ... ourselves

... *I said in haste ... I'm cut off ...*

116:11 ... others

... *I said in haste ... All men are liars.*

Hastiness is actually foolishness —

Prov 14:29 ... *impulsive ... folly ...*

29:20 ... *hasty in words ... fool ...*

Tamil Proverb:

A hasty man's understanding is one foot shorter.

ஆத்திரக்காரனுக்குப் புத்தி மட்டு! (ஒரு முழம் குட்டை!)

- Areas where we must avoid rash conclusions:

(a) In judging others in our mind —

□ Lk 13:1,2 ... *think ... worse sinners? ... No ...*

(eg: What we comment immediately

after hearing a news about an individual or a nation)

□ Jn 9:1-3 ... *blind ... whose sin?*

□ Hasty conclusions do not allow us to consider

the weight of the matter —

eg) *Bethesda ... 38 years ... healed on Sabbath*

*Jn 7:23,24 ... Do you judge according to appearance?*

In this same chapter we meet Nicodemus ...

He was not even born again but his attitude (Jn 7:50,51)

*... judge before hearing and knowing?*

Sometimes believers are more cruel than unbelievers!

Do not judge *before time* (1 Cor 4:5a)

Judgment is possible only if we have **all** the facts and details; the fact is we don't have them!

That's why **God** alone can judge anyone!

Those who keep judging others will ultimately be dictated by what **they think** that **others think** about them!

□ Learn to go by "convictions" —

You cannot fully satisfy the world —

*Lk 7:31-35 John ... demon*

*Jesus ... glutton*

Let those who appreciate appreciate!

Let those who abuse abuse!

(போற்றுவோர் போற்றட்டும்; தூற்றுவோர் தூற்றட்டும்!)

Go on with your job —

eg) Jesus

*Jn 7:12,14 ... Some said, He's good ... others ...*

*He deceives ...*

Our **minds** must be trained to keep silent

even when we are irritated by someone's foolish act —

*Eccl 7:9 ... Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry*

*... bosom of fools*

**(b)** In taking decisions for ourselves —

eg) Two outstanding examples in OT regarding marriage —

□ Abraham's servant ... Isaac ... Rebekah

Gen 24:21 ... *He remained silent as to know ...*

Even though his specifications were fulfilled (vv 14, 19)

□ Naomi ... Ruth ... Boaz

Ruth 3:18 ... *sit still ... until you know ...*

*"He who believes does not act hastily."*

Isa 28:16 ... *"tried ... precious ... sure foundation"*

He knows God is in control ... *"sure foundation"*

A saying: "Marry in haste; worry at leisure!"

**(c)** Crises and troubles make us mad

to become hasty in thoughts, words and deeds —

Psa 46:10 ... *"Be still and know ..."*

When?

— *"roaring waters"* (vv 3a, 4)

but *"river streams"* to make us *glad!*

— *"shaking"* mountains,

but staying unmoved in *God's Temple* (vv 3a, 5a)

eg) While Egyptians were chasing Israelites —

Ex 14:11-13 ... *No graves in Egypt?*

They thought,

We should not have come out of Egypt!

Moses answer:

*"Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord!"*

## How not to Think

### 10. Do not be thinking too much about the past.

- All thro' the Bible, we are admonished to remember the good things of the past —

Dt 32:7 ... How God led our forefathers

*... Remember the days of old ... father ... elders ...*

eg) My mummy managed without a bank balance  
— No borrowing!

Psa 77:11 ... *Your wonders of old ...*

*Count your blessings  
Name them one by one;  
And it will surprise you  
What the Lord has done!*

— Johnson Oatman, 1856-1922

Heb 10:32 ... *Recall the former days ... endured sufferings*

But we must forget the vain and shameful life of the past —

eg) Paul — Life in the flesh Phil 3:4-8

But now, vv 13-16

*“... forget ... mind ... think ... same mind”*

- Do not remember your old sins — 2 Pet 1:9

What right have we to “remember” what God has “forgotten”?

Where are our sins?

Thrown “*behind His back*” (Isa 38:17b)

Sunk “*under the sea*” (Mic 7:19)

Removed as the “*clouds of the sky*” (Isa 44:22)

Removed as far as the “*East from West*” (Psa 103:12)

The greatness of our God is in His “*pardoning*” —  
There’s where *His thoughts are higher* ... Isa 55:7-9  
— Certain sins may leave deep scars in our mind ...

eg) David’s sin

Look at his confession —

Psa 51:1,9 ... “*blot out*”

:2 ... “*wash thoroughly*”

:7 ... “*purge ... soap*”

More than forgiveness!

In the confession itself, he says what he—

a) “will be” ... v7 ... “*shall be clean ...*

*whiter than snow*”

b) “will do” ... v13 ... “*I will teach*”

vv 14,15 ... “*sing aloud*”

No failure is final!

Ours is a God of second chance!

- Not only our sins,  
we must forget the faults & wrong doings of others also  
if we are to improve our interpersonal relationships —

Two examples —

a) OT ... Joseph

— Remember what evil **we** did to others!

Gen 42:21,22

— Forget what evil **others** did to us!

Gen 45:5,8

b) NT ... Onesimus

Paul to Philemon

Phile 10-12 ... “*once ... but now ...*”

Be like little children —

They fight but forget immediately!

*“Be angry but sin not ... before sunset ... (Eph 4:26)*

■ Especially between spouses —

Is it really possible to forget the past offences of a spouse?

May not be;

but restrain yourself from bringing it up again and again!

“Past is past!”

■ Unless we forget the past,

we will not be able to concentrate

on that which is ahead —

Unload the past before fresh loading;

otherwise you’ll be overloaded —

Excess baggage!

“sin” — **God** rolls away;

“weight” — **We** must throw away!

You cannot otherwise “*run the race*” (Heb 12:1)

■ Leave your small ambitions for God’s greater plans!

□ Pharaoh’s message to Joseph’s brothers!

Gen 45:20 ... *Do not be concerned about your goods,  
for the best of the land is yours!*

□ Lk 9:61,62

Unless you learn to bid farewell to certain things in life,  
you cannot fare well with the present challenges!