

## Thinking About Thinking

Sometimes we need to take a step back and think about things. It may sound a little strange, but I am thinking about *thinking*. Last Sunday's sermon (evening) reminded me of the importance of focusing our minds on God and his ways. The verse from First Peter 4:7 continues to echo in my mind: "Be of sound judgment and sober for the purpose of prayer."

Together, the two terms, *sound judgment* and *soberness*, carry the idea of clear thinking and mental calmness. These terms follow in contrast to a series of terms that include drinking, sensuality, lust (any kind of passionate desire), and idolatry. Intoxication by alcohol and drugs affect the mind by *physically* interfering with the operation of thinking. The latter three terms also refer to a muddling of the mind, but without introducing a foreign substance. In all of these, the mind is unable to think clearly and calmly; Godliness is pushed out of the way.

Can you remember a time when an important event was being shown on the news? Perhaps it was the series of events on 9-11, or the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Perhaps it was the election returns during the last presidential election. Perhaps it was a news bulletin regarding the threat of tornados.

Whatever the case, do you remember having an intense desire to listen? You were focused on the television or radio. You probably leaned in closely and may have tilted your head to hear just a little better. Small insignificant noises were completely ignored. Anyone not interested (kids) were asked to leave the room or "Shush!" If you had been feeling tired, you were suddenly wide awake . . . focused, but calm . . . mentally alert!

That is the mind that God wants: wide awake; focused, but calm; mentally alert. At the heart of the focused and alert mind is a genuine desire to follow Christ.

Consider the following passages that demonstrate the importance of the sober mind that is focused on God:

Prepare your minds for action, keep sober.  
(1 Peter 1:13)

A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.  
(1 Corinthians 2:14)

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.  
(Romans 12:2)

Their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.  
(2 Corinthians 3:14-16)

Walk no longer just as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind.  
(Ephesians 4:17)

Let no one deceive you with empty words.  
(Ephesians 5:6)

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.  
(Ephesians 6:18)

God desires for us to have a clear mind. When our mind is muddled by chemicals, passions, or just the distractions of the day, we will be drawn away from God and will miss out on His gracious help. A calm and clear mind requires genuine intent and constant effort.

Is your mind clear and calm so you can pray?

Think about thinking . . . calmly and clearly.

Finally brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, **dwel**l on these things. (Philippians 4:8)