

Christ is Victor

July/August 2019

VOL. 32, NO. 4

“Valuing the thoughts of God”

Psalm 139:17: “How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!”

We value many things in this world. But this psalmist is valuing the thoughts of God. What do you value in your life? We know the first thing that created the world was the thought of God. Before this world came into existence, it was the thought of the Designer. What are your thoughts? Are they God's? If they are God's, your whole life will be built on the rock. Are you careful to check your thoughts against God's thoughts? Suppose some strange thoughts come into you. One such thought can ruin your life. We must be careful that the thoughts that possess us are completely of God. Once one thought possessed Ahab. He wanted to get hold of the vineyard of Naboth. In many ways, he could have improved his own garden. But that one thought was the cause of the ruin of his family and kingdom. Be careful about your thoughts. When Ahab could not achieve his own ends, his wife came to his help. A wise wife would ask the husband, “Why do you want to possess the land? Is this God's thought? If it is not God's thought it could ruin our family.” But Ahab had chosen a woman from a heathen home. She was an idolatrous woman. She could never counsel him in the ways of the Lord. If a wife cannot counsel the husband in the right way, the whole family will crumble. From where do you choose your partner? Is it from a home where the Word of God rules? Our Christian homes are not generally fully governed by the Word of God but we follow the world at home. We say, “That may be God's word, all right. Yet we are in this world. We must be wise.” That

is how people live. David says, “How precious are Thy thoughts! The sum total of them is altogether such a blessing to me!” A true Christian is nothing but a bundle of God's thoughts. He never swerves from those thoughts.

Isaiah 51:16: “I have put my words in thy mouth.”

vv. 7, 8: “Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law.” If you keep the word of God in your heart, the blessing flows from generation to generation. When we build a house, we want our children and children's children to benefit by it. But if you keep the Word of God in your heart and subject yourself to the commandments of God, the blessing flows to generations. Your house may fall, but the shelter you have built by obeying the Word of God will never fall.

Abraham heard the Word of God. He came from a heathen home, but when God called him, he obeyed. One by one his heathen thoughts were replaced by God's thoughts. Abraham received the Word of God and built a home. That home was wonderful and has lasted to this day.

Four hundred years after him, Pharaoh wanted to make his children his slaves. God warned Pharaoh: “Be careful what you do with God's nation. If you persecute them, God will destroy your children. Your whole army will be destroyed.” When a king loses his army, what has he to lean on? Nothing.

Nebuchadnezzar wanted to put the Israelites into a hard grind, but he was just in some ways. God chose Nebuchadnezzar to teach obedience and discipline to the disobedient Israelites. God revealed this coming situation to Jeremiah. “I will teach you there. Now you are not teachable. In the land of Babylon you will be a superior nation,” God said. God's revelations were the distinctive feature of Abraham's children. Their life was indeed better than the lives of those around them. God chose Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to prove the reality of God in Babylon.

In fact the dictates of these men were obeyed by that kingdom. The thought of God was respected there. If you are a Christian, your superiors will respect you. If you are a daughter-in-law who loves the Lord, your mother-in-law will respect your word. If you are just an assistant in a school or a college, one day those at the top will respect you because the Lord is with you. I have seen such things happen. When you are filled with the thoughts of God, you will be a leader wherever you are. St. Paul was in a big ship. He was a prisoner there. But he was guiding the captain. What did Paul know about astronomy and making decisions in guiding the ship? But what he said came to pass. In the beginning the captain did not heed his counsel. But at the end Paul's word became their guidance.

“How precious are Thy thoughts! How I value the sum of them!” Do you value them? When you read the Bible in the morning, are you reading it as a matter of routine? God likes to take away your thoughts and replace them with His thoughts. As you grow, you are filled with more of His thoughts. As a child, you might take in five percent of the Word of God, but at fifteen years of age you will take in twenty percent. At the age of twenty-five, you will have fifty percent of God's thoughts. The kings of Israel were ordered to copy the laws of God that they may know the word of God. If the king of a country knows the Word of God and with that knowledge guides it, in a way that country will prosper. To Abraham, at the age of ninety-nine, God said, “Abraham, you are not filled hundred percent with my thoughts.” (Genesis 17:1).

First of all, we do not value the Word of God. It does not get into us. Darkness surrounds us. The devil sees to it that the Word of God does not get into us. Many Christian homes have a kind of darkness. Once in Switzerland a young man noticed some strange growths on his body and wanted to get healed. He

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“Valuing the thoughts of God”

to an astrologer and did as he was told. He got healed but an evil spirit took hold of him and tied up his understanding so that he could not understand the Bible. What a price for healing! David prays, “Lord, deliver me from the sins of my youth.” Evil thoughts were dominating him. Adulterous thoughts! He was falling into sin. He tried to be good but could not. Parents, if you practise evil, your children will fall into sin. You tell me, “I have evil thoughts.” Examine yourself. Some parents have done much harm to their children. That Swiss boy married a lady in order to become good. But his misery increased. He wanted to die. Once, both he and his wife fell ill. In his sickness he was still seeking a way out. God sent a pamphlet into his hands. The truth dawned on him. He confessed his consulting evil spirits and God forgave him. Then he got victory. Christ is our Redeemer. There is victory in the Cross. Parents who are violent like lions are false leaders to their children. Are all your thoughts God’s thoughts? Do you check your thoughts with God’s thoughts?

Early in life, Absalom was possessed with one wrong thought. He wanted his father’s throne. He had no fear of God. David loved him almost to a fault. Absalom had murdered his brother but David felt compassion towards him and kissed him. It was a wrong kiss—a kiss to an unrepentant son. Many of us kiss our children that way and we lead them to hell. We must watch over them. They have wrong thoughts. Some of the statements that my children make are wrong and I correct them. They are not of God. They may get angry; but smiling over wrong thoughts will not help them. Then I pray for them. God makes them drop those thoughts.

David knew that his life was safe and protected by the hand of God but where was Absalom? David had exhorted his captains to deal gently with Absalom for his sake. Could they save Absalom? No power on earth can save your children unless you teach them the Word of God. Many young people go and marry

outside the will of God. If you ask, “Why do you marry her?”, they say, “I will convert her.” But the fact is that she will convert you. Many lost their first love on account of such decisions. They cannot be restored. Be filled with the Word of God.

Isaiah 51:21-22. God gives the cup of misery to your enemies. The devil is always watching to enter into your life and home. But as long as you are seeking God’s will, and studying the Word of God carefully and obeying it, your life will become brighter and brighter as the noonday. People will be surprised at your progress. All the thoughts of the wicked will fail. Those that wanted to destroy Daniel fell into the mouths of the lions. The Babylonian kings began listening to Daniel. Daniel rebuked Nebuchadnezzar, even the mighty king that he was! (Daniel 4:25-27).

If you obey the Word, you will get more and more of moral courage. You will say like Elijah who said to Ahab, “In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.” You just go on subjecting yourself to the Word of God. Then you will build the waste places. God will restore the years wasted by the palmerworm and the cankerworm. Examine yourself. See how much of the Word of God is reigning in your hearts. Is Jesus Christ, the Word of God, reigning in you hundred percent? “I do always the things that please my Father,” He said. He wants us to do so. Many of His disciples left Him because they said that it was hard. But Peter said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

Isaiah 66:3, 4: they “chose that in which I delighted not.” God looks at your choices. He is shocked: “O what will happen to my child?” You choose gaudy dresses. Well, can you fight the devil when he attacks you through that dress? Whatever you choose, it must not hinder your nearness to God. You choose a position respected by all. Then perhaps you associate with people who have no fear of God. One day you will become like them. You may give much money for God’s work. But you will be lost.

How good to know God’s thoughts for you! When Abraham was shown Palestine, it was a wilderness. Lot chose a good place; but today the place that Lot chose is the Dead Sea, totally uninhabitable. Even birds cannot fly over it. There are no fish in this water. Your life will become like that. You will be a Dead Sea, with no life. Why? You choose that which is against God’s will.

By the time the Israelites returned after four hundred years of stay in Egypt, Palestine was like a garden.

Lot came out of Sodom losing everything. Abraham returned out of Egypt to inherit God. Your life will be like that.

Peter did not leave Jesus. He became an important man in Jerusalem. What was his education and social status? It did not amount to much but Peter did not leave the thoughts of Jesus. Where can I get such thoughts which can lead me to eternal life? He reached a place from where he could not move away. Have you come to that place? Can you say, “Come what may, I will not leave God’s thoughts. The Bible shall rule my heart and home! If God gives me a partner, that person also will share in this work of God. That person should not bring new thoughts to spoil the thoughts of God?”

—N. Daniel

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“Turn that over to Me”

The career of missionary E. Stanley Jones, who died in 1973, was nearly cut short by chronic worry. When he had first arrived in India, Jones wore himself out, working and worrying. “I was suffering so severely from brain fatigue and nervous exhaustion,” he later wrote, “that I collapsed, not once but several times.” Aboard the ship returning to America, he collapsed again and the doctor put him to bed. After a year’s rest he attempted to return to India, but became a bundle of nerves on the return trip and arrived in Bombay a broken man. His colleagues warned him that any attempt to continue ministering in such a state of anxious care would be fatal.

While praying one night, groping in
“Turn...” *Continued on page 4*

REALITY CHECK!

**“So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him”
(Hebrews 9:28).**

“Basis of faith—humility and brokenness”

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10).

To many people, religion today appears like a maze of indistinctively marked paths. Very often these criss-crossing paths appear interminable and have no definite destination. Confronted by such a confusing babble of voices and thoughts so abstract and obtuse, many turn away in despair and others in disgust. In the midst of these jumbled and disconcertingly contradictory philosophies, each claiming to be one hundred per cent correct, how can any person find the truth? The Living God in His great wisdom and mercy has not left us to stumble and grope through this twilight darkness of religious confusion.

The Lord Jesus, before He left the world, promised His disciples that it was expedient that He should leave the world so that He could send the Holy Spirit to lead them into all truth. The Lord Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth. He, however, said that the world cannot receive Him “because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him” (John 14:17). By this the Lord Jesus meant that the Holy Spirit would guide the broken-hearted, the humble, and those who earnestly pursue the path of discipleship. Such will be led into a fuller and greater truth and there will be no religious confusion in their lives.

The Holy Spirit also convicts people of their sin and directs them in the way of salvation. Thus the worst sinner is able to find his or her way to the Cross of Jesus Christ where a further flood of light awaits them. He or she is then no longer a

groping, stumbling, and fumbling person. The blood of Christ and the love of Calvary liberate their distraught mind and set free their enslaved spirit and transform that person in a child of God!

It must be borne in mind that “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble” (James 4:6). It is quite common to meet with people who have had no more than a dubious religious experience who grow inordinately proud and even boastful of their too-much publicized experience. When a person is imbued with the true light of God, he or she never seeks publicity—and even hates the limelight. The media loves to pick up on religious freaks who boast of some new experience and whose claims are proved to be false by the cleverly hidden inconsistencies of their lives.

When you come up with religious deceivers, do not be so naïve as to jump to the conclusion that the whole talk of Christianity is a whole lot of baloney. What a tragedy that in some communities there is so much talk of Christianity and of those who get high on the emotional binge of religious excitement and yet are not really faithful, steady witnesses whose lives and fruits speak for themselves!

King David cries to the Lord, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Having gone astray and lost the presence of God through the carnal excitement which he desired, though fully aware that adultery was a grave offence against the true and living God, he cried to God from a truly broken and contrite spirit: “Renew a right spirit within me.” There

is much room for this cry of David amidst the predominantly shallow Christianity of today.

A right spirit is characterized by brokenness of heart. A right spirit does not find difficulty praying. A right spirit is in tune with heaven. A right spirit has a deep love for God’s Word, the Bible. A right spirit has correct priorities. Prayer and Bible study are unmistakably at the top. A right spirit treasures the will of God as a must. It seeks to know that will and stakes all to do that will of God. A right spirit is fair-minded and impartial in all its dealings; it is free from bias and bigotry. A man or woman whose heart is clean and who has the right spirit enjoys an interrupted communion with God.

A person with a right spirit has a wide heart with the longing to glorify Jesus. This is not just a feeling but an overpowering longing to see God at work. In other words, a person with a right spirit is never too far from revival. Either revival breaks out around that person or it takes place in his wake. He carries the presence of God with him into whatever situation he goes. He has few secrets and has an open personality.

My heart is deeply engrossed with this burden to bring about amongst my readers everywhere a broken and contrite spirit—a right spirit—so that the Lord God can work through them. I see revival tapering off in some places and I witness fresh outbursts of revival power and blessing in other places. The continuity is revival and its extension to fresh areas is of paramount importance

“Basis of ...” Continued on page 4

CHRIST IS VICTOR Volume 32, No.4

This newsletter is produced six times per year by the Laymen’s Evangelical Fellowship International. It is printed and distributed in the US, UK, Germany, Singapore, Canada, and Australia and is supported by unsolicited sacrificial gifts of young people. For a free subscription or for other enquiries, please contact any of the addresses below.

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“Basis of faith—humility and brokenness”

Where there is grumbling, bickering, or backbiting, revival comes to a speedy end. When the spirit of prayer goes down in any place, fellowship, or church, much talk and numerous committees surface. Little things are blown up into big matters which excite and agitate people. The fervent love for each other which once prevailed and produced smooth efficiency in operation disappears. There is little glory for God in a situation like this.

Great preachers can also lose this right spirit. Today's world seeks to press a preacher into the mould of

a business man which is thought of as a smart improvement! But a preacher, in whose mind money begins to figure as an important adjunct to his work, quickly loses whatever prophetic impulse he may have had and becomes a very mundane and powerless creature

Most Christians of today have so little light and revelation from God that they are clearly far out on a limb and have little power with God. Such people only produce desolation and death around them.

This is no time for complacency. Dear reader, awake to righteousness and sin not! God wants to

use you. But you must first be of a broken and contrite spirit. All the sources of information around us are contriving to make you hard, insensitive, selfish, money-minded and world-oriented. In other words, you are putting yourself where God cannot even speak to you! No wonder your heart is cold, your head so heavy and your path so unclear. Take hold of Jesus Christ with a broken spirit and you will find new power to overcome in your life, new peace in your home, new blessing around you where you live and work. May the dear Lord touch you and bless you.

—Joshua Daniel

“Put your name in it!”

Ruth Bell Graham vividly remembers September 2, 1933. She was thirteen. Her father, a missionary surgeon in China, and her mother were sending her to boarding school in what is now Pyongyang, North Korea. For Ruth, it was a brutal parting, and she earnestly prayed she would die before morning. But dawn came, leaving her prayers unanswered, and she gripped her bags and trudged toward the riverfront. She was leaving all that was loved and familiar: her Chinese friends, the missionaries, her parents, her home, her memories. The Nagasaki Maru carried her slowly down the Whangpoo River into the Yangtze River and onto the East China Sea.

A week later she was settling into her spartan dormitory. Waves of homesickness pounded her like a churning surf. Ruth kept busy by day,

but evenings were harder. She would bury her head in her pillow and cry herself to sleep, night after night, week after week. She fell ill, and in the infirmary she read through the Psalms, finding comfort in Psalm 27:10: “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me.”

The hurt and fear and doubt persisted. Finally, in desperation, she went to her sister Rosa, also enrolled in Pyongyang. “I don't know what to tell you to do,” Rosa replied matter-of-factly, “unless you take some verse and put your own name in it. See if that helps?” Ruth picked up her Bible and turned to a favorite chapter, Isaiah 53, and put her name in it: “But He was wounded for Ruth's transgressions; by His stripes Ruth is healed.” Her heart leaped, and the healing began.

—Selected The career of missionary E.

“Turn that over to Me”

emotional darkness, Jones seemed to hear a Voice ask him, “Are you yourself ready for this work to which I have called you?”

“No, Lord,” replied Jones, “I am done for. I have reached the end of my resources.”

“If you will turn that over to Me and not worry about it,” the Voice seemed to say, “I will take care of it.”

Jones answered. “Lord, I close the bargain right here.” A great sense of peace closed in over Stanley Jones, a rush of abundant life that seemed to sweep him off his feet. His energy returned, his enthusiasm bubbled over and he plunged back into his work with a vitality he had never before known. Jones went on to spend a lifetime of ministry in India, writing numerous

books, and ministering to multitudes around the world. He later wrote, “This one thing I know: my life was completely transformed and uplifted that night ... when at the depth of my weakness and depression, a voice said to me: ‘If you will turn that over to Me and not worry about it, I will take care of it,’ and I replied, ‘Lord, I close the bargain right here.’”

“Cast your burden on the Lord and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved. ... Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (Psalm 55:22 and 1 Peter 5:7).

Worry is the interest we pay on tomorrow's troubles.

—E. Stanley Jones

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