

SERMON NOTES

Do My Thoughts Influence My Future? (Proverbs 23:1-8) *When God is Misunderstood sermon series* By Pastor David Hillis, 08.13.17

BIG IDEA: *My thoughts influence but do not dictate my future. Therefore, I don't need to look for power in my own positive thinking, but I do need to pursue the mind of Christ.*

- Proverbs 23:1-8 tells us that if a selfish, stingy person is suddenly trying to get us to eat the food he sets before us, or accept a gift he's giving us, we have to be careful and ask "why?" It could be a wealthy or powerful person, with whom we don't have a relationship, but they're suddenly getting buddy-buddy with us. God is saying that people like that do not have hearts that are really with us! When we know someone, when there's a relationship, there aren't ulterior motives.
- In Colossians 3:1, the Bible says to focus, to set our sights, our thoughts, on Godly things. Proverbs 4 talks about guarding our hearts and our minds; and Romans 12 encourages us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.
- What we think and believe doesn't tie God's hands and make Him do what we want, though our prayers can move God's heart to respond. What we focus our thoughts on can influence, at least, what happens to us down the road. Our thoughts can shape our attitudes, determine our responses, influence our behaviors, and even our character.
- Our words do not carry magical, supernatural power; only God does. We can have all the faith in the world that we can do something; that doesn't mean we can. We can have all the faith in the world that God will do something, but that doesn't mean He'll do it either.
- Philippians 4:19; 4:8 and 2 Corinthians 10:5 remind us to guard our hearts; to fix our thoughts on what is true, honorable, right and pure, lovely and admirable; and to be careful with our thoughts because our thoughts matter!
- Our thoughts don't dictate our future, but they can influence it if we let them. They can lead us away from God. If we want to better ourselves and make positive changes, we need more than the power of positive thinking. True spirituality will always start and end with our relationship to Jesus. It is the Holy Spirit who is the key to changing one's life, not our thoughts, and not our effort alone. As we actively yield to the Spirit, He will transform us.

MY NEXT STEP: *Do your thoughts tend to be true, God-honoring thoughts? How can you decide to not entertain other thoughts this week?*

QUESTIONS FOR MY TIME WITH GOD:

1. Reread Proverbs 23:1-8 this week. How can you relate the circumstances presented here to any of your own today? How can you apply the wisdom of this passage to your own life?
2. Read Numbers 13-14. Notice what God promised them before He sent them out, and what they were tasked to do. How did Joshua & Caleb's report differ from everyone else's? How did their thinking affect their reports to Moses? Affect God's response? Affect the final outcome?
3. Look at Proverbs 4:23-26. When Solomon refers to guarding the heart, he is speaking to the inner core of who a person is — their thoughts, feelings, desires, will and choices that make that person who he/she is. What do you see can happen if you *don't* guard your heart? How do you need to guard it now, so that your thoughts are not adversely affected?
4. Next week we will be concluding this series by looking at one last commonly misunderstood verse, 2 Peter 3:9. You might also look at 1 Timothy 2:4. We will answer the question, "Doesn't God Love and Accept Everybody?" How would you answer that question? Put your thoughts in the comments of the "Hello" card online this week at myGrace.church!

PRAYERS FOR MY TIME WITH GOD: Marriages/DivorceCare

Thank God for sturdy marriages that reflect His faithfulness and beauty. Pray for DivorceCare, the support they provide, and the marriages at Grace and in our community which are strained to a breaking point or are failing. May God bring both hope and help, heal broken hearts, restore intimacy and re-center homes in Christ.