

Study 6

LIVING THE WALK: HOLINESS IN MIND

First Peter 1:13-14

Christians are called to think differently. We are not called to be pessimists. Neither are we called to be optimists! We are called to be *realists*. The reality is, that God is in control. The reality is, that God will judge everyone. The reality is that Jesus Christ has saved us by His merit alone. The reality is that one day He will return for His church and destroy His enemies. This is not thinking optimistically, but realistically. Such is the power that our minds play in our lives, that we are instructed to discipline the way we think. In fact every transaction of our minds, eventually, if left unchecked, will affect the way we behave (Prov. 23:7 KJV). We use our minds to believe. We base our beliefs on the available information in our minds.

1. What did David want God to do in his prayer of Psalm 26:2?

DON'T BE AN EMPTY HEAD!

2. If we could take Jesus' statement to Peter as an indication of the two basic ways of thinking, what two basic ways of thinking are there? (Matt. 16:23)

3. What are we told to do with our minds in Mark 12:30?

4. What was necessary to happen before the disciples could understand what Jesus was saying to them? (Luke 24:45)

So important is the content of our minds, that the Bible instructs us in not only what shouldn't go into it, but also what should go into it (Phil. 4:8). In our Text, believers are instructed to prepare their *minds* for action. The implication is that something is going to happen - and time is running out.

RIGHT THINKING- RIGHT ACTIONS

The outflow of a mind that is obedient to God will be *self-control*. While it is true that *God* is transforming us, it is also true that *we* are expected to change. God's Word clearly shows us that we have a tremendous power at our disposal: *the power to choose*. God enables this power in us by offering His grace. That is, when presented with the offer of salvation, we must choose whether to accept it, or reject it - and He enables us to be able to choose to accept His offer.

5. What was a vital part of Paul's preaching to potential converts? (Acts 24:25)
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Living God's way gives us the power to live self-controlled (Gal. 5:23). Peter later urges believers to live self-controlled (2Peter 1:6), thus implying that believers have the power to choose whether they will live for God or for themselves.

HOPE FULLY IN GOD'S GRACE

What the NIV renders *prepare your minds for action*, the Greek actually says something like- *gird up the loins of your minds*. This expression of "girding up the loins" was first used in the Old Testament.

6. Note the occasion of its use, and what was about to happen. (Ex. 12:11-14)
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The Christians who Peter wrote to were under intense persecution. Perhaps the temptation might have been to ask God to judge these persecutors with His wrath. Perhaps they may have wondered if God really cared about them because they were persecuted so much. So, Peter encourages them to trust God, despite the circumstances. They were to be prepared for the return of Christ at any moment, thinking correctly, and to hope fully in God's grace. No matter what they were going through, God's grace was going to sustain them. Secondly, when Christ returns, He will judge all those who have rejected Him by persecuting His church (2Thess. 1:6-10).

BE CONFORMED TO, AND BE DEFORMED FROM

God's grace is available to the ignorant. This is probably most people. When Paul was evangelising Athens, he alluded to them as being ignorant (Acts 17:30). Therefore, he emphasized God's grace to those he considered ignorant.

7. While the Bible presents and emphasises grace to the ignorant, what does it present to those who wilfully, and in full understanding of the consequences, reject God's grace? (Mk. 3:29; Heb. 6:4-6)

8. What does Romans 12:1-3 urge?

There is a lot of subtle pressure on Christians to be conformed to the world's way of thinking. The world looks for salvation from its governments (note how much undeserved blame governments get). Christians don't think in terms of governments having all the answers. We believe that God has the answers. The world also looks for salvation from its employers, financial institutions, and social-welfare agencies. The way the world thinks about these things results in either praise or criticism. But the way the Christian thinks about these things should result in prayer and intercession.

WHAT DO YOU DESIRE?

When we were ignorant we were led astray by our desires (Rom. 6:12). Sin had corrupted us totally. Before we knew God, it was only His *prevenient* grace that restrained the extent to which we sinned (Rom. 5:20). Our evil desires often trapped us (Prov. 11:6).

9. What else does the Bible instruct us to do about evil desires? (Col. 3:5)

Our desires need to be God-centred (*Theo-centric*). As we focus on Christ's will for our lives (Christo-centric) our desires are replaced with *His* desires (Phil. 2:13). We will do His will. Our desires become focussed on achieving God's purpose, not our lusts or ambitions. This is delighting ourselves in the Lord.

10. What does Psalm 37:4 promise to those who do this?

Amen.