

# “Guarding our Thoughts: Actions Speak Louder than Words”

October 8, 2024 ~ Ladies Bible Study

**Theme verse:** *“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” Titus 1:16*

**Introduction:** I know that we as ladies like to do a lot of talking ... for a myriad of reasons but if for no other reason than to hear ourselves speak. A person that spends the majority of their time talking about themselves is a co-dependent person. They are insecure in themselves in some area. So, to make up for it, they talk a LOT and a lot of that is about themselves.

But all speaking aside, our ACTIONS are what speak even louder than our words do. How can this be?? Because our actions are the true test of not only what we say, but what we know. If I were to tell you all about how to bake a certain cake and was very convincing in it, yet were not able to actually show you how to do it in action, which would speak louder? The actions would tell on me, would they not?

Why do I say all of this? To make this point ... “To act is easy, to think is hard.” – Johann von Goethe

The Bible tells us that our tongues are a great evil. That we must rule our tongues, but I truly believe that our minds are running a close second on this. We speak without thinking, do we not? But we act without thinking SO MUCH too!

It has been said that “Idle hands are the devil’s workshop.” Well, if IDLE hands are, how much more are IDLE words? Or IDLE minds?

Whew! I know it is getting hot already and we are just in the introduction to this lesson, but do not leave me yet. Instead, let us dig into our thinking and our thoughts some more.

I love questions about as much as I love word definitions, so let us ask ourselves some questions. Have you ever asked or said this ...

Did they not think before they spoke (or acted)?  
Do they even have a brain?  
They are a brick short of a full load.  
They are out to lunch.

## **Brain vs. Mind**

- Our *brains* are a tangible thing ... essentially something that can be touched or held.
- Our *minds* are an intangible thing ... not something that can be touched or held.
- But we need brains for our minds to work. Our thoughts need a house to live in and that is where the brain comes in.

## **The battle of our Thoughts:**

- We have been studying for weeks now on the thought of control ... through manipulation, through co-dependency, through humility, and now our thoughts (minds).
- There is a battle raging between our flesh and the Spirit.
- We must NEVER forget that #1 which one we feed the most will be the victor and #2 the one that WE CHOOSE ... yes, YOU choose ... will be the winner.

- Satan LOVES to be the winner! If he can control what you THINK, he can control what you DO.<sup>1</sup>

### **What are some sins of the mind (as seen by Dwight Pentecost)?<sup>2</sup>**

1. Pride – exaggerated self esteem
2. Lust – an intense longing
3. Covetousness – craving or desiring something that is not yours
4. Greed – wanting more and more for self
5. Suspicion – a feeling of mistrust
6. Discouragement – lack of courage and confidence

***“The biggest battle that we face is between our ears.”<sup>2</sup> – Mark Agan***

### **Our biggest enemy:**

Satan is our biggest enemy

Why is he so lethal?

- He is deceptive -- he comes to us in clothing of light (***II Corinthians 11:14***)
- He is invisible – he cannot be seen (***Ephesians 2:2***)
- He is subtle – he is difficult to spot (***Genesis 3:1***)
- He is relentless – he is always on the lookout for weak prey (***I Peter 5:8***)
- He is real – he is not a figment of the imagination (***John 8:44; James 4:7***)
- He is a spiritual being – it is not a physical person that we are fighting (***Ephesians 6:12***)
- He consumes the unsuspecting – he is looking for those who are not intentional; who are not on a set course but like to wander away (***Luke 8:12***)
- He is good at what he does – “the longer that you do something the better you get at doing it”<sup>3</sup>  
But one day he will receive his just reward (***Revelation 20:10***)
- He is a liar – not just the master of lying but the father of it (***John 8:44***)
- He is a thief – he has no care for you; he will take all that he can get (***John 10:10***)
- He is triumphant when we are ignorant – ignorance is not bliss (***II Corinthians 2:11***)
- His pride rubs off on us – we CANNOT fight against the devil by ourselves. We CANNOT “handle it ourselves.” (***Ephesians 6:11-13; Deuteronomy 20:4; Isaiah 40:10***)
- He is looking for those of like mind – he is looking for those who do not have the mind of Christ for if they are not for Christ, then they are against Christ (***Philippians 2:1-8***)

***“The first resort of a deceitful heart is to find someone else that is just as deceitful ... he [Satan] goes about searching for others who might have the same seeds of rebellion germinating just below the surface.”<sup>4</sup> – Mark Agan***

### **Getting into our Minds:**

- Satan is a master manipulator.
- Satan is a master mind player.

*Watch your thoughts for they become words,  
Watch your words for they become actions.  
Watch your actions for they become habits.  
Watch your habits for they become character.  
Watch your character for it becomes your destiny [your end]*

- We set our own destiny by what we allow to enter and take up residence in our minds.
- When a negative thought or a negative emotion or a negative feeling jumps into our minds, we must immediately recognize it for what it is and then quickly show it the door.
- We need to replace (renew) those thoughts with godly ones – *Philippians 4:8 "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."*
- Illus: When our daughter was growing up and was negative about something we would make her find 3 positive things to replace that negative thought, word, or action

### **What are some weapons that Satan uses against us in our minds?**<sup>5</sup>

1. **The weapon of Discouragement** – Any time that we make up our minds to do something for God, Satan is going to attack. Any time that we do great things for God, Satan is going to attack. He is going to attack our thinking. [See Elijah in *I Kings 18* ... he had just won a great victory of the prophets of Baal. Satan attacked his mind, and he ended up wallowing in misery under the juniper tree.]
  - Your circumstances will not cause you to be discouraged, but your THOUGHTS about your circumstances will. If you let Satan get into your head, he will play mind games with you and defeat you every time.<sup>6</sup>
  - The Bible tells us that we are what we think (*Proverbs 23:7*). If we think unhappy thoughts, we will be unhappy. If we think scornful thoughts, we will be scornful.

***Discouragement is a state of mind, not a set of circumstances.***<sup>7</sup> – Mark Agan

2. **The weapon of Worry** – Worry means to be anxious; to be distracted; to have a divided mind.
  - God lets us know that worry is a worthless (empty; of no value) pastime in *Matthew 6:27 "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?"*
  - Did you know that worrying is a SIN?! Ouch! Yes, I felt that too! But it is. Because when we worry we do not trust our omniscient (ALL-powerful) Savior to take care of us.
3. **The weapon of Guilt** – Ouch! I know! This is another sore and touchy area.
  - "GOOD guilt is a godly guilt. It is a loving tool of God used to convict, correct, and conform your character when you go astray. BAD guilt is used by Satan that will overshadow you with feelings of shame and condemnation."<sup>8</sup>
4. **The weapon of Anger** – Anger is an emotion of a fool, and it does not glorify God (*James 1:20*)
  - An angry person is often an integrator of more anger and the stirring up of anger in others (*Proverbs 29:22*)
  - Mark Agan in his book says that we are to confess it, consider it, and control it.<sup>9</sup>

### **What are 4 things that we need to keep in mind when Satan starts playing with our minds?**<sup>10</sup>

1. We must fight the flesh with the Spirit. *II Corinthians 10:3*
2. We must trust God's power to pull down those strongholds. *II Corinthians 10:4*
3. We must reject (cast down) every thought that leads us to doubting God or His Word. *II Corinthians 10:5*
4. We must bring every thought into captivity (corral it in) until it brings obedience. *II Corinthians 10:6*

## **Armor up!**<sup>11</sup> *Ephesians 6*

- **We are to use God's STRENGTH** – *Ephesians 6:10*
  - There is NO excuse for defeat in the Christian's life ... IF they are using God's strength to fight their battles. Are you losing your battles? Then you aren't fighting with God's strength!
  - We often do not believe that God can do it, so we try to do it ourselves ... and we fail every single time!
  - We need to stop ASKING God to give us the victory (because He has already promised it to us) and we need to start ACTING like we have won the battle already. Illus: the lady who prayed for rain carried an umbrella.
- **We are to STAND** – *Ephesians 6:14*
  - Too many of us are sitting when God has called us to stand.
- **We are to ARMOR up** – *Ephesians 4:11*
  - 1) **Belt (girdle) of Truth** – We need God's Truth (His Word) to fight Satan who is the father of lies (*John 8:44*)
    - We need honesty and integrity in all areas of our lives ... in our marriage, in our homes, in our workplace and in our churches.
  - 2) **Breastplate of Righteousness** – We cannot live right lives or free from the world's influence unless we are free of sin. Find your sins, confess your sins, forsake your sins ... OFTEN!
  - 3) **Our feet shod with the Gospel of Peace** – Do we walk in peace? Or do we stir up strife and discord among our brethren?
  - 4) **The shield of Faith** – “Above all” else ... if you have nothing else, make sure that you have faith. Not only that but we are assured that it will protect us EVERY single time that Satan hurls those fiery darts at us. Where is our faith rooted and grounded? It is in God's Word. So, get in God's Word and stay in God's Word! This is a VERY needful thing in our lives as Christians! God has been speaking to me about writing a book on this very thing ... how do we do The Needful Thing? What are the Needful Things?
  - 5) **The helmet of Salvation** – Our salvation gives our minds protection and power from evil thinking. Use your mind!! MAKE UP YOUR MIND that you are not going to let Satan control it with evil!
  - 6) **The Sword of the Spirit** – Oh, how we need the control of the Holy Spirit in our lives!!!! It goes back to our knowledge of scripture ... for God's Word is our sword and the Holy Spirit is the one who wields it on our behalf ... IF we are yielded to Him!

## **What are the 7 steps to winning the battle over our minds?**<sup>12</sup>

1. **Step #1 – Get Clean** (*John 1:8*)
  - “The first step toward victory is getting clean. Before you can STAY clean, you've got to GET clean, and the first step in GETTING clean is COMING clean – admitting you have sin in your life.”<sup>13</sup>
2. **Step #2 – Be Determined** (*Psalm 119:10*)
  - If the whole is not given, then the part that is held back will pull the good back as well. Beware! Be determined to give your WHOLE heart and mind to God. Not just part of it. Let Him keep it safe.
3. **Step #3 – Memorize Scripture** (*Psalm 119:11*)
  - Fill your mind so full of God's Word that you start thinking like He thinks (Philippians 2:5).
4. **Step #4 – Remain Teachable** (*Proverbs 15:32*)
  - Pride so easily slips in when we are not watching and especially when we are “doing” a lot of “good” things. Satan likes to slip it in to make us think that we have “arrived” but we haven't ... we have only just begun to chip away at the tip of this iceberg called our minds/thoughts.

5. **Step #5 – Be Vocal with God’s praise** (*Psalm 66:2*)

- Stop living under the circumstances and start lifting up your thoughts and your voices in praise to our God. It has been said that “It is amazing what praising can do!”

6. **Step #6 -- Learn what is really important** (*Luke 10:42*)

- Some things of this life are going to pass away because they are temporal (they have a designated life span). Let us learn what is eternal and focus on that. Let us not make mountains out of molehills.
- There are some Needful Things. Find them. Do them.

7. **Step #7 – Meditate on God’s Word** (*Joshua 1:8*)

- We talked about IDLE hands and IDLE minds how they are the devil’s tools ... his “workshop.” So, keep your mind occupied with God’s Word. Meditate on it. Dwell on it. Dig into it.

**Conclusion:** We need Christ for our strength and for our cleansing (renewing) of our minds! *Philippians 4:13* “*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*” and *Romans 12:2* “*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*”

<sup>1</sup>Mark Agan, What are you Thinking? (Amazon.com, 2012), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Mark Agan, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>Mark Agan, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup>Mark Agan, p. 23.

<sup>5</sup>Mark Agan, pp. 48-67.

<sup>6</sup>Mark Agan, p. 52.

<sup>7</sup>Mark Agan, p. 52.

<sup>8</sup>Mark Agan, p. 61.

<sup>9</sup>Mark Agan, pp. 65-66.

<sup>10</sup>Mark Agan, pp. 68-70.

<sup>11</sup>Mark Agan, pp. 77-88.

<sup>12</sup>Mark Agan, pp. 91-110.

<sup>13</sup>Mark Agan, p. 94.

Homework:

1. How is your thought life? What sins are lurking around in there?

2. What part of God’s armor are you lacking?

3. What steps are you doing? Why are you not doing the others (what is hindering you from doing those)?