



The heart of man plans his way,
but the Lord establishes his steps.
Prov. 16:9

UNIT 2

Time



In the first unit we set a foundation for our study, Think Like a Christian, Considering three areas: (U1S1) **The Origins of Thought**, (U1S2) **The Renewing of the Mind** and (U1S3) **The Potential of the Renewed Mind**. Now, in Unit 2, we proceed to consider some specifics concerning our thinking like a Christian. For this session we will consider the time frames in which the mind operates.

THINKING AND THE PASSING OF TIME

Some have said "Time Changes all things" and that may be somewhat true. We can all attest to the fact that our outlook on life and the way we think about things today tend to **change** over time due to the passage of time itself, or due to experience, education, age, perspective etc.

"Any man who is under 30, and is not a liberal, has no heart; and any man who is over 30, and is not a conservative, has no brains" Winston Churchill.

By this he was probably indicating, at least, that we tend to drift from emotional responses when we are younger to more informed responses as we grow. People start early in life with a more open mindset, open to many new things and ideas etc, and end up being more conservative in mindset, after having seen and experienced some of the realities of life. Being an **idealist** is different from being a **realist**. Although both have their place, only one is truly informed by actual experience.

The way we think about things can tend to change and this itself IS AN IMPORATANT aspect to be considered.

Eccl 1:1, 14-15 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven

I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him.

Whatever is has already been, and what will be has been before; and God will call the past to account.

Basically, Only God and His thoughts are trustworthy. We likely to think based on your current knowledge and circumstances, making decisions and choices now based on our current limited experiences. But as time moves on, we can look back and see how our mindset at one stage of life was very influential in our choices.

PLAYING GOD IS NOT THE ANSWER

As we saw in our first study, *The origins of thought*, the great temptation of humanity is to rule without God, as opposed to ruling with God. What we aspire to, our ambition, our interests or whatever direction we tend to take in life tends toward placing ourselves in first place. We tend to act on our own behalf or best interest, not realizing that only God, who does not change (Num. 23:19, Heb. 13:8, Jam. 1:17), can truly act on our best interest.

History is replete with humans playing God, thinking they are fully capable of choosing wisely, but they don't do it well.

In 1832 Ralph Waldo Emerson was ordained as a pastor (Harvard divinity school) but Emerson gradually moved away from the religious and social beliefs of his contemporaries, formulating and expressing the philosophy of transcendentalism. Thinking he said, "with my own heart" becomes the final authority; Thus for Emerson as well as for many other idealists in pulpits and seminary classrooms, "understanding" rises above "faith," and "reason" above all, since "reason" is the intuitive moment, a moment in which a new set of absolutes may be acquired. For Emerson, a set of absolutes can be located only within oneself.

EACH STAGE OF LIFE HAS IT'S OWN CHOICES

To begin thinking like a Christian, one must find the authentic starting point. That point can be none other than a recognition of the immutable God, Creator and Judge, before whom all nature and human nature must be accountable.

And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.
Hebrews 4:13

He alone is the final authority (Him and His word) and our responsibility before God is found in the pages of His holy Bible, not in our own hearts or minds.



BY FAITH ALONE ARE WE FREED FROM THE PLAYING GOD

We each need to make God central and seek him in every aspect of life, to be lead by Him and depend on Him exceedingly, or else suffer the consequences of living on our own accord.

Let's look at a Biblical discourse on this subject.

Galatians 4:1-9 English Standard Version (ESV)

4 I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, 2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. 3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. 4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. 9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?

Paul has explained that we have been called to live in freedom as sons, and now that you are legitimate sons of God through faith, he asks, how can you turn back to think and act like the world, and become enslaved again with the vain thinking of the world? This must not be.

Galatians 5:1 English Standard Version (ESV)

5 For freedom Christ has set us free; **stand firm** therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Paul, reiterates, we are now free. Don't go back. Stand Firm in Christ. **Choose to exercise your faith.**



DISCUSSION: How do you Choose?

- **Choices:** Do you feel the freedom that comes from seeking God and submitting to Him, letting him make choices for you according to His wisdom and knowledge?
- **Seeking:** Do you actively seek God in His word for answers and direction, or do you lean on your own understanding (Prov. 3:5-6)



PERSONAL CHALLENGE

What is the next big step/decision I perceive is coming up in life?

Has the Lord become the sole authority in your life or are you in the driver's seat?

How can I be certain that I am letting him lead in each season of my life? (See Psalm 119:97-105)

TEMPTED



In this session we want to understand the very nature of temptation and discuss the tools at our disposal to avoid and fight against

temptation. Without a doubt, the mishandling of temptation has led many to great destruction and a good argument can be made that the cause was a simple one: **a lack of being prepared for the rise of temptation.**

THINKING AND TEMPTATION

Definition **temp-ta-tion**: a desire to do something known to be wrong or unwise, sinful.

Temptation is very exclusive to the mind. It is a process that is first involved in the desire centers of the mind and heart. The process is as follows: James 1:14-15

Temptation: But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

Sin: Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Leaving areas of temptation *unaddressed* by remaining *unprepared* for temptation can allow you to be lured (drawn away.) this is precisely what we want to avoid at all cost.

Unaddressed : not considered or dealt with *Unprepared* : not ready or able to deal with something

TEMPTATION'S STRONGHOLD

The only true strength of temptation, its stronghold, is its power **to deceive** -and- deception has its greatest power when you think you know the truth. **Truth must not only be known, it must be believed to the point of transformation/change.**

In John 8:32(ESV) Jesus said "**and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**"

This is the kind of "knowing" that is transformative, setting you free. Therefore the principal way to expect victory over temptation is to saturate your heart and mind with the truth on a continual basis to the point of transformation.

Simple acknowledgement of truth is by no means sufficient.

Discussion: How many people who fall to temptation, know that what they are doing is sin?

Answer: All. Temptation, by definition, is the knowledge, at some level, of the wrongness of some action.

THE TEMPTER

Both our sinful tendencies and Satan himself can be a source of our temptation.

SELF: When your natural sinful condition is ignored enough in that weak areas where temptation has a strong pull are allowed to flourish, we are culpable of doing little to overcome those weaknesses.

Fighting temptation, having the power to resist temptation, is only possible when we determine to do all we can to resist temptation by both Addressing Temptation and Preparing for Temptation.

SATAN: Satan's attempts to deceive us and bring accusations against us is another source of temptation.

2 Corinthians 2:11 ESV

so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

Rev 12:9, 10 ESV

... Satan, the deceiver of the whole world...

... For the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, he who accuses them day and night before our God.

TEMPTATION'S PROCESS

Why can I be tempted? How can I be tempted? Where can I be tempted? What can I be tempted with? Most people don't ask themselves these questions.

Let's consider it and see how to address temptation's process.

1. **DOUBT** - Temptation attempts to get you to doubt God's word. Once you enter into a debate about what God has said, you have already lost. The best Biblical response is "it is written" (Matt. 4: 4,6,7)
2. **DIVIDE** - Separation from God is part of the process. This is a constant characteristic of those who fall to temptation. Satan divided the first family: Eve was alone, Cain and Abel, and so on... etc.
3. **DESTROY** - Failure to consider the future and the consequences prevents right thinking. Thinking of the "Now" only usually brings great destruction. The Aftermath is horrendous. Your inability to easily return to a place where you were before falling to temptation is part of the destructive play of temptations outcome.



HANDLING TEMPTATION

Temptation is rarely if ever clear and open. It is by nature deceptive. So, knowing the trust and the deception in the temptation is crucial. Jesus was tempted at his weakest moment, and so are we.

Matthew 4:2-3

And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God..."

Our greatest strength in our weakest moments is the truth of God and His Word that we have believed and can declare. Discerning what is true about a temptation and what is false allows you to immediately identify and begin to properly respond to a temptation. The only way to do that is with God's Word.

1 Peter 5:8 ESV *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*

James 4:7 ESV *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

Matthew 26:41 ESV *Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*



DISCUSSION: How will you prepare?

- **Be Proactive:** Determine to be prepared. Determine not to be caught off guard. Determine to identify and address your areas of weakness.
- **Seek the Lord:** Do all that is in your power to be prepared when temptation arises (and be assured that such temptation will arise)

Finally

- **Memorize:** Commit God's Powerful Word to Memory. Strengthen your mind.
- **Strengthen** your relationship with the Lord and other believers



PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Takes God's Word to heart. Make it part of your mind and heart. Below are some passages that can assist your and should be memorized, studied and used to strengthen your mind and heart to fight against temptation by using God's powerful Word.

CHOOSE

In this session we want to consider how every single day is a choice. How you live that single day out is up to you. Your choices truly matter.

We have been gifted with the privilege to choose. Having saved us God did not subjugate or enslave us but has made it possible for us to live freely.

Galatians 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

WHAT IS FREEDOM?

WHAT FREEDOM IS NOT: Freedom is by no means the right to choose to do what you want. That is slavery. Freedom is NOT the act of the will to do as it desires. Many, many people believe in this freedom which is not freedom.

Titus 3:3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, **slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.**

This kind of freedom is slavery because, in actuality, is **being controlled** by *various passions and pleasures*. How do passions and pleasures control us? They drive us towards a promised fulfillment that never delivers what it has promised.

We know this already. Every pleasure within me is not necessarily a good one. Freedom is exercised when we are able to **Discern** and **choose** the good desires that are either within us already or provided by God as we seek Him.

WHAT TRUE FREEDOM IS: True Freedom is actually the following of Holy desires. (**For freedom Christ has set us free**)

True freedom is experienced as our desires are changed to become **more freeing and less enslaving**.

Titus 3:8 The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may **be careful to devote themselves to good works**. These things are excellent and profitable for people.

So, we conclude that Freedom is the pursuit of holy desires that leave us free from all types of enslavement: fear, guilt, shame, pain, hurt and ultimately death.

THE PATH OF HOLY DESIRES: “True Freedom”

Your dreams are not good by default. Desires can sometimes take you to places we don't ultimately want.

The path to Holy desires is WHEN WE CHOOSE to go after God and He begins placing in us HOLY DESIRES.

This is not simply *a battle of the will*, trying hard to fight against bad desires and to try hard to desire what is good. No!

God places new desires in my heart through my seeking of God and His word.

- So that now there are things I desire that I did not desire before
- And I stop desiring some things I used to desire previously

God removes bad desires and gives new good desires. This is a heart battle that brings true freedom.

TRUE FREEDOM IS THE ESTABLISHMENT AND PURSUIT OF NEW GOOD DESIRES

Gal 5;16-17 **16** But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. **17** For **the desires** of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

Discussion: Who sets the desires in your life? Where do they come from? Are they from you, from outside of you?

HOW TO CHOOSE FREEDOM

1 Peter 1:14-16

As obedient children, do **not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance**, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

ALL DESIRES GIVEN BY GOD ARE GOOD WHEN PLACED UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF TRUTH.

This is practical holiness: The desire to make good grades in school, college is good. But the way I achieve it, be it by *study* or by *cheating* is a matter of **choice**. One submits to the truth of God and the other does not.

All desire must be placed under the government of God.

**THE CHALLENGE**

HOLINESS IS UNPOPULAR

Holiness is not seen and popular or even relevant. The reason is actually obvious. **Holiness is made to look undesirable!**

For example: We watch movies because we are motivated by references of others and of promotions. It is this propaganda that convinces us that it is a good movie. However, regularly we are led to believe a movie is awesome and when we see it we discover that it is not all that we heard about it. **We were propagandized!**

HOLINESS HAS BEEN POORLY PUBLICIZED: We are constantly told holiness is boring, colorless and tasteless. This is the constant idea being promoted about holiness, when in fact the very opposite is true.

WORLDLY DESIRES HAVE BEEN HIGHLY PUBLICIZED: They don't speak of the products defects and only promote the products benefits. This is sometimes called deceptive advertising because even the benefits are false. This is done to seduce the buyer into buying the product through a massive advertising campaign.

It says: **A life dedicated to the pleasures of this world is much better than a life dedicated to God**
(Holiness is a dedication – It is a daily choice)

However, when we buy the product and bring it home we discover the truth that is it not what was promised. But we often keep our mouth shut after we have been defrauded. Shame having been deceived is usually the reason we keep silent. And the public continues to deceive others.

Many continue to be deceived, In spite of all the testimonials of all the world that feels that what sin promised them, it did not deliver. It didn't last the time it would last, and there is no guarantee for this kind of product.

This is why holiness is unpopular and worldliness is popular: because there is incorrect information that we are listening to and the correct information is not being listened to.

**THEREFORE CHOOSE**

The reason people continue to purchase the obviously flawed product the world offers (Sin) is because of **unbelief**.

The bible provides a warning about this very thing;

Hebrews 3:12-13 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, **unbelieving** heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may **be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin**.

Unbelief = a heart that had chosen not to believe God.

God says that holiness produces full joy. But a moment comes when some choose to not believe God. The reason they CHOOSE not to believe God is because of the *hardening of the deceitfulness of sin*

Heb 11:24-25 By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 **CHOOSING** rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy **the fleeting pleasures of sin**.

Some would say he left the best for the worst. But no, He saw greater riches in what God provided than in what the world provided. **Sin never satisfies.** Never. It is a temporary thing. It only provides temporary pleasure which leads to less and less satisfaction.

- **DECEPTION leads to sin.**
- **DECEPTION is only conquered by TRUTH.**

Sin entered the world when Eve became **convinced** of the deception

Genesis 3:6 Living Bible (TLB)

The woman was convinced. How lovely and fresh looking it was! And it would make her so wise! So she ate some of the fruit and gave some to her husband, and he ate it too.

WHO ARE YOU GOING TO BELIEVE? Sin or God? Who will you allow to convince you?

- **You CHOOSE to believe GOD.** That is the daily choice that leads to holiness, to an abundant life.
- **You CHOOSE to believe SIN.** You believe that giving yourself to your carnal desires and pleasures will satisfy you, producing what you are looking for.

We believers have already chosen to believe GOD. We must not go back to unbelief.

Joshua 24:15

And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, **choose** this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. **But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”**

SUPERFICIAL knowledge of God’s word will lead to **SUPERFICIAL** following of God.

**Good, Pleasing, and Perfect: INNER JOY vs OUTER PLEASURE**

THERE IS A JOY RESERVED FOR THOSE WHO PLEASE GOD!

Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his **good, pleasing and perfect** will.

- **Good:** God’s will benefits me.
- **Pleasing:** Some things are beneficial but not please. But God’s will is also pleasing.
- **Perfect:** God’s will Lacks nothing. In complete.

So when we are convinced of this – we begin to do what is in **verse 1 of Rom 12**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to **offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.**

Knowledge must be sealed by the Spirit

The word and prayer must convince me. The Spirit of God must seal the truth of God in my heart.