

“Be Holy, For I Am Holy”

Lesson 5: Holy In Thought



Discovering God's Word
Bible Study Series

Be Holy, For I Am Holy”

Lesson 5: Holy In Thought

Learn how to be holy in thought by putting all your thoughts to the test, clinging to the thoughts that are good, and abstaining from all the thoughts that are evil

Watch the free video or listen to the audio of this study @ www.godsaidso.com/dgw125

Discovering God’s Word Bible Study Series

Study Number: DGW125

Written by Eric Krieg

About the author: My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

Copyright: Copyright © 2018 GodSaidSo Press. Please use this material to God’s glory and honor. Feel free to copy and distribute this material in any way that will bring God glory and help souls to be saved. However, you may not take any of the material out of context or change the material in any way. Please provide the author with the proper credit for the material.

Scripture quotations: Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God’s word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God’s word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God’s instructions.

**FIND MORE FROM THE DISCOVERING GOD’S WORD BIBLE STUDY SERIES @
WWW.GODSAIDSO.COM**

“Be Holy, For I Am Holy”

Lesson 5:

Holy In Thought

“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:13-16).

The Christian’s life is expected to be different from the ways of the world – and from the ways in which he/she lived prior to becoming a Christian. The life of a Christian is a holy life that is patterned after God’s holiness!

To be holy is to be separate or set apart. In the spiritual sense, it refers to our responsibility to be separate from the ways of the world (the ways that are common, profane, and sinful) in order to be entirely devoted to God! The standard that must be used to determine our holiness is God (who is perfectly holy), and the message that He has revealed to mankind. Furthermore, it is only by the grace of God that we can be made holy after we have sinned – and that grace which has been shown toward us ought to provoke us to giving our lives entirely to the service of the Lord! Our continued responsibility, then, is to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Corinthians 7:1).

But, what does perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord really look like? In our last study, I suggested that 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 should be

used as a model for perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. This passage says, “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.” We saw that this model involves three steps: Test, Cling, and Abstain.

To test means that we must examine everything in order to see its true nature (whether it is pleasing to God or not pleasing to Him). Then, we must cling (hold fast) to everything that is found to be in harmony with the will of God (that is, we must make it part of who we are and what we do). And, we must abstain (get away) from everything that is not found to be in harmony with the will of God (that is, we must give it no place in who we are and what we do).

This model has wide-reaching implications for our lives – in our thoughts, in our words, and in our conduct. Over these next few lessons, we want to spend our time evaluating each one of these three areas in order to see how we can be holy! This lesson will focus on our thoughts.

The purpose of this lesson is to learn how we can be holy in our thoughts by putting all things to the test, clinging to what is in harmony with God’s will, and abstaining from that which is contrary to God’s will.

Test

We must test/evaluate our thoughts. As we will see, what is in our hearts (minds) are vitally important to how we live our lives (whether we do the things that are pleasing to God or not). As we evaluate our thoughts, recognize that we must be willing to evaluate every area of our thoughts in order to see whether they are pleasing to God or not. We must not intentionally overlook *any* area. And, also remember that the standard for evaluating our thoughts must be God’s word. Only this will help us to perfectly understand which thoughts are pleasing to God and which thoughts are not pleasing to God.

The importance of our thoughts

As we begin evaluating our thoughts, we must understand their importance. We must recognize that our thoughts have wide-reaching implications for how we will choose to live our lives and will impact our holiness in all other areas. Now, as we prepare to consider a few significant points concerning the importance of our thoughts, understand that the term “heart” is frequently used in the Bible to identify the functions of the mind. Watch for this term as we go through the following points and consider: Is the author talking about the functions of our physical hearts (that pumps blood throughout our bodies) or is he talking about the functions of our minds (that thinks, experiences emotions, and influences our actions)?

(1) The word of God reveals whether our thoughts and intents are proper. Hebrews 4:12-13 says, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”

The Bible presents a clear standard for the way in which we must be thinking! Notice that the word “heart” is used in this passage as performing functions of the mind (i.e. as it mentions the thoughts and intents of the heart). The Bible, therefore, is able to clearly reveal whether someone’s thoughts and motives are in harmony with God’s will or not! We will be evaluating some of its teachings concerning what kinds of thoughts are pleasing to God and what kinds are displeasing to Him as we progress through this lesson.

This is significant, in large part, because of what is said in verse 13. We are all accountable to Jesus Christ for how we have lived our lives! And, this passage tells us, there is nothing hidden from His sight (not even the thoughts and intents of our hearts). Consider that God “saw” all of the wickedness of mankind preceding the flood in Noah’s time, including the fact that “every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5)! Also, when the Pharisees were

appearing to worship God, God knew that their hearts were actually far away from Him (Matthew 15:7-9)! These are just a couple examples of many that demonstrate God’s ability to know the thoughts and intents of our hearts.

So, our thoughts are important because the word of God reveals whether they are acceptable to God or not acceptable to God. And, they are important because we will give an account even for our thoughts and intents!

(2) Our “hearts” are responsible for our actions. Notice the following passages that demonstrate this point. Proverbs 4:23 says, “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.” Proverbs 23:7 says, “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. ‘Eat and drink!’ he says to you, But his heart is not with you.” Matthew 15:18-19 says, “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”

Again, notice that the Bible “heart” does not refer to the physical blood pump of the body in these passages. Instead, it refers to functions of the mind (including our thoughts and intents). Notice how each of the three passages I’ve just quoted connects our hearts with the things that we do (all of the “issues of life”).

Just a glance through the Bible will demonstrate this to be so. For instance, Cain killed his brother Abel because of the envy that was in his heart. Joseph’s brothers sold him into slavery because of their jealousy. The Israelites determined not to go into the land of promise initially because they believed the discouraging report ten of the spies brought back to them. Naaman initially did not dip in the Jordan River so as to be cleansed of his leprosy because he had thought he would be healed another way. David’s adultery with Bathsheba stemmed from his lust for her. Ananias and Sapphira lied to God because of their determination to deceive and keep back part of their profit for themselves. Jesus Christ was crucified because of the envy of the Jews.

But, the heart is not just capable of producing sinful actions. It is also responsible for our righteous

actions. Consider a few examples of this from the Scriptures as well. Joseph did not commit adultery with Potiphar's wife because he had determined not to sin against God. King Josiah tried to restore many things in Judah to be pleasing to God because his heart was tender and he humbled himself before the Lord. Paul's faithful life of preaching and service for the Lord stemmed from his dedication to give himself as a living sacrifice to God. Jesus Christ did not sin because He had determined to accomplish the Father's purpose.

Notice Matthew 15:18-19 again (quoted earlier) – and notice the sin that is identified as being produced from our hearts. Evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies. All of these unholy activities stem from unholy hearts. Therefore, it is importance to keep our hearts “with all diligence” – because all of the “issues of life” truly do stem from it.

(3) Given the importance of our thoughts, God expects us to be sober-minded. 1 Peter 5:8 says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” 1 Peter 1:13 says, “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

To be sober-minded is to be in control of your mental processes. 1 Peter 1:13 also identifies the importance of having your mind prepared for the proper action. This is seen in the instruction to “gird up the loins of your mind.” In Bible times, girding up the loins referred to the practice of preparing one's clothing for action by gathering the loose ends of the robe into the belt/girdle, allowing one to work or run more efficiently. The comparison with the mind, then, is to have your mind prepared to act appropriately in response to the various situations encountered throughout your life.

Christians are to remain entirely sober-minded at all times. They are always be ready to react properly to whatever comes his/her way! Given this responsibility of the Christian to be sober-minded, the Christian must abstain from those things which would hinder his/her ability to maintain a sober mind. Alcohol (even in moderation), drugs, getting

caught up in emotions (rather than dealing with them appropriately), allowing yourself to become depressed, becoming focused on the things of the flesh, etc. are all things that will hinder us from having minds that are prepared to take the appropriate actions. In each of those examples (and I'm sure other things that could be added to the list), our minds are clouded so as to make it difficult to give the proper response to the situations we encounter.

Quite simply, since God created us and recognizes the importance of our thoughts, He does not want our thinking to be negatively affected by inappropriate influences (i.e. like alcohol). Instead, our Creator wants our minds to always be fully prepared to make the appropriate decisions!

(4) So, we must “keep” our minds with all diligence, for “out of it spring the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23). You have likely heard the phrase, “garbage in, garbage out.” This is true concerning our minds! If they take in garbage (things that are not pleasing to God), our minds will be more likely to be thinking about things that do not please God. And, when this happens, we will be more likely to be involved in those things that do not please God.

You have also likely heard the phrase, “you are what you eat.” This, too, is true concerning our minds! Our minds produce actions that are the product of what we feed them! So, if we are willingly subjecting our minds to ungodliness, we should not be surprised whenever our lives reflect the same ungodliness (just as an individual who eats a lot of fatty foods should not be surprised when he/she is overweight and has many other health problems).

There are two ways that we can “keep” our minds. First, we can keep our minds by guarding the “entrance gates” to our minds. Consider this. How do our minds gain information? It is by our five senses (touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight).

So, realizing the things we have already discussed in this lesson concerning the impact of our thoughts on our actions, we must be extremely careful as to what we *willfully* allow into our minds. This applies to what we watch on television, what kind of music we listen to, what internet sites we visit, what kinds of places we go, the books we read,

the friends we keep company with, the type of educations we choose to pursue, etc. In all of these things, we must be evaluating (testing) whether they are going to help us be holy in thought or whether they are going to be introducing things into our minds that are going to influence us into a way that is not pleasing to God! As we will discuss later, let's use Philippians 4:8 as a "filter" for our thoughts. Anything that fails to meet the standard of Philippians 4:8 must be rejected!

Second, we can keep our minds by discarding ungodly information. There are some times inappropriate things (i.e. things that are not according to God's ways) gain access to our minds. Sometimes this is because of our failure to keep them out of our minds. And, sometimes this is because we had no control over the situation. But, even when the latter occurs, we do control what we do with the things that gain access into our minds! So, in order to "keep" our minds, we must eliminate those things that are not according to God's standard (so that they do not influence our lives in ungodly ways).

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 demonstrates how we must bring every thought into the captivity of Jesus Christ: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."

Our minds must be renewed

We are either carnally or spiritually minded. Romans 8:5-8 says, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

Being carnally minded leads to the sinful works of the flesh. This is because a carnal mind is

focused on fulfilling fleshly desires. Galatians 5:19-21 is a list that describes the sorts of activities that the carnally minded individual will be involved in (i.e. fornication, lewdness, idolatry, jealousies, drunkenness, etc.). Certainly, then, the carnal mind is not pleasing to God because it is contrary to His ways and will not submit to His laws.

But, being spiritually minded leads to the fruit of the Spirit. This is because a spiritual mind is focused on fulfilling the instructions of God, living in a way that pleases Him rather than a way that pleases self. Galatians 5:22-23 is a list of characteristics that will be present in the life of the one who is spiritually minded (i.e. love, joy, peace, self-control, etc.). Particularly, the one who is spiritually minded will deny himself of his own fleshly desires in order to please God.

Therefore, a major part of our transformation from the old man of sin to the new man who is created according to God in true righteousness and holiness involves the renewal of our minds. In fact, this renewal of our minds is essential to this transformation. Take a few moments to read Romans 12:1-2 and Colossians 3:1-4. I'll quote Ephesians 4:22-24 here: "that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."

The "old man" was involved in the sinful works of the flesh – and did not live life in a way that was pleasing to God. Colossians 3:5-9 identifies some of the things that were part of the "old man." At this time, our minds were focused on the things of the earth – and not entirely focused on the things "above."

The "new man," however, is created according to God – in true righteousness and holiness. Consequently, it produces things that are quite different than the things produced by the "old man" (see Colossians 3:12-17). At this time, our minds are focused on the things that are "above" (i.e. on spiritual/heavenly things) and not on the things that are on the earth.

But, what lies between the two is the renewing of our minds! You simply cannot be transformed from the old man (and all of its ways of sin) to the new man (and its holy ways which are patterned according to God's holiness) without a transformation of the mind!

This transformation involves the determination to put away all of the things which are contrary to God's will – and a determination to do those things that are pleasing in His sight. To do this, there must be an understanding of the dangers of those things which are carnal – and a valuing of those things which are spiritual! So, this transformation is very much from the inside out, since the change in actions will follow the change in mind.

Cling

There are a number of thoughts specifically mentioned in the Scriptures that are approved of God. We need to hold to these things – because they will lead us to conducting our lives in the holy way that pleases God! These things can, generally, be included in our responsibility to be spiritually minded (mindful of the things of God rather than the things of men). Now, we will certainly not talk about every single thought that is appropriate and helpful (that will take an ongoing study of the Scriptures and constant evaluation of our thoughts). However, we will identify some specific things which are identified in the Scriptures as being approved of God. Consider some of these with me.

The ways of God

Psalm 77:12 says, "I will also meditate on all Your work, And talk of Your deeds." Psalm 1:2 says, "But his delight [the blessed man's delight, see verse 1] is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night." There is nothing better for us to meditate on than the ways of our holy and perfect God! We must allow our minds to dwell on His nature and His holiness. And, we must allow our minds to be consumed by the instructions given in His law.

Things that are true

This is one of the things listed in Philippians 4:8 that describes what we must meditate upon. Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things."

We must not spend time focused on those things that are false or only speculative. Instead, we must meditate on things that are true (as only those things will have any valuable impact on our lives and our salvations). Among all the things that are true, God's word (as we've already noticed) must be a central part of our thoughts.

Things that are noble

This is one of the things listed in Philippians 4:8 that describes what we must meditate upon. This references things that are honorable (things that can be held in esteem). Of course, this cannot be a reference to things that are held in esteem by ungodly men/women. Instead, these are things that are held in esteem by godly men/women and by God. We must not spend our time thinking about disgraceful things (things which are looked down upon by godly men/women and by God).

Things that are just

This is one of the things listed in Philippians 4:8 that describes what we must meditate upon. To be just refers to being righteous – and observing the laws of God. So, we must not be thinking about things that are contrary to law (either God's laws or man's laws). Instead, we must be focused only on things that are lawful and right in the sight of God!

Things that are pure

This is one of the things listed in Philippians 4:8 that describes what we must meditate upon. To be pure is to be clean, separated from evil. In Matthew 5:8, Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God." So, we must not be spending time thinking about things that are sinful,

wicked, filthy, etc. Instead, we must be focused on things that are pure in the sight of God!

Things that are lovely

This is one of the things listed in Philippians 4:8 that describes what we must meditate upon. This refers to things that provoke love in us. We should not be focused on things that cause us to be resentful, unkind, faultfinding, etc. Instead, we should be focused on the things that stimulate us to love (both God and our fellow man).

Things that are of good report

This is one of the things listed in Philippians 4:8 that describes what we must meditate upon. These are things that are commendable. We must not focus our minds on things that do not have a good report/good name among others (i.e. those who are godly). For instance, sometimes we may be embarrassed to tell others what we are thinking about because they are not commendable (i.e. things that do not have a good name)! Instead, we need to be setting our minds on things we can be proud of and things that have no shade of evil in them (and are recognized as being commendable by godly men/women).

Things that are virtuous

This is one of the things listed in Philippians 4:8 that describes what we must meditate upon. These are things that are full of moral excellence. We must not think on things that are deprived of such moral excellence (i.e. things of the world, lustful things, etc.). Instead, we must focus on things that help us increase our spiritual strength/character.

Things that are praiseworthy

This is the last of the things listed in Philippians 4:8 that describes what we must meditate upon. While it is true that there are many who focus their minds on things that are praised by the world, this is not the focus of this passage! Instead, we must focus our minds on things that would be praised by those who set their hearts on serving the Lord. Only those things that would be praised by the Scriptures are going to help us live in ways that are pleasing to God.

Humility

Philippians 2:5 tells us that we must have the “mind of Christ” – as was manifested in Christ’s humility. The passage (Philippians 2:5-11) describes how Christ humbled Himself even to the point of death on the cross (even though He possessed the nature of being God)! This mindset of humility must be present within us also – that we do not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think (Romans 12:3, 16). We must simply maintain a modest assessment of who we are – and not fall into the mindset of believing we are better than others or that we are better than we really are!

Contentment

1 Timothy 6:6-10 says, “Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Hebrews 13:5 says, “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”

To be content is to be satisfied with the things we have already been blessed with – and is opposed to the mindset of always needing to have more! In fact, the mindsets of dissatisfaction, covetousness, and greediness is repeatedly condemned in the Scriptures. Colossians 3:5 even identifies covetousness as idolatry. Greediness simply causes us to pursue worldly things at the expense of serving God! A mind of contentment will keep our lives focused on God, both in being thankful for what He has already blessed us with and in not feeling the need to focus on accumulating worldly things.

Abstain

There are a number of thoughts specifically mentioned in the Scriptures that are not approved of God. We need to keep away from these things – because they will lead us to conducting our lives in ways that do not please God! These things can, generally, be included in our responsibility not to be carnally minded (mindful of the things of men rather than the things of God). Now, we will certainly not talk about every single thought that is inappropriate and not helpful. That will take an ongoing study of the Scriptures and constant evaluation of our thoughts. However, we will identify some specific things that are identified in the Scriptures as not being approved of God.

Lustful thoughts

Jesus condemned lustful intent and thoughts in Matthew 5:27-30: “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.”

He said that that the intent to look at a woman with lust for her is just as sinful as the act of adultery itself (this would also be true for looking at a man with lustful intent). So, as one application of this, viewing pornographic material is sinful. However, understand that pornography is anything that arouses (including looking at those immodestly dressed, viewing/listening to literature, music, movies, internet sites, etc. that are designed to arouse). Instead of this kind of mind that is focused on lust, Job’s commitment in Job 31:1 describes the appropriate mindset of a Christian. He said, “I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?”

Envy/jealousy

Both envy and jealousy are sinful mindsets that are condemned in Galatians 5:19-21 as being works of the flesh. Both of these mindsets have an improper desire for what another has. However, envy not only desires what another has, but it also seeks to deprive that individual of what he/she has. So, these mindsets are contrary to the ways of contentment. They result in seeking more from life on this earth than just what God provides. Therefore, rather than being focused on the things of God, such an individual is focused on worldly things.

Worthless thoughts

The Psalmist said, “Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, And revive me in Your way” (Psalm 119:37). But, why would it matter if his eyes would be focused on worthless things? Remember, this is one of the senses through which things gain access into our minds. So, looking at worthless things would provoke worthless thoughts that could (potentially) produce worthless and sinful actions! Something that is worthless would simply be something that does not produce a result that is pleasing to God. Therefore, we need to keep ourselves from thoughts that do not help us to serve God.

Selfish ambitions

Selfish ambition is condemned in the following passages. 2 Corinthians 12:20 says, “For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults.” Philippians 2:3 says, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.” It is also identified as being a work of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21. Our minds simply must not be focused on pursuing our own fleshly desires (i.e. selfish pursuit of wealth, pleasures, fame, status, etc.). Instead, they must be focused on pleasing God and putting others before ourselves.

False doctrines

The Scriptures contain many warnings about those who are false teachers leading others into error and away from the way of truth (i.e. Matthew 7:15-20; Acts 20:28-31). Particularly notice 2 Peter 2:1-3: “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.”

Realizing the dangers of false teachers and false doctrine, the Scriptures instruct us to mark those who teach false doctrine and avoid them (not giving them any kind of approval), see Romans 16:17-18 and 2 John 1:9-11. Therefore, we must be careful what teachers we listen to (or even read material from). We do not want to be misled by any! Remember, false doctrine is often subtle – and can negatively influence our thinking over an extended period of time. This is applicable to TV/radio/internet preachers, books, internet sites, a preacher in a church, etc.

Vain philosophies

Colossians 2:8 warns against philosophies that are contrary to the ways of the Lord: “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.” There are many philosophies that are spread by our culture, educational systems, entertainment industry, etc. that are often contrary to the teaching of Scripture. These philosophies often concern the meaning of happiness, attempt to redefine morality, pervert the God-given structure of the home, etc. We must be diligent in rejecting these vain philosophies rather than allowing our minds to dwell on them! They are truly vain (worthless/useless in terms of accomplishing anything that is good). If we allow our minds to dwell on them, we might just come to accept them and act

upon them. Rather than doing this, we should be focused on training our minds according to the instructions of God’s word, allowing it to shape our opinions in every area of life!

Conclusion

In this lesson, we have observed: (1) That we must put all of our thoughts to the test, recognizing the importance of keeping our minds focused on what pleases God and helps us live in a way He approves. (2) That the Scriptures identify many thoughts that are according to the will of God we must be diligent to cling to. And, (3) that the Scriptures identify many thoughts that are contrary to the will of God we must be diligent to abstain from.

Have you been pressing toward perfect holiness? We must always remember the influential nature of our thoughts on our actions – and that we will give an account of our thoughts on the Day of Judgment. So, we must use Philippians 4:8 as a “filter” to determine what is and is not permitted into our minds. Furthermore, 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 commands that we bring every thought into captivity and into the obedience of Christ!

Are you perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord by being holy in thought (testing every thought, clinging to the good, and abstaining from every form of evil)? If not, make your life right with Him today! Set your heart fully upon serving God and doing the things He instructs you to do. Do not delay! “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2)!

Study Questions

What does it mean to be holy?

What is your responsibility to be holy throughout your life?

1. Test

What is the importance of your thoughts?

What is the importance of renewing your mind? How do you renew your mind?

2. Cling

What kind of thoughts must you cling to?

Explain the following types of thoughts you must cling to:

1. The ways of God –
2. Things that are true –
3. Things that are noble –
4. Things that are just –
5. Things that are pure –
6. Things that are lovely –
7. Things that are of good report –
8. Things that are virtuous –

9. Things that are praiseworthy –

10. Humility –

11. Contentment –

3. Abstain

What kind of thoughts must you abstain from?

Explain the following types of thoughts you must abstain from:

1. Lustful thoughts –
2. Envy/jealousy –
3. Worthless thoughts –
4. Selfish ambitions –
5. False doctrines –
6. Vain philosophies –