

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.
Jackson, TN 38305
oldhickorycofc.com

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May As Well Say Or Do It As To Think It!

Have you ever heard someone make such a statement? I have! In fact it is quite often quoted. "You may as well go ahead and say or do it as to think it in your heart." I have often wondered about the merits and truthfulness of such a statement. Somehow the statement doesn't seem to ring true in the complete light of God's dealings with man. Let's examine a few principles that might help in determining whether or not the statement is true. We appreciate the fact that:

Man is accountable for his thoughts. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23); "for as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts" (Matthew 15:18-19). Peter told Simon, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22). Christians are admonished to bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). We can certainly sin in thought. We must repent of evil thoughts. Thoughts in a sense control our entire life! Please appreciate such, but is this the answer to our search? Is it as evil to think something as to say or do it? Many people have made the statement. I have heard it all my life. But let's notice further . . .

An individual's thoughts are his own. In plainer words, we are saying that what a man thinks affects only himself. When he puts the thoughts into action by words or deeds, then others are affected. You may ask for an illustration. Jesus said, "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). This is sin! And granted that lust involves the thought of his heart, it constitutes sin in thought. But such usually affects only one! Let the sinful deed also be committed and then someone else is involved. A young maiden may be deprived of chastity. A home may be destroyed as husband or wife yield to temptation that forever casts a dark suspicion over their fidelity one to another. Have you stopped to think of this when you condoned the statement that "you may as well say or do it as to think it"? We have given

an illustration to show that this is not so and many more illustrations could be given. Furthermore . . .

Thoughts void of deeds involve less agony of correction. Evil thoughts must be repented of! Certainly we are aware that these are not condoned by the Lord and man must confess and forsake them to have mercy of the Lord. Repentance of an evil thought would appear to be easier than the thought expressed in word or deed. One may become angry and experience an evil thought but he has enough control to keep from executing his emotion. Is he to be classed on the same level as the one who goes ahead and commits the deed? We are cognizant of the statement of John: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:13). This verse maybe taken to mean that the act is no worse than thinking it. However, John is demonstrating the value of love of brethren and the horribleness of hate. Here is proof again of our accountability for our thoughts and emotions but not the evidence that the deed is no worse than the thought. David experienced an evil thought toward Bathsheba — the deed was committed and it led to the death of Uriah. Wouldn't it have been easier to have had only the thought to repent of rather than the adulterous act and death of Uriah? That's the point we are trying to make! David said, "and my sin is ever before me" (Psalms 51:3).

Possibly there are men who make such a statement as the one we are examining without stopping to consider the consequence. They do it largely in ignorance. Others, no doubt, have a more sinister motive. They seek self-justification of their deeds. They desire to make it appear that the deed is no worse than the thought in an effort to cover their sinful deeds. They reason that individuals have sinful thoughts and those who have sinful thoughts are just as guilty as those who commit sinful acts. I fail to find this in keeping with scriptural conclusions. Let's be fair with ourselves and above all fair with God and His word. What do you think about it?

- Bobby K. Thompson (1925-2022)

Failing to Obey

"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

Recently, I wrote an article based on Jeremiah 43:4 & 7. In that passage of scripture, the prophet notes how the people of Israel rejected Jehovah by refusing to obey His words. Many religious people today scoff at the notion of obedience. They even say such foolish things as one cannot do works to earn their salvation. Really? I mean, is there really anyone out there who believes they can do enough works to earn their salvation? I have

been preaching and teaching for a very long time and had countless conversations with people of many different religions. However, I have never met the person who believed they could do any works that merited their right to salvation. So, when people are saying that works have nothing to do with salvation, just where are they coming from? Especially when no one that I have ever met believes that. Most everyone I have talked to understands the following: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." (Luke 17:10).

What believers in salvation by "Faith Only" probably do not understand is their disregard and disrespect for the words of Jesus is a disregard and disrespect for Him. "Faith Only" is just a cover or excuse for their disobedience. Jesus points out the inconsistency of the person who calls Him Lord but fails to do His words (obey). He goes on to illustrate how foolish disobeying His words are:

"Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great." (Luke 6:47-49).

What about you? Do you respect and love the Lord enough to do His words? Really? How about these words of the Lord? Notice: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16).

If you argue for "faith only" and that baptism has nothing to do with salvation, then you are no different than the people Jesus called out during His ministry. Quit it! That is a foolish argument. Humble yourself to truly accept Jesus as your Lord and do what He says. We are ready to help. Just let us know.

Please join us for Bible Study and worship each Sunday.

- Keith Hamilton

Clippings . . .

"The great danger facing all of us--let me say it again, for one feels it tremendously--is not that we shall make an absolute failure of life, nor that we shall fall into outright viciousness, nor that we shall be terribly unhappy, nor that we shall feel life has no

meaning at all--not these things. The danger is that we may fail to perceive life's greatest meaning, fall short of its highest good, miss its deepest and most abiding happiness, be unable to tender the most needed service, be unconscious of life ablaze with the light of the presence of God--and be content to have it so--that is the danger.

- Phillips Brooks (1835-1893)

I went for my early morning walk. Two little dogs came to the back fence where I was, barking furiously. The next morning, they hardly barked at all. A man's conscience is like that. If you allow it to get used to sin, first thing you know it won't bark at you anymore.

- Dee Bowman (1934-2021)

Seeing Clearly!

A young boy lost interest in playing baseball on the Little League Baseball team. Almost every time he entered the game as a batter, he struck out. Obviously, he was discouraged. His parents noticed that when he wanted to watch television, he would sit on the floor about three feet away from it. The "light bulb" came on: maybe we need to take him to have his eyes checked. Sure enough, the near-sighted boy needed glasses. How amazed he was when he put on his new glasses: "I can see! Everything is clear!"

In a sermon on a mountainside, Jesus Christ taught His followers about the characteristics of a life yielded to God. In the section of scripture known as the Beatitudes, the Lord said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8).

Corrective lenses are wonderful in helping people see clearly, but to clearly see God requires changing our hearts such that they become pure. Do you want to clearly see God? Then this is the kind of heart that is required: clean, unsoiled, guiltless, innocent, sincere, unfeigned, upright, virtuous, and void of evil. Pure living is always the result of pure thinking. Pure and good things come out of a pure and good heart, while impure and evil things come out of an impure and evil heart (Matthew 12:34-35). The pure in heart are those whose hearts are attuned to God, who want to follow Him, please Him, and do His will without reservation.

With the eyes of your heart (Ephesians 1:18), do you see God clearly?

- Gary Smalley

- * "To guide your children on the right way, you must go that way yourself!"
 - * "We commit two wrongs when we fail to right a wrong!"
 - * "If you have helped make a wrong, act quickly and courageously to make it right!"
 - * "The world rewards success; God rewards faithfulness!"
 - * "Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing." (Psalms 100:2).
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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)