

# Truth: The Acid Test of Biblical Thinking

## Session 4

### Introduction:

- Prov. 23:7—“As he thinketh in his heart, so is he.”
- Remember two Biblical assumptions about your peace of mind:
  - 1) Peace is NOT a passive experience (4:5-7).
    - a) Exercise self-control (“moderation”)
    - b) Stop worrying. Refuse anxious care.
    - c) Start praying about everything
    - d) Embrace your prayer situation thankfully
    - e) THEN, AND ONLY THEN—The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds!
  - 2) You ALONE can control your thoughts (4:8-9)

Prop: Personal peace comes when we adopt God’s thought agenda as our own.

Transition: Put your thoughts to the test. Are they Biblical? Do they comply with Philippians 4:8-9?

### **Qualifying My Thoughts: Whatsoever Things Are TRUE**

- I. Beware of INTUITION—Reading into things and ruminating on your intuitive conclusions
  - A. Intuitive people tend to “read between the lines” and “read into” words and circumstances. They tend to fill in the blanks.
  - B. Intuitive people tend to believe their intuitive conclusions as truth, even without much real evidence. “I can’t prove it, but I *know* I’m not wrong about this!”
  - C. Intuitive people overemphasize intangible signals from others, often interpreting them as negative. “I have a feeling he doesn’t like me anymore!”
  - D. Intuitive people often act in error, based on intuition alone. “I sense there’s something between us and I’d like to get it right.”
  - E. The problem with ruminating over intuition is that intuition, by its very nature, is NOT verifiably TRUE!
- II. Beware of PROGNOSTICATION—Predicting outcomes and forecasting the future
  - A. Intuitive people often prognosticate—predict the future based on their supposedly hypersensitive insights.
  - B. Prognostication takes intuition a step further by predicting outcomes and ruminating on them as if they had already happened.
    1. Example: The Smith family missed two Sundays at church. They must be upset. They’re leaving the church!

2. Example: He grimaced during my sermon. I must have hit a nerve. Now he's angry and will probably leave the church.
- C. Prognostication (forecasting the future—immediate or distant) produces anticipatory anxiety.
    1. Fear (Mt. 6:34)—too much thought about “the morrow” when Jesus said take “no thought.”
    2. Expectation—desire for a positive result produces tension about ultimate fulfillment (anxiety). “I hope I win.” “I hope she likes me.”
  - D. The problem with ruminating over prognostication is simply this: If it hasn't happened, it isn't TRUE; and therefore, outside the prevue of Christian thinking.
- III. Beware of SPECULATION—Classic “what if” thinking
- A. Speculative thinking considers all of the “what ifs” of life. It examines possible scenarios and scenarios consequential to the possible scenarios.
  - B. Speculative thinking believes it is “preparing for every possible contingency.”
  - C. Speculative people do not cross the bridge when they come to it; rather, they build bridges where there are no rivers!
  - D. The problem with speculative thinking is that it is not TRUE. If it hasn't happened, it isn't true!
- IV. Beware of PERCEPTION
- A. Disciplined thinking is like tuning an analogue radio—we tune out the static in order to hear the music.
  - B. Perception = my interpretation of the past and present.
  - C. Exaggerated perception produces suspicious mind (paranoia).  
Example: “He gave me a funny look; He's furious with me!” or “I know from the tone of her voice that she isn't happy with me.”
  - D. Errors in perception often stem from differences in personality.  
Example: Power, Precise, Pleaser, Party
    1. We tend to interpret others through the lens of our own personality.
    2. Just because people don't respond as you would in a given situation doesn't mean they're displeased or upset.
  - E. Truth is objective; Perception is subjective.
    1. Avoid forming strong opinions based on perception. Strong opinions require hard evidence.
    2. Learn to give people the benefit of the doubt.
    3. Remember, the human mind is prone toward negative perception.
  - F. Perception is just that—one man's way of seeing things. The trouble is, perception is not always TRUE.

“He suffers more than necessary who suffers before it is necessary.” --Seneca

