

Sermon of the Month - Stinkin' Thinkin'

There's a whole lot of stinkin' thinkin' going on?

"Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Rom. 12:2)

This brother and I had only met a short time ago, yet something seemed quite obvious. Just listen awhile and many times you will learn something. As we drove through the Texas countryside, I listened to him talk. This former pastor revealed a serious flaw in his thinking. Beside the highway was a cliff and rock formation. He pointed out the different shades and colors in the rock layers. Then the tell tale comment was made. "That occurred over a 100,000 years ago." Now maybe that statement means very little to you, but to me it spoke volumes. Many of the decisions made by that man over the years could be interpreted by the thinking represented by that statement.

More than once, from good people, have I heard such thinking. Years ago, my wife and I were eating lunch with a fine Bible believing, soul-winning pastor. Stretching for miles just outside the restaurant window was a beautiful valley. Describing this part of Wyoming the pastor's wife said "Over 100,000 years ago, this valley was covered in water."

Born again, blood washed children of God, who seem to have their Bible Doctrine in order yet are seriously influenced in their practical everyday thinking by the philosophies of this world. It's as if they possess a split brain. In one compartment they house all the Bible, church and Christian thinking. Then in this other compartment

is stored all the worlds thinking, which often includes elements of the personal e.g. family, finance, career, etc. Interestingly enough decision-making becomes muddled. The two compartments spill over into each other causing a very distorted Christian view of this world. They seem to randomly go to the two compartments to pick and choose. For decision making they apply a little Bible and a little of the world's thinking to arrive at their conclusion. From one compartment a little Bible thinking mixed with a little worldly thinking from the other compartment and *voila* - they have made the right choice. Or have they?

I read this statement the other day - "Sometimes you must do a little wrong to do right." Have you ever heard anyone say, "Well, that's just the way business is done, everybody understands that."? Or how about, "The check is in the mail," when the check is not in the mail or possibly has not even been written. One business man said, "I would rather do business with a lost man than a Christian. I can expect the lost man to lie to me, but when the Christian treats me the same way the lost does, well..."

"Christians dress like the world, listen to the world's music (perform it in the church even) entertain like the world, do business like the world, think like the world - for cryin' out loud, have you read the Bible? "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I Jn. 2:15). "Christians" and "the church" today have fallen in love with this world. If the heart is filled with love for this world, the love of the Father does not exist in that heart. "For all that is in the

world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I Jn. 2:16). Explain to me how it could be possible for the love of this world and the love of the Father to abide in the same heart. Don't waste your time or mine - it is IMPOSSIBLE. The church is trying to put a pearl in the snout of the worldly soaked swine and call them by another name. It cannot be so.

"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (I Jn 3:13). Is the world your friend? Do you have a love affair with this sin cursed world? Truly if you are a child of God, this world will not love you, it will hate you and you will not love the world nor the things that are in the world.

Herein lies the indictment. Beware of stinkin' thinkin'! Have you been transformed by the renewing of your mind? We are commanded, "Be not conformed to this world..." The Greek word "Conformed" in Romans 12:2 is *suschēmatisō* meaning to fashion alike, conform to the same pattern, fashion self according to this world. I see free will here. We have a choice not to fashion ourselves after this world, the times, styles, patterns and philosophies of this world. It is a choice of how you determine to fashion self - your self. The church has swallowed this worldly sales job hook-line and sinker. We do not have to follow the thinking of this world. We have a choice. God does not need the world's marketing techniques, it throbbing music, or hyped up programs and showmanship to win the lost.

No, the church service is not to be some dead dry funeral dirge. No,

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Christianity does not need to be portrayed as some boring stiff stick-in-the-mud. With the Biblical dynamite of God, I am a two-edged sword welding Holy Ghost empowered child of the kingdom who knows where I came from, who I am and where I'm going. I have got the peace that passeth all understanding, the love of heaven in my soul, a song in my heart, and joy in my step. There's no credit limit on my treasure account and have I got a message to TELL TO THE NATIONS!

"Come out from among them..." (Read II Cor. 6:17). Separation, personally and in the ministry as well is taught in II Cor. 6:14-18 and applies to all believers. "Be not conformed to this world" – that's the command. Earlier in Romans 8:29 Paul speaks of being "conformed to the image of His Son..." We are not to be conformed (suschematizō) fashioned like this world, but we are to be conformed (Greek: summorphos) to the image of Jesus Christ. This speaks of a union with, jointly formed or to be like Jesus. We preachers may apply Romans 8:28 in an effort to comfort someone when in reality that individual is out of the will of God and far from His purpose. Yes, "All things work together for good to them:"

1. "that love God,"
2. "to them who are the called according to His purpose."

To abide in His PURPOSE is to know His Promise. Apart from that may very well be chastening, correction to bring us in line, punishment for disobedience. The promise of Romans 8:28 belongs to those who walk in His purpose. The child of God will know the power and provision in all things that will prove to be for good "to them that love God" (not the world) and "to them who are

the called according to His purpose" (not the pattern of the world). Back to Romans 12:2, Paul says "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." This is indeed a supernatural change. The Greek metamorphoo or "Metamorphosis" is a "transformation by the renewing of your mind." The mind of God transforming your thinking, your attitudes, your philosophy of life. So clear is the sharp contrast given here. BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD – BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND, how? – by His Word!

SEE THE CONTRAST
CONFORMED – THIS WORLD
TRANSFORMED – HIS WORD
DO YOU HAVE A
TRANSFORMED MIND?

Next month we will take a little test to see if you are thinking Biblically. You have a foundation for your thinking. What is it? We will take the following outline and honestly look at our thinking.

1. The Brain vs. the Bible
2. Opinions vs. Omniscience
3. Evolution vs. Eternal
4. The spade vs. the Sword
5. Agnosticism vs. Authority
6. Free Thinkers vs. Truth Thinkers

Let me leave you with this provocative thought. In 1861- 1865 this country went through a period of division and defining. What was that civil war all about – the Union, slavery or what? We call Abe Lincoln the Great Emancipator. However, listen to his words:

My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could

do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save this Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union ... I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty, and I intend not modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men, everywhere, could be free.

James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1931), p.266.

It is recorded that Lincoln was truly Born Again just prior to his assassination. If that is so, what kind of mind/thinking would Mr. Lincoln have possessed as an unregenerate religious thinker? Arguably one of the greatest presidents ever, yet without a transformed mind could he have possibly assimilated all the facts, yea, all the truth, and lead this country as best needed in such a dire hour? Woodrow Wilson surmised "that had the South fallen in the first few months, the status of slavery would probably have remained unchanged" ((Charles F. Pitts, *Chaplains in Gray* (St. John, IN., The Christian Book Gallery, 1957), p.24.))

Did some play the slave card knowing that people are often moved by the touchy, feely? Could history be written based on facts not rooted in TRUTH? During that tumultuous time, Christians, families, yes and a nation was divided. Brother would kill brother; kinfolk would go to war against each other. Ministries and denominations would splinter. This is fact, but what was the truth?

Bringing it back home today we find good people on both sides of critical issues. How can we know the TRUTH?

-(continued next month)

Sermon of the Month - Stinkin' Thinkin'

(Continued from last month)

Be not conformed to this world –
Be transformed by the renewing of your
mind.

There is an eternally vast chasm of
difference separating the mind
conformed to this world and the mind
transformed by the work, will, and
Word of our loving Savior Jesus Christ.

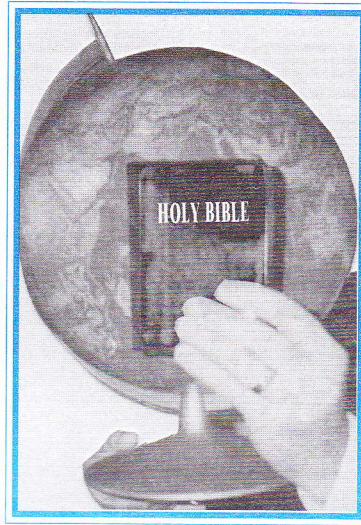
Let's take a little test. We might
discover some Stinkin' Thinkin'.

1. The Brain VS the Bible

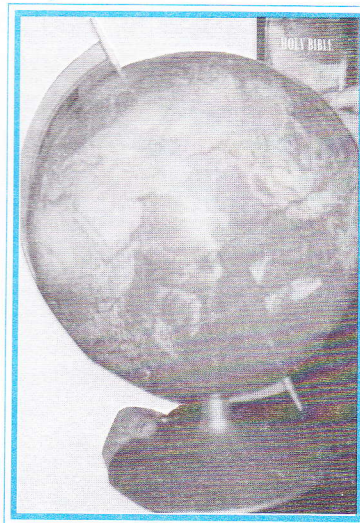
When a situation, issue or decision
confronts you, do you go to the Bible
in search of a verse to support your
thinking? Or do you search the
Scriptures daily to learn what God has
to say? To use, abuse or manipulate the
Scriptures to support our thinking is in
essence Stinkin' Thinkin'. The Bible is
not our source to find support for our
feelings or thinking. The Bible, God's
inspired, infallible Word is the authority.

2. Opinions VS Omniscience

Are we constantly looking for
experience, science, or the world's
sources to confirm the teaching found
in the Bible? God's Word needs no
validation or confirmation from this
world. I could park here and give many
examples beginning with, "In the
beginning" Gen. 1:1. "Thy word is
truth" and when God's Word speaks
on a subject you can take it to the bank.
By the way, if "science" contradicts the
Bible just hold on. "Science" will
eventually get it right – now or in
eternity. God's Word is absolutely
authoritative on any subject to which His
Word speaks.



Bro. Williamson gave a powerful visual to illustrate a point in the sermon Stinkin' Thinkin'. As the world invades the believer's life, many have drifted away from the Truth and the believers thinking is conformed to this world. "What do you see here? The Holy Bible with the world in the background. I could have used a larger Bible and totally obscured the world from view. But I'm trying to impress a point here. The Word of God should for every believer be absolute authority for thinking. Everybody has an authority for thinking. What is yours?"



"Now what do you see? The world with the Bible in the background. Again, the Bible could be totally obscured from view by the world and in fact for many believers, yes, believers, that's the way they view the world. The Bible is totally obscured from their decision making and if it does come in view, it is a small background part of the picture."

3. Evolution VS Eternal

This point is a good example of #2. So-called evolutionists do not even agree. They all have their own opinions, evidences, and research. Did you know the evolutionist has his church of worship? They're called museums, and in many cases our taxes pay for their worship. Go almost anywhere in the United States to tour National Parks, etc., and you will find evolutionary thinking. Everything happened in millions of years. At least the Smithsonian was honest enough to admit the flaws and fallibility. Their display said, "The science of human evolution is a fast changing field. Much of the material in this exhibit, which opened in 1974, is **now** out of date. We're developing a new exhibit based on the latest findings." Available for you to see in the Smithsonian Exhibit are five signs stating the incorrect information portrayed in the display. One reference book listed as recommended reading was titled, *Origins Reconsidered*. Each sign giving the updated position had this common statement, "Recent evidence suggests..." Noteworthy were the statements, "Fast changing," and "Now out of date." God's Word has not "changed" and is not "out of date." His infallible Word is not up for "reconsideration," and "creation fact" is not "fast changing." My Bible is not a result of evolution. No extra charge for this. The KJV translators got it right. God has preserved His Word translated from the original languages for English speaking people today. God's Word has not gone through modern version evolutionary process. We can stand

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solidly on the Authorized Version.

4. The Spade VS the Sword

Just as the archaeologists will travel thousands of miles to dig in search of proof, so often "Christians" will spend enormous amounts of time and money for self-help books, therapy, seminars, doctors, etc., trying to dig out an answer. I'm not saying those things have no place. However, for many the first line of thinking is where can I find the answer? Should the believer not immediately on bended knee open God's Word and allow His Holy Spirit to lead in all Truth. The Bible is the front line, not the last resort.

5. Agnosticism VS Authority

Does your thinking challenge the authority of God's Word? Are you forever questioning God's Word because your life is not yielded to His will? Doubt can be vanquished by faith and faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Search the Scriptures daily and study to show thyself approved. Somewhere, at some point you must in your mind declare once and for all the authority of God's Word for every facet of life.

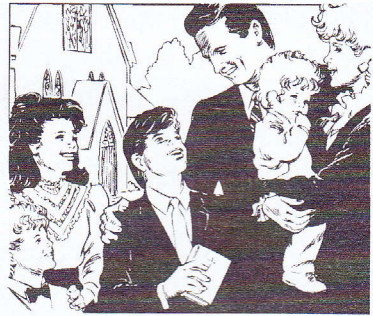
6. Free thinkers VS Truth thinkers

When I was in school, I had never even heard the term Christian education nor did I know a Christian School existed. One of my teachers in public school made this statement: "God is a crutch created in the mind of man to lean upon." Many believers live like that. God and His Word are there if you can't figure it out. He is our last resort instead of our final authority. "God, I'll let you know when I need something, otherwise I can do it myself." However, the Bible says: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and he shall direct

thy paths." The mind that flows through this world subject to every wind of change has no mooring of peace.

"For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." You have a choice to make. The authority for your thinking is a conscious, deliberate choice. Think about it. Can you pray this prayer?

"Father, by your help I will not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. I will delight myself in your Word and will meditate in your Word day and night. I acknowledge you in all my ways. I look to you for direction and pray your Holy Spirit will teach me and lead me in all your Truth. I am committed to read and study thy Word faithfully that I may know and do your good and acceptable and perfect will. Thy Word is truth: sanctify me through thy truth. This I pray in the name of Jesus my Savior and Lord, Amen."



JUST A THOUGHT!

At church, rarely is the mother less faithful than the father. A pastor, emphasizing his Men's Bible Class remarked: "If we have the child in Sunday School, that may be all; if we have the mother, we have the mother and the child, and that may be all; if we have the father, we have the father, the mother, the child, and the family car enlisted on the Lord's side."