Your Thoughts Can Kill You

James 1:15 plainly declares, “When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth [produces] sin and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

God’s Word declares that “evil thinking” is the beginning of sin. Sin enters the mind first and then put the hands and the feet into action. A scattered, distracted, wrongly possessed, wrongly centered mind is one of the greatest calamities that can happen in a person’s life.

That’s way Proverbs 4:23 warns man to “Keep his heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” And, Proverbs 23:7 puts the situation in focus when it states, “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

A person’s thoughts tell what he in actuality, is. They tell what goes on inside a person. You cannot think evil and do good. If you think evil you will do, and be, evil.

Jesus said in Matthew 12:35, “A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.” Meaning that a man is “good” because he has a “good treasure” in his heart. Good thoughts enable good character and bad thoughts enable bad character. No one can live a Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde life for very long. Sooner or later, what he is on the inside – in this thought life – will produce his actions and deeds on the outside. One might as well try to get a good meal out of the garbage can as to try to build a good life on lustful thinking.

Jeremiah 17:9 declares man’s heart is “deceitful about all things;” David wrote, “The Lord knoweth the thought of man and they are vanity” (Psalm 94:11); Solomon said, “The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord” (Proverbs 15:26); Colossians calls men’s thoughts “fleshly;” Titus calls them “defiled; Romans says they are “reprobate” and Ephesians says men’s thoughts are “vain.”

The concept we find in our text, James 1:15, is that “lust,” or evil thinking, give birth to corrupt action; and the sinful action give birth the death – separation from God!

These thoughts can be bold, daring, strong and persistent – like armed men, or demon spirits, they seek to force themselves upon man. Thee evil thoughts knock at the door of a person’s mind and, if they are admitted, they will come in and communicate. If they are not put out, they will possess the whole brain and lead to sin, and, finally, to destruction.

Every deed a person has ever performed was conceived in his heart (his thought life) first. Temptation comes first to the thought life. A person must yield in his thought life before he ever sins. If Satan must gain victory in the thought life before he can ever lead anyone into sin.

Paul said, in Romans7, “The good I want to do, I don’t do, and the evil that I don’t want to do, I find myself doing” (verses 15-19). Before he ever realized the victory of Romans 8, he said, “I see a law…warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity…”

In Matthew 15:19-20 Jesus has something to say about men’s hearts and evil thoughts. He says, “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts [the concept here is that – out of evil thoughts
I collected an article out of the New York Times back in the 50’s that could have been written yesterday. It states, and I quote,

“Does the sight of obscene pictures and the reading of obscene literature actually harm young people. Boys and girls of our time are exposed to so much that is harmful in entertainment and literature that it would be like ordering the tide to subside for us to expect them to escape contact with such things. The influence of obscenity is insidious and dangerous. Too must of it can color the mind for a lifetime and destroy the moral fiber of a character. Parents and teachers should make certain children set up habits that will uplift rather than degrade the. Our children cannot be protected entirely from the vulgar and obscene, but don’t you think we could see that they have better things as well? Every father and mother should insist upon children reading some passage from a good book every day. The mind is a storehouse; we can fill it with treasure, or cram it with trash. What we put there when we are young determines what we will be when we are older.”

Can you believe this was written in the New York Times before Computers, or the Internet – before much of the R-Rated movies and X-Rated media was available?

A leading Newspaper in America, back as late as the 60’s in an editorial, declared, “Hollywood is dropping filth bombs on American youth.” If that were true in the 60’s, what could be said of today? This filthy propaganda is more damaging, more deadly, to the moral character of Americans than an atomic bomb.

God warns the evil thoughts, hen they are fully grown, produces sin, and sin when it is matured, gives birth to death and separation from God!

In Proverbs 4, where I earlier quoted verse 23, “Keep yours heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life,” verses 24 through 27, continues to says, “Shut your ear against every whisper of immodesty. Fling out of your reach every tinted thing. Turn your eye from every impure picture.”

A person will either master his thought life and be enslaved by it, one or the other. No person ever sinned suddenly. He mediates first on the suggestion Satan puts in his mind. If this thought is not put out immediately, it will grow and grow, until it masters that individual, his mind, his character, and finally, his life. These thoughts will crowd out virtue, honesty, and all the God-given graces that should characterize a person’s life.

Jesus said, in the Sermon on the Mount, that to look and lust is as adultery; to hate is as murder; and to covet is as theft. Why? Because Jesus knew that lust is in the heart before adultery becomes an act; that hate was in the heart, long before it commits murder; and covetousness was allowed to remain in one’s heart before it was ever a theft. Jesus knew that sin starts in the thought life of a person and, if it is allowed to remain there, it will produce sin.
Satan sees to it that thee evil thoughts are constantly knocking at the door of a person’s mind. They come from the newspaper, magazines, television, and billboard, even conversations at the job place or at the market. Never before has there been such a flood time of ungodly thoughts hurled at a person’s mind. Books are filled with corrupt, debasing, unwholesome thoughts.

God says, “Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed in the renewing or your mind” (Romans 12:2).

Your mind is like a garden – it can be intelligently cultivated, or allowed to run wild. But which ever you choose to do, it will produce. If no useful seed is planted there in the garden of your mind; an abundance of useless weeds will grow. But, if you cultivate, weeding out the wrong, useless impure thoughts, beautiful flowers that are useful and pure will germinate and grow.

Philippians 4:8 says, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think [only] on these things.”

Psalm 119:9-11 says, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? [the question is, “How can a young person keep his life clean?”] by taking heed thereto according to Thy word. With my whole heart have I sought Thee [God]: O let me not wander from Thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.”

Paul tells the young preacher, Timothy, “Flee youth lusts” (2 Timothy 2:22). And, Paul tells us to “bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). David prayed, “Let the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight Oh Lord, search me and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts ” (Psalm 19:14 and 139:23).

If one’s thoughts are not guarded, they become like a run away horse, or a wild fire, racing out of control. Romans 8:6 tells us that “to be carnally mind is death, but to be spiritually minded is life.” It is a dangerous thing to try and crowd God out of your mind. Romans 1: 28 speaks to those “who did not retain God in their knowledge; and God gave them over to a reprobate mind.”

Jesus tells us that the unpardonable sin begins as “a thought in the heart.” In Matthew 12, where Jesus warns of committing the unpardonable sin, the verse immediately preceding His exhortation says, “Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them…” Then, after expressing the warning of the unpardonable sin, He concludes with the word, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” Between these two statements we have one of the most solemn warnings in the entire Bible. Jesus says it was their “thoughts,” not necessarily their “words” that would lead to this terrible unforgivable sin. Their “words” said, “this is of the devil,” that was bad enough, but their sin was deeper than that. Their “heart” said, “This must be God, but we want nothing to do with Him.” They had been deeply moved, convicted in their heart, but decided against God. It was a heart attitude, a decision of the heart against God that Jesus warned of the unpardonable sin.
Whenever anyone makes a decision, it becomes easier each time to make that same decision because when the decision comes again, the first answer that is registered on the plastic cells of the brain is the previous answer, or answers, that was given before. Time stamps deeper and deep the same answer in a person’s very nature, until the automatically, without any serious thought, give the same answer over and over.

It may be that you have said, “No, to God over and over again, until your whole being, brain and soul hurls back to God, with hardly a thought, automatically, the same answer you have given many times before.

My earnest prayer is that God will speak to you in such a manner, before it is eternally too late, to arouse you to act. Don’t crowd God out of your mind and thoughts. Turn you life over to Jesus Christ now!