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Our Way of Thinking

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While making defense before Agrippa, Paul shared the terrible things he had done while persecuting Christ and His people before his conversion. Why did Paul commit these terrible acts? Paul's answer, "Indeed, I myself *thought* I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9). You see, Paul "thought" he ought to do the things he was doing. He believed, at the time, they were the right thing to do.

Our thinking is what makes us do the things we do as well. We say things like, "My mind is made up!" when we have conclusively decided something. Our mindsets are very powerful in that they are what reveal who and what we really are. In his book *Christians, Wake Up!*, J. J. Turner, Ph. D. writes the following:

Our mindset determines how we function in life:

- Mindset determines how we cope with the daily challenges of life
- Mindset determines how we act and react to others
- Mindset determines our emotional state
- Mindset determines the emphasis we give to learning
- Mindset limits our achievement if not changed
- Mindset determines our beliefs and practices
- Mindset determines our relation to justice, right, and wrong
- Mindset can cause us to reject God's will for our lives
- Mindset can make us happy or miserable
- Mindset can determine our destiny; heaven or hell

The Bible is full of examples of how mindsets have impacted people for good and for bad:

- Eve had her mind set on listening to the serpent, believing his lie that she would become like a god herself (Genesis 3:1-9)
- Cain set his mind on anger and pride and chose to kill his brother, Abel (Genesis 4:1-9)
- An entire world of people were destroyed in the days of Noah because of their evil mindsets! "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every *intent of the thoughts of his heart* was only evil continually." (Genesis 6:5)
- Daniel "purposed in his heart" that he would do no evil... (Daniel 1:8)

Our God is clear that in order to be pleasing to Him, we must be willing to change our minds to conform to His ways. This is the underlying meaning of the word translated repentance in our bibles. The Greek word is the word *metanoia* which means "to have another mind" or "to change one's mind." When Jesus, John, and Peter preached repentance they were telling those who heard them that their mindsets were wrong. Those mindsets resulted in wrong actions. In the case of those Peter convicted on Pentecost, they were guilty of crucifying Jesus (Acts 2:36). When those

convinced of their guilt asked Peter and the brethren what they must do, what was the first word out of Peter's mouth? "Repent..."

Perhaps one of the most difficult verses and concepts in the whole bible is found in 2 Corinthians 10: when Paul writes this, "...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." All of us understand how difficult this command is to fulfill. Perhaps the key to doing better is found in the first half of the verse... Perhaps this is what makes our attempts more of a struggle than God intends for them to be... "...casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God." I know a lot of people that argue with God, some with seemingly major things and others with seemingly minor things. The point is that arguing with God is fruitless and destructive if we are going to bring our mindsets inline with God's will and desire for us.

God bless, I love you and want to go to heaven with you! Pat