
Words of Truth

Controlling Those Thoughts

By: Brian A. Yeager

A married, spiritually minded woman, is walking down the street. She is set on the items she is to accomplish on the day. She turns a corner and runs right into a very handsome man who is running with no shirt on. He is the exact image of that “dreamy guy” (as some would say). He grabs her as he runs into her and keeps her from falling. He touches her in sensitive areas and she feels more than she’d ever like to feel. He runs on and she walks away. Her mind however, cannot so easily walk away from the situation.

This married, spiritually minded woman, is now struggling with the fact that she was very much excited to have this handsome man run into her. What should she Scripturally do? Some would, wrongfully, declare that she has committed adultery. Some would cite this verse: *“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart”* (Matthew 5:28). What that person would do is ignore the context of that verse which goes on to say: *“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery”* (Matthew 5:29-32).

Did this woman commit the act of adultery by getting excited because of the situation that occurred? Did lust in her heart actually mean she committed the physical sin of adultery? The Scriptures say NO. Notice: *“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren”* (James 1:13-16). Sin can be stopped in the mind before it turns into action. That is the point of Matthew 5:28-32. You should remove the temptation before you act upon it. There are ways to do so and how and what occurs will determine whether or not someone has sinned.

Properly Handling The Thought Before It Turns Into Sin

This spiritually minded married woman, cited as an illustration in this article, has to take her thoughts and find the right way to handle them. There is a right action she can take to satisfy her desire in this case. The Scriptures tell her to do this: *“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let*

the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency... Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (I Corinthians 7:1-5 and Hebrews 13:4).

Sexual desires are not wrong. They are natural. They lead a man and a woman to find a mate. In fact, those who cannot control those sexual desires ought to marry (I Corinthians 7:6-9). Prior to marriage, self-control MUST be exercised. That person who has those desires must flee from fornication [unlawful sexual intercourse] (I Corinthians 6:18). That is where the spiritual mind and our fleshly bodies are going to likely be on two different courses. The body is going to desire something while the spiritual mind knows it is not lawful (Galatians 5:17).

The Spiritual Mind Has To Control The Flesh

The word of God says this: "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5). The married person can have a desire and have that desire fulfilled in the marriage bed. Thus, the married woman of this article is going to bring her thoughts into captivity by fulfilling her desire with her husband. The unmarried person on the other hand, they're going to have to exercise the verse we just read to a much higher degree.

A married person is going to have some liberty in being minded toward things of the world to satisfy his or her mate whereas the unmarried person has to have a different mindset (I Corinthians 7:33-34). The unmarried person, to control his or her mind, is going to have to steer much further away from sexually charged thoughts because they do not have a lawful vehicle to satisfy those desires. For example, one Scripture says this: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14). The word translated "provision" (Strong's #4307) means "forethought". A person who has no authorized means to satisfy a carnal desire has to find a way to stop thinking about it. Thus, the unmarried man or woman is to a larger degree going to have to: "...abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (I Peter 2:11).

Now, regardless of being married or unmarried, our minds have to always be set on those things that are right and lawful in the sight of God (Jeremiah 4:14 and Colossians 3:1-4). The woman that literally was run into by the great looking shirtless man cannot dwell on that man and seek to unlawfully satisfy what that encounter stirred about in her mind. We cannot mind carnal things (Romans 8:5).

Conclusion

What is in our hearts will lead us to do that which is right or wrong (Matthew 15:18-19). Whether matters of sexual lusts or any other thing, we have to be sure our thoughts are controlled. Things in this world will present us with challenges on a daily basis. Be strong enough have the right thinking of a converted man or woman (Ephesians 4:21-24).