

Who and What Controls Your Mind V

Fred R. Coulter—December 31, 2011

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services. I ended up last time at Proverbs 4, so let's go back there because this is the key thing. Living in today's world we have everything after our attention.

Have you ever pulled up to an intersection, especially in the summertime when it's warm, and here's this car with the windows down, and it's got the music blasting. BOOM, BOOM! You pull up and your car is vibrating. What do you suppose occupies the mind of those in the car? *The music!* There's good music, there's bad music. There is also destructive music. Music like that is meant to go through you, capture your mind, capture your emotions, and to control you.

Those of us who have God's Spirit, we need to guard the door of our minds. We need to be on guard against those things. Proverbs 4:23: "Above all **guard the door of your mind** with diligence... [Now this tells us it has to be something that we do all the time. Don't slack on up it.] ...for out of it *are* the issues of life." Everything depends, in your life:

- what goes into your heart
- what goes into your mind
- what you see
- how it impacts upon your mind

I think everyone, as you're getting older, and I know this happens to everyone, you begin remembering things in your childhood that you hadn't thought of for years and years and years. What does that tell you? That tells you it's been there all the time, but you haven't thought of it.

Also if you've gone through traumatic experiences, you have an extra hard challenge to begin putting those things out of your mind and to forget. Remember, the things that you forget are those things that you don't want in your mind. Philippians 3 becomes important from this point of view. It tells you the focus that we need to have to forget those things that are behind.

Paul, when he was in Judaism thought he had everything in the world to live for. He was important, he had the high priest's approval to go out and do the things that he did in arresting the brethren, and so forth. Paul begins talking here about his former life in Judaism:

Philippians 3:4: "Though I might also have *reason to* trust in *the* flesh. If any other thinks he has *cause to* trust in *the* flesh, I *have* much more: Circumcised on *the* eighth day; of *the* race of Israel, from *the* tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; with respect to law, a

Pharisee.... [As far as Judaism is concerned, couldn't get any better than that.] ...With respect to zeal, persecuting the Church..." (vs 4-6). Think of all the things that he went through. Think of the training that he went through.

Just thinking about the training of some of these poor Muslim kids. They send them off to the Muslim school [Madrasah] at three-years-old. They have everything drummed into their head. There they learn how to chant. Someone sent me a whole power point and it showed from the Koran how they just drill it into the minds of all the children to hate, to kill, to despise. I got this from a man in Egypt who said that he came to our website and he sent us an e-mail. I wanted to find out about him, so I said could you please tell me a little bit about yourself and tell me how you approach the Muslims, because he lives in Cairo, Egypt.

He says all the Christians there are persecuted; they're hated. Then he showed all of these pictures of the hatred and the violence. I got to thinking in relationship to this sermon, how much do men and women who get into that so deep hatred, how much is it going to take to cleanse their minds. Even in the second resurrection. It's going to be something!

Just a little sidebar, I remember talking to an Arabic-speaking man, attends with us down in Arcadia once in a while. He said that in the Bible that he had that they translated God as Allah. I was thinking, now if you do that, how are they going to tell the difference between Allah and Allah, I mean, once it's programmed into their minds. I got the answer from the e-mail when he sent me the power point. He said *Jehovah Elohim*. So that's what it should be translated in the Arabic Bible, rather than Allah.

Just think how much they have to overcome. Just think being brought up on hatred and killing and death and persecuting people and then seeing in your own community Jihadist bombers, killings. Think of what they're going to have their minds cleansed from.

But in relationship to what Paul had to have cleansed out of his mind was the persecuting of the Church. Because I suppose after he was converted, it would just seem like it would be one of the things that would happen. The women that he was dragging out would be crying and screaming and all of that sort of thing. And the men that he led off to be put into prison and those he consented to being stoned,

those things would be in his mind. So, he had a lot that he had to forget.

In this one phrase here, "...persecuting the Church... [we have all of that bound up in there. ...with respect to righteousness that *is* in law, blameless.... [kept all the traditions] ...Yet the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ" (vs 6-7).

This is why when we're converted and enter into that covenant through baptism with God the Father and Jesus Christ, ***this is for real and this is for life***. You can't go back on it. Look at all the things he had to count but loss. His whole life growing up being trained for this.

Verse 8: "But then truly..." Notice his focus and notice how he kept his perspective. Plus, he also had what he called a thorn in the flesh. We don't know what that was, except that it may have had something to do with his eyes.

"...I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord..." (v 8) When you're guarding the door of your mind, and there are things that you need to get cleaned out of it, remember this right here:

"...count all things to be loss... for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count *them* as dung... [The Greek there is 'skubalon'—*pile of manure*. All the accomplishments and everything that he did.] ...that I may gain Christ" (v 8).

That's the whole purpose in controlling your mind. That's why we have to exercise free choice. We're not going to be perfect in it. We're going to make some mistakes in it. We are going to sin along the way, but nevertheless all of these things are part of controlling our minds and using our free will and our choices to get it done, as well as the Spirit of God.

Verse 9: "And may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law... [There is no definite article here, so it is not *the law*, but *from law*, referring to Judaism law.] ...but that *righteousness* which *is* by *the* faith of Christ—the righteousness of God *that is* based on faith" (v 9).

- God gives to us *His Spirit*
- God grants us *His love*
- God grants *His Truth*
- God grants us *His forgiveness*

All of those things come from God, and those are given so that we can overcome all the works of the flesh, all the memories of the past, all the temptations of the present time, and to protect us from the difficulties in the future.

Verse 10: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." Paul understood that when he was called, he was going to suffer some things that no one else was going to suffer. When God called Saul, who became Paul, He told Ananias, He said that 'he is going to suffer things for Me.' You might say if you remember *The Blood Avenger* sermon by Michael Heiss, a little prod—maybe that was part of the thorn in the flesh that Paul had—to not be relying on self and not being relying on anything that he did.

Verse 11: "If by any means I may attain unto to the resurrection of the dead." From baptism to the goal, obtaining the resurrection from the dead, everything else is:

- growing in grace and knowledge
- controlling our minds
- controlling our thoughts
- bringing into captivity every thought to Christ
- casting down vain imaginations
- and everything that exalts itself against the Word of God

Here's the key: *He understood this was a process*. He understood that this was going to take time. Quite different from Protestantism today, when you just say, 'Yes, Lord,' you're saved and you've got it made from there on.

Verse 12: "Not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected... [Showing that it's growing and overcoming.] ...but I am striving..." This means in our growing and overcoming and building the character:

- we have to strive
- we have to put out the effort
- we have to put out the things that will help build the fruits of the Holy Spirit

We'll get into that later, 2-Peter 1, and so forth, but I want to focus in on how we forget and how we can combat a temptation that comes along.

"...but I am striving, so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained; but *this* one thing *I do*... [this takes a lot of effort] ...forgetting the things that are behind... [We all have a lot of things we need to forget. There may be a lot of good memories that a lot of people have that you don't want to forget. Those are good.] ...forgetting the things that behind, and reaching forth to the things that are ahead, I press [strive] toward *the* goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (vs 12-14).

Here is a real key. This comes by doing. Ephesians 5:26—talking of Christ: "So that He

might sanctify it... [the Church. Then that is sanctifying every one of the brethren.] ...having cleansed *it* with the washing of water by *the* Word.”

That comes with prayer. You have something you’re struggling with in your mind, you ask God to cleanse your mind. You ask God for the washing of the water by the Word. This is where study and prayer comes hand-in-hand. These things that we’re talking about now cannot be accomplished any other way.

Verse 26: “So that He might...cleanse it, having cleansed *it* with the washing of water by the Word; That He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be Holy and without blame” (vs 26-27). That’s how God wants us presented to Christ. And we have all the tools available to do it.

Today we’re living in a world where our minds are assaulted everyday. Think about it now for just a minute. There was a discussion of how many thoughts does a person have in a day. We’ve got trillions of brain cells and they’re all connected and we can train and program our mind so that they can be connected and work together.

They were wondering how many thoughts does a person have in a day. Someone estimated 10,000, someone said 20,000, someone else said as much as 50,000 thoughts a day. The Truth is your mind is working all the time. Part of it is thinking, that’s with the frontal cortex. Part of it is the automatic working of your body. Just like right here we’re sitting, everything is just fine. We’re reading, we’re studying, we’re thinking. But our heart is beating, our lungs are billowing, our stomach is digesting, our intestines are doing the rest of it. All of that goes automatic. That’s how we can do it.

Philippians 3:15: “So then, let as many as *be* perfect... [While our minds are imperfect and will be until the resurrection, we can have a perfect attitude of loving God, striving and overcoming, casting down vain imaginations, and guarding the door of our minds, so we don’t let things in that shouldn’t be there.] ...as many as *be* perfect be of this mind.”

Here’s another promise and here’s something that some people don’t understand and I would say very few. “...And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you” (v 15). How does that work? *That works with God’s Spirit working within you!* And you’re going along and all of a sudden there is a thought that you shouldn’t have. You don’t immediately reject it, but say maybe it’s something you have anger against someone and you hold it too long or you’re bitter and you’re holding it too long, or you’ve had a bad experience with that person. And you say, ‘Oh, well,

I’m going to stay away from that person.’ Whatever it may be.

There comes a time you need to get rid of it. *God will reveal it to you. He will reveal what you need to have cleansed out of your mind so that you can repent.* That’s why you go along and then all of a sudden you wonder, ‘I wonder why I’ve got these evil thoughts in my mind and I don’t want them.’

Ask yourself: How long have they been there? Maybe they’ve been there quite a while. Maybe it’s a result of something in the past. What is happening? *God is revealing it to you so you can have it cleansed out of your mind*—the washing of the water by the Word. And you can repent.

Let’s see how sin comes. Let’s see how we can fight it, as we go along. Some things come along and you can recognize it as lust and sin immediately. Other things come along and you don’t. Or maybe some things come along and Satan is trying to tempt you, because he is. Here we have in the first chapter of James the thing that has to do with temptation and sin.

James 1:13: “Do not let anyone who is tempted say, ‘I am being tempted by God’ because God is not tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one *with evil.*” Yet, we go through trials—correct? How does God look at us with our trials? He doesn’t tempt us with evil, but we come across good and evil and there are choices we are to make. God is not the One Who is doing it—the world, other people, your carnal mind, etc.

Verse 14: “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away... [What are you drawn away from? The central purpose and focus of having your mind on God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the things that are good, the things that are right, the things that are beautiful, and all of those things.] ...and is enticed by his own lust.”

You say to yourself, ‘Well, that’s not so bad.’ Satan comes along and says, ‘No, it’s really not so bad. It could be quite enjoyable.’ You can cut it off there—right? You can quit being drawn away and you can make up your mind to quit indulging in the enticement. If you don’t do that, then lust begins to take over. Then lust works by justifying the sin that what you’re doing is okay, what you’re doing is right, what you’re doing God will understand. So you could cut it off at that point.

Verse 15: “And after lust has conceived... [it’s a process] ...it gives birth to sin...”—and you sin. Didn’t intend to get carried away emotionally—anger, hatred, got caught short, something happened. I remember one time Dolores had an accident in the car and she thought I was going to be all mad

because the car was all messed up. I wasn't. I was concerned, 'Are you all right?'

Sometimes those things can come along. Other times a little itty-bitty thing and you get mad. I know growing up—my mom, if she were alive, would tell you—I was a very cursing, angry, hot-tempered, tool-throwing mechanic, because I wasn't a mechanic. I was trying to fix this motorcycle and nothing worked. I was down in the garage shouting, yelling and screaming. I remember my mom finally had enough of it. She took the heel of her shoe, because the kitchen was right up over the garage, it was right down, and she banged on the floor with her shoe. She said, 'Freddie, you don't want to be so-and-so—do you?' Did that work? *Yes!* Do I still remember it? *Yes!* That's what happens.

You can overcome those things and you can put them down. Let's come back here to the book of Job. Let's see one thing that Job did. Remember, Job was really righteous, but he got carried away with his own righteousness. But at least from this we can get something on how we can overcome lust and sin. Just put in your notes there Matt. 5, where Jesus said, 'You shall not look upon a woman to lust after her, because if you do you've already committed adultery with her.' Most men come along and say, 'Hey, I can't help it.' *Well, you can!* Job did, here's what he did. Now this can apply to anything.

Job 31:1: "I made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I look upon a virgin?" What do you mean make a covenant with your eyes? 'Okay, eyes, I'm going to baptize you. Now we're in covenant.' *No, that's not it!* What it is, you ***put a guard of thought in your mind*** that regardless of what may come—it could be lust toward a woman, it could be wanting things that you don't really have and that you don't really need. It would be whatever would be a prime thing in your life.

You go to God and ask God, 'Help me to overcome this. Help me to guard the door of my mind and my eyes, so that I'm not going to be out here like the song says, 'watching the girls go by all day long.' Of course, you have to be very careful watching television, because guess what they have? Even on supposedly conservative Fox News lots of time they get a lot of things where there is soft porn. I wonder how Job would function today? But you can do that.

What is your weak point? What is the thing that causes you trouble all the time? Then pray about it, ask God to help you with it. Ask God to give you control over that and to forget the things that are behind.

All of this has to do with repentance. All of this has to do drawing close to God and asking Him to give you His Holy Spirit so you can use it to

guard the door of your mind and stop things from coming into your mind that should not be there.

Here's the whole purpose of it. We'll tie this together with 1-John, the first chapter, in just a bit. Did David have a lot to forget and to repent of concerning Bathsheba and Uriah her husband? Did not Bathsheba have a lot to forget, too? The old saying is, 'It takes two to tango.' She didn't have to bathe on top of the roof and he didn't have to go over there and gaze on her. If he did, he should have turned and walked the other way. But he didn't. He said to his servant, 'Come over here. I want you to take this message to the lady next door.'

When she got the message, she should have declined and said, 'No, tell the king thank you, but this is something that should not be done.' Could have been stopped right there. You know what happened; didn't stop. She got pregnant. Didn't stop! 'How am I going to get out of this? Well, I'm king, I know what I'll do. I'll have him come home, lay with his wife.' Uriah is not exactly a dumb cluck, and he knows that his house was right next to the kings. I don't know how much he knew about Bathsheba, being his wife he probably knew a lot. Maybe she never intended, maybe she did intend it, but there's a lot that goes on here. We get enticed with our lust and we think, 'This will be okay, this will be all right.' *No, not indeed!*

David still didn't repent. Took months, right up to the time that the baby was born, just before the baby was born. Nathan the prophet had to come, tell them about this nasty man who had all kinds of sheep. He wouldn't kill his own sheep for eating, but he got a ewe from one of his neighbors, killed it. David got furious, and said, 'That man's got to pay for this!' Nathan looked at him, and said, '***You are that man.***'

If you exercise what we're talking about, then you can yield to God and He can correct you as you go along. You don't have to wait for a big catastrophe to happen in order for it to be turned around.

What was the sentence? He repented, but the child died, and for the rest of his life his whole household was in turmoil and trouble and sexual sins and rebellions. even an attempted coup to put one of the other sons on the throne instead of Solomon. Let's go through this a little bit here, because this is important. ***Repentance is the key to begin forgetting and putting it in the past.***

Psalms 51:1: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions." Yes, He did. Nathan said, 'Your sin has been put away.' But he understood something had to happen inside.

Verse 2: “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.” Look at all he had to forget—all the planning, all the scheming, all the misuse of power, all the lust of using the office of the king to get his own way when the king was there to serve the people.

Verse 2: “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin... [washing of the water by the Word.] ...for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me” (vs 2-3). Right there in the forefront of his mind. How much of that was really gotten rid of during the rest of his lifetime, *only God knows*. But some things stay with you a long, long time. Some things stay there *as a lesson to do not do those things again*. You don’t have to dwell on the experience.

If you’ve done something where you’ve lost an arm or a leg, or something like that, that’s a constant reminder that you did something you shouldn’t do. Sometimes there will be those memories as a constant reminder for you to repent and for you to ask God to forgive you.

If you see the movie *Elizabeth*, there was a man who was trying to entice her to marry him and then he would defect England to the Spanish, or whatever. She almost married him, but he was caught in a conspiracy with the protector. The protector was going to have him eliminated and Elizabeth said, ‘No, I want him around to remind me of what not to do.’ So, there are some things that will stick with you the rest of your life of what not to do.

Every time I drive down to L.A. I pretty well have the spot where I rolled over the car. Every time I go south and come back north, I remind myself, ‘Fred, don’t do something stupid.’ I don’t relive it. It doesn’t bother me, but it’s a good reminder. ‘Hey, dummy, pay attention.

When it gets down to sin, here is the key, v 4: “Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge.” He acknowledged his sin. That’s how we need to go to God. This then is how we can capture those thoughts, use them for repentance, asking God to help us and cleanse us.

Let’s come clear back to 1-John 1, and let’s see the whole process here. I think it’s interesting when you understand that John was an old man when he was writing this. We don’t know how old. He lived to be almost 100, and finished canonizing the New Testament in about 98-99^{A.D.} and died shortly after that.

1-John 1—notice how he writes this. He doesn’t write *you*. A little later he talks about *I*, but

here he’s using *we*. John was admitting that even in his old age he still had things that he had to repent of. It’s a lifelong thing in growing and overcoming.

1-John 1:6: “If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth.” The easiest thing is *self-deception*. The easiest thing is *lying to yourself*, denying what you have done, rather than repenting. That’s why he says, we are lying to our selves.

Verse 7: “However, if **we** walk in the light, as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.” (v 7). He’s talking about himself, too.

Think about this. That agrees with what Jesus said in the model prayer. Every day: ‘Give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.’ Which is another key, too. There’s repentance every day. And always remember this: As long as we still have the law of sin and death in us—which we do—there are going to be things that we’re going to have to repent on a daily basis. Maybe some of the things you have to forget and get out of your mind are in there so deep that it takes a lot of repetitive repentance to, with God’s Spirit, cleanse it out. *But God will do it!*

- God wants to see how we’re going to respond
- How are we going to choose
- What are we going to let rule in our minds—
 - ✓ Self
 - ✓ Sin
 - ✓ Satan

or

- Christ and God the Father.
- What are we going to let into our minds?

or

- What are we going to avoid and push out and not let it in there?

“...cleanses us from all sin.... [every single one] ...If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (vs 7-9).

Combine that together, Eph. 5:25-26, and Psa. 51 and 1-John 1—cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That’s the whole process of conversion. Of course then, at the end at the resurrection, everything that is built into us spiritually speaking, is going to pass from this life to the resurrected life. The works of the flesh and everything that we don’t want is going to be completely eliminated.

Verse 10: “If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.”

Notice the change right here 1-John 2:1: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And *yet*, if anyone does not sin.... [now he goes back to the *we*] ...**we** have an Advocate with the Father; Jesus Christ the Righteous; and He is *the* propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*” (vs 1-2). That is in God’s time and His plan and in His way.

Let’s understand something, the reluctance of going to God when we need to go to God because we’re ashamed of what we have done. When that happens, what you do is understand God is waiting for you to repent and *God will lead you to repentance*. That’s what the Holy Spirit will do. This way then:

- you can have your minds cleansed
- you can forget those things that are behind
- you can have a clean slate

—look at it that way. Clean your mind out. Get rid of all of the garbage. And in this day and age we all have plenty of garbage to get rid of.

Notice how he prayed, Psalm 86:1: “Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy..... [He was really repentant here—wasn’t he? *Yes!*] ...Preserve my soul, for I am Holy; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long” (vs 1-3).

He really had a great difficulty when he wrote this, v 4: “Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.... [Here is a key to always remember: ***Never delay in repenting***] ...For You, LORD, are good and ready to forgive, and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You. Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, for You will answer me” (vs 4-7). *Yes, and God will!*

- this is how you control what goes into your mind
- this is how you get the things out of your mind that you don’t want there, that don’t need to be there
- this is how you can focus in on what God wants us to do

—and as Paul told us, As many as are of this mind are perfect.’ That is, *perfect in attitude*. ‘And if in any other thing, God will also reveal that to you.’ Obviously, so you can repent.

(go to the next track)

Living in today’s world there are a couple of very good Psalms for us that can help keep us on the right track. Let’s go to Psalm 37 first. Very good for today’s world with everything that different people have. Lots of times you think, ‘How can those people have those things and here I’m struggling away?’

Psalm 37:1: “Do not fret yourself because of evildoers... [Don’t worry about them, even though they prosper in their way.] ...and do not be envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass; and wither as the green herb” (vs 1-2). God is going to take care of them. And look at how many people—BANG!—have their ‘come-upins’ just like that. There’s this famous golfer, you know who he is. Got caught with a harem harlotry. Wife divorced him and he was the king golfer of the world, up to that point. After that, in two years he only won one event. Cut down!

Here’s what we are to do. This helps us in being able to apply *guard the door of your mind*. Don’t let things get carried away. Verse 3: “Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land, and cherish faithfulness.” Our reward is coming at the resurrection.

Now last night Dolores and I were watching, she recorded it, it was *The Birth of a Star*. It showed some fantastic, just unbelievable pictures of the universe. I think that God has caused those things to be for men and women to see as a witness against them that God has made all these things, whether they believe in Him or not. It’s still a witness. They’ve also discovered that sounds come out of the sun and even the moon, even the rotation of the earth, all the stars. The heavens actually sing. Are those some of the signs in heaven that God is giving us in a peaceful way, rather than a destructive way that He’s Creator? There is no way that they can do these things.

They can’t happen by themselves. They cannot evolve. Proof: In this movie, it showed a laboratory in England and one in America where they are able, with gigantic machinery, tremendous huge laser lights and magnetic power, and everything. These machines with wires everywhere and the tenets in it and they get it up and they get it going and they get just a split second of fusion. It takes all that work for a split second and it never dawned on the narrator when he said, ‘Well, the sun has trillions of times of that happening every minute.’

Never dawned on him, look at the work and power and mathematics and everything that men have had to do to make these machines, to get a itty-bitty little—and God has the universe filled with it.

Psalm 19:1: “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork.” That’s what He is doing. He’s giving this as a witness, because when Christ starts to return, the heavens roll back as a scroll and BANG! There’s that second sun out there. Now, that’s a different story.

Verse 2: “Day after day they pour forth speech, and night after night they reveal knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth and their words to the ends of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun. Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices as a strong man *set* to run a race” (vs 2-5). Right there. Everything is there.

It shows these close-ups of the sun and it’s just seething and boiling in this tremendous power. They have figured out that it’s held in that position and round so everything doesn’t explode by gravity. Never asked the question: Where did that gravity come from? Who controls the gravity? Yet, this is on every star.

Verse 6: “Its going forth is from one end of heaven, and its circuit is to the other end. And there is nothing hidden from its heat” (v 6). *If* we get discouraged, or *if* we get frustrated, or *if* we get down, don’t stay down. If you have one of these DVDs you can pop in there about the universe, pop it in there and watch it and just think about what God has done and how He has given all the promises to us. Then start thinking about the promises and start thinking about what God is going to do. Then go pray and ask God to help you come out of whatever the difficulty is.

This is why we are not to let the world get us down. Even though most of the world might have a lot, own a lot, a lot of possessions, whatever. You have the Spirit of God, which is worth more than everything they own. Think of that. You have the true riches. They have the perishable riches.

Psalm 37:3: “Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and cherish faithfulness.” All of this is thought and mind control that you are exercising yourself. This goes on inside your mind. This is how you guard the door of your mind. *You exercise your mind unto things that are good.*

It’s like this one woman, she kept saying, ‘I get depressed so easily.’ So, we were sitting there talking about that. This was some years ago. We got to talking and then she was telling me about some of the television she was watching—all of these murders, all of these diseases and sickness and things like that. And I said, ‘Hey, why don’t you turn off your television and study your Bible and ask God to help change your attitude, instead of

identifying so closely with all those television programs you’ve been watching and see how you do.’ She came back in a few weeks and said, ‘Boy, that sure helped.’ Because she was letting all that depression and all that sin into her mind and it got heavy for her. ‘How can this be? Look at the suffering.’ And all of that.

Verse 3: “Trust in the Lord, do good, dwell in the land and cherish faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart” (vs 3-4). Isn’t that something? Remember what Jesus said concerning John the Baptist. He said, ‘I tell you there has not risen among men a greater prophet than John the Baptist’—and yet, he did not one miracle—‘but he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than John the Baptist.’

What is the desire of your heart? If it’s good and your thoughts are on it, God is going to fulfill it. Have you ever gone along, maybe you thought of something years back, and then you forgot about it. You’ve gone along in your life’s journey, come down years later, and then all of a sudden you realize ‘God gave me that desire.’ There it is right there. God says He will.

Here is how it happens, v 5: “Commit your way unto the LORD... [Every day in prayer and study.] ...trust also in Him... [There it is the second time.] ...and He will bring it to pass.” That’s why Paul says *keep your mind on the resurrection, press toward it, strive for it.* That’s why he wrote, ‘Bringing every thought into captivity, getting rid of the vain imaginations that exalts itself above the knowledge of God.’

Verse 6: “And He shall bring forth your righteousness like the light, and your judgment like the noonday.” Stop and think about it, God and Christ have *called you*. You are on *Their* side. They will make it happen. Not instantly now, but it is going to happen.

Verse 7: “Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret yourself...” The second time. When you go through the Psalms, look at things where it goes in ones and twos and one-two-three. There are some cases where it goes one-two-three-four. I forget the Psalm, but it is let not, let not, let not, let not, four times in a row.

Verse 7: “Rest in the LORD...” (v 7). We have that twice.

- *trust* in the Lord
- *rest* in the Lord
- *delight* in the Lord
- *commit* your way to the Lord
- *rest* in the Lord

“...wait patiently for Him; do not fret yourself...” (v 7). Don’t be frustrated. Don’t be comparing yourself with others, because Paul said ‘those who compare themselves among themselves are not wise.’ He could have said stupid, but he didn’t.

“...do not fret yourself because of him who prospers in his way; because of him who carries out wicked schemes” (v 7). Notice how these things help you when you study the Psalms and the Proverbs, to get your mind orientated in a right way so that you have the right thoughts.

Verse 8: “Cease from anger... [Because when you’ve got a lot of anger, you can’t think of anything else.] ...and forsake wrath... [put it behind you] ...do not fret yourself... [three times] ...it leads only to evil.... [You’re going to go do something you shouldn’t do.] ...For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth” (vs 8-9).

You need to think about that. I just imagine, while Dolores was recording that on the universe, and during the Christmas and New Year’s holidays they have been having on Animal Planet marathons on the earth. Showing all the things about the earth. Just look at what God has done, how He’s created everything. All of the animals, the fish, the birds, the land, the water, the deserts. Some things are just almost beyond comprehension. Like this herd of elephants that travel through drought-stricken areas going to where there’s going to be water. It’s the only river that empties out into an inland basin once a year and it’s quite a flat basin. But it goes for hundreds of miles and fills it all up with about anywhere from 3-5 feet of water. In certain other places it’s a little deeper.

All these elephants, they come out of the desert. They’ve had dust, they’ve been drinking muddy yucky water. But they kept going, kept going. They finally got there and then it shows them enjoying the water. They’re all in there, spraying it up in the air, rolling over, and the little elephants are swimming under water, and all of this sort of thing, that *God takes care of them. That’s why we’re to trust in God, because He’ll take care of us.*

Think about the earth. Not only are we going to inherit the earth and rule with Christ during the millennium, but afterwards there’s going to be a new heaven and a new earth just for the spirit Family of God and New Jerusalem.

Remember this, v 10: “It is but a little while, and the wicked shall be no more; yea, you shall diligently consider his place, but he shall not be there. But the meek... [that’s us] ...shall inherit the earth... [there it says again] ...and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (vs 10-11).

Well, we could go on and read more there, but read the whole Psalm here. This is very encouraging. Remember, if you get down, you get depressed,

- grab the Bible
- open it up to some of the Psalms
- get on your knees
- put your Bible right on a chair, read it while you’re praying.
- Thank God for what it is

and I’ll guarantee you, you’re prayers will start coming; your mind will be focused on what it needs to be.

Now come to Psalm 73; Asaph was one of the priests, and, of course, he had to do the things that were right. This is a really good Psalm. You get down at the mouth and you get frustrated and discouraged, come here and read this Psalm, the whole thing, all the way through. We’re not going to read the whole thing, but we’ll read a good part of it.

Psalm 73:1: “Truly God is good to Israel, even to those who are pure of heart.... [he starts out praising God] ...But as for me... [his circumstances] ...my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped, for I was envious at the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked, for there are no pangs in their death, and their strength is firm. They are not in trouble like other men... [he’s referring to himself] ...neither are they plagued like *other men*. Therefore pride is as a chain about their neck. Violence covers them like a garment” (vs 1-6).

The next time you watch one of *The Godfather* movies, remember this Psalm. The wicked never succeed, always comes back on them. Even though for a time, v 7: “Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than the heart could wish for. They scoff and speak with malice; in their arrogance they threaten oppression. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth. Therefore, waters of abundance are drunk by them” (vs 7-10).

They just seem to have everything, go against God’s laws. And here you are struggling, trying to obey God, trying to do what is right, and you’re having a hard time with it. But you look out and here are all of these people in the world, they have all of these things. But remember, you’ve got God’s Spirit. That’s more than they have.

Verse 11: “And they say, ‘How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?’ Behold, these are the wicked, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.... [We’re not of the world, so here Asaph had a really good pity-party here going for himself.] ...Surely I have made my

heart pure in vain and washed my hands in innocence, for all the day long I have been plagued and chastened every morning” (vs 13-14).

How are you going recognize this good Christian life going through all these problems, and you look out there and you see the world. You watch it on television, all these rich haughty people. They have everything they want, money to spend, and all of this sort of thing. So he had a good pity-party for himself.

Verse 15: “If I say, ‘I will speak thus;’ behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children. When I thought to understand this, it was too painful for me.... [‘God, what an injustice. Where are You?’] ...Until I went into the sanctuary of God... [Today we do when we pray. Got a bad attitude like this? *Study the Word of God, go pray!* Don’t let it pull you down. Because you have to guard the door of your mind and you have to control by choice what comes in.] ...Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end” (vs 15-17).

That’s we were to understand our end and the resurrection, v 17: “Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down into destruction. How have they been brought into desolation, as in a moment!” (vs 17-19).

This reminds me of a movie. It was quite a movie. I forget the black actor, but the two partners in this business bet \$1 that they could take one of the partner’s son, disown him, divest him of all of his wealth, make him a bum and go out on the street and get a bum and bring him into the Wall Street office here and make him a fantastic executive. So, that’s what they did. So here the son who had a mansion, had servants, wife, family, children, everything. None of them would have anything to do with him. All of his credit cards were gone. All of the access to the bank accounts were taken away. And here’s the man, the black fellow, who became the one to work in the office and he was given everything and made lots of money. He was having a great time until the tables turned.

Finally, the son met up with the black man and they discovered what had happened. So, they set a trap, because it was speculation on the stock market on the orange crop, whether it was going to be damaged by the frost or whether they had a good crop. They could make all kinds of money with the inside trading with it.

They worked it out, they knew the fellow who was going to bring the report to the two partners who schemed this thing. They were able to follow him around and switch briefcases and put a different report in there. The report was that it was going to go up, rather than go down. So, they bet all

their money on it. It started out and it went up—then the report became known and it was sell, sell, sell. Madness in selling on the stock market to get rid of it, because everyone was losing money. Here is the son and the black man and they’re sitting there watching everything happen and at the end the two partners ended up with \$1.

God has His moment, v 19: “How have they been brought into desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors, like a dream when one awakens; so, O LORD, when You awake, you shall despise their image, for thus my heart was grieved and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was like a beast before You” (vs 19-22). Then he went on to repent. This is why the Bible is so good. You can’t get any of this kind of material out of any psychology book.

Now let’s come to the New Testament and see how then spiritually we are to do. This is how we are to control our minds, control the thoughts. How we are to have our minds washed with the washing of the water by the Word; to be cleansed from all unrighteousness.

Colossians 3:1: “Therefore... [After he’s gone through chapter one and two.] ...if you have been raised together with Christ... [remember the covenant] ...seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at *the* right hand of God. Set your affection on the things that are above, and not on the things that are on the earth. For you have died... [in baptism; remember your covenant baptism] ...and your life has been hid together with Christ in God.... [Just like Paul wrote there in Philip. 3, looking forward to the resurrection.] ...When Christ, *Who* is our life, is manifested, then you also shall be manifested with Him in glory” (vs 1-4).

Now, because of this, God has all of these promises which He is going to fulfill, pray tell me, what promise has God not fulfilled? Every promise He has given He has fulfilled or will fulfill or is fulfilling them. We have to keep that in mind.

Verse 5: “Therefore... [we have something we are to do with our mind] ...put to death your members which *are* on earth—sexual immorality, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desires, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” Those are the things that are hard to overcome. These are the things through lust, as we covered there in James 1 that can come along and entice us and drag us down.

Verse 6: “Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, among whom you also once walked, when you were living in these things” (vs 6-7). So he’s showing right here, once you’re converted these things don’t go away instantly.

- you have to work at it
- you have to put them out
- you have to pray about it

But you should also put off all these things. Now these are the emotions that get you carried away, rather than thinking objectively—fact, *fact*, **fact**, putting together properly.

Verse 8: “But now, you should also put off all *these* things: wrath, indignation, malice, blasphemy, *and* foul language from your mouth.... [Sometimes those things are deeply buried in your mind. You’ve got to get rid of them.] ...Do not lie to one another...” (vs 8-9). These are brethren. Why does he say that? *Because it’s so easy to lie and you don’t intend to!* Sometimes you give an answer that is not true just because you feel embarrassed about the truth. Rather than say, ‘Well, I don’t want to talk about it at this time.’ Something comes up and it always ends up in trouble—doesn’t it? Sometimes it builds a big fire, so to speak. Other times it doesn’t. But you can still overcome it. You can even put out a big fire, get rid of the junk in the ashes and build something good on it.

“...wrath, indignation, malice, blasphemy, *and* foul language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, *seeing that* you have put off the old man together with his deeds... [this is all a part about Unleavened Bread, putting out sin, putting in righteousness] ...and have put on the new man, who *is* being renewed... [That is present tense passive—*being renewed*. God made us so our minds with His Spirit and our spirit together, our minds can be renewed.] ...being renewed in knowledge...” (vs 8-10).

Romans 12 is where it takes place. This is why we are to guard the door of our minds and use these things to change our minds, to grow and develop and overcome. Romans 12:1: “I exhort you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy *and* well pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service. Do not conform yourselves to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind... [This is what it’s telling us how to be renewed (Col. 3).] ...by the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove what *is* well pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God” (vs 1-2). Here’s how you renew it:

- You put out the old; *you bring in the new*
- You get rid of the carnal; *you put in the spiritual*
- You get rid of the sin; *you put in righteousness*

Colossians 3:10: “And have put on the new man, who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him Who created him.” Being made to

have the mind of Christ. Being made to think like Him, to act like Him, using the Spirit of God. God is no respecter of persons, so it doesn’t matter.

Verse 11: “Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian *nor* Scythian, slave *nor* free... [male or female (Gal. 3).] ...but Christ *is* all things, and in all.”

You see the levels of growth that we have. You put out the sin, you get rid of the major things. Then other things that are not as major come along and then you get rid of those. Then you are renewed in knowledge. Now notice the progression here:

Verse 12: “Put on then, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, deep inner affections... [Love is a choice. Love, you learn it. The love of God, toward God, the love toward each other.] ...deep inner affections, kindness, humility, meekness *and* longsuffering.”

Those things take time to develop. Imagine the work that has to be done if someone thinks that he’s the greatest. Imagine the trials that he’s going to have to have in order for God to get his attention. ‘Hey, fella, you ain’t the greatest.’ But can be done.

Verse 13: “Forbearing one another...” Let me just say this. Every single one in the Church has a problem or difficulty that may be hard for someone else to handle. Rather than sit back and judge them, *forbear; pray for them*.

That’s what John says in 1-John 5. ‘If you see a brother sin a sin not unto death, pray for them.’ Instead of saying, ‘Well, he or she shouldn’t act that way.’ Maybe they shouldn’t. Your prayers can help change that. Maybe if you were more friendly to them, that would even help. So, is there pride on both sides in failing to come together? *Yes!*

Verse 13: “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so also you *should forgive*.” Here is the goal and we’ll end this series with this, because ***this is how we guard the door of our minds:***

Verse 14: “And **above all these things put on love**... [love is the greatest (1-Cor. 13).] ...which is *the* bond of perfection.” Remember how we read that Paul said if you are thus minded you’re perfect, that is a perfect attitude.

Verse 15: “And **let the peace of God rule in your hearts**...” Let the Holy Spirit of God lead you and let that be the government of God in you. This whole thing with the structure of a church with a hierarchy that the ministers rule over the brethren misses the point. *Christ is to do the ruling!* We are to do the serving and teaching.

I'll tell you one thing, if Christ can't rule in you and lead you by the Holy Spirit, do you think that a hierarchical ministry can substitute for that? Replace that? Do better than that? *No!*

“...to which you were called into one body, and be thankful. **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly**... [That's how you overcome. That's how you put all of these things out.] ...in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And *in* everything—whatever you do in word or in deed—**do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him**” (vs 15-17).

That's how you can guard the door of your mind and use these tools to become more converted, to change and grow and overcome the way that God wants you to!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Proverbs 4:23
- 2) Philippians 3:4-14
- 3) Ephesians 5:26-27
- 4) Philippians 3:15
- 5) James 1:13-15
- 6) Job 31:1
- 7) Psalm 51:1-4
- 8) 1-John 1:6-10
- 9) 1-John 2:1-2
- 10) Psalm 86:1-7
- 11) Psalm 37:1-3
- 12) Psalm 19:1-6
- 13) Psalm 37:3-11
- 14) Psalm 73:1-22
- 15) Colossians 3:1-10
- 16) Romans 12:1-2
- 17) Colossians 3:10-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 5
- Galatians 3
- 1-John 5
- 1-Corinthians 13

Also referenced: Sermon:

The Blood Avenger (Michael Heiss)

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