

The Servant

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When was the last time you had a “really good idea?” Nothing good ever came from thinking bad. Sometimes, we don’t need to think harder, we need to think higher. Listen to what God says about what most people are thinking (and He knows what we are thinking). For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8-9). When we look at the “ways” of many people we must admit that we “don’t like their ways.” No one can change their ways until they change their thoughts. Don’t think harder, think higher! Here are some suggestions:

1. Think Good thoughts- (Phil 4:8). Like it or not, there is a brain game going on. Think tennis not football. Think left brain and right brain. Think of bouncing your ideas and thoughts off of God. Hit what you think to be a good idea across the net (not to low, remember), give God your best shot, and He will hit it back. What kind of thoughts should you play with? “Whatever is true, whatever is honest, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.” A tennis ball has to be “live” in order to be any good. Sometimes a ball is “dead,” and has lost its bounce. Don’t bother with bad tennis balls or bad thoughts. If someone tosses you a bad idea, or thought say, “no thanks” and reach for a good one.

2. Become an authority on what is good- (Phil 1:10). Paul spoke of approving what is “excellent.” Become an expert on thinking excellent thoughts. This does not mean accepting the tired and worn out thoughts of prejudice, or presumption. Great minds look at things carefully. How can I make this or do this better? How can I help? How can I improve things? I can settle for “Okay,” or acceptable, but I rather shoot for excellence. Become good at thinking good.

3. Only call good good (Isa. 5:20). Isaiah warns about calling evil good. Thinking good thoughts does not mean becoming a Polly-Anna or looking at life through rose-colored glasses. Everything is not good. Some people just need to think “higher.”

4. Do Good (Ps.34:14; Acts 10:38). Sometimes the cycle of bad thinking can not be broken until we do something “good.” The Psalmist describes the better life with the advice to “depart

from evil and do good.” Good thoughts always precede good actions, but they follow them too. “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life...” Everyone was born to do good. Someone might say, Oh, no, we were born to “glorify God.” True, but how do we do that? “Let you light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven” Mat. 5:16. “To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin” (Ja. 4:17). It is as simple as that.

5. God is Good. “Oh taste and see that the Lord is good” (Ps. 34:8). Here is the heart of goodness. Here is the mother load. “God is Good.” Good is an energy force that holds the universe together. When a sick woman touched the hem of Christ’s garment, the Bible says that “virtue” (some translations say power) went out of Him. This is a “third rail” that makes the subway go. There were three rails in the subway. Two for the wheels of the train and one for the little foot that rode the energized third rail. Getting on the right track is getting right with God and discovering what life can be with His divine power energizing your life.

6. All things are working together for good. Paul gives us some good news in Romans 8:28. “All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.” It does not say that all things are good. It says that, for those who love God, all things are “working together for good.” That means wherever you are, all the time, and in every way, God is at work, and He is doing good.

7. God has good news. This good news is called the “gospel.” God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to be our Savior, Lord, and King. This is good news. Anyone alive (anyone who can still read this) can know God’s goodness, His forgiveness, His power and His grace. Salvation is God’s good work (Phil. 1:6). Sin is the result of wrong thinking. The Bible says that the devil is a liar and the father of lies. The devil has control of all the “low” thinking of this world. Think higher, think better, think good, think God, think Jesus. Nothing good ever came of thinking bad. Think good. 🍌

**No one will ever be
better than his thoughts.**

“as a man thinketh in his heart so is he” Prov.23:7

Look for the Union Label

That used to be the pep song of the Garment Workers Union. Unions are not doing very well these days. I used to be a member of the AFL-CIO. I clerked at a department store across the street from Gimbels, at Willoughby-Peerless in Manhattan. That was forty years ago. I remember going to the Union Hall during my lunch hour to “pay my dues.” The only thing I got out of being a union member (as I can remember) was a thinner pay envelope. Times have changed for unions. Today, with down-sizing, out-sourcing, and off-shore bank accounts, forget about unions, it is “every man for himself.”

There is another Union however that we cannot forget about. This Union is called the church. The church has been marching for a common cause for over two thousand years and it still looks out for the interest of the “little guy.” Jesus never spoke about the “little guy” or the “big guy,” for that matter. He spoke of those He called the “poor in spirit,” or those who “hungered and thirsted after righteousness.” He called them the “meek.” And when He called for them, they came in great numbers.

Not only has the world changed, I am afraid the church has changed as well. First of all, we are having real problems with this thing called the “Union.” Even though the Master prayed that we would be “one,” we seem to be having problems being in one accord. It is hard to travel in one Accord if everyone has a different idea of where they want to go. It seems everyone has their own idea of how things should be done. One of the reasons I know there is trouble with the Union is because I see trouble with the communion. There seems to be a struggle in many churches between “labor” and “management.” How the church got divided into two groups is a long story. The Lord Jesus never intended there to

be labor and management, however. The leaders were supposed to be laborers. We are supposed to be one family. The church needs ministers not managers.

There is also a problem with the Union Label. There are a lot of cheap “knock-off” imitations being marketed and passed off as the church. Forget the “robes of righteousness,” today’s union members are more interested in looking “good” than in looking “godly.” When many of us old prodigals came back from the pig pens of worldliness we were not proud of our Tattoos (although they were a reminder that God could save anyone who wanted to be saved). Today our prodigals are tattooing, piercing, dancing, and strutting before the altar, often bringing along some pigs in the process.

The real church does have a union label. Jesus said that label is love. “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, in that ye love one another” (John 13:35). There seems to be a GAP in the Christian garment industry. It is a Gap between what Christ paid for and what we are trying to sell. The problem is, it seems, we don’t know what love is any more. And we seem to be confused about what the Union is supposed to be as well.

Second Corinthians 6 and First Corinthians 10 speak about the Union. Our Union must be with Christ, first of all, and then we can enjoy Communion. Communion comes only after union.

Today it seems that people want God to change and be more casual. After all, if casual is good for business, it should be good enough for God, you think? It seems, these days, the church is more interested in being “hip” than “holy.” We want God to break dance, or moon-walk, to “rap” and “hang-out” with us on Sunday. Some large evangelical churches even have Saturday night ser-

vices, to free the family for family day on Sunday. Sunday evening services are rare. Some churches are marrying gay couples and asking God to be one of the Bride’s maids. Others find their marital knots come loose too easily. Many preach grace but cannot recite the Ten Commandments, calling into question their very understanding of grace.

The word union, is sometimes translated “fellowship.” Any fellowship in which the Lord Jesus Christ is not Captain and Commander is a “ship” of fools. A fellowship that has as much of the world’s ocean in the boat as there is out, is sure to sink. Any fellowship that thinks “Cruise ship” rather than fishing trawler is lost at sea.

Yes the Union Label is love, but that is just the label. It is not the garment. The garment is righteousness. What good is the hood ornament without the car? Look for the label, but also look at the garment. Check the stitching, check the buttons. See if the lining is full. The label is love, but the garment is righteousness. Not self-righteousness, not “our” righteousness, it is “His” righteousness, the righteousness spoken of by Paul when He said “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

A bad thought tried to enter
Like a wolf into the fold
But with Christ there in the center
It was turned back to the cold

Christ the good kind Shepherd
is also called the word
shall lead our spirits God-ward
If we obey Him when we heard

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