

IN YOUR RIGHT MIND

Monday, December 01, 2008

Brenda Cobb Murphy - brenda@brendacobbmurphy.com

Consider how much there is to think about. There is all that you've learned through twelve plus years of school, every book you've ever read, science, fantasy, all you've experienced and everything you've learned throughout your whole life. There's everything you've learned in church, through reading the Bible, and about God. On top of that is what you are daily experiencing, learning, reading, and absorbing through your five senses. Finally, there is what Holy Spirit is telling and teaching you. Our brain holds it all, or all that it deems important, from a lifetime of living.

"Of all the objects in the universe, the human brain is the most complex: There are as many neurons in the brain as there are stars in the Milky Way galaxy," says David Eagleman in his *Time Magazine* article, "10 Unsolved Mysteries of the Brain." But, even more incredible than the human brain's ability to hold information, is our ability to *think*. That is what makes us human as opposed to computers, what enables us to innovate, create, and change our environment to suit our wants and needs. It is from our mind, as opposed to our brain, that we experience humor and pathos, that we have opinions and can express them, and that we can understand abstract feelings and ideas. **The essence of *who we are* is our mind and our ability to think and process what we learn, not just learn it.**

Born out of that ability to think and process information comes our imagination, daydreams, and thoughts. As long as we are alive, awake, and healthy, we are thought-free only by making the effort to be, and that usually doesn't last long, especially if we're trying to be still and hear God.

So, here's the question: **how much of our thoughts are merely through default?** Most people are familiar with the fact that on a computer you must choose a default printer in order for your computer to know which printer to use, even if you only use one. This default setting tells the computer that without human intervention the computer is to use that particular printer.

Much of our lives are lived by default. We even have a default setting for our arguments. Have you ever read the book, *The Dance of Anger* by Harriet Lerner? She tells how when we fight or argue with our spouse we have it perfectly scripted.

We know exactly how far we can go, what buttons to push, and the "safe" way to argue, without crossing the lines drawn out. But today I'm talking about default thinking. Because we live in a fallen body in a fallen world, default mode for us is born out of our human nature and satan's influence, causing our thinking to naturally operate out of fear, worry, and negativity.

We tend to live our thought life as it comes along, random thoughts flowing through our brains, generated and influenced by whatever happens to be going on at the time. If we're in a bad mood our thoughts are full of all the things we'd like to say to whoever gets in our way, or has ticked us off. Our stresses can consume us, as we hash out over and over the consequences of whatever problem currently looms the largest. When the driver in front of us doesn't use his turn signal our thoughts respond appropriately. **Unless we interrupt the default mode going on in our minds we get stuck in letting thinking just happen to us.** I find, personally, that the hardest time to switch my thinking out of default mode is during the night. As our son Chris said when he was little, "The night exaggerates." I wake, and suddenly my mind is filled with worries, which can easily roll over into panic and fear.

But there are results to all the thoughts flowing through our head. Life-changing results, and they fall with a domino effect. ***Your emotions follow your thoughts,*** and that's where you can get in trouble. Positive emotions bring laughter, joy, peace, comfort, and the fruit of the Spirit, while negative emotions cause fear, panic, sadness, anger, road rage, and, yes, the biggie: STRESS.

And these effects topple more dominos, in that our emotions also have results. ***Our physical body responds to our emotions.*** Unfortunately, our emotions can't tell the difference between reality and fantasy. Think about it, in a sad movie we cry, funny we laugh. Fear brings sweaty palms, pounding heart, and dry mouth. Love can bring a euphoria hard to top, or cause physical pain when our heart breaks. Anticipation, surprise, confusion, anxiety, grief, depression, cheerfulness, relief; they all bring a physical response. Our *head* knows it's a movie or a good book, or that we're just imagining what could happen to our children, but our emotions still respond, thereby causing a physical reaction. It's a proven fact that negative physical reactions to emotions cause serious health problems.

So, here's how it works: Our thoughts and imagination bring either a negative or positive emotional reaction, which then causes a positive or negative physical

reaction. *Thoughts to emotions to physical reaction.* Hence, you can control your physical health by controlling your emotions, and that is done by controlling your thoughts. That's one of the reasons that we're told In Philippians 4:8, *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-- think about such things.*

Or, as *The Message Bible* puts it: *Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse.*

Our minds weren't created to live in default, we have the mind of Christ. While having the mind of Christ comes from our relationship with God and allowing Holy Spirit to change us, it also means that we take control of our thoughts, instead of letting them control us. Second Corinthians 10:5 talks about wrong-thinking. *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

How easy it is to fall into living in default: depressed, discouraged, fearful, angry, resentful, negative, and stressed. We tend to think that the mind of Christ is some holy, spiritual plane that we get by reading our Bible and praying. I'm talking about walking out our daily Christian lives as we work, parent, play, read, watch TV, live our life, and rest. Have you ever considered that the mind of Christ means that our minds are creative, innovative, laughing, joyful, challenged, imagining, curious, and adventurous? Choose life, instead of death. Choose to think good, instead of fussing about how bad things are, what are we going to do, or so-and-so did this to me. If our perspective is physically from earth then we will think in default. But if we live as spiritual beings with a spiritual perspective, then our minds, through Holy Spirit, will live joyfully and peacefully, whatever our circumstances.

Therefore, this holiday, choose life, and disable your default setting.