

Thinking Differently II – Dr. James McDonald Study Notes

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Prov. 23:7 Thinking determines outcome more than anything else. “Nothing is different until I think differently.”

II Cor. 10:3-6 **God, help us to reach for the real weapons.**

The Real Weapons:

1. Divine power – mighty to God; He's the source of them.
2. Powerful – Dynamite (my problem is that I don't think with that power and would rather take matters into my own hands because of the way I think and I wind up ruining things)
3. Destroy strongholds – strongholds or fortresses in our thinking that we have walled off but they are not right. God doesn't want to curtail them; He wants to destroy them.

1. Reasons Why it's hard to change our thinking: Because my strongholds are not easily destroyed.

1. Because my old argument made sense to me; I liked their reasons and reasoning **V. 5** arguments. We all have our reasons and strongholds that don't get torn down; until we see that they are wrong and need correcting, nothing will change.
2. My old opinions felt good – “every lofty opinion” **V. 5** Do not be wise in your own eyes, but everything in me thinks that I am!
Since they are my opinions, I like for them to be true, and even if they aren't, I still would prefer that they be, so that I can keep this high opinion of myself that I prefer.
All of us have to start out with “I was wrong” before we can ever get to “I was right.”
3. Because my own mind is opposed to God, destroy argument and lofty opinions opposed God. “The mind set on the flesh is opposed to God.” This is the mind we are born with and need to have changed out.
4. My old pattern of thinking came natural to me. Take every thought captive, even the ones that just came to me without thinking on them very hard; they are natural to me.
The natural me is a bad me; all thoughts must be filtered; no unfiltered thoughts.
Non-defensible, unbiblical thoughts are rejected if I am to get to a better place.
Every thought has to be reviewed until we start naturally thinking correctly.

2. Reasons why it's hard to change our thinking: Because my engagement has to be personal. – **VV. 6-7 You can't do it until your obedience is complete. **I have to choose to do this myself.****

II Cor. 10:3-5 Strongholds are fortified places in our thinking made of arguments and lofty opinions.

Strongholds: Fortified patterns of thinking that are stubbornly resistant to God's Word and God's will for us.

They come from our disposition, our home of origin, our own history.

We want to tear down those things that keep us from what God has for us! These have to be torn down and demolished!

Strongholds of disposition - Jacob - Gen. 25:19

1. Everyone is born with a disposition. Given to you by God, give for good and for uniqueness, mixed with sin, and our disposition gets bent.

Unborn babies are just tissue? God's Word portrays that life begins at conception, and comes with a disposition! (like Jacob and Esau, John the Baptist)

V. 22 – “2 nations”

It was like that before they were born!

Disposition. Your natural mental outlook; your predominant tendency or leaning; your prevailing point of view! Affects every relationship, every decision; it is the filter installed on your thinking and is how you process reality.

Your strongholds are affected by your disposition. Your reasons why you think that you are right, might not be because you are right, but may very well be because of your disposition.

Your arguments (we are going to destroy the wrong ones) or the reasons why you think you are right, and your lofty opinions are the way you view reality.

2a. My disposition dictates my thinking pattern. Gen. 25 Present at birth, disposition. Jacob wanted to be born first, and they named him “heal grabber”, “tripper”, “supplanter” “line-breaker” etc.

We can see it in our kids and in other people, but can we see it in ourselves?

All of life and what you do in life, parenthood, churchmanship, authority, etc. is forced into this mold of thinking. If you cannot see beyond it, and step outside of it, and be willing to change the incorrect parts of it, this will become a bottleneck that stops God’s process of shaping you into what He wants you to be.

2b. Disposition affects my pace thinking. Esau grew up an outdoorsman and Jacob grew up to work in the tent. (very different from each other)

Esau is hairy, outdoors, big beard, bow over his shoulder kind of man (could have been on the cover of an Outdoorsman magazine).

Jacob is the great indoors-man, loves to cook, mom’s favorite, super precise, forward-thinker, super smart, sly as a snake, not a speck of dirt on him ever (could have been on the cover of GQ).

Jacob is not less of a man than Esau is or vice versa; these are both valid, God-given ways to be men. God gave them these dispositions!!

Who’s right? They both are and they both aren’t. They both have strongholds about their particular dispositions and need to see the shortcomings that are inherent with their thinking.

The goal of thinking differently is not so that we can all think the same; it is taking every thought captive and making it obedient to Christ and destroy the strongholds of disposition that say “my way of approaching life is the correct way.”

3b. My disposition affects my people thinking.

V. 28 – how messed up is that? Favorites? Dysfunction results in massive wrong thinking.

4b. My disposition affects my passion thinking. Esau came in famished once from hunting and said “give me some of that red stew.” Jacob said, “For the price of your birthright.” Shrewd individual! They fell to their own passions that dominated their thinking. Esau sold his whole future for a bowl of soup. Jacob deceived his own brother and stole from not only him, but his own father, the right of the first born.

5b. Disposition affects all of my thinking. Esau just wanted his soup without really considering the future or the consequences.

If you are low self control. Low “how will this affect me” and High “I want it and I want it now,” you are Esau.

If you are high shrewd, high planning, likely to finagle and connive your way through something, you are Jacob.

You don’t want to be either one!

Analyzing my disposition:

Four main temperaments, four and one half centuries before Jesus. Hypocrites postulated that these 4 were as the result of deficiencies in 4 different body fluids: blood, yellow bile, black bile and phlegm.

Nevertheless, the observations that he made were excellent – modern observations and studies have added little to what Hypocrites taught and observed 2500 years ago.

You may have heard these under several headings: Myers-Briggs; DISC; Taylor Johnson temperament analysis; Christian teacher/writer Gary Smalley likened these 4 to animals, lion, golden retriever, otter, beaver.

Hypocrites gave them 4 names and we are going to use them—locate yourself in these; Choleric, Sanguine, Phlegmatic, Melancholy (c.f.: chart that was passed out)

(see chart)

Choleric - Main focus – driver

- Their need - to win
- Downside - too aggressive - can run over people
- These are often your CEOs, leaders, risk takers. Christopher Columbus is a good example

Sanguine - Main focus - Expressive

- Their Need - have fun - these are the comedians, clowns, life of the party people.
- Downside - Impulsive - good entrepreneurs, good entertainers

Phlegmatic - Main Focus - very amiable

- Their need – to get along well with others – don't want to impose their ideas on anyone - don't judge (someone who is quick to judge is not phlegmatic).
- Needs - to be safe - no conflict, calm; Abraham is good example
- Downside - often too passive

Melancholy - Main Focus - analytic - analyze everything

- Their Need - Precision - Moses is a good example
- Tend to be feelings oriented and very compassionate.
- Downside - can be negative - common career is accountant, artist, musician (Mozart, Van Gogh), scientist, research analyst.

Choleric - Main Focus - Time - Now - they don't ask anything unless they want it right now.

- View of Authority - rulers rule - "who's in charge?"- whoever takes charge.
- People problem - means to an end - may use people to get to their goal and fail to treasure them as much as the uniqueness that
- God has placed in each one.

Sanguine – Main Focus - Time - Late

- Authority - majority rule - they are influencers of people, so are happy with the majority vote.
- People Problem - people pleasers - so concerned about influence they will go with whatever the mood is.

Phlegmatic – Main Focus - Time -

- Time - Tomorrow - because to give their opinion or to show up early would put some people who are late in a bad light and they would not like that and would rather be in a bad light themselves.
- Authority - order rules - whatever keeps the order
- People problem - Can think People aren't worth the effort – doesn't need people

Melancholy - Time - Punctual

- Authority - Rules rule - whatever the rule is
- People Problem - can think people are beyond help - despair of people.