



Should I be Committed?

Proverbs 24:16: (NASB) *For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, but the wicked stumble in time of calamity.*

Happy New Year! Another year in the books - for some of us, we may look back and think "I'm glad that's over!" For others we may look back and think, "I'm glad that happened!" For all of us, I hope we look forward with hope and anticipation for God's will and blessing in this new year. As we begin 2012, let's take some time and talk about what it takes to make the kind of changes in our lives that will actually be meaningful and hopefully permanent steps forward towards a more effective life as a child of God.

This will be a four part discussion, the parts of "Our Thoughts" and "Our Attitudes" will be covered today.



30 day changes are an easier way, Matt Cutts, TedTV

- *A few years ago I felt like I was stuck in a rut. I decided to try something new for 30 days. Think about something you always wanted to add to your life and try it for the next 30 days...there were a few things I learned from this. The first was, instead of the months flying by forgotten, the time was much more memorable.*

Our Commitment



Let us find a basis in God's wisdom for our thoughts: Psalms 104:24: (NASB) *O LORD, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all; The earth is full of Your possessions.*

A compass always points true north. Where does the "compass of our mind" naturally go back to find "true north"?

Does our true north go back to these things? 2 Timothy 3:1-5 Romans 1:28: God allows the true north of many of the human race to be way off, going in the wrong direction. God isn't going to make you find Him; He allows you to make choices with free will. But free will also needs checkpoints for which it can find its way back. **Hopefully our true north goes back to this:** Philippians 4:4-7: A rejoicing attitude gives us peace. **Our wisdom should be based on God's wisdom:** Psalms 90:12 Job 28:12-13, 28

What thoughts are we comfortable with? "Comfort" can be deceiving, as it is not necessarily based upon what is good for us, but instead what is convenient for us. We all like to be comfortable, but we don't want to be lazy. Luke 12:16-21: Is our thinking towards "stuff" or on something bigger than we are...the outworking of the plan of God?



Homeostasis, Kelly Traver, MD, SimonandSchuster.com

Your brain operates on the same principle as your body - homeostasis. This is a fancy word for "don't rock the boat," keep everything the same. Just as your body's physiology works to keep parameters like calcium, blood sugar and weight stable, so does your brain work to continue whatever behavior it has become used to. Behavior change is hard, but the good news is, we can change.

Comfortable habits are hard to change. Sometimes the thoughts we are comfortable with are not necessarily the thoughts we should follow because they will keep us from the place we need to be.



Our thoughts must attain unto spiritual comfort: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5: Saul of Tarsus had a lot of personal power and influence. Once he became a Christian, he was humbled. From a physical standpoint, that would not have been comfortable. He walked towards that which he was originally against. *The Apostle Paul made a determined choice to focus on spiritual things!*

What thoughts tear us down?

Covetous thoughts! Exodus 20:17: (NASB) *You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.*

Lazy thoughts!



Proverbs 6:6-9: (NRSV) *⁶Go to the ant, you lazybones; consider its ways, and be wise. ⁷Without having any chief or officer or ruler, ⁸it prepares its food in summer, and gathers its sustenance in harvest. ⁹How long will you lie there, O lazybones? When will you rise from your sleep?*

Think about how if we apply ourselves, our lives could become more valuable to those around us. We need to replace our laziness.

Idolatrous thoughts! Romans 1:21-25: (NASB) *²¹For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²²Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. ²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

These are very deceptive. Our world is built on idolatry. We idolize people and make the people the center of everything instead of God. Ego never brings something good.

What thoughts build us up?

Humble thoughts: Romans 12:3-5: (ASV) *³For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith. ⁴For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another.*

We are part of something much bigger than any one individual. We are to contribute to the body of Christ.

Informed thoughts: Psalms 25:4-5: (NASB) *⁴Make me know Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths. ⁵Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; For You I wait all the day.*

1 Peter 4:12-14: (NRSV) *¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.*

We become aware that trials are lessons for our benefits. The difficulties can be looked at positively. The sting of the pain is taken away.



Daily Power Ritual, the five things for tomorrow, AmandaMarieBlog

- *The day before, I make a list of five things I want to get done the next day. By doing it the day before, your mind subconsciously works on solutions to those problems so when you wake up in the morning, it's already engrained that those are the things you are going to get done today. More than five becomes daunting.*

Serving and sacrificial thoughts: Romans 8:35-39 Philippians 1:21



Righteous thoughts: Philippians 4:8: (NASB) *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*

Patterns to consider: Ephesians 3:1: Paul's commitment as a "prisoner of the Lord Jesus."

Joshua 24:15: *Chose ye this day whom ye shall serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

John 2:17: *...The zeal of your house consumes me...*

Let us find a basis in God's love for our attitudes.



God's love for His creation: 1 John 4:16: (NASB) *We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*

How do we think our thoughts? There is a filter of attitude our thoughts go through. What does that filter keep out and let in? God's love should be our filter.

How do we establish "true north" for our attitude? Exodus 20:8-10: The Sabbath truly is an attitude - every day should be an attitude of rest and peace in God.

The following is a good contrast relating to the Sabbath attitude: Luke 6:7-10: Their attitude was to trap Jesus.

Success means lots of failure, Brian Tracy

- In order to be successful, you have to fail a lot. The law of probabilities says the more you fail the more likely you are to succeed. Have you ever failed? Does failure hurt you? No, failure makes you stronger.*

This is a different way to look at failure - use a new filter and see your failures as stepping stones to succeeding. God loves us, so our failures can be something valuable from which we can learn.

True north as described by Jesus - the will of God: John 4:31-34

True north as described by the Apostle Paul: Philippians 3:7-11: His filter was the will of God through Jesus. Christ was the only value in his life, all else was meaningless.

What attitudes bring us down? Where do they come from?

Entitlement: John 11:47-50: A lazy, entitled attitude is damaging. We need our filter to add in the flavor of humility!

Gradual stepwise changes, Kelly Traver, MD, SimonandSchuster.com

- We know that if you practice a new behavior over and over for a long enough period of time, your brain will eventually decide that this new behavior is the one that needs to be protected and continued. Too rapid a change is interpreted by most brains as a stressful event. People who are ultimately successful in making and maintaining major behavioral changes do so through gradual step-wise changes.*

Pride: Proverbs 18:11-12: (NRSV) ¹¹The wealth of the rich is their strong city; in their imagination it is like a high wall. ¹²Before destruction one's heart is haughty, but humility goes before honor.

Proverbs 27:1-2: (NASB) ¹Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth. ²Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips.

Proverbs 16:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who watches his way preserves his life. ¹⁸Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling. ¹⁹It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly Than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Anger: Ephesians 4:25-27: (NASB) ²⁵Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. ²⁶Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not give the devil an opportunity.

Proverbs 27:4: (NASB) *Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, but who can stand before jealousy?*



We need to properly filter anger. It's okay to have anger, but it can't overwhelm you. Our attitude should be based upon the love of God. Our anger should filter through God's love and then we can put it in perspective.

Greed: Luke 12:15: (NRSV) *And he said to them, Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.*

What a profound statement! If wealth brought happiness then the wealthiest people in the world would be the happiest people in the world. Luke 16:14-15

Laziness: Proverbs 26:12-16

What attitudes encourage us? Where do they come from?

Happiness/Contentment: 1 Timothy 6:6-7: (NASB) *⁶But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. ⁷For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.*

1 Peter 4:12-14: Contentment doesn't mean we are excited about a difficult trial, but we are able to accept it because it is there for our growth.

 **Small sustainable changes more likely to stick, Matt Cutts, TedTV**

- *Small sustainable changes - things that I could keep doing - they were more likely to stick. There is nothing wrong with big, crazy challenges, but they are not likely to stick. What are you waiting for? I guarantee you, the next 30 days are going to pass whether you like it or not. So why not try something you always wanted to try. Give it a shot for the next 30 days!*

Joy: Philippians 4:4-7 Nehemiah 8:10

Joy = Heart and Mind being guarded by God's peace

Reverence/Humility: John 13:13-17: Jesus took the position of the lowest servant and is our example. How can we go out and be helpful to someone every single day?

Proverbs 1:7: (NASB) *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

Psalms 111:10: (NASB) *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.*

We can safely say that knowledge and wisdom come from reverence.

 **80/20 rule not perfection, Kelly Traver, MD, SimonandSchuster.com**

- *The 80/20 rule: If you follow healthy guidelines and principles 80% of the time, you'll be healthy. You don't have to be perfect to have good health.*

Perseverance/Determination: Romans 8:38-39

Compassion: Matthew 9:11-13

Attitude is the filter through which our thoughts go. What is our attitude built upon? It should be the love of God. Our thoughts should be built upon the wisdom of God. We will talk in a future program about our words and actions. These together provide a very concrete way to change our lives to honor God.

**Should I be committed?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**