

As a Person Thinks... Romans 12:1,2. Philippians 4:4-8.

- A while ago I joined around 300 others at a seminar providing insight into the world of the human mind. Dr. Caroline Leaf is a follower of Jesus and qualifies as a cognitive neuroscientist with a PhD in Communication Pathology specializing in Neuropsychology. Only a few decades ago scientists considered the brain to be a fixed and hardwired machine. Many scientists are now seeing the brain has having renewable characteristics - ie neuroplasticity.

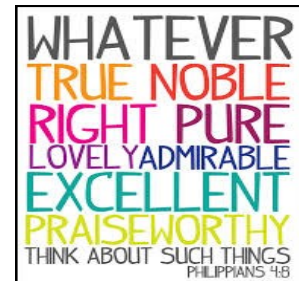


- Her work adds a new dimension to the outworking of “renewing your mind” from Romans 12:2... *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the **renewing** (ἀνακαίνωσις—the gradual conforming of the person more and more to that new spiritual world into which one has been introduced, and now lives; the restoration of the divine image; and in all this so far from being passive, he/she must be a fellow-worker with God...Thayer) **of your mind.** ... eg instead of worrying so much we can pray (Philippians 4:6) and “cast our cares onto Him”..1 Peter 5:7 then changes will occur in the brain...*
- “The scientific power of our mind to change the brain is called epigenetics and spiritually it is “as a person thinks so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). The way the brain changes as a result of mental activity is scientifically called neuroplasticity. And spiritually it is the “renewing of the mind” Romans 12:1,2” (from “Switch on your Brain” P. 59)
- Now some Scriptures which Caroline mentions concerning “Renewing the Mind”

1. Think about whatever is _____ vs 8



SO



- Lindy told the 670 of us present at the Melbourne Prayer Breakfast that in goal one of her tasks was to remove human excrement from the toilet bowls using a brush - a “tooth brush”! All done without protective gloves. This was one of the “hard labour” aspects of her imprisonment. While doing these tasks Lindy gave herself some good advice, “The more I grumbled to myself the worse the job seemed. Instead if I sang to myself the job was not nearly so bad”. Philippians 4:8 principle..

Our thoughts and thinking radically impact our lives— *Finally, brothers and sisters, 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.* Philippians 4:8.

- Lindy encouraged those of us listening to remember, “Don’t get stuck on bitterness and resentment. You take them with you wherever you go. Don’t “rent your mind out to regrets” ... Ephesians 4:31,32 Are there any thoughts of bitterness I need to confess?

- Our thought lives have incredible power over our mental, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being. The emphasis is not so much “positive thinking” but far more. To reduce stress in our lives we must change the way we think. The stress is in my self not outside. My mind is a gift from God. We have been given by God the freedom to choose what we think about. .. We have a “free will”.

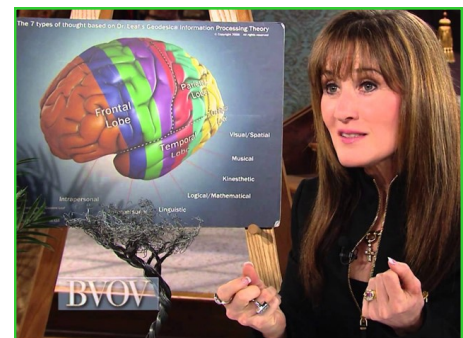
Proverbs 23:7 "*As a man thinks in his heart, so he is.*" (K.J.V.) What dominates your mind? What do you think about the most?

*Sow a thought, reap an act
Sow an act, reap a habit
Sow a habit, reap a character
Sow a character, reap a destiny*

- GIGO.. Sometimes we let garbage enter our minds — no wonder we are under stress. Many people are indiscriminate about what we allow to enter our minds....violent, degrading films, pornography etc. Then we wonder why we worry and focus on negative things. Focus on what is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right...
- Paul is saying this involves a deliberate, conscious **choice**. Change the channels of your mind. When a thought comes into your mind, ask "Is this true, noble, right...?" (Phil. 4:8). If it's not, reject it. (Valiant Man “bounce the eyes).

2. Our incredible _____

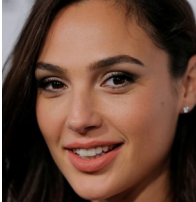
- We are made in God’s image: Genesis 1:26,27...*Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness...*
- *I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made* Psalm 139:14.. We have approx. 100 billion neurons + 100 trillion connections in our brains...incomprehensible complexity
- We are thinking beings—our mind—our intellect and our emotions—our thinking generates electromagnetic energy—which is a signal that goes to our gene codes in the brain
- Our thinking actually shapes our brain....We are designed with a powerful mind to think and to choose—as we think we influence our body and spirit ... we are not victims of our biology... “mind over matter” is real. Our brain processes information that comes in through our 5 senses processing with 400 billion actions per second—what we process leads to physical changes in the brain
- We have all sinned—Romans 3:23... we are damaged—we all make bad choices. We can choose to make right choices—the foundational one—repent and turn to Jesus.
- Build our thoughts with a Philippians 4:8 principle produces a 1 Timothy 1:7..*not a spirit of timidity but of power and love and of sound mind.*



- Deuteronomy 30:19...*This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live...* Moses challenged Israel to choose life, obey God and therefore experience His blessing..The principle applies to us too
- An Israeli political leader said: “A day will come, and it is not far off, that the COVID-19 crisis will be behind us. I do not know when this will happen, but there is something that I do know: The State of Israel must not waste this crisis. We must not resign ourselves to the feeling of discomfort, disappear behind the masks and just try to pass the time and survive until the vaccine arrives. We need to look today for the opportunities that exist in the crisis, find the new springboards it creates – ” Can it be our “finest hour?” In this COVID pandemic?... Is there someone I can make a phone call to... send a text to... refer them to the church website.. Is there a task I can do? Is it the time to learn a new skill? Ephesians 5:16
- We are not robots. God calls us to grow as responsible mature followers of Jesus. The Holy Spirit ideally controls our spirit and the spirit controls the mind and the mind controls the brain and therefore the body.. May our thoughts more and more be honouring to Jesus...

3. Have an “attitude of _____”

Do not be anxious (μηδεν μεριμνατε—imperative) *about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* Vs 6

- An “attitude of gratitude” is good for our soul. Count your blessings. Ingratitude produces people who are difficult to please— it's never good enough. They are "when... and then" people -- "when such and such happens then I'll be happy".
- David Lazarus of “Israel Today” writes that the Israeli Actress Gal Gadot, prays the “Modeh Ani,” the traditional Jewish prayer recited every day as soon as she wakes up. Translated from the Hebrew the prayer reads: “*I thank You, living and enduring King, for You have graciously restored my soul within me. Great is Your faithfulness.*” I am not saying that Gal Gadot is a Christian but there is wonderful principle of beginning every day with “Thanks be to God”. What are my first thoughts for the day? 
- Hidden within the meaning of the Hebrew word for being “thankful” is the idea of confessing or acknowledging that we are completely dependent on God for our lives. We thank Him for “restoring our soul” or giving us the life-breath to arise and live yet another day. Thankfulness requires enough humility to admit that our lives are not wholly in our control, but dependent on someone Greater. For us this “someone” is the Lord Jesus Christ.
- When I’m grateful, it gets the focus off **my** problems and gets the focus on the benefits in my life... and on the Lord who gives those benefits... Psalm 103:2..*Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all His benefits-*

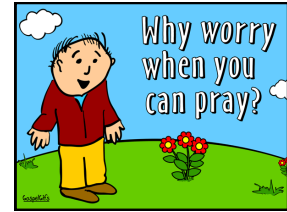


Giving thanks before a meal is a simple but profound way of not taking things for granted - and giving thanks to the “Giver” (& for the “preparer”...). How vital it is that we do this regularly in our homes. The “family that prays together stays together”. As a young or older couple begin courting start the habit of regular praying together.

4. Pray about _____ vs 6

"In everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." 6b

- Whenever God tells you to eliminate something—ie worry—He always has something superior to put in its place—ie prayer. Paul is saying, don't panic -- pray. If you stopped worrying, realize how much free time you'd have. Pray during that time. Those who work 7 days a week end up worse off than those who take time off to worship and pray, to re-focus, re-prioritise, re-create, relax and spend time with church family and loved ones.



- Hebrews 10:24,25... *let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the Day drawing near....* One of the wonderful by-products of regularly worshipping together, praying together is the support and encouragement we give to each other - we don't go to church to "get" but to "give" - expressing worship to our Creator God and giving support to each other
- I Peter 5:7: *"Unload all your worries on Him since He is looking after you!"* Take our problems to the Lord, pray about everything—confess our sin 1 John 1:9.. Repentance and forgiveness—sets us free.
- A life insurance company did a study & learned that people who attend church once a week live on average 5.7 years longer than the general public. Why? Perhaps, one reason being, people who attend church every week are more likely to "Psalm 46:10" and pray a little more and worry a little less. If we commit our lives to Jesus Christ then this verse is very true ...*Peace (εἰρήνην) I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.* John 14:27
- God says unload all your worries on Him. The God who made every thumbprint in the world different and the God who made every snowflake in the world different is a big enough God to handle all the details in your life.

5. The _____ vs 7

If you do this you will experience God's peace (ἡ εἰρήνη του θεου) which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your heart quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus." Philipians 4:7. (garrisons our mind)..

- There is a promise of peace of mind. People are looking everywhere for peace of mind. They try pills, fads, therapy, rock crystals, stress reduction seminars and listen to tapes, books -- anything to give just a little peace of mind...Real peace comes from: *"... as you trust in Christ Jesus."* Paul is not talking about a religion; he's talking about a relationship with God's Son Jesus Christ. Only as we follow and obey Jesus can we gain peace— forgiveness of sin—a change of thinking and *renewing our mind*—leads to a peace that passes all understanding...

As a person thinks so is he/she....