

**LETTERS FROM GRANDPA**  
**# 28**

Dearest Grandchild,

Today's letter will again focus on the book of Philippians. Again it will focus on your thinking.

**“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.” (Phil 4:8)**

God has given you the ability to think. He has granted you the power to direct your mind and focus your thoughts. Even as you read this letter you can immediately think about something else if you want to. Distance does not deter your mind. In an instant your thoughts can be on Minneapolis, the moon, or Mars.

In our last letter we mentioned two multimillionaires, J. Paul Getty and William Randolph Hearst. Both became obsessed with the fear of death. They obviously chose to focus their minds on something they feared. You don't have to do that! The late Mike Pratt wrote the following saying April 28, 1970. *“Worry is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained”*. The point is, you can deliberately choose to think about good things. You don't have to worry!

We are creatures of habit. There was a time when you couldn't walk, now you can walk in your sleep. There was a time when you couldn't talk. Now you can talk in your sleep. The more you think about bad things the easier it will become to think about bad things. That's why you need to obey the Scriptures and think about things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy.

Please also note the relationship between what we think about, and what we do. When Jesus was criticized for eating with unwashed hands, His disciples were concerned that He had offended the Pharisees. This “washing”, as you know, involved ceremonial tradition and not hygiene. At any rate, Jesus pointed out to His disciples the obvious: **“Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.'” (Matt 15:17-20)** Sin does not start outside of you and force it's way in, it starts inside of you and forces it's way out.

Judas did not betray Jesus because of something that he ate. Nor did he betray Jesus by accident. Judas betrayed Jesus because he made up his mind to do so. Judas heard Jesus warn

everyone about evil thoughts, but still allowed the thought of betraying Jesus to take root in his mind. Remember! Each one of us is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust,. What we lust for gives birth to sin, and sin when it is full grown gives birth to death (Ja. 1:14, 15).

It seems that the greatest temptation Jesus faced was not at Calvary, but in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was in the garden that He was making up His mind whether to do His own will or the will of the Father. Note that the angel of God did not need to strengthen Him at Calvary, but rather in the Garden where His sweat became like great drops of blood (Lk. 22:43, 44).

Note also that Jesus prepared Himself mentally “before” He was tempted physically. When He went into the Garden to pray He asked Peter, James, and John to watch with Him. After several hours of prayer, however, He no longer needed them. When the soldiers came he could calmly identify Himself as the One they came to arrest. When on trial before Pilate and Herod He was in complete control of his thoughts. Even when they nailed Him to the cross He could offer a genuine prayer for the Father to forgive them because they didn’t know what they were doing.

Jesus was tempted in all points like we are tempted (Heb. 4:15). Yet He didn’t sin, and we do! One reason for His success is that He prepared Himself mentally, before He was tempted physically. PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW THE DEVIL TO CATCH YOU BY SURPRISE! For example, the time to decide about what is right or wrong is “before” you have a date.

Again, we are creatures of habit. Just as it is hard to walk an unused path, it is difficult to think any thought for the first time. The more you do it, however, the easier it will become. David said that he would set no vile or wicked thing before his eyes (Ps. 101:3) It will be much harder to think good things if you watch a bad TV program, or movie. If Jesus wouldn’t watch it, we shouldn’t watch it either.

On January 15, 2009, US Airways Flight 1549 lost both engines due to multiple bird strikes. The pilot was Capt. Chesley B. “Sully” Sullenberger. He became an instant hero when he made an emergency in the Hudson River saving the lives of all 155 people on board. His instant action didnot come by accident. He was an Air Force pilot for 7 years, becoming a flight leader and training officer. In 1980 he joined Pacific Southwest Airways and became an instructor in safety procedures. When those engines quit Capt. Sullenberger had prepared himself in advance to know what to do. He described the event as making bank deposits over a period of many years so that he could immediately make a withdrawal when he needed to.

You may be absolutely certain that the Devil wants to destroy you. Even now he is setting a trap to rob you of your virtue. One way to avoid that trap is to think about things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. Start now! YOU CAN DO IT!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce