

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 453

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will be about "amusement". The word "muse" means to be "absorbed in thought". For example, "He was musing on the problem." A "museum" is a place where you go to stimulate your thinking.

When you place an "a" in front of a word it is called an "alpha privative". It changes the meaning of the word to mean the opposite. A "theist" is someone who believes in God, an "atheist" does not. A "moral" person has morals, an "amoral" person does not. The word "amusement" therefore means "to not think". When our problems become too heavy to bear, we often seek out some form of "amusement" to take our mind off of our problems.

The Roman government wanted to keep the idle masses amused because they knew that a large group of poor people was a major threat to their empire. Therefore, the Roman government sponsored many different forms of free amusement. Large theaters were scattered throughout the empire that could seat as many as 7,000 spectators. The Colosseum could seat as many as 45,000. The Circus Maximus could seat as many as 250,000. All of this "amusement" was not an accident, it was designed to keep people from thinking about their problems.

Jesus, by contrast, encouraged people to think! **"What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?"** (Matt. 18:12) **"What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'**"**"I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. "Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go."****"Which of the two did what his father wanted?"** (Matt. 21:28-31) **"What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?"** (Matt. 22:41)

In order to become a Christian you have to "think". Our neighbors, Pete and Dorothy Lanyon, were godly people who reached out to help disadvantaged children. One young man was in their home from the Cookson Hills Christian School. In those days sniffing glue was a popular way to get high. Glue sniffing has been linked to chronic damage to the heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, peripheral nerves, and brain. It sometimes results in sudden death. Pete told me that the doctors warned this young man that one more episode of glue sniffing could possibly kill him or reduce him to the level of a vegetable where he would be incapable of thinking. Not being able to think would also make it impossible for him to receive Christ. Glue sniffing is Satanic!

As you know, the way you think is the way you live! (Prov. 23:7) People with a depraved mind live a depraved life (Rom. 1:28). **"the sinful mind is hostile to God."** (Rom. 8:7) But **"To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences have been corrupted."** (Titus 1:15)

The Bible word for "repentance" is "metanoeo" which literally means to "change your mind". We are not to be "conformed" to the pattern of the world, but we are to be "transformed." This "transformation" takes place by the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:1-2). As we have said, the way you think is the way you live! When you change your mind, God will help you to change your life!

This is precisely what happened to the Ephesians. The temple of Diana was in Ephesus and was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Worshiping Diana involved many evils including immorality and ritual prostitution. Paul wrote to the saints in Ephesus: **“So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”** (Eph. 4:17-24)

An accountant can sit at his desk and work all day long! Thinking is work! There is a sense in which belief is also a work. Jesus was once asked: **“What must we do to do the works God requires?”** Jesus answered, **“The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”** (John 6:28-29)

What do you think about Jesus? If you have never really thought about Him perhaps it is time to turn off the TV, put down the cell phone, and do some serious thinking!

Please think about it for eternity is a long time!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce