

Think Biblically

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[0 : 00] Tonight our topic is thinking biblically. How do we think biblically? The Bible tells us how we think shapes who we are.

! So we go to Proverbs 23 and verse 7. Proverbs 23 verse 7 in part it says, For as he as a man thinketh in his heart so is he.

So in other words our thoughts shape our identity. And when you think about it, our minds are constantly getting barraged aren't they? All the time. With different messaging, with worldly philosophies. And I like to kind of think about it.

You could even put it that you could say that the devil has a PhD. He's a doctor of philosophy. So the devil's got his philosophies. Really he's a master of worldly philosophies isn't he?

We see that in Colossians it talks about worldly philosophies. And we warned about his methods. We see Colossians 2 verse 8. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of man, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ.

[1 : 07] This word philosophy is a sense where the devil's got his kind of way of thinking and he projects that on humanity. And the devil also is methodical about his captivating philosophies.

He uses methods. And we're called to guard against them. We see Ephesians 6 verse 11 talking about the methods of the devil. It says put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

But interesting this word wiles in the Greek, not that I labour the Greek, but of course you don't have to be a Greek expert to know what wiles in the Greek means.

It's a Greek word, methodia. So the methods, isn't it? The methods. I like to kind of joke really, you could say that the devil is a Methodist.

So I'm not against any Methodists that are present, but the sense that the devil is a Methodist, he's methodical. In other words, he's got methods, right? He's got the wiles of the devil and it says that we should guard ourselves, stand against the wiles, the methodia of the devils.

[2 : 15] He's got lots of methods. Lots of methods. And we'll explore some of the methods. You could reckon that the devil uses different methods and philosophies that he uses to control the masses of the world.

To conform them to his ways. And when you think about it, the enemy of our soul, he holds many captive, doesn't he? You could even sing the song, he's got the whole world in his hands.

As it were, the devil's got that temporary kind of temporary control, hasn't he? As we see 1 John 5, 19, it says, and we know that we are of God and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

Of course, we know God's ultimately got the world in his hands, but there's a sense where it lies in the captivation of the wicked one, isn't it? In wickedness, there's a sense where the enemy's holding people captive, captivating people.

And the good news, though, is that we are safe people. As God's people, we can know a new way of thinking and that translates into a new way of living. Basically, there are two minds.

[3 : 22] When you think about, you know, the fish are all going in the one direction, but there's one that's going against the flow. There's the conforming, and then there's the one that goes against the crowd, goes against the peer pressure, goes against the group thing.

There's two minds. Either you're conforming with the crowd or you're transforming. So that leads us to really the core text to take our thoughts together tonight is really a familiar one.

And we could read the verse before, of course, to present our bodies of living sacrifice. But verse 2 reads on, And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

So basically, there's two kinds of minds. Most people conform. So that's what we're going to talk a little bit about and then unpack how can we be the one that goes against the flow.

Amen. The one that is transformed. And when we trust Christ, there's a mind shift that happens. A shift of thinking, isn't it? We find a higher standard than this world in which we live.

[4 : 33] We have a new wavelength. A new mindset happens. Friends. So we're going to look a little about the truth of this verse. Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.

How do we think biblically? How do we get that? That new mindset? What does that even look like? That's what is called, really the important point here tonight, that's what is called a transformed mind.

God says, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. And the transformation, it begins here in between the ears, in the brain space, the mind.

It's a new way of thinking. God's word tells our mind can be renewed. It can be renewed. It gets transformed. When we trust Christ, we find a new way of thinking.

We think differently. We've changed channels. It's a new mental outlook. And the transformed mind, when you think about it, the transformed mind helps us to think biblically, to respond biblically, to relate biblically.

[5 : 42] How can we transform our minds, our thinking, such that it aligns with God's will, with his word? That's what we need, isn't it? Don't we?

That transformation. How do we have it? How can we know it more? How can we have that renewed mind, that mind shift that shifts from that perspective of not conforming to the world, but rather coming under God's will and following that?

How can we discern what is good and acceptable and perfect in his sight? How can we think biblically? So, just to whet your appetite, that's what we're going to get to.

How we can think biblically, we're going to unpack that a little more, a little later. But just to really relate the concept that there's two ways of thinking.

Two ways. There's two minds. There's the conforming of the mind to the way that the pack goes, the crowd goes, and there's the transformed mind.

[6 : 42] So, we're going to look more at that later, that transformed mind. We're going to look at that later. But firstly, let's look at the opposite for a time, the conformed mind.

And this is really, when you consider it, this is the mind that we all start with. We're born that way. We're born with a mind that conforms to the world. We're inclined to conform to the patterns, the thinking patterns of this world.

We tend to conform, to just go along with the consensus. It's kind of easier that way, isn't it? Just go with the flow. Conforming is a passive thing, isn't it?

We just let it happen. We let the world's influence shape our thinking. And honestly, we don't even realise it's happening, do we? When we think, the less that we're in this book, the less we're in the word, the more we're in the world.

And there's a battle between the word and the world. And if we're spending all of our time in the world's influence, it's no wonder that we're getting conformed.

[7 : 44] We don't even realise it's happening. It's happening all the time. And we can be just like the Joneses next door who don't know God. Because we're watching the same TV programming.

We're watching the same social media. We're entering into the same kind of concepts that the ungodly are conforming to. And so it's very easy for us, even as God's people, to not even realise it's happening to us, as saved people.

Because, friends, let me tell you, you're at war. We are at war. And when we think of war times, not that I'm really any great expert of such a thing.

I used to work in military intelligence, actually, in the Army Reserves, but it was only for a few weeks. And then I ended up moving interstate. So I was kind of sad that I didn't, because that would have been an interesting field to work in military intelligence.

But let me tell you that the devil is a master of propaganda, isn't he? You look at war times, what happens? There's a whole lot of propaganda that they're feeding.

[8 : 50] And it's happening now. There's various wars going on around the planet. And sometimes we only get one narrative. We get one stream of one view of they're the goodies and they're the baddies.

But we only hear the one side. It's a one-sided narrative, isn't it? And the devil is a master of propaganda. He uses all kinds of ways to shape people's opinions.

Basically, it's a conforming process. You know, they did that in World War II, didn't they? They had, what was her name? Some woman, wasn't it? Tokyo Rose. Tokyo Rose.

I know Peter knows all about it. It's that Lord Haw-Haw. Okay, Lord Haw-Haw. There you go. So they had English-sounding voices. They were cultured. But they were the enemy, broadcasting the enemy's narrative to the Allies, trying to shift popular opinion.

And when you think, there's that kind of propaganda process that's going on, without us even realising it. And basically, it's a conforming process. So let me talk a little bit along these terms, and then we'll get back to the word, to talk about this idea of conforming.

[9 : 57] And there's a whole load of psychological terms that we're going to just touch on tonight, to just kind of unpack that idea that, hey, there's a propaganda war going on right now.

And so there's a whole load of words, and we'll just talk through each of these different, you could call them kind of propaganda terms. And these are real terms.

This is real terminology. This is what happens in wartime, in warfare, in propaganda speak. So there's a propaganda term called entrainment. Entrainment.

Now, it happens like in mass rallies. You know, Hitler was a good proponent of entrainment, where it was all regimented, and there was marching, and there was lots of crowds, and lots of performance.

And it was all like a synchronisation. Now, you get that today, too, when you have people clapping in sync at a concert. You know?

[11 : 03] Entrainment. Entrainment. There's this sense where everybody's on the same wavelength, and they're singing from the same songbook, as it were.

This entrainment. So the whole group is moved in one direction. Entrainment. And it's possible for a mass delusion to happen. There's this term called mass formation psychosis.

I know there's some experts about that here amongst us. There's a sense where there's a large group of people forms a collective mindset. And that's what's happened with some of the government campaigns with this and that, where they move the whole mass of people to have a particular view.

And it could be something that's actually irrational or extreme behaviour, as in wearing masks, for example. Or, you know, everyone's got to conform. There's this kind of sense where this mass movement of a mass of population to all conform and to go with something that really doesn't actually make sense.

There's a kind of groupthink that happens, where people surrender their critical thinking to just go with the group mentality. This groupthink. So it could be anxiety in response to fear or propaganda.

[12 : 15] Again, you think of COVID times, there was a bit of that, I think. Even just as an observation, you could see there's this groupthink. And the mass hysteria, where there's sometimes misinformation.

But people get hypnotised because they're told this one story and they're told and told again. It's like when you listen to the media, climate change, climate change, climate change, climate change. You know, there's this sense where, oh, fear, trepidation, the sky's falling. This mass hysteria. This is what happens too in cults. There's this sense where there's a cultic, this emotional manipulation. So they exploit emotions like fear, guilt or love to control behaviour. In churches that have got this kind of authoritarian kind of controlling of manipulation, there's that happening.

There is that happening in churches, sadly. We're talking about conforming. That's the concept I'm talking about here. A conforming of minds. And so mind control is a reality. It can happen.

[13 : 20] Where there's this manipulation to shape beliefs and behaviours. So it aligns with the goals of the group or the leader. And a crowd can come under this authority figure or the media.

You see that, for example, in North Korea. There's this total, the whole population has got to bow down to this ultimate leader. And he has authority without question.

You see it in George Orwell's novel 1984. The Big Brother government. They had mass surveillance. And thought police, they called them. Thought police that would dictate what people could believe.

And they would suppress dissent and punish what they called thought crime. Thought crime. The act of thinking against the government. Of course, that's 1984. It's a novel.

But don't we see some of that? Some of these things. There's some of that government overreach at times. You know, in the UK, you can't pray silently, silently outside an abortion clinic.

[14 : 24] They'll lock you up. They'll drag you away and they'll throw the book at you. Just someone, there's media stories of this with a Christian woman just standing quietly like that.

And the policeman comes up and says, what are you doing? What are you thinking? What are you thinking? It's like, I'm just praying. I'm just praying silently in my head. Oh, you're not allowed to do that in this zone.

It's forbidden. They're boughten. You know, this is that kind of mind control. And we see that in this kind of mind control. It happens in authoritarian control of cults.

Where there's a compliance. You must comply. And if you don't comply, they show you the door. And there's this conforming of a mind, isn't it?

Another aspect is herd mentality. Where people join this cause and they want to conform to the actions or opinions of the majority. I guess it's human nature, isn't it?

[15 : 19] You want to fit in. You just go with what everyone thinks, what everyone does. And people join this cause and there's not this bandwagon effect. Everybody else is doing it.

I'll jump on the bandwagon too. Without thinking, actually, does that make sense? We could think, again, I don't mean to labour about COVID, but it's one example of where just everybody else is doing it.

Everybody else is getting it. I've just got to go along with it. It's just the bandwagon effect. So conformity, it happens by a social conditioning too. When we take on a group's norms, values, behaviours, media, education systems, all the information, disinformation, the peer pressure, such that it moves a population to do something which, actually, that doesn't actually make sense.

Propaganda. So I don't mean to labour this unduly, but there's this sense where there's a propaganda methodology. And propaganda can take really many different kinds of forms.

And it uses these emotionally appealing phrases like freedom or hope. You see that in the posters that were out there for Obama when he was standing. Just had a face of Obama with the word hope underneath it.

[16 : 32] They wanted to give this impression that to vote for Obama was going to bring hope. And so it garnered support there. And we see that he used those buzzwords.

And cults and cultic groups can use a brainwashing, a manipulation, conforming minds. We see the news media. Friends, the news media is controlled.

It's curated. It's curated. You see some media examples of that where it shows a news report from one station. And it's actually many, many stations.

They're repeating and parroting the same words. Because it's all fed by the same controlling mechanism that's behind it. So the media is very controlled itself.

And we think of cults. They use information control. They restrict people's access to information, to different perspectives, to shape perception and suppress dissent.

[17 : 28] Information control. Jehovah's Witnesses use that. I've heard that they can't read a gospel tract. They think that's more harmful than pornography. For a Jehovah's Witness to receive a gospel tract or information that's outside of what the watchtower gives them.

Information control. Information control. They don't want to hear anything different. So as a church, we don't mind people getting information. We want to be discerning about that.

But it's not like a control, like a cult would have. And cults use indoctrination. So they have this system where they indoctrinate people such that there's unquestioning acceptance.

What the minister says...