

MENTAL ATTITUDE SIN

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INTRODUCTION

Think about the wonder of heaving clean pure and unpolluted thoughts. What joy would that be! Here is a unique lecture on Mental Attitude sin. Throughout church history the church has mostly focused on physical and visible sins. But the Bible encourages us to focus on mental or unseen sins. We want to begin by just giving you some Bible verses, some Bible input that I believe will help you to get the picture.

I. FOCUSING ON MENTAL ATTITUDE SIN

A. The Word of God Judges the attitudes of our heart

We will begin with a verse from Hebrews 4:12, *“The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any double edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joint and marrow, it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”* Mental attitude sin.

B. Guard your heart

Proverbs 4:23, *“Above all else guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”*

C. Stinginess is a mental sin

We are talking about the stingy man. And it says, *“Do not eat the food of a stingy man, do not crave his delicacies, for he is the kind of man who is always thinking about the cost.”* Proverbs 23:6-8.

D. Evil comes from within

Mark 7:15-23 tells us some words Jesus gave on this topic. *“Nothing outside a man can make him unclean by going in him, rather it is what comes out of a man that makes him unclean.”* After He had left the crowd, and entered the house, His disciples asked him about this parable. ‘Are you so dull,’ He asks, *“don’t you*



see that nothing that enters a man from outside can make him unclean? For it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and then out of his body.” Verse 20, “He went on, “What comes out of a man is what makes him unclean, for from within out of man’s hearts come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these evils come from within and make a man unclean.”

What a long list. What a picture Jesus painted here. And they are all things you can’t see. And yet in the history of the church generally churches have measured outward actions, not the inward mental attitude sins.

The apostles give us a further picture on this. Romans 1:29,30, “They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, and depravity. They’re full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They’re gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, and boastful. They even invent ways of doing evil. They disobey their parents. They’re senseless, faithless, heartless, and ruthless.”

E. Lovers of themselves

In 2 Timothy 3:2 Paul says it in a different way, “People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.”

F. People are full of evil

And notice that in some of the places Paul said, “They are full of, or filled with.” Now for many of us that is not the case. You wouldn’t be here if that was the case. But is there a drop left in the bucket? Is there something left in the bottom of your soul?

G. Get rid of every kind of evil

Ephesians 4:31, “Get rid of all bitterness, rage, and anger, brawling, and slander, along with every form of malice.” Colossians 3:5, “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed which is idolatry.” So Paul already told us to get rid of it. Now he tells us to put it to death. You have these cockroaches in your life. Put them to death! Squelch.... In Colossians 3:8 he said, “But now you must rid yourself of all such things, these things; anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips, do not lie to each other.”



H. Desire the fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22 gives us a list. There again he has been talking about evil things in just a few previous verses. And here he gives us the opposite picture. The fruit of the Spirit is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”

I. Out of the heart the mouth speaks

Matthew 12:34, “You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil out of the evil stored up in him.”

II. HOW ARE MENTAL ATTITUDE SINS CREATED?

A. Air Castles

Mental attitude sins are built around air castles. We have air castles built around ourselves. Around who we like to be. Around whom we think we really are. But because of sin those air castles are not in reality with the way it is in life.

B. Pride

These air castles are usually much bigger and more glorified than what we really are. So most of these things center on an element of pride. A couple other words for pride are heady, or high-minded. You just will portray yourself a little bit better than you are. And that's why we are easily offended, when other people don't recognize us as a director , or people don't recognize that we have been to training workshops.

III.TWO TYPES OF SINS

There are two types of sins: sins of the mind, and sins of the body. They are related. The sins of the body are obvious or visible. But the sins of the mind we don't see.

SINS OF THE MIND	SINS OF THE BODY
<p>Love of self. 1 John 2:15-17, <i>“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boasting of what he has and does, comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”</i> Three things mentioned here; cravings, desires, lusts. Just on the spur of the moment being emotionally involved in an action.</p> <p>Love of self is a sin of the mind. Now, we're talking about love of self, not loving oneself. We need to have a certain self-esteem and healthy love for ourselves, or we cannot even love other people at all. But love of self is a selfish love. How is that expressed in sins of the body that we can see and recognize?</p>	<p>Boasting. He is telling everybody how good he is, how good he does, what he's accomplished. We are talking about bragging. Some of this may be true, but we are talking about his attitude about these things. With boasting we have another sin of the body.</p> <p>Deceit. Part of the love of self comes in the form of deceit. So because he loves himself, he boasts and deceives people. In your Center there is a nice row of files. When a leader comes he thinks, "Wow, is this nice." Until he opens them and finds out there is nothing in. What was the idea? The idea was that the leader would say, "Boy, are you a good administrator." So, it was love of self.</p>
<p>Love of sex</p> <p>In other words we may call that lust. Lust. This is a sin of the mind. With our mind we dwell on sex. We dwell on joys of seeing somebody else's body. We may just dwell on, well, wanting to think about it, wanting to see some of these things, without being found out; the element of adventure is there. How does that portray itself in sins of the body?</p>	<p>Fornication</p> <p>Young men and women who are playing the field to indulge themselves sexually. Engaging in sex to fulfill their own lustful desires.</p> <p>Adultery Married person exploring sexual acts outside of his/her marriage. Enjoying extra marital affairs for the thrill of it.</p> <p>Deceit — Because you wouldn't want your wife to find out that you've been looking at these book tables in the street. Or you don't want to tell your wife the real reason you like going to the beach. So, that deceit element comes with that.</p>

SINS OF THE MIND	SINS OF THE BODY
<p>The love of power</p> <p>That's a mental attitude sin. This sin is very subtle and comes very easily to Christian leaders. Now some of you have become leaders in certain areas. Fortunately becoming a director and administrator is difficult. There are a lot of struggles with it. Therefore not too many of you are thinking, "Oh boy, I got it now." Maybe there are a number of you thinking, "What have I gotten myself into?" However that is only because it is just the beginning. Look at the attitudes of some of your church leaders, pastors and provincial superintendents, and how they do some things, and you know it is because they want power or they are afraid of losing it.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>In leadership pride slowly comes in. You accept it, assume it, people give it to you.</p> <p>After a while you demand it, you expect it, you need it, you cannot do without it. You have a problem.</p>	<p>Show of great prowess — as showing one's superior strength. It is a major element in boxing matches and other physical sports that feeds this love of being the best, the greatest, the strongest or most powerful in their specialty. There are many testimonies of disappointment and emptiness upon reaching the very top.</p> <p>Exercise undue authority –exemplifies desire to rule or boss others around. To control others. Extraordinary desires to influence others as exhibited by many entertainers and movie stars who seem hopelessly addicted to the need of admiration and applause from the crowds.</p> <p>Places of church leadership and spiritual influence. -</p> <p>Often desires to attain high spiritual positions are marred by the love of power and esteem these positions bring. Attainment of the desired position often brings with it a reversal of roles by which the pastor or other leader is being served rather than doing the service. He subtly enjoys his elevated state, and church members, basing their views on worldly situations, accept it as normal to serve him. Spiritually however it brings devastating results.</p>
<p>The love of money</p> <p>Love of money is another mental attitude sin. It is shown in covetousness. You can see that a person covets things, that he desires things. But to exactly pinpoint that, in his mind or in his heart, it is the love of money, that is hard for him and it is hard for you.</p>	<p>Theft — Honesty and theft have been two of the biggest problems that western missions have found among the church leaders . Somebody may give them money to build a children's home. A year later there is no children's home but there is a nice new church. There is a church not a children's home.</p>
<p>Love of pleasure –</p> <p>An unusual delight in pleasure. An addicted feeling of satisfaction by which one gives himself/herself over to continual amusement and enjoyment.</p>	<p>Reveling — participating in noisy excessive celebrations centered around self-indulgence. A constant seeking of merry-making and wild, noisy, uncontrolled behavior.</p> <p>Incontinence. — Without self-restraint leading into sexual activities. People Incapable of containing themselves, no self-control.</p>
<p>Anger — Feelings of strong displeasure and hostility, mixed with resentment and desires for revenge.</p>	<p>Clamor- To make strong public demands and complaints. To cry out demanding and complaining noisily like a child throwing a tantrum. With loud and uproarious outcries like hitting the table with his fists he insists on his rights.</p>
<p>Wrath — Intense anger or rage. Any action carried out in great anger especially for punishment or vengeance.</p>	<p>Strife — A particular person has a negative feeling, and no matter what you do with that person, he is always having an argument with somebody.</p>
<p>Hatred — Having a strong dislike or ill will toward a person or thing. To dislike or wishing to avoid, shrink back from</p>	<p>Emulation –Because of a focus of hatred, a person tends to act like the person they hate and have many of the same problems and qualities they dislike in that person, even though they may be acted out in different ways. The son of an alcoholic father may become a drug user. The daughter of a lazy mother may become a workaholic. A student with a strong dislike towards his brother who is in a secular University may at all costs try to surpass all other students in his group.</p>

SINS OF THE MIND	SINS OF THE BODY
<p>Bitterness — May be defined as holding grudges. It may cause or show sorrow and pain characterized by hatred and resentment.</p>	<p>Variance — which means to be in conflict. To be a disagreeable person. Bitterness eating away at a person causes them to look on the negative side of everything and everybody until their whole life is characterized by this. Because he is bitter over terrible childhood experiences a student may disagree with the Marriage course. Because of rejection by a large church a church planter may insist on conducting large group meetings and reject the small group principles. Because of mistreatment by a previous employer a quarrelsome coach does not submit himself and insists on using his own conflicting methods.</p>
<p>Jealousy or Envy — A feeling of discontent or resentment and ill will because another has advantages or possessions, etc that one would like to have. A person may be suspicious or worried that someone is taking the love and attention he has or wants. A worker may have such feelings when his disciples leave for paid education.</p>	<p>Gossip — A person who chatters idly and repeats rumors. He indulges in idle talk or rumors about others. For instance a coach may enjoy sharing negative information about a stationary program. He keeps bringing up little negative things at inappropriate times. He repeats unfounded rumors to harm this other Christian ministry.</p>
<p>Malice — (They are different sides of the same coin.) It implies a deep hatred or dislike causing one to get pleasure from hurting others or seeing them suffer. Ill will implies unfriendly feelings that lead one to wish harm or unhappiness to others. Spite means to desire to get back at others by hurting or annoying them.</p>	<p>Accusations — false accusers. A team member who continually find fault and blames his leaders or co-workers. He may bring formal charges or accusations based on falsehoods or misconceptions. Perhaps he may be vindictive for some perceived mistreatment which he suffered.</p>
<p>Implacability — One that cannot be made calm or peaceful. He has no pity and becomes harsh, strict or stubborn and does not want to soften. He persistently goes on his evil way.</p>	<p>Murder — You can do nothing with that person to satisfy him or pacify him, he must have revenge. A person whose nature and characteristics are bent on destruction and brutality. Very dangerous like a wolf in sheep's clothing</p>
<p>Unthankful — A person who is not grateful like a student who deserves a 3 but is given a 4 and goes away complaining he did not get a 5 in the course. He is thankless and unappreciative. This is a major difficulty among our Christian brothers and sisters. It shows itself in wrong attitudes towards shipments of humanitarian aid and other forms of help.</p>	<p>An evil eye - Without a spirit of gratefulness a person can develop a negative, even evil, intent towards others whom they think have something better or something more. They begin to wish evil on other people. People who in the past have suffered extreme poverty may hoard material goods for themselves and reject helping other poor people. Believers living under dictatorial governments may take unlawful advantages of government funds reasoning that the government has withheld from them the normal privileges of life.</p>

CONCLUSION

I think for leaders there is a time to think about these issues. We must guard our heart. We must take care to have a clean mind, a pure mind. And satan is never going to let up. He is going to try to come in your life one way or another. "Eve" is there. There is a tree with all kind of good fruit out there. They are the secret whispers. The thought, the look, the reach, is not so very far away.

We are so quick and rash to judge others. So quick to condemn, but the Bible says to be quick to hear and slow to speak. Listen, then think and meditate and speak less critically. Often our first impulse is to think negatively about a brother. Wrong and evil thoughts about others come almost automatically but the Bible says don't judge. Guard your own heart and soul. David did that. Read the Psalms and you too can become a man after God's own heart.

As leaders we must learn to feed ourselves on the Word of God, obey it completely, recognize sin and put a stop to it. Martin Luther said, "You cannot keep birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest there." **You have that power.** Something happens and you recognize it. "Hmmm. This is not

a pure thought. A pure feeling. A pure motive. Now you know Lord Jesus I don't really want that. Take that desire away and keep me pure for you." Develop a desire for purity, remembering that the pure in heart will see God.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

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Practical assignment

Completed

- Review the list of the sins of the mind and how they are played out in the sins of the body. Write down the three that you struggle with the most. Pray and ask the Lord for His help to remove these sins from your life. Find out what the Bible says about these sins, then memorize a verse to help you resist temptation in these areas.
- Look at the fruit of the Spirit and choose the ones which are opposite of the sins that you struggle with. Memorize a verse or passage dealing with each of these fruits of the Spirit.
- Bring a written record of your work to the next meeting.