

How I Think Matters

Most of us know the story of that dear Little Engine that could. Can you imagine how that story would have gone if he had a different train of thought (pun definitely intended!)? What if it looked more like, “I won’t fail; I won’t fail; I won’t quit; I won’t quit.” Wait, that’s the same concept.....right?

I had a professor in Bible College who decided one day to teach on something other than New Testament Survey (happened quite a bit actually!). We were going through one of the books in the New Testament and he got onto talking about our thoughts. How we think often dictates our actions, but probably more than what we already realize.

He gave an example of walking towards the Prize (Jesus) and saying out loud, “I won’t trip, I won’t trip, I won’t trip, etc., etc.” Then turned to us and said, “What do you think I’m most likely going do?” The answer: trip.

Why? It’s where his focus was at. Yes, it was to NOT trip, but he was so focused on not tripping, that it happened. He wasn’t thinking the opposite alternative: to just walk and keep his focus on Jesus.

Oh, there are so many days when I think to myself, “I will not lose my temper today!” “I will not yell today!” “I will not be lazy today.” Guess what happens? I lose my temper with my kids, get frustrated and yell at something stupid like my cat or computer...or the kids and I just let the laundry sit in the baskets, not folding them; dishes in the sink....cuz I don’t want to do it. HA!

A few months ago, as I was talking to God about how I hate yelling at my kids, and how lazy I can be, He brought to memory the lesson my professor taught.

I felt He was telling me he wanted to renew my train of thought from one of “I’m NOT” to one of “I’m GOING TO.”

“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect” (Romans 12:2).

He wants to renew my mind so I can be a better parent, wife, friend and believer. The way we think is so crucial in how we act and react to different situations.

Example: instead of thinking, “I will NOT yell” and placing my focus on yelling (which is what’s really happening with that train of thought), I begin to think, “I will BE

PATIENT and LOVING and KIND in my responses” which changes my outward reactions towards my kids. Do you see what I am saying?

This way of thinking can be used in practically every area of our lives. To be clear, I’m not turning into one of those “If you think, it will be” motivational speakers. I just know what the Word says about how my thoughts affect the way I talk, act and react, and how I should go about putting what I have learned into practice.

According to Ephesians 4:21-24, I need to throw off my OLD sinful nature and FORMER way of life and let the Spirit RENEW my thoughts and attitudes.

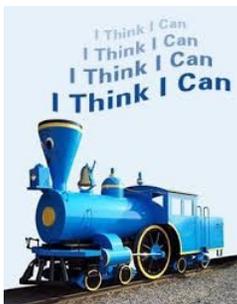
With that being said, I need to allow God to train me on how to think, so that I can be a better mother, wife and woman of God. Things I already want to be. Thank goodness for His infinite wisdom and willingness to train us!! Now I just need to be teachable in return.

So now “I think I can; I think I can; I think I can” and I CAN! Thanks to Jesus and Holy Spirit. I know it will take some time as we constantly and daily learn about new areas that God wants to renew and make more like Him.

Thankfully, along with wanting to renew our minds, thoughts and attitudes from our old sinful nature, He also gives us the means and access to Him in order to accomplish just that. It’s through Him and Him alone that we can be renewed. Yay God!

“Father, thank you so much for loving me like you do. For not only sending your Son to take on my sin and shame, but to take on my entire human, sinful nature so that I can have the opportunity to know You more and become more and more like You. Please renew my thoughts and attitudes so that I can learn to love as you love, and act/react through that love and new mind. I love You.”

Esther Cobb
(yep....Gina’s wonderful daughter-in-law)



Philippians 4:4-9 (NLT)

4 Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! 5 Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon. 6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. 7 Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. 8 And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. 9 Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

Ephesians 4:21-24 (NLT)

21 Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, 22 throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. 23 Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. 24 Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.