



Series: "Wholesome Thinking"

Study #1

The Issues Of The Heart

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

It is said that when Carl Jung, the great psychoanalyst, met the chief of the native people in Taos Pueblo in New Mexico in 1925, the chief told Jung his people felt that the Whites were mad—uneasy, restless, always wanting something. When asked why he thought they were mad, the chief replied that it was because they thought with their heads, a sure sign of mental illness among his tribe. When Jung asked him how he thought, the chief pointed to his heart.

While the chief's words are to be respected, the truth set forth in the Scriptures is that what we are on the outside is a manifestation of what we are on the inside. External experiences do not determine internal experiences. Rather, inward thoughts prompt and incite outward actions. As a very well known leader in our country once commented, "The heart of a fool is in his mouth, but the mouth of a wise man is in his heart" (Benjamin Franklin).

Before the great flood of Noah's day, it was said that "... every imagination of the thoughts ... of man's heart was only evil continually." Therefore, "... the wickedness of man was great in the earth" (Gen. 6:5). The real issue is the condition of the heart! We have heard much about "the battle of the mind." It appears, however, that this battle is in the heart. Prior to examining our thoughts in this study, let us consider the origin of our thoughts.

A wise man by the name of Solomon talked of the issues of the heart! His first words about this matter were, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). Further indicating that what one thinks reveals what one is, he explained, "The thoughts of the righteous are right: But the counsels of the wicked are deceit" (Prov. 12:5). Understanding the heart matter, in our key-text he exhorted, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

A wonderful man by the name of Paul testified of the issues of the heart! The great Apostle said much about thinking in his epistles. One insight in the Roman letter was, "... to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6). Similarly, in another writing he explained that when there is darkness and blindness in the heart, uncleanness is witnessed in the life (see Eph. 4:18, 19).

A worthy man by the name of Jesus taught of the issues of the heart! The God-Man Himself stated, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matt. 12:35). On another occasion, the Savior said, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart" (Matt. 15:18). With this truth before us, may we yearn for pure hearts and pure thoughts.