

Think for Yourself

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BICOG Publication

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published by the British-Israel Church of God.]**

Think for Yourself

God has given man a mind to think and reason. Most people however in this world are blind sheep following what the majority thinks and does. Religious people are also brain washed into following a man, and have that man make every decision for them, and these people get so used to this that they need to be led in every decision that they make. Does God want this for us? Or does God wants us to be free thinkers-free to choose right or wrong, of our likes and dislikes?

I always tell people when they walk into a church to do three vital things:

1. Think
2. Think
3. Think

One must not lose their own personal sovereignty to no one-You are your own person. Even salvation itself is personal, "work out *your own* salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil 2:12). Salvation is *in no one's hands but yours and God's*-a covenant between two parties of their own free will.

Religious Tyrants

Unfortunately, many people do not try to think and reason when it comes to religion. Many people feel that the pastor or priest up there knows a lot more than all the people in the audience listening to him therefore they let the professionals think for them.

But that's the lighter side, what of these cults and sects like Jim Jones, the Wacko from Waco Texas, where their believers were so brainwashed that these leaders actually led them to suicide, and fighting government forces. These people literally put their lives into the hands of a man who was just looking for his own way of control and power over other human beings.

The Muslim and Hindu world are full of these types of human beings. Gurus, Imams, Mullahs all out for control and power, all in the name of religion.

Even the religion of Atheism-the Communist control of Russia, China, and others led to the death of millions of lives, due to the brainwashing tactics of the Communist to squash and kill anyone that was against them that almost led to Nuclear war with the West.

What of the Nazi's of World War Two? This was started by one demoniacal fanatic idiot who thought that he was some sort of a Christ like figure. He said he was the savior of Germany and spoke of a 1000 year Reich-and was going to produce a super race; and millions followed that man to the result of 50 million people losing their lives.

Why did these things happen? People lost the ability to think for themselves and blindly followed any man that would solve their problems.

The problem with this is, people are looking *to flawed men and women* for the solutions to their problems; instead of looking to that being who is the creator of all, who knows how things

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function in a human beings heart and mind; that being is flawless and that is God Almighty and his Son Jesus Christ! They are "without sin." They know how human being ought to work and function. They are the ones who actually created and promote free thinking, free choice, personal sovereignty, logic and reason.

Humans Created to be *like* God.

The Bible says that Almighty God created man in his own likeness and image (Gen 1:26).

Hebrews 11:3 says, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Out of nothing God created. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen 1:1).

All one has to do is look at the creation with all its systems, laws, design etc...What a thinker!

When you consider that we are created in his image, he has also given man the ability to think, reason and plan. A great thinker has vision (Proverbs 29:18), they plan and prepare, they consider the consequences that will follow each action. Man has the same ability to do what God does in a limited way.

God also *chooses* to be good *always*, it's his nature to do so. He chooses to do good continually because he knows the other alternative is evil, destruction and death. So God has free choice. He thinks freely and knows what is right and wrong and chooses the right.

Now many people say, "You better believe I think for myself! No one is going to tell me what to do." But there is a difference between doing what you *want*, or feel like doing, and *learning* to think for yourself! Most people today do what they feel like doing, therefore **DO NOT THINK!** To do whatever you want is ***not thinking***-but careless living with no planning, preparing, and calculating the risk and consequences of your actions. That is not thinking like God. And to think like God is no easy task it requires a change.

Paul said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.*

"And *be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Rom 12:1-2). Paul says not to follow the *non-thinking* world but to *renew* your mind and think like God. It's in man's nature to follow the crowd (Ex 23:2), but God is a thinker, and wants you to be one as well.

Notice what 2 Corinthians 10:5 says, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself *against* the knowledge of God, *and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*" God wants people to control their thoughts and choose the right way of thinking. **Think!** does *God takes you just the way you are.* Satan has everyone deceived into thinking that you can do whatever you want and you will be saved. **Think!** Is that true? Or does God want you to *renew* your thinking and become like him a *true* free thinker, a Sovereign

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human being that can think, act, produce, reason and plan independently without anyone holding your hand for every choice you make, knowing you will make the right choice!

God has free choice so do you

Jesus Christ when he was on the earth chose Good over evil even though he was tempted by it, "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted... For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin." (Heb 2:18; 4:15). Jesus Christ chose righteousness over sin. God told Israel to "choose life" (Deut 30:19). God chose Israel as his nation. God chose Jerusalem as his capital. God chose Saul, then David as his king. God chooses, and God has given us that very same power.

When one chooses, it is not *blind* choice, but, "*Prove all things*; hold fast that which is good." (1 Thess 5:21). Prove all things to yourself and hold fast to the good things.

Barnes writes, "A man who has applied the proper tests, and has found out what is truth, is bound to *embrace* it and to hold it fast. He is not at liberty to throw it away, as if it were valueless; or to treat truth and falsehood alike. It is a duty which he owes to himself and to God to adhere to it firmly, and to suffer the loss of all things rather than to abandon it. There are few more important rules in the New Testament than the one in this passage. It shows what is the true nature of Christianity, and it is a rule whose practical value cannot but be felt constantly in our lives. *Other religions require their votaries to receive everything upon trust; Christianity asks us to examine everything.*

"Error, superstition, bigotry, and fanaticism attempt to repress free discussion, by saying that there are certain things which are too sacred in their nature, or which have been too long held, or which are sanctioned by too many great and holy names, to permit their being subjected to the scrutiny of common eyes, or to be handled by common hands. *In opposition to all this, Christianity requires us to examine everything - no matter by whom held; by what councils ordained; by what venerableness of antiquity sustained; or by what sacredness it may be invested. We are to receive no opinion until we are convinced that it is true; we are to be subjected to no pains or penalties for not believing what we do not perceive to be true; we are to be prohibited from examining no opinion which our fellow-men regard as true, and which they seek to make others believe. No popular current in favor of any doctrine; no influence which name and rank and learning can give it, is to commend it to us as certainly worthy of our belief. By whomsoever held, we are to examine it freely before we embrace it; but when we are convinced that it is true, it is to be held, no matter what current of popular opinion or prejudice maybe against it; no matter what ridicule may be poured upon it; and no matter though the belief of it may require us to die a martyr's death.*" (emphasis added).

God challenges the skeptic to look into the Bible and prove it to yourself, and when one is convinced, we are to choose Good-it is not blind faith, but *real* faith. Throughout Scripture, God asks us to think, to consider, to contemplate. Proverbs is full of exhortations to the many who makes wise decisions. The book of Romans apparently is used in Law Schools in America to demonstrate how to construct a logical argument.

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Christianity proclaims itself as a logical, rational, convincing truth. It invites the skeptic, the critic, and the scoffer to ponder. Many of such people have done so and come to faith in Christ, notably Josh McDowell and Lee Strobel, among many others.

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Almighty God wants us to be a person that does not need his or her hand held on every decision one makes. Yes we are to depend on God especially for impossible situations. We are to rely on him for our salvation, to give us strength for overcoming in this life. We depend on him for healing and other things that are out of our control. But what of the things that are in our control? Can we not base on biblical principles and biblical law things in our life and to think for ourselves?

We must be independent-I don't mean what the world means, to basically rebel against society and governments and needing help from no one. In this case I mean having a task to achieve or a job to do, and you are left on your own *after you have been trained to do it without any help*. Like being employed in a company, being trained and then off working on your own without any assistance.

Jesus Christ of Nazareth trained his 12 disciples with the knowledge of God, they had the Bible, and left them to do the work of God. The Lord build the house, he designed it, and he trained the disciples to keep it and build on it. Jesus was its architect, and gave them the instructions.

Notice what Jesus says in his parable, "*For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.*" (Matthew 25:14). Jesus is likened unto a person who travels far off and gives his "goods" to his servants, the church of God. Notice it's God's church, his goods, he built it, and the church is to maintain it, and make it grow, as the next verses reveal.

"And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; ***to every man according to his several ability***; and straightway took his journey.

"Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents.

"And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two.

"But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money." (vv.15-18). The Lord gave according to one's ability, and took his journey. He left them to maintain the church and to multiply. They were left on their own, they were trained by God, supplied by God with the holy spirit (see Philippians 1:9; 4:19) and they had the instructions, they knew what they were doing. Just like any company with employees, they are provided for with a place to work, supplies to work with, training and instructions. And the Lord knew who was more qualified to get more or less, like an employer who knows who has more experience and skills and so have more or less responsibilities to give.

Today in the church of God, this lacks. People have been so used to everything being done for them, and just "waiting it out till the Lord comes," most belong in the one talent category where they just dig into the earth and do nothing with the gift the Lord has given them. The Church of

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God is imploding, instead of expanding and growing. Paul said, "but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;" (1Thess 4:10).

How do we increase? With the tools and instructions Jesus has given us! And with the holy spirit God has supplied us with. Paul said, "For *we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building*" (1 Corinth 3:9). We labor! We work for the company called the Church of God, Jesus being the boss of that company! A Christian is supposed to labor, not sit on the sidelines and wait for the Lord to come. We are to produce for the Lord, and increase for his kingdom to come.

Paul continues, "and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." (1 Corinth 3:8). At the latter end of that parable, Jesus gives them rewards for their work and says, "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

"And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, *I have gained beside them five talents more.*

"His lord said unto him, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

"He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, *I have gained two other talents beside them.*

"His lord said unto him, *Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

"Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

"And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

"His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

"Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

"Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

"For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 25:19-30). Jesus hates unprofitability. We must be productive, as Jesus said,

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, *that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*" (John 15:16). If we need anything when we work, God will provide it, because "for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5). We must listen and be instructed and give reverence to the boss, the head of the church which is Jesus Christ. In any company rebelling against the authority will only get you fired and then how can one live?

1 Corinthians 3:4-9 is the same Message

The Apostle Paul spoke of the work in the same manner as Jesus did. He spoke of the different functions that they had in the church of God. People were holding them up as highly ranked in the church of God, and that they were of great importance. Paul said, "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

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"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, *but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?*" (vv.4-5). God has given to his church ministers according to their ability as Jesus said, "Whatever difference there may be in our talents, it is of God's making; and he who knows best what is best for his Church, has distributed both gifts and graces according to his own mind;" (Clarke's Commentary).

Then Paul said, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

"So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." (vv.6-7). Since the people were proclaiming Paul and others as great ones in the church, Paul said that they weren't "anything." Now this did not mean that what they were doing was not important in the sight of God; the context means *"This is to be taken comparatively. They are nothing in comparison with God!* Their agency is of no importance *compared with his:* see the note at 1Cor 1:28. It does not mean that their agency ought not to be performed; *that it is not important,* and indispensable in its place; but that the *honor is due to God - Their agency is indispensable.*" (Barnes Notes, emphasis added).

What does it mean that God "giveth the increase"? Notice the context of the three verses, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

"So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

"Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward [Grk. "misthos" Strong's 3408 "wages"] according to his own labour." (vv.6-8).

The next verse explains it further, "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are God's building*" (v.9). The church of God are co-workers together *with* God, meaning, "It is literally, not we are his co-partners, but we are his fellow-laborers, *that is, fellow-laborers in his employ, under his direction - as we say of servants of the same rank they are fellow-laborers of the same master, not meaning that the master was engaged in working with them, but that they were fellow-laborers one with another in his employment.*" (Barnes notes, emphasis added). It all about employment. God "giveth the increase" means God *gives from the increase* that has been accumulated, to *his workers*, "every man shall receive his own reward [Grk. "misthos" Strong's 3408 "wages"] according to his own labour." They produced fruit as Christ said they were to do-growing in grace and Knowledge (2 Peter 3:18), the fruits of righteousness, his law which is the way of salvation!

Jesus said, "...The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, *that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.*" (Luke 10:2). Pray, Jesus said that God would employ people to work the harvest which is the world. So little in the church of God have taken up this task that the "Labourers are few." Let's pray that more people will be engaged in the work of God and labor into the harvest of the world, and receives the wages of eternal life.

As a result of their labor, the Lord "...added to the church daily such as should be saved... And believers were the more *added* to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)" (Acts 2:47; 5:14). Acts 2:47 should read, "And the Lord added daily to those who were saved" (Clarke's Commentary). God was rewarding them because of their labor increasing in the "fruits" of

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"righteousness" (see 2 Corinthians 9:10; Philippians 1:11). Righteousness is God's law (Psalm 119:172) which is the way of salvation; God gives the increase.

As for Acts 5:14 as well as Acts 11:24 that says, "For he [Barnabas] was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was *added unto the Lord*." The church increased, profits were up, as it says they were "added *unto the Lord*" God was getting richer with every new convert due to the work of God that was being done as Paul said he wanted the church to do increase more and more. More and more people were being hired by God to work in his company. The Apostles did the work of preaching the Gospel, more people heard the calling came to Christ, met with the boss, Jesus, in prayer, and decided to work for him under the contract of the Covenant, became baptized, and received the Holy Spirit and are now co-workers with the church members under the master Jesus Christ to produce more profits for the Lord.

So the work of God is important; without people doing it how can the church increase?

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? *and how shall they hear without a preacher?*

"And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

"But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." (Romans 10:14-18).

Use Reason and Logic

When one studies the Bible, and wants to find out the truth of God, many people tend to throw their brains out at the door when it comes to religion.

God pleaded with Israel, "Come now, *and let us reason together*, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah 1:18). Israel was not being reasonable, they slid into such sins that reason was out the window, Israel was determined to kill herself, and God was trying to show them the error of their ways.

Paul also when he confronted the Jews, "...went in unto them, and three sabbath days *reasoned* with them out of the scriptures," (Acts 17:2). Paul through the Bible with logic and with common sense demonstrated the fact that Jesus was the Messiah.

The Bereans also, "...in that they received the word with *all readiness of mind*, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11). With an open mind received the word of God, and searched the scriptures to see if these things were true. That one can defend and demonstrate the truth with all logic and reason.

God wants us to use logic and reason. Job said, "Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to *reason* with God." (13:3)

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Again, "Put me in remembrance, *let us plead together*; declare thou, that thou mayest be justified"; (Isa 43:26). In the end, when one uses logic, common sense and reason, one will come to realize and demonstrate the fact that God exists, the Bible is his word; Jesus is the very Son of God that died for the sins of the world, and prophecy proves that Bible is true as does history archaeology, and the law of God itself proves that God is real.

How to think for yourself

God was pleased with Solomon when Solomon asked for wisdom above anything else. This shows that God desires us to be wise, which implies thinking. And "Be wise as serpents, gentle as doves", "Test the spirits to see if they are true", "Examine yourself to see if you are in the faith". Scripture is chock full of directions to think, examine, and reason.

First one must have a foundation, and that foundation is the word of God itself, "The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his* commandments: his praise endureth for ever." (Psalm 111:10). After using reason and logic to demonstrate to yourself that the Bible is true, then the foundation can be laid to think for yourself. With the knowledge of God-his commandments as your base, one can know what is right and what is wrong and then *knowing* to choose the right way when a situation comes.

One must remember that you-you alone have *control* over your thoughts. You control what you think about. The Bible says, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, *think on these things*." (Philippians 4:8). You have control over your mind and thoughts, and to choose to set your mind on the good things, one must focus on these things.

Colossians 3:1-2 says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, *seek* those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. "

To "seek" means:

"1) to seek in order to find

1a) to seek a thing

1b) to seek [in order to find out] by thinking, meditating, reasoning, to enquire into" (Thayers).

The things of God, one must choose to set their mind on them, by thinking, reasoning, enquiring. Just as we can choose what to eat, or what to read, or when to get up, or "which dreams to pursue, which job to seek after, which friends to associate" with, or which woman or man to marry, so we can control which images or thoughts WE ALLOW OUR MINDS TO DWELL ON.

God intended our thoughts to govern our actions. You can either set your mind to steer the ship or you can let it drift aimlessly in an ocean where Satan reigns supreme Most in this world choose the latter and then try at the last minute to steer in order to avoid the approaching crash-finding, in most cases, that it is too late.

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If you continue reading Colossians 3, Paul lists several things on which you should and should not be thinking. It's all in an effort to "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (v. 10). We become like God when we learn to think on the things He thinks upon.

Create also a suitable environment for thinking.

In Today's society ones thinking can become corrupt and one's mind can become full of lies deceit and sins. If one does not guard the door to their minds, one can become used to sin, and "having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:2), meaning "The cauterized part becomes rigid and hard, *and is dead to sensibility.*" (Barnes Notes, emphasis added).

Paul said, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall *keep* your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). God's peace his law (Psalm 119:165) and we must "keep" meaning "guard," that is what the word "keep" means in this passage (see Strong's #5432), your mind from evil. Meditate on his ways and laws and your mind will not wander from it. "O how love I thy law! *it is my meditation all the day.*" (Psalm 119:97). This is how we guard of minds, by focusing on God's laws, the things that are good, true and decent.

After this a renewing of your mind must begin to happen, and one must not get back into the same old habits of non-thinking which leads to sin. But it's more than just avoiding certain things which constantly pour out negative images. We have to then *practice* thinking about what's right setting our affection on things above, as Paul said. Strive for a healthy, well balanced life to improve the quality of your thought production. Developing a thoughtful and creative mind is impossible if our mind becomes dull because of too much or too little sleep; too much or too little exercise; too much, or the wrong kind of food.

The Christian must be one who produces, is active, and one who can think for him or herself under the *auspices* of Jesus Christ. If one does this success, peace and prosperity will come, and this person will *not* drift aimlessly in life with no purpose whatsoever like most people in this world. A fulfilling life for the Christian will be there for them.

One Final Note

Many in the church of God have often asked the ministers to make decisions for them on many small matters that should not be up to the minister but by their own personal choice. Ministers have been asked if certain colors are alright to wear, and things like this. People do have personal likes and dislikes that they can choose or not choose without a ministers help. Paul said, "for where no law is, *there is* no transgression" (Rom 4:15). The color of a dress, shoes, certain styles of suits or pants, these things whatever your personal choice and style is you can choose to pick for yourself without the need of a minister, or friend, unless you want their opinion, but ultimately the choice is yours, Think for yourself!