Thoughts on Education (Part 1 & 2)

Summary

If we're the most educated, most prosperous society in history, why are the underlying social problems only getting worse? This two-part essay traces the flaw back to the very "first premise" modern education is built on, and proposes Yahweh's revealed Word as the missing starting point.

- Part 1: Statistical measures of educational and medical progress (rising post-secondary enrollment, hundreds of thousands of trained physicians) shown not to translate into a healthier, happier society.
- Part 1: The Genesis account of the forbidden fruit read as the first "scientific experiment" — mankind rejecting Yahweh's Word as the starting premise for acquiring knowledge.
- Part 1: Two basic categories of knowledge identified (good and evil, right and wrong), with

modern education charged with treating knowledge as morally neutral.

- Part 2: Material knowledge (learning to work with "things") and spiritual knowledge (learning to relate to Yahweh and others) distinguished as mankind's two original assignments.
- Part 2: The Bible presented not as the sum of all knowledge but as the necessary starting premise for pursuing any knowledge rightly.
- Part 2: A caution against the opposite extreme — treating Bible study alone as a substitute for developing Yahweh-given talents and skills.

The full article begins on the next page.

Thoughts on Education (Part 1 & 2)

As North Americans, we enjoy living in what the world perceives as the richest, most powerful, most prosperous and most educated nations on earth. We have vast libraries full of great volumes of accumulated knowledge on virtually every topic imaginable. A great percentage of the world's countries look to us for advice and guidance in social, community, technical and other strategic planning initiatives. Yet we suffer nearly 25,000 murders each year within our own borders - far more deaths each year than what results from the many wars abroad that the Americans participate in - yet these wars evoke greater public outcry!

Since World War II, we have been flooded with movies, programs, books, pamphlets, counsellors, articles and professional advice on love, marriage and sex. Why then do over one half of our marriages end in divorce? Or why do ever-growing numbers of unwanted teenage pregnancies result in even less

wanted, staggering numbers of abortions by unwed teenage mothers that are contracting and spreading disease with their teenage counterparts at even more alarming rates?

Why? Nearly 54% of our citizens now enjoy some form of post-secondary education compared to less than 4% at the turn of the century, yet like the statistics mentioned above, and only recently, unemployment has skyrocketed, welfare rolls have quadrupled, and over 15% of our own populations live below the poverty level!

Why when we continue to train nearly 750,000 physicians with an average of 11 years of education, and we make ongoing advances and technical breakthroughs in understanding and treating disease, do we have excessive and still growing health care costs, coupled with higher numbers of people suffering ever-increasing new diseases, sickness and death like never before? Why then with all of our education and resulting knowledge do we suffer such abysmal problems? Why the paradox?

We must remember that there is a cause for every effect. If the effects of our knowledge have caused us to be living in undesirable circumstances, we must look to the cause. This does not necessarily mean that

the knowledge we have produced has caused all the evils around us, but it does mean that our vast array of knowledge has failed to cure existing problems or to prevent new ones!

What is wrong? Is it wrong to acquire and possess knowledge? Of course not, but there are 2 basic types of knowledge - true and false - or right and wrong - or good and evil. In our pursuit of knowledge, we have used only one basic premise or starting point - science. The scientific method of experimentation, discovery and reason. Errors almost always result from a false basic premise. Mankind started off in the wrong direction *(with science)* and even though some of the knowledge acquired along the way has been good, it's been based upon the wrong premise! Therefore man has yet to achieve the desired effects of his efforts.

Do you suppose that knowing who you are and why you exist has anything to do with the right kind of education? It does if you want to get started on the right basic premise. Very early in the Biblical accounts, we see Yahweh is educating mankind. He is revealing to them, what is right and what is wrong - or what is good and what is bad. Mankind had a choice. They could know right from wrong by taking

Yahweh's Word for it, or they could decide for themselves. They pioneered in deciding for themselves what is right and what is wrong.

They conducted the first scientific experiment when they ate the forbidden fruit! They rejected Yahweh's Word, they observed the fruit, experimented with it by tasting it, and then reasoned that it was pretty good! Webster's defines "experiment" as: "test, trial, experience; to try out a new procedure, idea or activity"!

Starting out on this wrong first basic premise was what caused Yahweh to cut mankind off from His revealed knowledge - the true foundation or starting point for all knowledge *(Gen. 3:22-24).* That knowledge which is still cut off from the majority of mankind today, is the missing dimension in modern education! The *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines education as: "an attempt on the part of the adult members of a society to shape the development of the coming generation in accordance with its own ideals of life". In other words, education is what mankind has made it to be!

To call into question our modern system of education, or its standards, would seem ridiculous to most, because those people are prone to assume - to

carelessly take for granted whatever is popular - whatever has the general public acceptance - which is that education is something you go to school to get. However education is not something you go out and get! It is a way of life. And there are two additional problems with our modern education system - WHAT is being taught, and HOW it is being taught.

Our children are not being taught HOW TO THINK, but merely to follow along with the rest of the crowd. The preponderance of our "learning" is merely to memorize portions of our vast accumulation of knowledge. Our systems of education instils the habit of assuming - of carelessly taking for granted without question - what is commonly accepted. It is only a fraction of human beings who truly know why they believe what they do. We are nations teaching our children to be followers not leaders! And because we like to be well thought of - to be liked - to be accepted, people are trapped into conforming - into following the false teachings of the world like blind sheep!

For 6,000 years man has virtually destroyed every part of this creation he was intended to maintain and beautify - for 6,000 years he has been experimenting with what is right and what is wrong! Man has

educated HIMSELF with his own scientifically created material knowledge. In so doing, mankind has produced a vast mountain of evils all around himself. His fund of knowledge is a mixture of right and wrong - of good and bad.

It has produced a civilization full of empty lives, unhappiness, pain and suffering, crime, immorality, broken homes and family life, corruption, injustice, violence, pollution, environmental chaos, war, disease and DEATH. Yet man refuses to believe the most obvious results of his own experiment! "There is a way which seemed right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" *(Prov. 14:12).* That way began when man conducted the first scientific experiment in the symbolic Garden of Eden!

Humans do not learn well from experience, nor all at once. The childishly simple and most incredibly obvious lesson of the forbidden fruit has not been learned in 6,000 years! Even an agnostic would have to agree that the future welfare and quite possibly even the very existence of our civilization is dependent upon the educational system we choose to utilize.

We must truly question whether we have absolute faith in our system of education and resulting

knowledge production, especially considering the tremendous import we place upon it. One who is truly educated never relies on assumption and does not take things for granted. We must learn to "Prove all things" *(I Thes. 5:21).*

Yahweh freely revealed to us over 6,000 years ago, that there are 2 basic types of knowledge - good and evil - or right and wrong. Many are inclined to equate the good knowledge with only spiritual knowledge, and the bad knowledge with material knowledge. This however, would make all forms of material knowledge wrong, or evil, which of course is not true. Mankind was given dominion over the physical creation with instructions to subdue it. Dominion means to "reign or rule over" - the material creation, and to subdue means to "subject to oneself".

To fulfill this Yahweh-given assignment, mankind needed to know how to deal with THINGS! Yahweh knew he would need to learn to make things, to build things, to grow things and to work the land and resources of the planet. Yahweh knew that man would of necessity, have to create his own material knowledge. First Corinthians 2, reveals why man alone among the creation, is capable of acquiring this needed knowledge: "For what man knoweth the

THINGS of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?"

Yahweh also FREELY revealed to us that, although mankind was created physically complete, he was created spiritually INCOMPLETE! Simply put, man has a complete body and a complete HUMAN spirit, or conscious will. The human spirit however, is INCOMPLETE; it requires the Spirit *(Will, desire or intent)* of Yahweh to complete it; "...even so the *[Spiritual]* things of Yahweh knoweth no man, but the Spirit of Yahweh *[knows all these things]"*.

In addition to working with material things, mankind was to develop and maintain a loving relationship with his Father - Yahweh. Man was also to marry and develop and maintain loving relationships with his spouse, his children and his neighbours. He was also to teach his children to be loving, honest, contributing members of a community. These things required the help and advice offered only through Yahweh's Spirit.

So from the beginning, mankind needed to know how to deal with things - material knowledge, and how to deal with others - Spiritual knowledge. Acquiring physical knowledge is possible due to the

fact that we were created with a human spirit - His Holy Spirit within us that separates us from animals. Spiritual knowledge however, comes ONLY BY REVELATION of Yahweh - it is FREELY GIVEN - all we have to do is accept it! To become truly educated we need both kinds of knowledge!

REVEALED KNOWLEDGE, freely given to us by Yahweh - Yahweh's Word - the Bible, is mankind's instruction manual. Who would know better what to put in an instruction manual - the Creator, or the thing created? This revealed knowledge is the FOUNDATION, or first basic premise - the starting point for ALL KNOWLEDGE!

It is not the sum total of knowledge - it is the only true premise from which to start - the concept that directs our approach to the acquisition of all further knowledge. Yahweh gave us awesome minds with which to think - He intended us to use them to explore, observe, study and measure things - to acquire additional knowledge through experimentation and HUMAN reason.

Knowing this, He supplied us with the requisite first step - the basic premise from which to conduct all of our observations - His freely given revelations of what is right and what is wrong. But like our first parents,

we have continued to reject the very foundation of all knowledge. Our educational systems and resulting production of knowledge have been operating without a foundation - based on human reason alone, which invariably means false premises and erroneous hypothesis - the evidence is all around us!

Paul describes a society which rejects Yahweh's revelation as the foundation for all knowledge: "Because that, when they knew Yahweh, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools" *(Rom. 1:21-22).* Once you reject Yahweh's freely given advice - His revelations of foundational truth, your wisdom becomes darkened - you no longer have access to the spiritual light - or enlightenment, that is "the LIFE of men"! This pursuit of material knowledge only, is foolishness to Yahweh! "And even as they did not like to retain Yahweh in their knowledge, Yahweh gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient *[or not right])" (v. 28).*

All knowledge is obviously not wrong, but when you leave Yahweh and His fundamental starting premise out of it, it may well end up wrong more times than not. And so when we say there are two types of

knowledge; good and evil, we mean just that. There is the good or right kind of knowledge, which is any knowledge, whether spiritual or material, that is based on the foundation of Yahweh's Word, and there is the evil or wrong kind of knowledge, which also can be any knowledge, whether spiritual or material, that is based on human reason (or experimentation) alone.

While the Bible *(Yahweh's Word)* must be the beginning premise for the pursuit of all knowledge, Yahweh does still expect us to train, develop and use our incredible mind power to His glory and honour. The overwhelming majority of humans use their Yahweh-given abilities to seek for and attain material knowledge for their own selfish and vain ambitions - and most will even admit this!

There are a very few at the opposite end of the spectrum who believe that Bible study is all we should do in order to obtain an education, and that we should set aside all materialistic pursuits. Neither extreme is true education.

The Messiah did not come so that we might be uneducated and live in poverty. Instead, He said: "I am come that they might have LIFE, and that they might have it more abundantly" *(John 10:10)*. The Messiah hoped that we would allow a Yahweh-

centred, true education to make it possible for us to live ever-expanding, happy, joyous, productive, creative and prosperous lives, intelligently using the creation the way it was intended to be used!

The Bible is not a book of sentimental religion, nor is it the repository for all knowledge. It is precisely and simply what it says it is - the first basic premise, or starting point for every pursuit. It contains the basic premise from which we attain all additional knowledge, whether knowledge of science, history, psychology, genetics, sound business practices, health, family and community or international government relations, social sciences, sex - virtually ALL branches of knowledge.

To become truly educated in any area of knowledge, the Bible must come alive. It contains practical, common sense, sound principles, that when applied, always bring about successful and prosperous results. Just like it says it will! "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in *[good]* health, even as thy soul *[spirit]* prospereth" *(III John 2).*

The Messiah encourages us to rely on Yahweh for our physical needs - to provide food, shelter and clothing. BUT, few people grasp the true meaning and intent

of the conditions for the Messiah's promise in Matthew 6:33: "BUT seek ye FIRST the Kingdom of Yahweh, and His righteousness *(revealed truths)*; and all these THINGS shall [then] be ADDED unto you". Notice the Messiah does not tell us to discard every material thing on the way to becoming educated, He simply tells us to make seeking Yahweh and the Kingdom our FIRST priority, as they are the most important! There are other things to seek as second, third, and fourth priorities, etc., but the problem with most people is that they make money, a career choice, a love interest, or acquiring some form of material knowledge their number one aim in life, while relegating Yahweh to a lesser, if not the least important pursuit of their lives!

So we see that education is not something you go out and get, it is rather a way of life. Education is rightly developed character, and that may not come easy. Most want to be considered successful and well educated, but they do not really understand the meaning behind the words. Generally what they are wanting is simply a superficial recognition for WHO they are, rather than WHAT type of person they are - too much emphasis on the package and not the contents!

If you are seeking to be a truly educated, well-rounded individual, you first need to know WHAT that means, and then you need to be prepared to work hard to achieve it - for the rest of your life! There are seven basic aspects of obtaining an education revealed within the Biblical accounts that may provide you with some assistance in achieving yours:

1. Build a solid spiritual foundation based on Yahweh's freely revealed laws. We were designed and placed on this earth to become educated in spiritual AND material knowledge. Unless proper spiritual knowledge is the foundation of our life, most everything we do, is more apt than not, to be based on wrong information. The Messiah gave His disciples knowledge, but then He admonished them to GO OUT AND APPLY IT.

Those who DO what He freely revealed, He likened to building on a rock foundation, whereas those who make their life based solely on human reasoning, He likened to building on sand. Remember not only to learn the Spiritual intent of the revealed knowledge - but to APPLY it. That is where the results come from - this APPLICATION is the cause for the desired effect!

2. Capture the vision of the type of person you would like to be. We are told that people perish without vision in Proverbs 29:18, and in Proverbs 23:7, that; "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he". The Messiah many times admonished us to "follow Him", or to imitate Him - to use Him as an example of what type of person we would aspire to be. As Paul relates: "For you yourselves know how you ought to IMITATE US; we were not idle when we were with you".

Paul and his companions worked hard, being careful to pay for all of their own needs. Notice WHY: "It was not that we have not that right *[to accept gifts]*, but to GIVE YOU in our conduct an EXAMPLE TO IMITATE" *(II Thes. 3:7-9 RSV).* And Paul further clarifies this in I Cor. 11:1; "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of the Messiah". Respect the wise counsel of your elders such as the Messiah, Paul and other lesser but wiser, accomplished people of history, or within your own family or community, and look up to and abide the advice given by such people, providing you always check that their advice is based upon true Biblical premise. It is your responsibility to "Prove all things", as the Bible instructs.

3. Prepare and plan with much patience, to work hard to achieve your goals. It's been said that opportunity favours the prepared man. Proverbs 24:27 says, "FIRST work your farm, and till the soil - THEN marry and set up house". Notice the system of priorities. Many set out with every passion and desire to find that special someone, while spending little time or effort to secure a good job or to better themselves educationally. Most people do not understand that marriage is a Yahweh-plane relationship which is symbolic of the marriage of the Messiah to His Congregation *[His obedient believers - those that APPLY His revealed truths].* So many enter into the marriage not really committed, thinking that divorce is always an option. But regardless of what society teaches, marriage is a sacred covenant, not only between husband and wife, but between THEM and Yahweh, and should not be made hastily, without counting the cost, and only after much planning and preparation. Likewise, we must realize that we are not ready to jump into a career or to immediately pursue any major objective without much planning and preparation.

Planning, preparation and hard work requires patience, and it may not always come easy. Why else do so many frustrated people suddenly realize after

years of unhappiness, that they are in a job they hate, a marriage they want out of, or a life they do not enjoy? Because of impatience, or not counting the cost of their decisions - by not APPLYING the first basic premise - by not making the decisions based on the right foundational knowledge - not planning and preparing prior to making the decision.

The Messiah said of those who apply patience, that they are: "...those who, having heard *[understood]* the word *[the truth about right and wrong knowledge]* with a noble and good heart, keep it *[apply its principles]* and bear fruit *[are successful]* with patience *[planning, hard work and preparation]" (Luke 8:15).* Planning and preparation often incur many difficulties while exercising your patience. This is where faith in the absolute validity of Yahweh's revelations of basic knowledge comes into play. We are instructed to "count it all joy when you fall into various trials *[problems or difficulties],* knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. BUT let patience *[proper planning, hard work and preparation]* have its perfect *[prosperous and abundantly successful]* work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" *(James 1:2-4).* Count the cost and be prepared to work hard and properly

plan and prepare prior to making life's crucial decisions.

4. Learn to be humble like Yahweh. Yahweh - our Creator, truly does want us to be happy, and to realize that we should want to imitate this all-powerful, all-knowing Being! Notice how we do that: "For all *[material]* things hath mine hand made...but to this man will I look *[to provide them with],* even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth *[has faith]* at My Word" *(Isa. 66:2).* Yahweh also says that He "dwells", or freely shares His advice - His revelations of what is right and wrong, with "him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit" *(Isa. 57:15).*

To listen to and heed the wise counsel of older, wiser, more accomplished individuals takes much humility. Adhering to and diligently obeying Yahweh's advice - His freely given Laws, concerning success in business, family, community, international relations, and virtually every other of our endeavours, requires even greater humility. We must not let the vanity of our typical "know-it-all", or "know-a-better-way" human nature get in the way of a right, Yahweh-centred education.

5. Strive for excellence in everything you do. Your job is a career. Your marriage, preparing for Yahweh's

Kingdom - every one of your prioritized objectives should be treated with the planning, hard work and preparation of a career - the best you can.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 instructs us that "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might [as best as you can]; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest".

We have only a limited time during this life in which to become educated. We need to learn to simplify our lives and the things that we do, in order to devote quality time for proper planning, hard work and preparation for each of our important educational pursuits: Yahweh, family, work, the community and our other educational hobbies.

Yahweh gave us minds meant to be developed and trained to operate efficiently and effectively - if we always do the best that we can. And when we do, we will enjoy the fruits of a happy, prosperous, healthy, successful, secure and abundant life.

6. Continually seek for and accept new challenges in your life. Always observe, think and learn, while seeking more productive and efficient ways of doing things. You have the mind to do it, which is what

makes life interesting and is the catalyst for stimulating growth. Unless we deliberately make efforts to go beyond what we have already mastered, we will never grow.

A life full of obstacles and challenges is a blessing, providing a wealth of opportunities to work hard for, to plan and prepare for and to conquer each and every one of them, while gaining an invaluable education - it's called experience!

7. Realize that true education never stops, but is rather a life-long pursuit. Focus on developing the whole you. Education is not merely learning how to earn a living, it is learning how to live - it is building character. Never stop in your studies of great men; always seek counsel of wiser, successful elders before big decisions - there are always some around.

If you do not know any personally, then take the wisest advice of all - seek for the fundamental guidance - the first basic premise of all knowledge - accept Yahweh's Word on the topic you are pursuing. Continue to develop communication and social skills - build new friendships, broaden your existing relationships. Look for and take advantage of new opportunities to learn, to participate, to help, to share what you know - to become truly educated.

None of us have yet attained the perfect education. We can all continue to put our absolute best into becoming as close as humanly possible to our greatest role model. I've chosen the Messiah and His Apostles as my personal and foremost examples to imitate with all my might.

I truly hope that you will come to understand that there is a definite correlation between physical and spiritual prosperity. Yahweh - your Creator, does want you to lead a happy, successful, exciting life - He cares enough to have even freely given you a complete "instruction manual" on how to do just that! Most do not enjoy His blessings because for one reason or another, they refuse to accept His advice - they actually think they know better!

Begin now by submitting to Yahweh in all humility, then seek His Kingdom with all your might. Beyond that, if you make Yahweh the centre of your life by seeking out and accepting His sound advice on every other goal or topic you have an interest in, you will need to plan for and prepare to enjoy a life of happiness and abundant blessings. It works - Yahweh really does know just a little bit more than most of us! Put it to the test - try Him out - its absolutely FREE

and guaranteed to work! When you put Him to the test, what an education you will have!

This article is a small insight into some of the most basic Bible topics. It is my very best effort to share some of the simple concepts outlined in the Bible. I have faith that if you read it with an open mind, it will stimulate and motivate you in your pursuit of a well-rounded, complete and true education - it WILL inspire you to actually read the Bible, and APPLY its principles, which is the way to achieving the happy, successful, healthy and abundant life you surely have always hoped for.

THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION Part II

Do you think for yourself? Now there is a question that would inspire a variety of heated responses from people! "You better believe I think for myself! No one is going to tell me what to do," most people would say. But there is a vast difference in doing what you want or feel like doing, versus actually LEARNING TO THINK FOR YOURSELF. Most people simply do what they want or feel like doing, which is the very reason why most of them never actually think! And, most do not understand the difference!

An example in point. Examine any modern textbook today and you will see that Darwin's theory of evolution - not the Bible, is the foundational doctrine upon which all education is based. Evolution and the resulting "scientific" education based upon it, are something that the overwhelming majority in society accept with very little questioning. Yet even many of the most scientific minds acknowledge the numerous flaws in the unprovable theory! The same theory that was refuted by Darwin himself!

Religion, if people are honest, is also something most people take completely for granted. Most believe what they have grown up to believe, never stopping to consider why - or to wonder if they could actually prove it one way or the other. You would expect the most convincing argument refuting evolution to come from the field of religion, yet the average church goer cannot answer the questions because most of them do not even read the Bible, and many that do, certainly do not understand it, so they take someone else's word for it.

There are thousands of awesome proofs, refuting absolutely any possibility of evolution right before our very eyes - yet most cannot even see them! Ask any botanist how many plant species are totally

dependent upon co-existent insects, or ask any biologist how many animal species are totally dependent upon co-existent plants - the answer is every single one of them! In other words, they all had to be there from the beginning at precisely the same time in order to have survived. Even the simple question of which came first, the chicken or the egg, will confuse most people.

Yet if you actually think just a tiny bit, you will realize that neither the chicken nor the egg could have come first - the only way the species could have begun, was with a chicken AND a rooster, otherwise the first egg would not have hatched! Ask any proponent of evolution to explain how every species of plant and animal on the planet evolved both male and female counterparts at precisely the same time (in order to multiply), and you will find that none have an acceptable answer beyond "it must have just happened"!

The greatest proof that evolution is an impossible and very childish theory, is the very existence of man - who, because of the human spirit, has MIND POWER - the ability to think, reason, plan, design and create things. Animals are driven by instinct and nowhere in the evolutionary theory is there any

explanation for the incredible leap between dumb animals and the mind of man - in fact, nowhere in the evolutionary theory can its proponents even answer the simpler question of how the plant species suddenly made the gigantic leap to instinctive animals.

Just consider the awesome advancements in technology and science created by man and then consider the non-existent contributions to society set forth by the plant or animal kingdoms.

Only man of all living organisms can THINK! What a privilege! Yet thinking is something else that most simply take for granted - and rarely actually DO! There is a reason WHY we can think - there is a reason that Yahweh gave you a mind! He gave it that we might educate ourselves to use it - properly. As we look around in this decadent society, we see the fruit of minds that have become twisted and perverted by being educated from the scientific premise. We have become a society of daydreamers and drifters, with the average North American watching nearly 45 hours of television weekly.

Television requires no thinking and is a thief of time! More than ever before, children read less, spend less time outdoors, get little if any real exercise, have poor

appetites yet struggle with weight problems, poor diets and health, and most importantly, they spend less time thinking - because they spend up to 60 hours per week watching television, playing with mindless video and computer games, or countless other electronic babysitting toys, while consuming vast mountains of junk food.

Think about the negative effect this has on the mind - especially the young, impressionable minds of children. TV promotes daydreaming, the exact opposite of thinking. It fills willing minds with thousands of distorted, unrealistic and often perverted images while robbing the mind of the time to spend investigating and discovering the natural world around them. If you add all of the other distracting gadgets we have at our fingertips, it is not hard to see why so many find it hard to concentrate, why we constantly need a "break", and why most simply do not enjoy thinking! Not only have people not been trained to think, they have been conditioned - trained NOT to think.

Certainly the breakdown in the family and the overall moral slide of society contributes to our collective lack of educational thought. Studies show that parents, or step-parents in many cases, are not as

concerned about poor grade reports from their children as they used to be. One study showed that one third of parents did not even know what kind of grades their children were getting! In the same study, nearly 25% of high school students said they did not apply themselves in school for fear of what their classmates might think - it is not "cool" to be smart! Certainly peer pressure discourages thought - especially of those minds that are already too lazy to think for themselves.

For those students who are concerned about grades, an increasing number are cheating for a higher mark. In fact, North Americans have become quite accomplished cheaters. Honesty is no longer the best policy - not if you want to get promoted. Politicians cheat - and lie about it, celebrities cheat - and brag about it, bankers cheat - and deny it, athletes cheat - and claim "everyone" is doing it, and the average citizen cheats on a daily basis in ways far too numerous to list. Students cheat - and admit feeling better about getting an "A" by cheating than a "B" for their own hard work! Obviously cheating does not stimulate educational thought.

Aside from dishonesty, the working world does not stimulate thinking - in fact it discourages it in most

cases. We are a people who no longer attain satisfaction and enjoyment through work. Work has become the dreaded "four" letter word. Most people work in a mindless job with a boss over them because they do not have the mental discipline to create or manage their own work.

The working world also discourages productivity. Although we are working more hours than in years past (solely to get more money) we are getting less done! We are beginning to reap the rewards of two or three generations of workers who have grown up in the age of television and "free thinking", which is more accurately non-thinking!

Add to these factors the tremendous wealth and prosperity we have enjoyed, and you end up with people conditioned to, and desiring only a life of ease - of not thinking. When it's time for vacation, most desire a place where they can just free their minds (from what I do not know)! Very few, actually just want to get away to think and collect their thoughts. We don't have time for that! We work for pay and when it's time to get away, we want to go to "never-never-land". The gregarious, push-button lifestyle of western civilization does not develop a thoughtful people.

Do we realize that even a democracy does not encourage deep thought? The very nature of our government structure promotes conformity - find a group you belong with and vote for them - don't think - just conform! Try being a non-conformist in this arena - actually THINK of and suggest better ways to govern, and like a few other thinkers over the years, you will not only be ridiculed, but more than likely arrested!

Added together, all of these factors make it very difficult for us to properly educate our minds - our foremost purpose in life! We must forsake the thinking of this world and learn to think like Yahweh! You can do it. You CAN learn to think, reason, meditate and educate yourself to actually create like the Yahweh of this universe - but it will take work - hard work.

Hebrews 11:3 says that Yahweh made the visible things of this universe out of nothing! How creative - what a thinker! How long must Yahweh have thought about and planned such an awesome creation. When you consider that we were created in His image and likeness *(Gen. 1:26),* with minds capable of thinking, reasoning, planning and creating like Him, how sad

that most do not exercise those minds - do not educate them through proper thinking.

A great thinker has vision. He has mental discipline. He exercises patience in planning and preparing for his actions, knowing that there is a time for certain things *(Eccl. 3:1-8).* But learning to think like Yahweh is not a "gift" as many traditional Christians would have you believe - the mind is the gift. Learning, or educating the mind involves a great deal of thought - it involves a change of mind! "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 Yahweh" *(Rom. 12:1-2).* This timeless advice was first handed down to the ancient Israelites in Exodus 23:2, where they were instructed to "NOT follow a multitude [the crowd] to do evil [the things of the world]". II Corinthians 10:5 gets even more specific: "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of Yahweh, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of the Messiah".

Contrary to what traditional Christians profess, Yahweh is not looking for people who will just give their "hearts" to Him and get "saved" that they might

"go to heaven", just as they are. Yahweh is looking to WORK with people who are willing to WORK with Him - who are willing to put the effort into thinking AND acting like He does.

In conclusion, there are three broad points to consider when planning and preparing to educate your own mind.

1. Realize that you alone have control over your own thoughts and what you think about. There is a story which perfectly illustrates this point in a book entitled, *Every Man a King,* by *Orison Marden*. He writes, "A certain man of no great learning, so runs an old legend, fell heir to a ship. He knew nothing of the sea, nothing of navigation or engineering, but the notion seized him to take a voyage and command his own ship. The ship was gotten underway, the self-appointed captain allowing the crew to go ahead with their usual duties, as the multiplicity of the operations confused the amateur navigator.

Once out to sea, however, the work grew simpler, and the captain had time to observe what was going on. As he strolled on the forward deck, he saw a man turning a big wheel, now this way, now that.

"What in the world is that man doing?" he asked.

"That's the helmsman. He is steering the ship"

"Well, I don't see any use in his fiddling away there all the time. There's nothing but water ahead, and I guess the sails can push her forward. When there's land in sight, or a ship coming head on, there'll be time enough to do steering. Put up all the sails and let her go."

"The order was obeyed and the few survivors of the wreck that followed had cause to remember the fool captain who thought a ship steered herself.

"You say no such man ever existed, and you are right. That isn't admitting that no such foolishness exists, however. You wouldn't be so foolish, would you?

"Think a moment. Are you not in command of something more delicate, more precious, than any ship - your own life, YOUR OWN MIND? How much attention are you giving to the steering of your mind?"

Most people believe, or act like they believe, that they are merely victims of circumstance - just going along with the flow, never realizing that all along, they, and they alone, were in control of their own destiny. As in the story, your circumstances may determine what

you were born into, but they do not determine where you will go - you do that!

Just as we choose what to eat, read or wear, or when to get up, or which dreams to pursue, which job to seek, which person to marry, so we can choose which images we allow our minds to dwell on. Col. 3:1 relates the same thing as the above story: "If ye then be risen with the Messiah, seek those things which are above, where the Messiah sitteth on the right hand of Yahweh".

Thayer's Lexicon defines the word "seek" as: "to seek in order to find out by thinking, meditating, reasoning; to inquire into". Yahweh 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 choose the latter, many even believing that Satan does not exist, or holds no sway over their destiny! Wonder why so many that do not choose to think their actions through, end up in experiencing divorce, bankruptcy, single parenthood, abortions, disease, unemployment, accidents, injury, environmental crisis, and on and on it goes.

If you continue reading in 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 [or mind], which is renewed in the knowledge after the image of Him that created him" *(v.10).* We become like Yahweh when we learn to discipline ourselves to think on the things that Yahweh thinks on.

2. Create an environment suitable for thinking. The familiar story of Lot and his family illustrates the damaging effects of living in a morally bankrupt society - which is precisely what our modern "free-thinking" society is. Yahweh told Lot to gather his family and leave Sodom, for Yahweh was going to completely wipe it out because it had become a society without restraint - one of complete mental freedom to think about and do whatever you wanted or felt like!

Sound familiar? How many times have you heard people say, "I can do whatever I want, as long as it does not hurt anyone else, or I don't force it upon others"? But, what these self-gratifying people do not understand and consequently never think about, is the fact that the visual effect of their actions, ALWAYS has a lasting impact upon the minds of everyone around them - it involuntarily but most certainly programs the "theatre" of the mind.

As they were fleeing the city, Lot's wife looked back with longing to the society she had come to love; the society in which a violent, raping mob almost sexually assaulted her own daughters! She had become so wrapped up in the decadence of the day that she actually hated to leave it. She was not willing to completely forsake the wrong ways - the way of sin. Because of that, she became a pillar of salt - or simply put, she died with the rest of the sinners.

The point is, you cannot stay in the midst of the same old habits, or circle of friends, or allow yourself to watch those kind of things that you are trying to stop, and expect to control your mind. At some point you must flee old habits and wrongful thinking.

But Satan is the "god of this world", as the Messiah Himself declared. So how can we come out of this world if he is its god? The Messiah answered that in John 17: "I pray not that thou *[Yahweh]* shouldest take them out of the world, but thou shouldest keep [guard or protect] them from the evil [that is in the world]". The Messiah did not wish or expect us to be isolated in some secluded cabin away from society - He simply prayed that Yahweh would help us to build up a protective hedge around us and our thinking, to keep us from the evil influences surrounding us.

Your mind thinks and meditates on a constant succession of connected images. The images which have transformed the thinking of most in this society are of sex and violence. We have to avoid those areas and people which fill our minds with negative imagery, which sometimes NEVER leaves!

But it is more than just avoiding people or things which pour out negative imagery - we have to begin thinking about what's right - setting our minds on things above, as Paul said. Strive for a healthy, well-balanced life to improve the quality of your thought production. Developing and educating a thoughtful and creative mind is impossible if you get too much or too little sleep, too much or too little exercise, too much or the wrong kind of food.

Just think about the negative effects of so-called "night life". Night life does not prepare people for the day - it does just the opposite. Work ends and then the fun begins, leaving many exhausted in the mornings, seeking stimulants to wake them up so they can trudge through another day of their mindless job. Think about what this lifestyle does to productive thought.

We are to use the night to prepare for the day - that is what Yahweh intended when He created the night

AND the day! Use the night wisely - go to bed early, rising early the next morning, often before most others, feeling refreshed and invigorated and ready to gather your thoughts, thinking about, planning and preparing for your day. The Messiah was great with people. His friends and companions loved Him dearly, and the hearts of the disciples glowed with admiration when in His presence *(Luke 24:32).* Yet the Messiah realized the value and vital importance of solitary time. In fact, He craved it!

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a SOLITARY place, and there prayed" *(Mark 1:35).* He was not out late the night before - He rose early and began by focusing His thoughts on Yahweh - on the things above. Notice Matthew 14:23: "And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain APART to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone". The Messiah also ended His day seeking those things from above - praying and thinking on the things of Yahweh.

Great men of the Bible repeatedly sought after Yahweh and His thoughts early, when it was most quiet, and when their minds, refreshed from a night

of sleep, and free from all of the cares of the coming day, were most impressionable.

Take steps to eliminate all possible external distractions to thought, and then practice Messiah-like thinking - in the mornings to fully and adequately prepare for the day, and in the evenings, to fully and adequately prepare for a calm and restful sleep during the night.

3. Fix firmly in your mind that educating yourself to think like Yahweh is a habit. Paul, because of his life of sinful activity prior to encountering the Messiah, was well aware of how bad habits could affect the mind. He had much to say about changing your mind - about getting away from bad habits and acquiring new, good habits. He was speaking as one with authority on the issue, as indeed he did have much experience from which to draw. In his case, it was not simply a matter of sharing the revealed truths, but rather sharing them as they related to his and every other sinner's *(like you and me)* life.

It is not unlike exercising the body. Your mind also becomes conditioned by what it does, or does not do. In Philippians 4, Paul exhorts the brethren to be of one mind - Yahweh's mind that is. He continues on in verse 7, with more details of what this means: "And

the peace of Yahweh, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Yah'shua the Messiah".

Solomon, whom Yahweh stated was the wisest of all men, past, present and future, when asked by Yahweh what he desired most, replied simply, that he wanted Yahweh to grant him wisdom in understanding the things of Yahweh *(See I Kings, Chapter 3).* Not only did Yahweh grant Solomon's request, He graciously, and in addition, granted him more material riches and honour than any other man as well!

Yahweh will protect our minds, but this does not mean that we need do nothing! We must do our part. And in verse 8, our part is further clarified: "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these DO, and the Yahweh of peace will be with you".

It is vitally important that we realize the significance of the order in which these things occur. FIRST we think - THEN we act. Your thought, or lack thereof,

governs your actions, which are the causes for the effects in your life. Bad, or incorrect actions based on lack of thought result in bad or unpleasant effects.

Good, or correct actions based upon well thought out plans, result in good or productive effects. And the best way to ensure that good effects always happen in your life, is to develop good habits of always thinking things through from a Biblical perspective - a perspective of revealed truths, which are the first basic premise to any of your endeavours.

Most non-religious people assume the Bible was written to inform them about basic religion. Most religious people think the Bible was written merely to inform the mind about details of religion - about Yahweh, the life of the Messiah and possibly some doctrinal information.

Both groups are only partly correct. The biggest mistake made by almost everyone, is that the Bible is NOT merely a book of information to fill the mind - it is a book of information purposefully designed to CHANGE your mind - or to RENEW it to its perfect state as it was originally designed!

True education is nothing if not the persistent and determined training of the mind, to think, act and

reason like the mind of Yahweh - like the mind it was patterned after! David, whom Yahweh said was "a man after His own heart", wrote: "I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word" *(Ps. 119:16)*. He did not forget Yahweh's word because of what he says in verse 15: "I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways". David read, studied and then meditated, or thought about what he read several times over!

Continue from this inspiring Psalm: "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation" . David completed his studies later as he meditated on Yahweh's testimonies - His revealed truths - the fundamental starting point for all things.

The Messiah was the greatest thinker who ever lived on earth, yet most do not try to emulate His way of thinking. They assume - which is a way of NOT thinking, that the Messiah's way is just not practical in this modern world. THAT'S NONSENSE!

The Bible is the only absolutely practical book ever written, revealing principles which, when applied,

bring about rock-solid, positive results - every time, freeing you from the artificial limitations of an otherwise "no thinking" lifestyle, common to most people in our society! And they always will - even for eternity!

Practice these timeless principles. Take the Bible at its word. Most people, even in religion, do not take the Bible at its word, otherwise there would not be so much religious deception and division in this world. Believe the Bible and not men!

Think on these things. Then, APPLY them and prepare for the freedom to become truly educated! And as you develop that education, you will find yourself taking on the very nature and character of Yahweh Himself - and that's a good thing!

Acquiring a NEW MIND is simply a matter of changing the old mind - of exercising the freedom to develop and maintain the habits necessary to truly educate your mind. This book, "A New Mind" is simply purposed to inspire you to change your mind about the Bible. It is designed to inspire you to actually read and apply the many Biblically revealed truths in your day to day living.

I hope, when you have finished reading this book for yourself, that you have not only been inspired to read the Bible, but to share the inspiration of this book with others as well. There are no copyrights or restrictions on the material contained in this book, other than it must always be shared freely - not sold, and in its entirety, so feel free to make copies for your friends and loved ones, or write to us, with the names and addresses for any number of free copies you wish us to send.

Remember. The foremost purpose of the Bible is to change, or renew your mind for the purpose of allowing you the freedom to enjoy the only opportunity of truly training and educating your mind during this lifetime.

The foremost purpose of your life, is to become educated after the image and likeness of your Creator - your loving Father. That is why He has so graciously given you all of the necessary tools!

Your mind, patterned after His, together with His instruction book - the Bible, are your free keys to an infinite gift - a brand new mind. Turn the keys - the rewards are eternal!

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