

Men Programming Their Lives!

- Do we find ourselves out of control at times? Do we feel trapped in our own emotional responses of resentment, anger, loneliness, guilt, stress, etc.?
- How do we respond to the events, circumstances, and people that God puts into our lives?
- Do we practice right **actions** or **thoughts** to things that happen in life?
- Do we understand the basic **foundational principles** that make up life so we help our family?
- Can we help another family that has strife, conflicts, confrontations, and hostilities that are destroying them?

I. BECOMING AWARE OF PROGRAMMING WE HAVE BUILT IN OUR LIVES:

A. What is Programming?

We all have programming which includes our responses and how it effects us. One could call this conditioning. Many things happen in life that that condition us to do what we do, respond as we respond, think as we think, and feel as we feel. We are accountable for our programming. All our responses, reactions, thoughts, attitudes and feelings are our own choices.

Programming then, includes all the significant things that have happened to us. We have both good and bad programming that is just a part of life.

Programming includes the events, circumstances, and people that have impacted our life in specific ways. It includes all the past, its effect on the present and how we deal with it. It is also made up of our own **habits** and **patterns** of life that **we have built over the years**. Also we have also reproduced patterns of life from the example of others and from our own habitual practices.

B. Do We See Programming in the Word of God?

1. What kind of programming did Paul have that would cause him to *sing* while in prison as recorded in Acts 16?
2. What was David's programming or conditioning when he faced Goliath? (I Sam. 17) Had his trust in God become a part of his life, if so, when?
3. What was the habitual programming of the Psalmist as seen in --
 - a. Psa. 4:8 _____
 - b. Psa. 5:3 _____
 - c. Psa. 5:7 _____

HOW DOES PROGRAMMING AND HABITS INTER-RELATE?

- We must become aware of the **Practice of Habits**.
- Habits are personal patterns established by frequent repetition that reveals itself by constant performance.
- Everyone has a daily routine or a pattern of habits, most of which are routine, if not even beneficial. We are creatures of habit.

- Habits are a part of our routine and life is easier because more gets done.
- Habits set our lifestyle and living patterns, which become part of our *behavior* and our *thought life*.
- Ongoing habits (or programming) largely produces our _____.

A. What Is A Habit?

1. It is _____, so it can be unlearned.
2. It is _____, and it can be stopped.
3. It is a pattern of _____ and it can be changed.
4. It is _____ and so it can be stopped.

B. What are Some of the Dynamics of Habitual Practice?

1. We become _____ with a practice or while performing the habit.
2. We built automatic _____ to given stimuli.
3. We engage in habitual practices by how we _____, our emotional or feeling responses, and by the decisions we make repeatedly.
4. We can build a habitual practice until it is automatically done without conscious thought or _____. **This is programming.**
5. We soon respond to given stimuli in a habitual way without _____ or consideration of what we **are doing**.

C. We Must Become Aware of the Frequency of the Practice!

1. What am I doing?
2. How often do I do it?
3. What is the habit?
4. Is it a life-dominating sin?
5. What is the stimuli?
6. How does my habit (programming) related to my life in general?
7. How does my habitual practice impact my family?

D. We MUST Effect Change so Our Programming of the Past DOES NOT Continue to Control Us!

1. We must recognize and _____ the sinful habits we have built.
2. We must recognize the extent to which we have reproduced the _____ of others into our lives.
3. We must recognize the patterns of _____ that are automatic to certain **stimuli** that comes from **events, circumstances and people**.
4. We must "PUT _____" the habits of sin. (See Col. 3:8-9; Eph. 4:31.)
5. Continued sinful habits and practices from the _____ must be recognized and dealt with boldly, biblically, and victoriously.

II. BECOMING AWARE OF MY THOUGHTS INVOLVED IN MY PROGRAMMING ! *LOOKING AT OUR SELF-TALK PRACTICES!!*

A. Becoming Aware of the Inner-man and the Outer-man!

1. The inner man is made up of thoughts and emotions, while the outer-man is made up of words and actions.
2. Christ emphasized the relationships of inner thoughts, understanding, and desires with outer actions and words. (Matt. 12:34-35)
3. Our inner thoughts and outer actions are intertwined.

B. Becoming Aware that the Great Battles of Life Take Place in the inner man, not the outer man.

1. In the arena of the thought life is where the major battles are either won or lost. (II Cor. 10:3-5).
2. The battlefield is the mind, and Satan seeks to interject thoughts to defeat us. (See Acts 7.)
3. The sin problems of lust, jealousy, envy, bitterness, anger, and pride, for example, must be faced as thoughts first as well as the outcome produced in behavior. (Consider Prov. 23:7; Rom. 12:2; Isa. 26:3.
4. There must be change in the inner-life of thoughts and deliberations if there will be change in actions or our behavior.

C. Recognizing More About the Importance of Our Thoughts!

We need to understand how God made us and how thoughts have such an impact on our daily life. Our thoughts take the form of internalized sentences or what we will call -- ***self-talk***.

1. Thinking is a train of ideas manifesting itself in ***sub-vocal speech***.
2. Peoples' thinking includes their ***evaluations, attitudes, opinions, and perceptions***.
3. We self-talk to ourselves about almost anything and everything we consider to be significant to us.
4. We do most of our important thinking in terms of ***self-talk*** or internalized sentences.
5. We talk to ourselves in the inner mind and heart about past and present events, circumstances, and people who are a part of our lives.
6. Our constant inner thoughts are often reflected in our attitudes and actions.
7. Our thoughts, and words, spoken to ourselves, also have a great influence upon our emotions or feelings.
8. Our self-talk has immense impact on our programming or conditioning and vis-versa. Habits of thinking builds programming or produces conditioning in our lives toward certain responses.

D. Recognizing Sin Factors in Our Self-Talk Practices!

1. Mentally, we stated, we are in a **battle** -- to either think: (II Cor. 10:3-5)
 - a. High things exalted against God, or biblical truth,
 - b. vain imaginations or imaginations controlled by God,
 - c. our sin-nature controlled thinking, or thinking biblical truth, not lies.
2. We often pervert truth because it is human, sinful, and natural to do this as we walk in our sinful ways. This is why we desperately need to meditate upon GOD'S Word. (Jh 8:32; Eph. 4:15, 25; Col. 3:9)
3. Many of our lies (we have programmed them, made habitual use of them) we use to take ourselves off the hook of responsibility --
 - a. so we feel less guilty,
 - b. we feel vindicated of our actions,
 - c. we feel someone else is to blame,
 - d. we feel less responsible.

Examples:

1. What kind of lies did Eve engage in when tempted?
2. What does Proverbs 23:7 teach us, and Romans 12:2?
3. What is the emphasis of II and III John? WHY?

E. Recognizing That In the Process of Thinking We Build a "Belief System"!

1. By our inner self-talk (thoughts and evaluations) we build a belief system about many things. This belief system is made up of both lies and truth.
2. Our belief system comes from --
 - a. inner thoughts,
 - b. our family background,
 - c. our own experiences,
 - d. and relationships, and
 - e. especially from our pattern of responses to many things in life.
3. **Note:** Because every situation in our lives is **interpreted** by what we believe, our belief system, not the situation, is the **key** to our responses.
4. In other words our communication (which reveals our thoughts, emotions and intent of our actions), comes from our heart or our belief system. (Matt. 12:34.)
5. It is what we say to ourselves, so repeatedly, that builds our belief system which in turn **produces** our actions, thoughts, attitudes and reactions. (Example: What do you think King Saul was thinking (belief system) as he was hunting David to kill and destroy like an animal?)

F. Be Aware That God Desires a Change in Our Thinking!

1. This can only take place when the Christian chooses to be transformed by the renewing of the mind by the Word of God with resultant change in behavior.
2. The portions of Romans 12:2 and Colossians 3:8-14 command us to --
 - a. be transformed and not conformed to this world,
 - b. to be changed by "putting off and putting on" those things as given in the text.

3. By God's grace you must capture your thoughts and bring them under control.
4. This demands that we are alert and on guard so we can evaluate the thoughts as to whether they are spiritual or carnal (sinful).
5. Thoughts that come from the flesh, the world, and the devil must be brought under God's control.
6. Satanically inspired thought processes must be ***destroyed with a vengeance.***
7. Only ***meditation*** upon God's Word and ***implementation*** of God's Word in our lives will bring our thoughts under God's control. (Phil. 4:8; Rom. 8:5-8)
8. We must destroy ungodly thoughts. Too often we allow every thought to run its course in our minds without analyzing its worth. (II Cor. 10:3-5)

G. Be Aware that God Desires Accurate, Truthful Thinking!

1. God desires we focus on right things. (Phil. 4:8) *Be righteous.*
2. Our self-talk thoughts are often in the form of --
 - a. generalizations,
 - b. rationalizations,
 - c. defense mechanisms
 - d. obsessions, or compulsive behavior. (The control of sinful desires.)
3. Sinful imaginations and falsehoods can form strongholds in the mind and then in the will.
4. Imaginations can include fears, worries, doubts, and other forms of sinful thoughts which can undermine our Christian walk.

Note: The mind is a battle ground where we so often fail as we build mental rejection to truth and neglect what we see in our own lives.

H. Recognize God Desires Us to Have Victory in Our Thinking!

1. Sinful self-talk can be changed by our rejection of lies, embracing the truth (God's Word) and that takes place only as we meditate upon God's Word with the determined intent to apply it daily.
2. To change, we must repent and face the lies that we speak to ourselves.
3. In order to help our spouses or children (youth) we must recognize the kind self-talk they practice and help them to face the truth.
4. We must apply: (Jh 17:17; Phil 4:8; Psa. 139:17-18, 23-24; Psa. 15:2)

Assignments:

1. As an assignment for the coming weeks, take special note of your inner self-talk practices.
2. Notice the negative, critical, sinful inner-thought patterns and you will also notice how these influence your attitudes toward life in general.
3. Challenge yourself to recognize belief systems you have in areas of failure.

4. You do interpret life by what you believe, not because of the situation at hand, so notice how you do this, then apply Bible truth toward changes.
5. Consider what some of yourself talk lies might be in given areas of sinful failure.
6. To change you will need to prepare a **stop card** on which you . . .
 - write down the lie you need to reject,
 - the truth statement you need to embrace,
 - and the verse (s) you will memorize as God's answer for you.

III. BECOMING AWARE OF ATTITUDES THAT FLOW OUT OF MY PROGRAMMING AND SELF-TALK PRACTICES:

A. Consider These Facts About Attitudes:

1. Attitudes have to come from some place. They don't just happen by themselves.
2. An attitude is a state of mind about something or someone.
3. An attitude is the composite of the way we feel and think about something or someone. We cannot separate attitudes from thoughts.
4. Attitudes reveal what we have put into our hearts. (Matt. 12:33-35)
5. Probably our attitudes are built by a) *WHAT* we think about, b) *HOW* we think, and c) *WHO* controls those thoughts.
6. Attitudes are built in the inner being by how we respond to things and events in life from the time we were small children.
7. We note the attitudes in the lives of others by their words, actions, and reactions.
8. Our very lifestyle, priorities, belief system, and purposes in life reveal the inner attitudes we have toward life in general.
9. Our surrender to the Word of God for our lives comes out of our attitude to true discipleship and the control that God has on our lives.

B. Attitudes Include the Following:

1. Our attitudes are partially produced by our self-talk and our programming.
2. We build our attitudes as we talk within ourselves about the events, people, and circumstances of life.
3. As you read Malachi 2:11-16, what was it that God spoke about that we are to carefully guard?

*“Therefore, take _____ to your _____, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.” (vs. 15) “Therefore take _____ to your **spirit** that you deal not treacherously. (vs. 16)*

4. What does God command in II Corinthians 7:1? _____
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5. What did the Psalmist desire according to Psalm 139:23-24? _____

6. Notice Hebrews 4:12 and think about the fact that the Word of God was given to help us make discernment about the thoughts and motives of the heart.

Consider these Bible characters:

- What kind of attitudes do you think Jonah had as he fled from God's will?
- What kind of attitude did Adam have as sin came into their lives and whom did he blame?
- What do you think was Paul's attitude as he sat in jail? (Acts 16)
- What kind of attitude did Peter have toward Gentiles and their getting saved according to Acts 10?

C. How Do We Change Our Attitudes?

1. We must face the negative, destructive, sinful attitudes. (See Heb. 12:15)
2. We must look at the attitudes that defeat us. (See Heb. 3:17-19; Psa. 106)
3. We must admit and face the lies and the sinful attitudes we have built into our lives.
4. It is vital that we recognize the wrong, sinful attitudes that we have built into our lives by our reaction to people, events and circumstances that make up life.
5. We must recognize that many of our attitudes are produced by our **perception** and our **self-talk evaluations**.
6. We build a general viewpoint on life as a Christian by either talking Biblical truth or lies to ourselves.
7. Behind bad attitudes are reflections of sinful actions (or sinful habits) and self-talk lies. We must quit trying take *ourselves off the hook of responsibility* by our sinful self-talk lies.
8. To build and maintain the right kind of attitudes we must put away pride (an attitude) and seek to have a broken and contrite heart. (See Psa. 34:18; 51:17.)

Bible study about attitudes:

1. What example of attitudes do we find in Hebrews 3:7-13?
 - We are exhorted to hear His voice, lest we have an attitude of **indifference**. (3:7)
 - We are exhorted not to harden our hearts, lest we have an attitude of **rejection**. (3:8)
 - We are to take heed, lest we have an evil heart of **unbelief**. (3:12)
 - We are to exhort one another daily, lest we build an attitude of unbelief. (3:13)
2. What kind of example do we see in Christ's life in Philippians 2:5-11?
 - Christ came to be a servant and He had a servant's heart. (Matt. 20:28)

- We see Christ's attitude of humility, setting aside His rights, and entering into complete servant hood.
- Christ set aside all His rights as He gave Himself in sacrificial death.
- He was obedient unto the Father. (See Hebrews 5:5-9.)

Note:

1. We must face the past and what we need to change, and reject the sinful reactions we still live from the past.
2. We must take a stand against the wrong practices, habits, and patterns of life of the past if we are to change our present sinful attitudes.
3. We must recognize that our present attitudes are produced by our inner personal heart evaluations.
4. We do build a general outlook on life as a Christian and through this we also produce present reactions and attitudes to things that take place on a daily basis.

An extra personal Bible study from Romans 12:

Find attitudes from the following portions; write in your own words from what you think you have found in these verses.

Romans 12:3 _____ 12:4-8 _____

12:9 _____ 12:10 _____

12:11 _____

12:12 _____

12:13 _____ 12:14 _____

12:15 _____ 12:16 _____

12:17 _____ 12:18 _____

12:19 _____ 12:20 _____

12:21 _____