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Understanding Men - posted by CofG (), on: 2020/6/11 3:23

When Reason Serves Rebellion
Devotional by John Piper

The sluggard says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!" (Proverbs 22:13)
This is not what I expected the proverb to say. I would have expected it to say, "The coward says, 'There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!'" But it says, "sluggard," not "coward." So, the controlling emotion here is laziness, not fear.

But what does laziness have to do with the danger of a lion in the street? We don't usually say, "This man is too lazy to go do his work because there is a lion outside."

The point is that the sluggard creates imaginary circumstances to justify not doing his work, and thus shifts the focus from the vice of his laziness to the danger of lions. No one will approve his staying in the house all day just because he is lazy. But they might excuse him if there is a lion in the street.

One profound biblical insight we need to learn from this is that our heart exploits our mind to justify what we want. That is, our deepest desires precede the rational functioning of our minds and incline the mind to perceive and think in a way that will make the desires look right, even if they're wrong.

This is what the sluggard is doing. He deeply desires to stay at home and not work. There is no good reason to stay at home. So, what does he do? Does he overcome his bad desire - his laziness? No, he uses his mind to create unreal circumstances to justify his desire.

Jesus said, "The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil" (John 3:19). We love the darkness so that we can keep on doing what we want without exposure. In this condition, the mind becomes a factory of darkness - a fountain of half-truths, equivocations, sophistries, evasions, and lies - anything to protect the evil desires of the heart from exposure and destruction.

Consider and be wise.

Re: Understanding Men - posted by davidkeel (), on: 2020/6/11 4:47

That has brought two memories up for me.

I remember I had my first car crash shortly after passing my driving test. I realized I had been day dreaming at the time but now I knew that I had to stop this mental habit I had had for many years. That was a sad day for me to think I couldn't just relax in a lazy fashion while driving. But had to make myself alert all of the time.

That was the first time I took hold of my mind to change a habit in my character.

You also said we don't like to leave sin behind.

The next story is that I used my mind to overcome a sin. I was on a train coming back from London to my home. The train passed through a village where a friend lived. But I had not been walking in forgiveness in my heart with them and had held a grudge against them for a few years.

I was only a young Christian.

This was just a natural part of my sinful condition and I hadn't woken up to how bad I was.

I was starting to feel the conviction of the Lord and decided right then I would use my will to forgive that person ... and reject any temptation to change my mind on the matter.

Needless to say a storm of temptation came into my mind. Like I was in a battle field. It was an incredibly hard battle to

tay true to the decision I made. After five minutes of this I felt liberated inside and that I had truly overcome the temptation to disobey the Lord. I knew inside me that I had completely forgiven this guy.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

I saw the guy the following day in our town and approached him with not any form of bitterness or bad feeling. But spoke with him as you would with a beloved friend.

This whole episode brought a much closer walk with Jesus to me. And many blessings. And was the first time I knew I could overcome a major sin by not giving in to temptation. But to take every thought captive and make them obedient to Christ.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/6/11 8:48

Hi David,

Would you say that you won the battle to forgive that guy by self-power or by God's grace?

I am thinking of this:

Luke 22:41-43

And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.

Blessings

Re: - posted by davidkeel (), on: 2020/6/11 10:11

Hi Jade, I can honestly say that it was such a comprehensive victory... the way it happened inside of me... to have the fierce temptation suddenly go from me that it felt like a thing that God had helped me with.

The only part from me was that I was not going to give up taking every thought captive whether it took a long time or not.

As the days went on and I looked back on that experience I had the same question myself. Was that me that did it? .. or the Lord, or was it the devil just giving up?

I do believe that our sins do give the devil a stronghold in our life in some way. I don't have any verses for that.

I actually went on to think it must have been a miracle.

But that idea was dismissed a few years later when I was in a dire situation in my job. I had been in it for 12 years and had to work nights for 7 years. I really wanted to leave and I was getting really down and depressed. I felt locked into the job though and that God was keeping me there for some reason.

I once again turned to the idea of forgiveness to get some kind of liberation from the depression as I knew when I forgave the guy whilst on the train a few years earlier it brought me so close to the Lord..

Anyway I knew I was holding these ungodly thoughts toward my manager. She was a very hard and bossy person. But I decided again that I would ask the Lord to forgive me and said to Jesus, "I forgive her Lord", "and I am going to make myself stop having these terrible thoughts and not have a nasty thought against her."

So I made sure I would catch myself as I would find myself being tempted to go back on this idea. I would be sometimes shaking my head saying no .. I'm going to forgive her!

I managed to change my heart attitude again and I got complete victory and had a really nice heart attitude towards her.

Though this was more like a day to day battle. A few years later I went back to see her and told her that God had changed my life through repenting. She said to me, "I think I need to repent also".

It wasn't just the forgiveness of somebody that was achieved, it was the fact each time I did this more grace came into my life. More favour to live life. I felt like a new person inside. Had more deeper fellowship with the Lord.

It was the fulfillment of James 4 v 8.

Thanks for asking anyway. Here is a video of a girl teaching the same process.

The main part of the video is at 9 min 20 sec. But it's worth watching right from the start to get to see what she is like.

<https://youtu.be/-LY-ql1sgms?t=3>

Re: Victory - posted by cup (), on: 2020/6/13 13:30

Gal 6:14-15, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

Here is the key - we are crucified to the world and we are a NEW CREATION!!!

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2020/6/18 9:55

Thank you, David, for sharing. You had a heart for God's righteousness. I was blessed by your post.

Re: - posted by davidkeel (), on: 2020/6/18 14:09

That's kind of you Jade, I thank you.