

I. One of the world's greatest philosophers and mathematicians, Descartes, once made the statement, "I think, therefore I am." This has been given different meanings, but what I would like to emphasize is this: Thought is intimately connected with life; thought gives life meaning. There more you think, the more meaningful your life will be. So for the best life: think deeply!

The apostle Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:13, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind;" now "gird" relates to being clothed. We are to clothe our minds, to dress them up. We must, to put it very simply, THINK! We must use our brain in our Christian life. Without it we are nothing. We can't go around like a robot saying, "I believe in God... I believe in God." We must put meaning to our words. We must believe deep in our minds, not just on the surface. We must think about the Word of God.

Someone once said that we must be a voice, and not an echo. This means that we must not be like a cave, which does not understand the voice that it echoes back, but we must stand up for what we know and have thought out; we must stand up for what we know and have thought out; we must speak up for the truth, not just reflect what the world or the crowd around us is saying and doing, good or bad. We must not be a complete fool who cannot think for himself.

We tend to have our minds controlled by "idiot boxes," something that keeps us occupied and prevents us from having a brain attack. We want something to do our thinking for us. We want someone or something to divert our minds from dwelling on ourselves, our guilt, our responsibilities. We want to be continually entertained. Now, entertainment, in its place, is fine. But for most of us the question is not, "Are we doing anything worthwhile, meaningful, or important?" The question that concerns us is, "Are we having fun?" I hope that some of you here realize that having fun is not all there is to life. If your aim in life is fun, then you'll never really find it.

Science fiction writers have recognized man's trend to escape into a fantasy world and have described in their stories of the future what they call "live-it" sets. With these things you can choose the fantasy of your desire and actually live it in your mind. It is merely an extension of the TV set that we live in front of today, just like an addict sometimes. We let the TV "think" for us, and if it were to go off indefinitely, we would have withdrawal pains. Even if the show isn't interesting, we had rather watch it than do something constructive. [I wish someone would tell me what is constructive about watching TV all the time.]

II. God wants us to retain our individuality or personality. He doesn't want us to copy anyone but Christ. The randomness of our personality can be encompassed by the infiniteness of God. We must think independently. We must use our imagination. Remember the imagination that you had while you were young? What happened to it? What happened to the plans and designs you were going to build? Imagination will die if it is not used and exercised. It, like a metal, will rust if not taken care of, but if polished and worked will shine brightly.

John Bunyan, in his classic work, *Paradise Lost*, paints the picture of a man bent double, eyes on the ground, scrabbling among the small dust of the earth, while all the time an angel stood above him offering him a golden crown -- and he never saw it, because he never lifted up his eyes. We, today, must look up from the small dust of worldly living and seek the true beauty of God. Don't miss it! We must think about it to enjoy it. The more time we spend on our life searching for and thinking about God, the more meaningful it will be for us when we find him.

Imagination is closely related to our perception or vision of the future. Someone once said (E. Paul Hovey) that a blind man's world is bounded by the limits of his touch; an ignorant man's world by the limits of his knowledge; a great man's world by the limits of his imagination.

Are you using your imagination for God? Do you ask yourself: "What can I do to promote the work of the Lord and the church?" Or do you wait for someone to ask you for help in something else? Worse still, do you just say, "What can I do for myself to help pass the time and end the boredom?" The church needs the imagination of its members. God told us to carry the gospel, but he did not tell us details about how we had to do it. That means that we must think of better and better scriptural ways to do it.

[So many have said that the future of the church is its young people. But have you really thought about your future? What do you want to do with your life? Do you want to look back after

10 years and say; "I have grown in wisdom and stature before the Lord", or do you want to look back and cry, "My God, my God, why have I forsaken you?" Now is the time to secure your future. Think about it.]

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