

# The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” – Psalm 119:105

Nov 16

2008

## The Battle

Jerry Jenkins

There is a continual battle going on, a “tug of war,” and the battlefield is our minds. Not only is the battle very real, it is also very basic to our walk here – as basic as faith and love. Through Christ our spirits can win this battle against the flesh, but the choice is ours. And what an important choice this is! The victor in the battle for our minds will direct our lives.

This choice we make is a choice about what we will think, what we will invite into our minds. Our minds are always *working*. We are always *thinking*. Either we will carefully and consciously choose our thoughts, or, in failing to exercise spiritual control, the flesh will dominate our thinking and take control of our minds.

Sometimes the flesh takes over as our minds are directed toward the *past*, reliving events. Yet, everything in the past is just a memory now, and every experience we’ve ever had is over. Other times the flesh turns our thoughts to the *future*, mentally creating situations that have yet to happen and perhaps never will. To compulsively worry about the future in this way is to live in a make-believe world, a world in which God has little, if any, place. In contrast, the spiritual outlook has a very *present* and godly focus. Let us then fix our minds on God, thanking Him for the Savior who frees His people from both the regrets of years gone by and the uncertainties of days yet to come!

A key to the battle for our minds – to controlling our thoughts – is *awareness*. An awareness of what our minds are doing is critical. Are our minds inclined to the optimism of faith or the pessimism of doubt? Do we realize that we choose our mental response to the things we see and hear? Are we aware that we are choosing those things which will dominate our thoughts?

If we search for *good*, we can find plenty of good to think about. If we search for *bad*, we can find plenty of that instead. And “so the battle goes.” Whatever we think on will *grow* (much like a seed). A small mustard seed can grow into a plant so large it resembles a tree, and much the same is true of the seed-thoughts we allow to be planted in our

minds. Focus on good, and good will grow! “*Whatsoever things are lovely..., think on these things*” (**Philippians 4:8**).

We need to catch ourselves in the act of inappropriate thinking and stop such thinking before it does damage. Negative or wrong thinking can spiral out of control before one realizes it. We need to learn to identify thoughts that have the potential of eroding our joy, peace, perseverance, and hope. We need to get to the point where we can treat such thoughts as flies at a picnic – pests to be shooed away, not invited to stay.

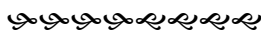
Behold the power of thought. Have you ever considered that you can’t have an emotion without first having a related thought? For example, you can’t get angry without first having angry thoughts (so the next time you get in bumper-to-bumper traffic, control your thoughts and thereby control your anger). You can’t get sad without first having sad thoughts (so if you find yourself depressed, reflect on what you’ve been thinking about). You can’t get jealous without jealous thoughts, etc. It’s impossible! In order to *feel* something, you must *think* on it first.

Our minds are very powerful instruments. If we understood the power of our thoughts, we would be more careful what we think! What we think about is the most important factor in determining what our lives will become. “*Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life*” (**Proverbs 4:23**). “*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he*” (**Proverbs 23:7**).

As Christians, we should think differently from the world. We should have a larger measure of peace and happiness because our thoughts are focused on Jesus.

Guard your thinking and thereby guard your life! Change your thinking, and you can change your life!

*“...Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”*



Preacher’s point — If this article looks familiar to you, then you have a great memory! It appeared in this bulletin over ten years ago (September 6, 1998, to be exact). I ran across it while going through some old bulletins and thought it was worth printing again. Thank you, Jerry, for your permission to do so!

# News and Notes

## Members:

- \* Mary Burnett had a spell Friday night and has been in a lot of pain.
- \* Connie Cobern is having enough problems with her gout in both feet that she cannot stand up on her own. She is using a wheel chair.
- \* Geneva Copelin is fighting a chest cold and congestion.
- \* Metty Fain remains in Highland Manor Nursing Home; Room B2; 215 Highland Circle Dr; Portland, TN 37148.
- \* Cotton Reed is suffering from sinus problems.

## Friends and Family:

- \* Sandlyn Fultz is having a brain MRI and chest x-ray on Thursday in B'ham.

Absent: Katie Greene (San Antonio, TX).

New Reports: None known.

## CAN YOU TRUTHFULLY SAY THIS?

“I do not want to be *anywhere*, at *any* time, with *anyone*, doing *anything*, that would in *any* way detract from my influence for the Master.”



*“It is well with the man who is gracious and lends; he will maintain his cause in judgment. For he will never be shaken.”*

**Psalm 112:5-6a**