

thinking right in the STORM



The very fact that you are reading this tells me that you are going through a tough time. Going from day to day trying to put on a happy face and go meet the world that is doing fine in their lives, and try to fit in without losing it?

You're going through a super tough time. And somehow in the course of this, you have gotten a hold of this study to encourage you and help you through? So, what's the first thing we should discuss as we sit down as new friends with a cup of fresh coffee? Though in times like this it may seem that what we are facing is a clearly external issue, in the long run you will come to realize that your suffering is more an internal struggle than anything else.

The Bible has a lot to say about WHAT we think on and HOW we think and the importance of this in every area of life. One of the main passages that comes to mind is Proverbs 4:23 ...

Proverbs 4:23 - Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.¹

Another version words it this way

Proverbs 4:23 - Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.²
and

Proverbs 4:23 - Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do.³

Keep in mind that to the Old Testament reader, the heart was not the place of emotions like it is for us today, but rather the "mind" or the "inner you". Let me ask you a few questions. Do you work hard to guard your mind against wrong thinking as you go through this difficulty?

What are some of the wrong thoughts that you are tempted to think and dwell on regularly?

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Pr 4:23). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

² Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Pr 4:23). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

³ Tyndale House Publishers. (1996). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Pr 4:23). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

In what ways can thinking these thoughts cause you to sin or go against what you know God wants in your life right now?

The passage instructs us to “make every effort” to guard how we think. In your current suffering, as there are many wrong thoughts bombarding your mind ... How can you make changes in your life right now to protect your thinking from sinful thoughts? What actions can you take right now to keep wrong influences away?

So, Proverbs 4:23 kind of gives us a “defensive” challenge. We need to be very diligent to protect our minds from wrong thinking. However, as in much of Scripture, we are instructed to be “offensive” and not only “defensive”. A key passage we should consider as we fight to have God glorified in our trials is Romans 12:2

Romans 12:2 - Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.⁴

This passage reminds us to not act like the world. That includes in our suffering. Rather, we are to let God change us. And how is that done? ... by letting him change the way we think.

So, let me ask you this. You're suffering. HUGE. Many who don't know Christ are in the same boat. The difference is we have the Spirit in us enabling us to do what they can't. We have the Truth of Scripture informing our minds of God, His character, and his reasons for hope.

⁴ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ro 12:2). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

We are also told that as our thinking is changed ... we will come to know what God's will for us in in life. If you have been a believer for any length of time you should have an idea what God wants in your life. As you think about these months and even years ahead of you, now permanently changed by deep grief, what do you think (from what you know of God and Scripture) is God's will for you in the days and months ahead? How do you think He wants you to bring Him glory in your new phase of life (2 Corinthians 5:9)?

TRUTH you NEED to remember ... put on a card, memorize, keep it with you 😊

Proverbs 4:23 - Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do. (NLT)⁵

⁵ Tyndale House Publishers. (1996). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Pr 4:23). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

