

Keeping Ourselves Unspotted from the World
(Lesson 1)

Introduction:

1. According to James 1:27, an important part of "*pure and undefiled religion before God*" is "keeping ourselves unspotted from the world."
2. One of the keys to keeping ourselves unspotted from the world is "controlling our thoughts."
3. We are basing our study of this subject on David's appeal in Psalm 139:23-24.
4. In our lesson we are pointing out:
 - a. why we must control our thoughts
 - b. how we control our thoughts.

Discussion:

- I. LET US CONSIDER 2 REASONS WHY WE MUST CONTROL OUR THOUGHTS
 - A. First, we must control our thoughts because God knows our thoughts.
 1. When David made his request in Psalm 139:23, he had learned that he could not hide anything from God, including his thoughts.
 2. The Bible clearly teaches that God knows our thoughts.
 - a. Psalm 139:1-2
 - b. Psalm 44:21 tells us that God "*knows the secrets of the heart.*"
 - c. According to John 2:25, Jesus "*knew what was in man.*"
 3. Since God knows our thoughts, it is essential for us to control them.
 - B. Second, we must control our thoughts because our actions, our words, and our attitudes are determined by our thoughts.
 1. See:
 - a. Proverbs 23:7 -- "*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.*"
 - b. Matthew 12:35
 - c. Mark 7:21-23
 2. Since our conduct and attitudes are determined by our thoughts, it is essential for us to control our thoughts.
 - C. Now that we understand why we must control our thoughts, . . .
- II. LET US CONSIDER HOW WE CONTROL OUR THOUGHTS (Negative and positive instructions)
 - A. Negative instructions:
 1. We must avoid thinking too highly of ourselves (Romans 12:3).
 - a. A number of verses explain why we must avoid this kind of thinking.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 10:12
 - 2) Galatians 6:3
 - b. A number of characters in the Bible illustrate why this kind of thinking must be avoided.
 - 1) Nebuchadnezzar thought too highly of himself (Daniel 4:30, 33, 34, 37).
 - 2) Herod also thought too highly of himself (Acts 12:20-23)
 2. We must avoid dwelling on the past (Philippians 3:13).
 - B. Positive instructions:
 1. 2 Corinthians 10:5 teaches us to bring "*into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*"
 2. We must think on the right kinds of things (Philippians 4:8).

Conclusion:

1. The Bible teaches us why we must control our thoughts, and the Bible teaches us how to control our thoughts.
2. Let us follow David's example of wanting his life to be right with God in Psalm 139:23-24.
3. Those who do have confidence that all things work together for good (Romans 8:28).