

# YOU ARE WHAT YOU THINK



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How is the condition of your heart these days? I'm not talking about your physical heart—but about your psychological/emotional heart—your mind and soul.

Over the years I have learned that what we put into our minds affects the way we think. The way we think affects the way we feel in our hearts. The way we feel affects the way we talk and how we act. Therefore, the way we talk and act comes directly from our hearts.

Typically, I am pretty good at revealing what I mean through written words. However, at this moment, I feel there is no better way to share my point than to refer to previously written words—from scripture. There are many that speak to where I am going—like Matthew 12:34b that says “...For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”. But perhaps the best scripture that dives deeper into my point is Luke 6:45: “A good man brings good things out of the good that is stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of”.

Whether you believe in God or not, there is much truth in this statement if you stop to fully ponder it.

In the early years of my marriage and beginnings of mommy-hood, I spent a great deal of time with a friend in the same stage of life as me. Often times, our group grew as she invited several of her neighborhood friends to join us. Spiritually we were not of the same mind, but with our commonalities on other fronts, I enjoyed our time together—at least at the beginning.

As days, weeks, and months wore on I found that she and the others who joined us would eventually turn our time together into a husband-bashing session. I would listen, empathize, and try to offer words of help and encouragement. But it seemed my input fell on deaf ears and was highly unwelcome. So I became quieter over time and then, surprisingly I found myself starting to join in on the bashing. As time progressed, my heart started to become blackened with negativity toward my husband and I began focusing on all that he was “doing wrong”.

I wanted to feel like I was part of the group—complaining about my husband made me feel welcomed and even important. But at the same time, my heart felt heavy. I was putting husband negativity into my mind. As it became overloaded with the constant junk, it affected the way I felt toward my husband. Ultimately it affected the way I treated him—both in word and deed. I spoke and acted from what was in my toxic heart because of what I was filling it with.

I am ashamed and embarrassed to admit these truths to you. But perhaps my

confession and humility might allow you to be real with yourself. Maybe for you, it's not in spouse bashing and meanness but in other areas—how you've acted toward and spoken to your children, parents, friends, or even strangers.

There is also the generality of our heart over-overflowage. In general, are you a Negative Nelly or Nathan? Or are you a Positive Peggy or Pete? Do you complain, grumble and gossip continually? Or do you uplift, encourage, and spread goodness?

Depending on which way you lean, I'll bet we can trace it back to not only your growing up years and circumstances in your life along the way but also to what you are putting in your mind now. We cannot change our past. We cannot change what has been done to us or even mistakes we've made that have brought us to this point. But we can begin a new way, powered by how we choose to spend our time and what we put into our minds.

If you put good things into your mind from all sources (media, books, music, words from positive people), you will find that you will think good thoughts. Adversely, if you put bad things into your mind, you will find yourself thinking bad or negative thoughts. Don't believe me? Give it a try. I dare you – I double dare you! For one week, take out negativity, including media and screens. Fill the gap with goodness—good books, good music, uplifting people. I guarantee you will notice a difference—not only in your heart and mind but also in your relationships.

Now, what if some of your close relationships are contributing negatively to your heart? Well, you can begin by being a light of goodness to them. You can fill yourself with good so that you can exude positivity, uplifting thoughts, and encouragement. You can also pray for them. But like my “friends”, there are just some people you cannot deter from their negativity and it may be time to say goodbye as I did.

I cannot speak to how my “friend's” negativity affected their marriage back then or the future of their marriages. But I venture to say the husband bashing was not good for it. I'd also like to say that because I left and began choosing to fill my mind with better things and better friends, my marriage was and is so much better for it. The same holds true for other relationships in my life—as I fill my mind and heart with goodness, it overflows to others.

Just as it is said “you are what you eat”, I am confident in saying “you are what you think”. No matter where we stand on the religious continuum, this concept holds true.

What are you and those you love putting into your minds? Has it changed over the past months as the world has changed? Are you spending more time than ever on your phone or other devices? Are you listening to news and media and all of the

heaviness in bulk? Or do you know the fragility of your mind, know how quickly it can become blackened, and have you chosen to put extra goodness in at such a time as this?

What about a different part of your heart and mind ... have your fears and worries increased? Are you more concerned about your future and the future of those you love like never before? When you are overwhelmed with the heaviness, where do you turn? Where does your hope come from?

Friends, I come to you today outside of my normal monthly auto article, with a desire to share my heart with you—at such a time as this. The unending pressures, heaviness, and unprecedented terribleness that have touched each of our lives these past few months have been incredible—for every single person. We have been bombarded with excessive evil, problems, conspiracy theories, and political junk. We've experienced a rollercoaster of emotions with fear being prominent in so much.

What seems to be missing, is hope. I ask again, where does your hope come from? My hope comes from the Lord. It came from many other things over the span of my life but always, always, those hopes fell flat. If you are curious, if you are open to a new way, if you have a hole in your heart that yearns for hope, I encourage you to seek the Lord.

Okay, but how, you might wonder? Where do you start? What if I told you the answer may be in an eagle? How crazy is that? Here's the reasoning from my heart:

My dad loved eagles—he had a small but glorious collection. Every single time I am lucky enough to spot an eagle, I immediately think of my dad. As we approach Father's Day this year, my heart is extra heavy—it is the first one I will have without my father on earth since he passed away the day after Father's Day last year. Knowing dad knew Jesus, I have great hope that I will see him again one day. Until then, the eagle will fill me with goodness as I remember my dad.

Here's another eagle moment: I attend Eagle Brook Church. The logo is an eagle soaring over the water. Eagle Brook is an incredible church with a passion to reach people for Christ. Eagle Brook has an extensive online following as well as nine campuses—eight in the twin cities area and the ninth opened here in Rochester in October of last year—on what would have been my dad's 66th birthday. Coincidence? Maybe. But there is more.

Our nation is in the midst of a great crisis. The heaviness is enough to crush our spirits and tear us apart—and has already to a degree. The negativity that we hear from every direction has the potential to blacken our hearts and have the overflow be a catastrophe of evil. But then, we can remember, our national bird—the bald eagle!

The bald eagle was chosen in 1782

as the emblem of the United States of America because of its long life, great strength, and majestic looks. It represents freedom. It is an amazing creature that brings about awe as you behold its greatness. I don't believe if we look at our nation right now that any one of us would call it great. There is so much evil, so much division, and so much negativity. But what if the eagle was the key to bringing about greatness again?

Let me bring my point to a climax—again, not with my words but with greater words from my favorite good book—the Bible. Isaiah 41:31 says, “But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

I ask a third time: where does your hope come from? If it does not yet come from the Lord, might you explore this option with me? You would not have to carry the heaviness of your current circumstances on your own—the Lord can carry them and He will also renew your strength. He will fill your heart with His goodness. That goodness could then overflow into the lives of others. You could run to spread His Good Word as Eagle Brook does—reaching people for Christ so that more people have this great hope. You could be confident of where you will go when you leave this earth—the same place as my eagle-loving dad went. And even more—maybe, just maybe, as all of our hearts start to overflow with goodness, our nation might get on track to obtain the greatness of which it is undoubtedly capable of.

I am confident that the solution to greatness is in the eagle. For if we think back a moment to why this bird was chosen to be the emblem of our country—for its long life, great strength, majestic looks, and freedom, we would also see the parallel between the eagle and the great hope we have in Jesus. If we believe in Him, we will have long life—the longest—eternity in Heaven. We will have great strength—because it is in our weakness that Christ will carry the load and fill us with His strength. We will have majestic looks—for a life lived in Jesus, yields a majestic beauty like no other. And finally, we will have freedom as we've never before experienced—freedom from our sin. We will die to self and strive to be like Christ, allowing Him to fill us with goodness so that our hearts would overflow with goodness to everyone who crosses our path here on earth.

To be a man or woman that brings about good from the overflow of our hearts, we must first fill our hearts with good—what we watch and listen to, who we spend time with, every single thing we put in our minds. If you need a good place to start, I invite you to join me in soaking in the goodness from Eagle Brook Church this weekend or check out past messages online. Perhaps this “eagle” will be the one that fills you with hope as you begin your journey of long life, great strength, majestic looks, and freedom.

Join us online! Sunday, June 21st at 9am & 11am



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