

Inflated Thinking

Scriptures:

II Chron. 18 tells the story of King Ahab, his false prophets and King Ahab's demise. Verse 22 goes on : "So you see, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of your prophets. For the Lord has determined disaster for you."

[23] Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah walked up to Micaiah and slapped him across the face. "When did the Spirit of the Lord leave me to speak to you?" he demanded. [24] And Micaiah replied, "You will find out soon enough, when you find yourself hiding in some secret room!" [25] King Ahab of Israel then ordered, "Arrest Micaiah and take him back to Amon, the governor of the city, and to my son Joash. [26] Give them this order from the king: 'Put this man in prison, and feed him nothing but bread and water until I return safely from the battle!' " [27] But Micaiah replied, "If you return safely, the Lord has not spoken through me!" Then he added to those standing around, "Take note of what I have said." [28] So the king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah led their armies against Ramoth-gilead. [29] Now King Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "As we go into battle, I will disguise myself so no one will recognize me, but you wear your royal robes." So Ahab disguised himself, and they went into battle. [30] Now the king of Aram had issued these orders to his charioteers: "Attack only the king of Israel!" [31] So when the Aramean charioteers saw Jehoshaphat in his royal robes, they went after him. "There is the king of Israel!" they shouted. But Jehoshaphat cried out to the Lord to save him, and God helped him by turning the attack away from him. [32] As soon as the charioteers realized he was not the king of Israel, they stopped chasing him. [33] An Aramean soldier, however, randomly shot an arrow at the Israelite troops, and the arrow hit the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. "Get me out of here!" Ahab groaned to the driver of his chariot. "I have been badly wounded!" [34] The battle raged all that day, and Ahab propped himself up in his chariot facing the Arameans until evening. Then, just as the sun was setting, he died.

Proverbs 20:6 (NLT) Many will say they are loyal friends, but who can find one who is really faithful?

Psalm 36:1-4 (NLT) For the choir director: A psalm of David, the servant of the Lord. Sin whispers to the wicked, deep within their hearts. They have no fear of God to restrain them. [2] In their blind conceit, they cannot see how wicked they really are. [3] Everything they say is crooked and deceitful. They refuse to act wisely or do what is good. [4] They lie awake at night, hatching sinful plots. Their course of action is never good. They make no attempt to turn from evil.

Proverbs 16:2 (NLT) People may be pure in their own eyes, but the Lord examines their motives. *People can rationalize anything if they have no standards for judging right and wrong. We can always prove that we are right. Before putting any plan into action, ask yourself these three questions: (1) Is this plan in harmony with God's truth? (2) Will it work under real-life conditions? (3) Is my attitude pleasing to God?*

Proverbs 25:14 (NLT) A person who doesn't give a promised gift is like clouds and wind that don't bring rain.

Matthew 23:23 (NLT) "How terrible it will be for you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest part of your income, but you ignore the important things of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but you should not leave undone the more important things.

Definition:

VIEWS SELF AS A GOOD PERSON

- a. Focuses only on positive attributes
- b. Fails to acknowledge own destructive behavior
- c. Builds self up at other's expenses
- d. Focuses only on intent, not impact of choices
- e. Usually believes they are unique/superior

Biblical Principle

Any good behavior used to establish goodness is twisted thinking inflated. The twisted Thinker believes that good behavior establishes their goodness. They will refuse to look at their hearts because they will have to face the fact of their inherent, pervasive darkness and have no hope outside of God's grace.

Issue of Goodness

Practicing Twisted Thinkers believe "If you really get to know the real me, you'll see I'm a good person like anyone else." The problem is that is the twisted Thinker who defines what is good and even the essence of goodness. There needs to be an absolute authority to define goodness. The example of the rich young ruler gives a prime example of the twisted thinker in inflated thinking. The Inflated Thinker defines goodness and then uses acts of goodness to maintain the belief they are good.

How does the Inflated Thinker construct their outer-world? Here are some tactics:

They do things that are charitable (giving to church and other charities)

Observe religious events

Using their artistic and/or mechanical talents

Holding down a job

They abhor certain types of crimes and/or addictions

They do acts of consideration to friends and strangers

Demonstrating sentimentality with other people, animals, birds, etc.

All of Jeffery Dahmer's attempts to quit killing were actually tactics he used out of his inflated thinking – they were attempts to firm up his image that he wasn't that bad of a guy. He got and read Bibles, went to church and spent time with his grandmother; but why didn't he just turn himself in?

Formula of Corrosion

Dwelling upon irresponsible fantasies + A personal definition of "goodness" decaying spiritual and moral deterrents + Development of Twisted Thinking patterns + Determined choices to pursue the Big E = The Shock

Many Inflated Thinkers create a fantasy world that keeps their image of “goodness” and keeps them from moving into empathy. Because most of the choices and the direction of the twisted thinker are below the street, there is a big shock when the twisted thinker actually acts out on his chosen direction. Fantasies cause the erosion of the deterrents to responsible behavior. Fantasy is the anesthesia that allows us to make irresponsible choices. The thinking and fantasies of the twisted thinker is in the sewer, which no one sees. Even the Twisted Thinker can be shocked by their own choices. The Twisted Thinker can invoke the fantasies at will if they haven’t deleted them from his/her memory. They can behave responsibly for a season, then find it boring or disagreeable and begin the path towards the Big E by entering into their fantasies and no one will know they’ve gone there.

Correctives & Responses

The very moment we see inflated thinking, it needs to be exposed. One tool that can help is the Ripple Effect Chart (*See handout*) Another tool is the Rap Sheet. These will help the Inflated Thinker to be empathetic and move back into time and space and pull out of fantasy. It needs to be done as soon as the awareness of Inflated thinking starts.

Weighing the misdeeds and damage against the good things will help the inflated thinker see the whole picture.

It is essential that the inflated thinker temporarily discontinues good deeds and charitable acts and let their daily behavior stand for itself.

Remember, Jesus is not against good behavior but he’s against using good behavior as the only criteria for defining goodness!

Stubborn Thinking - "I Won't"

Scriptures:

Proverbs 12:27 (NLT) Lazy people don't even cook the game they catch, but the diligent make use of everything they find.

Proverbs 22:13 (NLT) The lazy person is full of excuses, saying, "If I go outside, I might meet a lion in the street and be killed!"

James 1:2-5 (NIV) Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, [3] because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. [4] Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. [5] If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

James 5:10-11 (NIV) Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. [11] As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Definition:

- (a) Unwilling to do anything you find boring or disagreeable.
- (b) "I can't" means "I won't" - nothing to do with skills or ability
- (c) Lack of perseverance is a maturity issue.
- (d) Energy and effort are not the same - effort is energy expended on something that is goal-oriented, and may even be distasteful. This takes the form in three ways:

Short Cuts

Stubborn Thinkers live to find short cuts so they can avoid being inconvenienced or responsible. It is actually a form of laziness.

Refusal To Do Things that are Disagreeable

Stubborn Thinkers will always find reasons for not following through on things they find disagreeable or boring

Will Engage in Relationships Where They Have Control

The Stubborn Thinker will bring in pornography into a marriage relationship because they are certain they can please themselves and won't risk being hurt or rejected by others. Like other thinking patterns, Stubborn Thinkers lock themselves into isolation and distance themselves from meaningful relationships.

Grandiose Standards

The stubborn Thinker is often afraid not to live up to their self-imposed grandiose standards. This will lead to avoidance of making an effort to endure through the process. Demanding others behave a certain way is a symptom of Inflated Thinking and further isolated the Stubborn Thinker.

Correctives & Responses

Stubborn thinkers must experience consequences - not to have consequences is to not have respect for the person. An real accountability relationship will have consequences and a contract.

“I can’t” needs to turn into “I must.” This is done by helping them see the impact of their choices. This will help them become empathetic.

You must identify and challenge the excuses that avoid effort. When they won’t do something, ask them, “What are you trying to avoid?”

The Ripple Effect Chart

