

Vain Thoughts – Psalm 119:113

SAMECH. I hate *vain* thoughts: but thy law do I love. (*Psalm 119:113*)

What is a vain thought? Well, in the context of the verse, vain is described in the dictionary as empty, useless, devoid of meaning, or scripturally put, not profitable. In short, thoughts that do not produce anything of value, are vain.

Now, this is contrasted with the law of God by the use of the word “but”, which is a conjunction that draws a sharp distinction between the two parts. In so doing, the word of God makes vain thoughts and the law of God mutually exclusive. Now, this ought not be a surprise in that the LORD God draws many sharp distinctions in His word, and thus makes many things mutually exclusive. Among these are good and evil, grace and works (for salvation), holy and unholy, clean and unclean, etc.

However, in this one thing, the LORD is addressing how we think. The Psalmist makes it very clear that loving (or enjoying) vain thoughts and loving the law of God cannot co-exist in someone, in that they cannot serve two masters. Either the Psalmist will hate vain thoughts and love the law of God, or he will do the opposite. He cannot be double-minded. Now, this was made clear earlier in the psalm when he testified the following:

Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. (*Psalm 119:104*)

It is the “therefore” that demonstrates to us that we cannot have a co-existence in our minds of thinking of things that are false, and a love for the law of God. This is to say that we cannot think in ways, and about subjects that are empty of real meaning, unproductive, and contrary to the law of God, which is to say we cannot think about things that are

manifestly not true. Hence, we cannot fill our minds, and think about things that don't exist anywhere else except in the imagination, and are thus not real.

Now, I know in this modern age that there are those who believe that if you think it, it is indeed real, simply because you think it. However, that is utter nonsense in that we can think in our minds all day long that we can fly without any mechanical assistance whatsoever, but the simple laws that govern this physical universe will quickly prove that wrong. Thus, this simple illustration ought to prove that simply thinking it doesn't make it real or true. All it is, and all it will ever be, is fantasy and a fiction that we have invented (if you will) in our minds to divert us from having to deal with the realities of this life.

By the same token, reading about someone else's fiction and fantasy, is no different than coming up your own. In fact, in the eyes of God, to approve of iniquity, is just as bad as actually engaging in it. Why? Because all sin and iniquity begins in the heart and mind, long before it is acted upon, and to approve of sin and iniquity is, by implication, a strong statement that sin and iniquity are indeed right and proper and righteousness is not.

So, it should be understood that reading and partaking of that which is vain is no different than coming up with the those vain things yourself. After all, by implication, you approve of it when you partake of it. And, as the verse was very plain above, that is to set oneself against the law of God. Plainly, the 113th verse stated that the Psalmist hated vain thoughts, but loved the law of God. Notice that the word was not "and", rather it was the express contrast of "but".

We cannot serve two masters, for we will love one and hate the other, we will not love both equally, particularly when they are diametrically opposed. This the Lord Jesus Christ made plain when He stated:

No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (*Luke 16:13*)

And again:

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (*Matthew 6:24*)

Which confirms the principle of what is written in James about those who do attempt to, at once and the same time, live for Christ and love and enjoy the things of this world: ((Now this verse sits in the context of trusting the LORD to grant one's request for wisdom, which, when one asks with uncertainty, one is double-minded concerning the LORD's promise of understanding and wisdom for all who ask in all singleness of heart. The principle here is the same. One cannot ask doubting, being unsure of whether the LORD keeps His promises or not, all the while professing to "believe" the LORD.))

A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways. (*James 1:8*)

To attempt to reconcile the dichotomy within ourselves and be comfortable with both vain thoughts and the law of God is to put ourselves in the worst condition of all in the sight of God: we are true hypocrites that are comfortable being double-minded. We should all understand where that leads: and it won't be heaven.

This is why "Christian fiction" is such an oxymoron.