

Outline

Un-Thinkers' Universal Truths (Part B)

I knew a guy once who never liked to be hurt. If someone tried to do something that might hurt him or make him feel bad, he would do his best to try and correct that situation and prove the other person to be a faulty person as well. And if he could not prove that person to be faulty or if they did not accept his correction of them like they had just done to him? He attempted to hurt them with hurt that might make them feel the same way he was feeling. Many times he was justified in feeling wronged because they were wrong in how they hurt him.

For example, I remember when this guy was probably 13 and we were playing pick up football like young teen boys are often prone to do. He felt that one of his friends was cheating and not playing the game right. So, naturally, with a spirit of fairness, this guy confronted his buddy. But the other kid just laughed at him and said he was quitting and taking his football and going home. And with the other boys that turned to leave with him, he started making fun of my friend. Naturally this wrong was extremely unfair. But there was nothing to be done. My friend did not want to stop playing ball, but the other kid wasn't changing his mind and just kept walking away and laughing and making fun of my friend. It just wasn't fair. My friend was being made out to be in the wrong – to be the fool. And he stood there pathetically, getting angrier with each moment that passed, with each new chuckle, each new insult.

Then something snapped. My friend rushed toward this other kid with everything he had, with his best Rick Flair impression (for those of you who do not know who Rick Flair is, you are either too young or not a Professional Wrestling enthusiast.), leapt into the air with both feet flying in front of him and violently slammed into the back of the cheating, laughing, insulting friend. The boy flew face first into the muddy Minnesota ground, writhing in pain and gasping for his next breath while I, shocked with what I had just done, mouth agape, paused, then flew like the wind for home.

I am happy to say that what could have been a very dangerous moment for the boy turned into only a few moments of fear and pain and no great physical damage was done. However, the moment terrifyingly lives on in my memory to this day. I believe that was the last time that buddy and I ever spent together. That moment irrevocably broke a friendship – and all because of my desire for justice at all costs. I chose to curse my persecutor – to get revenge on one who was hurting me.

Throughout the last month we have been engaged in a bit of a challenge that I have thrown down for everyone. **UnThink Your World!** And the chapter in the Bible that provides the guidance for this is Romans 12 with the UnThinker's Mission Statement coming right in the first two verses of the chapter:

October 4, 2009

UnThinker's Mission Statement

Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him...Romans 12:1 TM

God absolutely sees that every day is His business in our life. He knows best how we can live our lives. Sometimes I get to thinking that I know best how to live your life, but my thinking is flawed. You see, the difference between God and me is that He knows you inside and out, better than you know yourself. I, no matter how much I might think I know you, can never know what it is like to live your life or think your thoughts. So I have to UnThink my desire to make judgments on your life like I truly know your heart. And each of us needs to UnThink our living our lives on our own without listening to God, for He truly does know our hearts and our lives and how best to live them and is constantly speaking to us about how to live them if we would just listen to His voice in our Fleeting Thoughts! The Mission Statement goes on to tell us exactly how to do that!

Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. Romans 12:1,2 TM

UnThink your world. UnThink what society and the culture tells you to think and how to live. Focus your attention on God and obey what He tells you to do no matter how crazy it sounds. God's voice in your Fleeting Thoughts is always positive even if it at times feels painful – like putting others first in front of yourself, seeking forgiveness from those you have wronged, choosing not to react without integrity when a wrong decision is sitting in front of you that might make you feel better in the short-term, but will end up hurting you and others in the long-term.

Which brings me all the way back to my friend Eric that I so unceremoniously gave a face plant in the cold, muddy Minnesota turf so many years ago! I thought in the moment that disciplining him in such a way would cause him to re-think his, in my opinion, unjust treatment of me. I chose to give him something that might hurt just as much or maybe a little more than I was hurting at the time. I soon realized I had made a bad decision. My persecution of my persecutor did not bring him to “truth realization” or me to satisfaction. We both felt miserable and he, when he quit sucking wind through the pinhole his lungs had become, wanted nothing more than to make me equally if not more miserable. However, we humans seem to think revenge and hurt are the appropriate responses to those who have hurt us, whether they were right or not. Romans 12 counsels us to UnThink the idea of “eye for eye, tooth for tooth” as a failed philosophy that only leads to further pain and persecution:

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Romans 12:14-16 NIV

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God desires that we UnThink our reactions toward the pain that others cause us. Our natural response is to hurt them back. I know that this has been the case in my life from the face plant I gave my friend to the Verbal Defense that I have always been tempted to throw back at those who have confronted me with their offenses they say I have created in their lives. Like an efficient boxer, I have met confrontation with quick jabs to their logic, swift uppercuts at their own deficiencies, and major haymakers that attempted to take them out of my life and the good graces of others. I have been a deft persecutor 'opposer.'

However, God proposes a different plan: Bless and do not curse your persecutor. What are our first Thoughts? *%###!#! Curses. Whether it is an actual choosing to cuss someone out or simply calling them a name or chewing them out, we love to get some of our own back. ([Back to verses 14-16](#)) Not only that but what else do we do with our enemies? We love to celebrate when they fail and rejoice when they make mistakes. Further, when the ex- has something great happen to her or the boss who laid us off turns a profit or the person who cut us off out on I-95 just misses the accident ahead and isn't stuck in the ensuing traffic jam, we thrive on grieving over their good fortune and we mourn their success.

God begs us to UnThink this attitude of entitlement on our part, this choice of pain infliction we opt for. God tells us it will lead us only down very dark paths that end in poor life choices. How do we UnThink those who hurt us? He shows us right here: Bless them rather than curse them – rejoice in their success, mourn over their loss. There is nothing, nothing, NOTHING to be gained by hurting another or joyfully celebrating their pain. It only serves to darken our own spirit and steal our own joy.

Who is it that is your persecutor today? Who do you have a hard time rejoicing with their successes and are tempted to love their humiliations? Who is it that you avoid like the plague because you do not like them or because they have hurt you at one time or another? Is your spirit of revenge or return persecution working for you? Is it bringing you peace? I don't think so. I am willing to bet the house it only serves to make you an angry and despondent person. It is time to give them the F-Word. Not that one...shame, shame, shame – The ultimate F-Word – Forgiveness. Look at what God says here in Romans 12 – Live in harmony with one another. Be willing to associate with people of low position – don't think you are too good for them. Truly when we choose to live a life of forgiveness, we choose to live out of harmony with how God intended us to live. When you choose to reverse the verse and rejoice with those who mourn and mourn with those who rejoice, you are thinking you are better than they are. You are conceited. I am self-righteous. I have been there. I have been hurt by others and immediately thought, "Who do you think you are?" Then I have subconsciously or not so subconsciously plotted their demise either through gossip, slander, disrespect, or worse. I stand here today to tell you it has never worked in my life! It has only served to make my life more miserable. UnThink this worldly, 'humanic' lie that we as humans are so accustomed to living by. God's universal truths that feel so alien to us will work, even though every fiber of your being says the opposite. Here is what it looks like from our UnThinker's Guide:

UnThinker Universal Truths

[Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my](#)

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friends...Romans 12:17-19a NIV

If someone treats you poorly, resist the temptation to pay them back in kind. It will go badly for your spirit and for your life. Instead, look what God encourages us to do instead. As long as it is up to us and we can control the situation, we must seek for the peaceful solution. Revenge will always backfire. It has in my life. Getting back at someone who has hurt you will never work in your favor. However, to choose to live at peace with someone rebuking me, or hurting me, or seeking my ill will always bring God's blessing.

Wait on God to lead you in life. We all play a role in His great play. Too often we feel it all-important that we take control of our lives and move the situations into our favor or against another's favor because God is just way too slow. We allow our emotions to motivate and move us to actions that we later regret. Then we take things a step further. The Non-Thinking society says, "Do unto others before they do unto you." This philosophy leads to broken relationships as we seek revenge, manipulated solutions, and power brokerages. But God asks us to **Un-Think** this philosophy and wait on Him to work life out for us. He asks us to **Un-Think** revenge and plot ministry with our enemies, **Un-Think** hatred and plan for creating beauty in another by helping them to see the beauty in themselves, **Un-Think** manipulation and seek to get along with everyone we can within our power. Now that is power brokerage! God wants us to wait for His signal what to do, for He knows how best to handle it when we are hurt:

...but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:19b-21 NIV

Only God knows another's heart. You do not even though you think you do. You do not know what hurt is driving their life that has caused them to hurt you. You do not know their motives. They may not be evil, but may be used by God to show you your blind spot. That is how most conflict has shown itself to be in my life. Sometimes I have responded appropriately; sometimes not. I am in a constant state of UnThinking how to respond to those who hurt me and some of these practical principles have helped:

UnThinking Hurt Responses That Lead to Growth and Relationship

1. Wait on God to reveal your next step.
2. Assume the best in another person – even your enemy.
3. Choose the path of best resistance by listening, thanking them, then leaving.
4. Sleep on your response.

Pray for your Enemy, then Obey God's Voice in your Fleeting Thought.

October 4, 2009