

Mental Weeding

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Romans 12:2 NIV)

Renewing our minds as Paul asks can be difficult. Unwanted negative thoughts can come into our minds at any time, so we need to “weed” these thoughts to regain our focus. Weeding our gardens and lawns every spring is important. As librarians, we also know that weeding is an important part of collection development, to prevent overfilling our libraries with obsolete or worn books.

In this information age it is a challenge to keep our minds from hearing and seeing things that are not edifying. There are times when the media we encounter makes us feel tainted. We are then convicted by the Holy Spirit. The old computer phrase, “Garbage in, garbage out,” applies to the human mind. We try to make wise choices and listen to His Spirit. Memorizing Scripture is our defense against evil. As David said, “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11).

Martin Luther is quoted as saying, “You cannot keep birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair.” In other words, don’t dwell on thoughts that increase your temptation to sin. We cannot find fulfillment while constantly thinking angry, envious, proud, or lustful thoughts. When we ask God to help

us to change our focus, He can make us aware of wrong thought patterns. 2 Corinthians 10:5 states, “Take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” For example, when we choose to switch from complaining thoughts to remembering to be grateful for our blessings, we are taking every thought captive. Dwelling on our own concerns is another pitfall, or “weed,” that takes our minds off God. In the Parable of the Sower, “The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful” (Matthew 22).

In Philippians, Paul exhorts, “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (4:8). We can’t achieve perfection in this fallen, broken world, but with the Lord’s help we can have a more peaceful and effective thought life.



—Cynthia Hammell

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