

Set Free from Excessive Reasoning

by Joyce Meyer

Many Christians live in the shallow area of their soul—they live by what they want, think and feel. That's where I was for a good part of my early years as a Christian. But thankfully, God didn't leave me there. He began calling me to come out into the deep—to begin following the leading of His Spirit instead of the dictates of my flesh.

God dealt strongly with my emotions and my will. Then He moved to the area of my mind, where I had some major strongholds of wrong thinking that needed to be changed—reasoning being one of the worst.

I was a person who was heavily into reasoning, always trying to figure out the “why” behind something and planning excessively for what was ahead. But one day God required me to give it up. He showed me that reasoning is the opposite of trust and that I couldn't do both at the same time. He then led me to some specific scriptures that opened my eyes to the condition of my mind and showed me what I needed to do to bring about change.

Stay In Your Right Mind

The Bible says that there is a mind of the flesh and a mind of the Spirit. Romans 8: 6,7 says that the mind of the flesh is sense and reason *without* the Holy Spirit; it is hostile to God and will not submit itself to His ways. In other words, the mind of the flesh is heavily into reasoning and thrives on figuring things out on its own.

On the other hand, the mind of the Spirit is *life* and *peace*; it brings health and peace to our mind, will, and emotions (see Romans 8:6). How do we have the mind of the Spirit? By having our minds constantly renewed with the Word (see Ephesians 4:23). Little by little the Word washes away the wrong thinking and replaces it with truth.

So to stay in our “right mind,” we need to be in God's Word regularly and follow what it says. Anytime we see something in Scripture, or God speaks something to us in our spirit and we refuse to do it, reasoning has somehow gotten involved and deceived us into believing something other than the truth. I have found that when God speaks to us through His Word or in our inner man, we are not to reason, debate, or ask ourselves if what He has said is logical. When God speaks, we are to mobilize—not rationalize.

Does that mean we throw away all common sense and personal planning? No. I believe it's wisdom to have a plan, and common sense is essential for daily living. But we can't let our plan and logical reasoning override what God is telling us to do. Proverbs 3:5,6 says, *Lean on, trust in, and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding. In all your ways know, recognize, and acknowledge Him, and He will direct and make straight and plain your paths.* If the Lord is giving us direction, we will have peace about it in our spirit—it may not make sense in our head, but in our heart, we will know it's right.

Stand Against Second-Guessing

One of the dangers of reasoning is that it can cause us to be double-minded. James 1:8 describes the double-minded man as a man of two minds that is *...unstable and unreliable and uncertain about everything [he thinks, feels, decides]*. Sometimes God will ask us to do something that initially we accept. However, just as we start to do it, the mind of the flesh kicks in and wants to know every detail of the plan.

That's what happened when God asked me to quit my job and take my ministry north, south, east and west. My mind began to reason and ask questions like, *Where are you going to get the money to do that? Who's going to help you? What are your friends going to say?* It wasn't long

before I became so confused that I began to waver back and forth, wondering if I should step out or not.

In distress, I went to God for direction. After He reassured me to step out in faith and quit my job, He told me how to stand against the temptation to second-guess what He told me. He said, "Every time your mind begins to question My Word, say, 'I don't have the answers to all those questions, but this is what God told me to do *right now*. Therefore, I am going to take *this* step and trust God to give me the answers I need for the steps I still have to take.'"

Avoid Being Closed-Minded

There have also been times when God has told me to do something, but my flesh was totally opposed to it. In my spirit I sensed a peace and a prompting to do it. But my soul didn't *want* to do it, didn't *feel* like doing it, and didn't *think* it was a good idea.

In situations like these, I believe we need to remind ourselves that God's thoughts and ways are higher than ours (see Isaiah 55:9). Proverbs 20:24 says, *A man's steps are directed by the LORD. How then can anyone understand his own way?* (NIV). Again, this is where we must **choose to trust** the Lord and line up our will with His. We need to step out and begin doing what He has told us. This is how we exalt God's Word above what *we* want, think, and feel. I can tell you from experience that once you start doing this, you will begin to see more and more victory in every area of your life.

Now, it's okay to ponder something if you need an answer on how to deal with a situation—just ponder it in your *spirit* and not in your *head*. In other words, ask God some questions and then be still and listen for His response. Just say, "Lord, I would like to have some clarity and direction on this. Please show me what to do." If He gives you enlightenment, that's great. But if you don't sense Him telling you anything or you start getting confused, stop asking questions. His silence may be a sign that it's not time for you to know the answer to what you're asking. And if you get confused, you've gone too far and are back into reasoning.

A Prayer for Change

I believe it's very important that we stop trying to figure everything out on our own. Life is so much sweeter now that the Lord has set me free from excessive reasoning. I am no longer living in a perpetual state of confusion and frustration. Instead, I am able to follow the peace of the Holy Spirit and discern God's will for my life.

If the Lord is speaking to you through this article, then I encourage you to get into agreement with Him—get honest with yourself and accept His conviction. Say, "Lord, I hear You, and I agree with You. I will stop consulting my mind, will and emotions for direction, and I will follow the leading of Your Spirit. Please forgive me for trying to figure things out on my own. I realize that apart from You, I can do nothing, so I ask You to change me, and give me the grace to trust and acknowledge You in all I do. Thank You, Lord. In Jesus name, Amen."