

## God wants us to think before we act

Especially in matters with serious consequences, it is better to be cautious and careful — rather than to act hastily and thoughtlessly in ways that turn out to be wrong. It will help us greatly if we can consider this week that **God wants us to think before we act**. Better planning is a benefit to any endeavor in life, and it certainly pays big dividends in our spiritual lives.

Most of the things we do that we later regret are things we do thoughtlessly. Yet the excuse “I didn’t think” is not enough to justify wrong conduct. And even the good things we do would be even better if we thought them out more deliberately in advance. The person who is careful in the way he lives his daily life renders more effective service to the Lord.

One of the disadvantages of the fast-paced way we live is that it leaves us little time for reflection. Too many concerns crowd in on us, and we find ourselves rushing into and out of activities with no opportunity to think and evaluate and consider. Our deeds are hasty, rather than cautiously thought out. Our lives end up being haphazard hodgepodes of this and that, rather than the well-constructed results of premeditation. Nowadays we truly need the biblical warning to think about what we are doing.

Each of us is involved in the business of building a life. When the process is completed, we will have a character that we are responsible for because it is the result of decisions we have made. Since we will have to account for the life we have lived, living is serious business. Once our lives are finished, there will be no opportunity for us to go back and remake them. Careless mistakes can be eternally costly. So it pays to check — and recheck — our principles and our actions to make sure they are right. It is better to take the time to ensure accuracy than to rush into actions that we will later regret.

Paul wrote to his young friend Timothy, “Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tim. 4:15,16). As we make our way through the activities of this week, may we allow enough space in our daily routines to consider, to plan, and to prepare. May we take the time necessary to make sure we are on the right track.

### Monday: Titus 2:11-14

**Key Idea:** If we work at it, we can learn how to say no to things God does not want us to do.

**Questions for Family Growth:** In v.12, what does it mean to “live soberly” (NKJV)? What are some reasons why we should live that way, according to these verses? What are some things we do that we should be more careful about?

**Wisdom for the Day:** Proverbs 14:28.

## Tuesday: Joshua 7:1-26

**Key Idea:** If we do not think before we act, we may do things that hurt others.

**Questions for Family Growth:** Before the battle at Jericho, do you think Achan purposely planned to disobey God? What might have helped him to do what was right in the moment when he was tempted? How were others hurt by what he did?

**Wisdom for the Day:** [Proverbs 14:29](#).

## Wednesday: Matthew 26:14-16; 27:3-5

**Key Idea:** If we do not think ahead, we will do things that later fill us with remorse.

**Questions for Family Growth:** How might Judas have felt when he realized what he had done in betraying Jesus? If he could have gone back and started over, do you think Judas would have been more careful in what he did? How can we avoid the kind of mistake that Judas made?

**Wisdom for the Day:** [Proverbs 14:30](#).

## Thursday: 1 Corinthians 10:12,13

**Key Idea:** If we do not make wise escape plans, temptation is likely to overcome us.

**Questions for Family Growth:** Is anybody so strong spiritually that he does not need to be careful? What does it mean to “take heed”? What are some practical things we need to do ahead of time so that temptation will not defeat us?

**Wisdom for the Day:** [Proverbs 14:31](#).

## Friday: Genesis 39:1-23

**Key Idea:** God wants us to decide on our convictions before temptation comes our way.

**Questions for Family Growth:** When is the best time to decide what we really believe and what we are going to do about our beliefs? If we simply make up the rules as we go along, will we live a life that is pleasing to God?

**Wisdom for the Day:** [Proverbs 14:32](#).

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