

# I Thought but Then I Unthought

By: Dr. James L. Snyder

Looking back over my life I honestly can say, giving it a great deal of thought, the biggest problem I have is when I actually think. Thinking can get me into more trouble than anything else I do.

This was no more evident than recently we got a phone call from the bank. I hate it when the bank calls because they never call to wish me happy birthday or wonder how in the world I am doing today. They always have an agenda. Usually, that agenda has to do with my money.

When I answered the phone all I could say was, "Here we go again."

Much to my relief it was not about my account, but rather it was the bank account of the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. I cannot tell you the smile that slapped itself all over my face when I heard this.

Immediately I called my wife to the phone and said, "It's your bank calling you about your account." Smilingly I handed the phone to her.

For years, we have had separate accounts and it has worked out rather well. I remember when we first were married we had a joint account and it was always getting messed up. We had two checkbooks for the same account, which did not make any sense at all. Everything was messed up and checks bounced all over the place.

To solve this dilemma we decided to have our own checking account in separate banks. I am not quite sure about her account, but the checks keep bouncing in my account and I am not exactly sure why.

The bank was calling my wife because there had been a suspicious activity on her account. I thought about telling them that other activity on her bank account was also suspicious, but sometimes I know when not to speak.

According to the bank, my wife bought a package of wine costing \$600 and they were wondering if she was buying it for the church communion service. I heard my wife laugh and figured out there is something going on. We do not use wine in our communion service, we use grape juice. However, the bank did not know why my wife was buying wine.

The only wine in our house is me, who whines all the time and believe me, according to my wife, my whining is very intoxicating. At least to her it is.

We finally had to go down to the bank and try to sort this mess out. My wife tried to tell them that she did not make such a purchase.

I would like to tell you how delighted I was to go to the bank with her and see her in a dilemma that I did not create. I know I create a lot of dilemma in our home. The fact that we been married as long as we have been married says a lot for her tolerance of whiny old people like me.

"We did not think," the bank manager said to my wife, "that you were buying wine like this. We thought perhaps you might have been buying wine for the church communion service."

All three of us laughed a very hearty laugh because she knew we did not use wine in our communion service.

However, the truth of the matter was, there was this activity on her account in the amount of \$600. My surprise was that she had that much money in her account. I scratched my head a bit and thought, where did she get all that money? Immediately I had to unthought that and get back to the basics of our visit here in the bank.

The bank manager got out all of the paperwork with this transaction.

The first thing of note was that it took place in a liquor store in Southern California where my wife had never been.

My wife looked at me and said sarcastically, "Why are you smiling?"

I thought about telling her, but then I unthought that and got back to the details of the transaction.

In looking at that transaction, the bank manager happened to notice that it was on a particular Sunday when it took place. That Sunday my wife was in church. In fact, the time of the transaction was when my wife was playing the organ.

"Can you verify that she was playing the organ at that time?" The bank manager asked me.

A thought that came into my mind was to tell the bank manager that my wife was so talented that she could be in two places at the same time. After further thought on that, I unthought that idea.

The bank manager finally took care of that transaction and we were able to leave the bank knowing us, or rather she, was free from that transaction. I did not say anything on the way home, but I was smiling on the inside.

Thinking can be a very hazardous occupation, but I was reminded what Paul said. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

I am trying to learn to think about important things and not things that are negative and damaging.

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# Political leaders need our prayers more than our criticisms

By: Roger Alford

A busload of politicians were traveling a country road when they suddenly careened into a pasture and crashed into an old farmer's barn.

The farmer dug a big hole and buried the politicians. A few days later, the sheriff passed by, saw the crashed bus, and asked the farmer where the politicians were.

The old farmer said he had buried them.

"You mean to tell me," the sheriff said, "every one of them was dead?"

"Well, some of them said they weren't," the farmer said, "but you know how those politicians lie."

Politicians certainly seem to be unpopular in our day and time, but there's really nothing new in that. Down through world history, people have scorned their government leaders. Long before the typical official is elected, scathing personal attacks begin, oftentimes even from churchgoers who should know better.

Christians are called to pray for their government leaders, not scorn them.

The Apostle Paul called on Christians to pray for kings and all government leaders so "that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

The Apostle Peter said we are to "show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor" (1 Peter 2:17).

Of course, Paul and Timothy spoke of kings and emperors, in-

stead of presidents and prime ministers, because that happened to be the kinds of political rulers they dealt with in their day. But the notion of respecting and praying for our political leaders still holds, regardless of the titles they hold.

You don't have to be on Facebook or Twitter long to find that many people in our local communities and across our country deliver hateful, scornful personal criticism at all our political leaders. Now, as a good American, I'm a defender of our constitutional right to free speech, so wholly support everyone's right to say what they will regarding the issues of the day. But I've found that much of what is said doesn't address issues but instead is, instead, personal attacks meant to stir strife.

As a journalist for more than three decades, I've had the pleasure to know lots of politicians at various levels of government. I have the greatest of respect for many of them, who opt to go into public service despite the harsh, often unwarranted criticism they face from the moment they step into the spotlight.

As God's word commands, we really should commit to praying for our government leaders at least as much as we criticize them.

And, if ever a busload of them crashes into our barn, let's commit not to bury the ones who say they're alive.

Roger Alford offers words of encouragement to residents of America's heartland. Reach him at rogeralford1@gmail.com.

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