

## IMAGINARY IDEALS

Sometimes, we compare ourselves against an imaginary ideal we create in our minds. For example, a mother could compare her toddler with picky eating habits against an imaginary, ideal child that gobbles up everything he is served, pausing only to say “please” and “thank you.”

Or, a single 26-year-old male may compare his marital status against his imaginary, idealistic belief that all 26-year-old males should be married with at least two children. In both cases, such comparisons may lead to discouragement, envy, and bitterness.

## THE BEST MEASURING STICK

Rather than measuring ourselves against others supposedly better off than we or against imaginary ideals created in our minds, *we should measure ourselves against the Word of God*. Only by comparing ourselves with the Bible can we see ourselves as God sees us. Often we are worried about what others think about us, and sometimes rightfully so, but God’s thoughts about us trumps all.

The Bible does not mandate that *all* toddlers *must* eat *all* food served to them, pausing only to say “please” and “thank you.” Nor does the Bible mandate that *all* 26-year old males be married with *at least* two children.

God created each of us with a unique combination of talents, personalities, gifts, strengths, weaknesses, and external circumstances. Thus, different people will struggle with different types of thoughts and circumstances. Let us look to the Word of God as *the* measuring stick against which to compare ourselves. Really, the bottom line is that we are living in God’s will and seeking His direction, regardless of how we compare to others.

## THINK ON THESE THINGS

*“Lord, lift me up and let me stand,  
By faith, on Heaven’s table-land,  
A higher plane than I have found;  
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”*

*Higher Ground, Johnson Oatman, Jr.*

What if our minds were like a drinking glass? If I filled a drinking glass to the brim with lemonade, what would happen if I then proceeded to pour grape juice into the glass? Well, the grape juice would skim off the top of the glass onto the table. The glass full of lemonade would prevent much grape juice from penetrating.

What if our minds were like that? What if we could just pour godly thoughts into our minds up to the brim? So when unbiblical thoughts would seek to enter our minds, they would just skim off the top and not penetrate.

Now if I introduced this concept to a brain scientist, he would start laughing and launch into a lecture about neurotransmitters, sensory nerve cells, and cerebellums. But I like the drinking glass concept. I like to think of our minds as an empty glass waiting to be filled. The more we fill our brains with godly thoughts, the less room for unbiblical thoughts and desires.

## ENTER THE ZONE

Spiritually, I think the Bible supports my drinking glass theory. Paul proclaimed, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16). If we walk in the Spirit (i.e., fill our minds with godly thoughts), we shall not partake in fleshly lusts (i.e., fill our minds with unbiblical thoughts).

Often, we approach the issue of overcoming unbiblical thoughts from the standpoint that we must identify and resist