

# **Thought and Purpose to Achievement**

*By Bobby Schuller*

We're in the middle of a series called "As a Man Thinketh." And this is named not only after the famous Allen essay, but also after the famous bible verse, which says "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Or to say as a woman thinketh in her heart, so is she. That you literally are what you think about. Your thoughts will always crystallize into habit, and habit will solidify into circumstance. You are the result of your thoughts. What you dwell on, what you spend time thinking about becomes who you are. If you foster beautiful thoughts, you will foster a beautiful mind, and that will result in a beautiful life. If you foster base or negative thoughts, you'll become a base/negative person, and that will result in negative circumstances in your life.

So the mind is like a garden. It must be cared for, tended to, daily. It is the most important thing in your life, and it is your first freedom to choose what you will dwell on and what you will meditate on. The things you dwell on and meditate on become habit and become your life. So just like a good garden produces good fruit, a good mind produces good fruit. If you tend to good thoughts, your life will bear good fruit. If you tend to bad thoughts, your life will have bad fruit. The circumstances of your life are literally the result of your thinking. Can I get an amen? So to change your life, you have to change your thoughts.

You also have more power over what you think than over what you do. I know you got to think about that one for a second whenever you say it, but let me just ask you a question: have you ever raided that package of double stuffed Oreos in the middle of the night when you didn't want to? You ever done anything you didn't want to do? Very often we war against our circumstance while fostering and nurturing the thoughts that got us there. Every affect has a cause and the cause of every circumstance in your life is your thinking. Maybe ten percent of your circumstance in your life is not because of your thinking; maybe dumb luck or something horrible happened or whatever, but even then your ability to endure suffering and challenges in your life are 100% going to be the result of your thinking. So to become true believers, true happy and whole students of Jesus Christ, we have to begin by changing our thoughts, by changing what we dwell on.

So today, in this sort of third part, I want to talk about achievement. And I'm going to begin by talking a little bit about worldly achievement, but this is important because even though God may not call you to start a company, the things God calls us to do are big and bold and amazing. And in order to achieve what God has called us to do, we have to become the kind of people that foster thoughts of achievement.

And so today, this is my sort of thesis is all that a person achieves or fails to achieve in life is directly related to his or her own thoughts.

People who think about goals, who think clearly about their goals, measurable goals, think about them a lot, are achievers. People who make plans achieve. People who believe achieve. People who dedicate their life to learning and to knowledge, these are people who know almost every problem is a knowledge problem. These people achieve. People who achieve are those who foster thoughts of being willing to sacrifice, of being willing to endure losing and being embarrassed over and over and over in the midst of failure, and still get up and try and do something. People who foster thoughts of achievement will achieve ultimately. It is a law. It is so. It is known.

Your ability to achieve is directly related to your thoughts. Your achievement is not the result of your environment. Nor is your lack of achievement. Your achievement or lack of achievement is not the result of luck. And your achievement and lack of achievement is not the result of fairness. In the end, your achievement or lack of achievement is 100% directly related to your thinking. And environment, and luck, and fairness, those things only help you to the length in which they give you the kinds of thoughts that lead to a successful life. That's why some of the poorest, most disadvantaged, most unlucky people can become the greatest world changers in history. You can, too.

I believe that the greatest enemy to achievement, therefore, and there are many, but at the top of the list is blame. Blaming your environment, blaming people who hurt you, blaming your challenges,

your disadvantages, let me just tell you something if you're looking for something or someone to blame, I promise you will find it. Life for all of us will never always be fair. Actually, it'll never be fair. There are going to be times in your life where you're going to have advantages. There will be other times in your life where you'll have disadvantages, but until Christ returns, you will never live in a fair utopia. That is a part of life. And so achievement is the ability to keep one's own purpose and goals before his or her mind, despite the fact that he or she has enemies. Wow.

You know there's always going to be people who are against you. There's always going to be people who are going to tell you that you're too old, you're too young, you're too short, too skinny, too fat. You're not educated enough. They don't like your race. Or they don't like where you come from. They don't like your accent. Guess what: those people are never going away. Ever. But guess what: it doesn't matter. You can do anything you set your mind to as long as you don't lose here! You can do and achieve anything as long as you foster the kind of mind and thinking that results in achievement. Nothing is ever going to be fair, and that stinks, doesn't it. And there are always going to be bullies. There are always going to be bigots. There are always going to be people that put others down, that have prejudice and hate in their heart, and there will always be victors who overcome in the end because they foster not thoughts of blame, but foster thoughts of victory, of life, and of hope. That's who you are. Don't let bitterness come in your heart. Don't let

blame come in your heart. Successful life is the result of successful thinking.

Disadvantages are not as big of a disadvantage as you think they are, as long as you keep your thinking, right? I know not everybody loves this author in Christian circles. I think she's great, but J.K. Rowling was a single mom who couldn't afford, legend says. I don't know how accurate all this is, but legend says that she couldn't afford heating in her house in the winter, so she went to a coffee shop or sometimes a local pub, and she didn't order anything, but she hand wrote Harry Potter on yellow legal pad. She didn't blame life for being a single mom. She didn't blame the government for not making sure she had what she needed. She didn't blame anyone. And though she maybe had every right to do those things, it didn't bog her down. She had a dream in her heart, and she achieved it because she fostered the right kind of thinking. She knew that every obstacle in her way, if her destiny was her destiny, was overcome-able. So, she didn't have a computer and a printer, fine. She'd write it by hand. She didn't have a heater to stay warm, fine. She'll write in the coffee shop. And let me tell you when the publisher who received 30-50 manuscripts every single day of neatly packaged, finely produced, well printed documents every stack, every day, and they all looked the same, and they were all homogeneous, and then he saw a bundled legal pad kind of sticking out, he was curious. And he read it. And today, J.K. Rowling is richer than the queen of England. I'm not advocating for any

of these people's morality, I'm advocating for the fact that they achieved good things because they foster thoughts of achievement. They don't blame their environment. If anything, they use it to their advantage.

Stephen Hawking, who's probably the world's greatest scientist, wrote several books with his cheek. He has ALS. He is stuck in a wheelchair and he doesn't blame others. He doesn't blame his environment. He doesn't say life is unfair. He doesn't foster bitterness in his heart. He's designed a machine that touches his cheek and using one cheek muscle he writes books and gives lectures. He doesn't blame anybody. He fosters the right kind of thinking.

Steve Jobs was born an orphan into poverty. He built the greatest company maybe in American history, Apple computers. One time his mom said that she wished she would have sent him back, his adopted mom. Do these people blame others? No. They foster the right kind of thinking because they know if they set their mind to a thing, they can achieve it. There will always be bullies. There will always be people who are going to come after you and they're going to try to poison your mind to make you think you can't accomplish what I know you can accomplish. Don't listen to them. They're always going to be there so learn to endure them.

You know sometimes our bullies and our enemies and our bad circumstances forge us into the people we were called to be. Talk about that a little bit in a moment. Oh, and Robert Smith! You may not have

ever heard of this man. Robert Smith is the wealthiest black man in America. He's a multi-billionaire. Smith was a young kid when his mom brought him to.. he was there when Dr. King gave his "I Have a Dream" speech. And from that point on, his parents taught him not to blame the world, and not to blame bullies, or blame racism, or any of these things for his lot in life, but to continue to endure.

And he tells this story about how he was in love with semi conductors, and he wanted to get an internship at Bell Technologies. And they took one look at him and they said no. This was in the '70's. And you read this guy's article and at no point do you see that he feels angry over racism or anything like that, and yet it's obvious that maybe they didn't pick him in the 1970's because of his race. But he doesn't have any bitterness in his heart at all. He just seems like a wonderful man. And he just said I don't know, I didn't get it, so I just called them every day. I called them every day for two weeks. And then finally when that rich MIT white kid didn't show up because he was busy doing something else, they let him go and guess who they called. They called Robert Smith.

And he talks about how in his life, he had every reason to feel angry about how he was treated as a young man. But it just doesn't even come through in the interview. And it's almost like the Forbes journalist wants to eek something out of him, and asks about the election of Barak Obama.

Now I don't want to get into politics here, okay. We're studying history, but I remember when I was in seminary and I was taking African American history, I asked my professor, because at the time Senator Obama was running, and it was him versus John McCain, I think. And I asked her, I said do you think Barak Obama can be our next president. And you could tell she's been through so much, and she felt angry and hurt, and she said no, our country's too racist.

And when this guy was asked by this Forbes journalist, were you surprised when Barak Obama was elected president? He said let me tell you something. My grandfather was the only black man at the inauguration of FDR. And he said but I'll tell you something – I was not surprised at all, and this was his quote. He said “we are only bound by the limits of our own conviction.” That's a good man. That's a good man. Has he endured racism? Absolutely. Has it kept him down? Absolutely not. He fosters the right kind of achieving thoughts that got him where he needs to be.

So people tell you, you can't do it because it's rigged against you. You can't do it because it's unfair. You can't achieve anything because you're too poor. You're not educated enough. You're not smart enough. You're just like your father. I'm here to tell you ignore them. You can do anything you set your mind to. And the one thing the enemy wants in your heart more than anything is bitterness, blame, unforgiveness. To end the time of trial and testing, find someone to blame and then give up!

Don't do it. You can do anything you set your mind to if you foster the right kind of thinking, and that's very good news. Can I get an amen? God believes in you! God believes in you! The maker of heaven and earth. A lot of idiots and bullies and people like that will say things about you. Guess what: they're not going anywhere. You can overcome them, in Jesus' name. I believe in you, too.

And that's what Jeremiah teaches. Jesus teaches us, too, the same thing. Jeremiah teaches us that all that a person achieves or fails to achieve is directly related to his or her own thinking. And I'll read it to you. In Jeremiah 21; 29, rather, God is in effect penning a letter to the Jewish people who have endured so much persecution. And here they are, they're in captivity in Babylon, and does God say war against them? Or in surge against them? Or be bitter? No, He says this. This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: "Build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there. Do not decrease. Also, seek the peace.." now listen to this. This is of the captors. The evil Babylonians. Babylon is always bad in the bible. And listen to what God says about Babylon: "Seek the peace and the prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it because if it prospers, you too will prosper.

Listen, he says in that city of evil captors who by war and violence, who destroyed your homes and burned your villages and took your things and carried you back to Babylon, in that land live the best life you can. Be blessed where you are. Thrive and blossom right where you're planted. Make the best life right where you are. Wow! What a shift in thinking. What a shift! Is it unjust? Absolutely. Is it unfair? Absolutely. And God says bless them, love them. Sounds like Jesus, doesn't it. Turn the cheek. Love your enemy. Pray for those who persecute you. I promise you that in the seventy years of captivity, God gave them the best piece of knowledge they could have ever had, which is that I can thrive anywhere I am, no matter what, if I foster the right kind of thinking. If I do not allow bitterness and blame to enter my heart, but instead foster thoughts of victory, goals, hope, achievement. Amen, okay. Hey, good, I got one without asking for it. That was cool. It's like I'm back at ORU! Okay.

So I want you to know: bless your captor. Bless your captors? Wow. What a shift. Bless your enemies? What a shift. Victor Frankl said something similar. A great author. His book is in the back in my library, if you'd like to get it: *Man's Search for Meaning*. It's one of the most important books I've ever read. Victor Frankl was a Jewish man in captivity during the Nazi occupation in Germany, and there he was, rotting away as his family had been killed and he was skinny and starving and thirsty and he had lice. And this is what he learned from that. A great thinker. He said "everything can be taken from a man but

one thing – the last of human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude. Any given set of circumstances to choose one’s own way.” The one thing they can’t take away from me, Victor Frankl said, is my ability to choose how I will respond. No one can take that from you. He lived. He not only lived, he blessed the whole world with his story. And he told us if you can’t change your situation, change yourself. And I would say, change your thoughts.

The thing we learn from the story of Jeremiah is that although Babylon was unfair and it wasn’t right, and it was hurtful, that when the people were in Babylon, that very thing, deciding to thrive where they were, to build the best life possible today, right where I am, that that very thing was the crucible that allowed them to be the kind of people that could return home victors. They didn’t go home weaker than when they came, they went home stronger and that doesn’t happen very often to people in captivity. That’s what new thoughts can do for your life. Radically transform it. All that a person achieves or fails to achieve in life is directly related to his or her own thinking.

So here’s one of the best new thoughts you can have: I refuse to blame anything or anyone for where I am today. I refuse. I refuse to blame anything or anyone for where I am today. I will run my race. And I promise you, that thought will give you a very successful life.

And by the way, it doesn’t end there, you know, in Babylon. He doesn’t just say plant there and thrive there, because the famous

passage then comes, I think this is the most tattooed bible verse on earth. If there was a list, this would be at the top. God says at the culmination of all of that, at the end of the seventy years, you will come home and you will be my people, and those who are looking for me will find me, and you will prosper, and you will thrive in Jerusalem! In Zion! But first, you have to thrive in captivity, and this is the crescendo: “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you; plans to give you a hope and a future.”

You will not be here forever. No matter where you are, or what state you are in life, it will end. And if you're in a good place in life, keeping that good thing requires good thinking, hard work and daily maintenance. And if you're in a bad place in life, guess what? That will end, too. I think one of the most crippling things that depression does that leads people to suicide is this plaguing thought that I'm always going to be sad or depressed. I'm always going to be sick. I'm always going to be stuck here. And let me tell you something, and this is from the Lord, something good is always coming. Something good is always coming! You're not going to be here forever. And even if you thrive here, there's no limit to how good your life can be. You say, Bobby, I have a terrific life. Good! God's going to give you even more! Don't limit your faith. Maybe you're thriving in Babylon, and that's a good thing. But God's going to do even more in your life: more abundance, more love,

more success, more spiritual energy and life on Zion, and He will get you there.

So to be there, and to get there, we have to foster the right kind of thoughts. We have to believe. We have to stop blaming others. We have to stop accusing our environment, or demand that life be fair, or any of these things. We want to build a better society. We always want to have a good government. We want to vote rightly, but in the end, none of those things are going to get you where you need to go, are they? No. What will get you there is the right kind of thinking. You foster belief in your heart, and faith in your heart, you'll get there. You foster goals and plans and if you devote your life to learning and you're willing to be embarrassed by losing over and over and over for the dream that one day you'll succeed, you are going to get there. You will. Don't let anybody say this or that about you. Well, I mean I guess you can let them, but don't let it stop you. Don't let someone calling you too this or too that or anybody's prejudice keep you from inheriting your destiny. Why would you do that? You can accomplish anything you set your mind to.

We live in a Father's world. And Jesus promised us greater things than this will you do, for I'm going to heaven to be with my Father. Did you know that? You can do greater things than Jesus. That's what the word of God says. Believe it or throw it away! Believe it or throw it away. Its either true or it's not. And He didn't say that once you have the right government, or the right race, or the right age, or you got the right

gender, or you got the right education, or the height, or the right friendships, or the right connections then you'll get there. He just said you will. So believe it because you will. And I believe it. Amen.

Lord, thank you. Thank you for this time. We love you, it's in Jesus' name.

Let me just pray over you. Father, I pray in Jesus' name that you'd open up heaven and give us the right kinds of thoughts. People have hurt us. There's people who are here who haven't gotten jobs they should have gotten, or promotions they should have gotten, or they didn't get into a school they should have gotten into because of prejudice or because of something, or because of health problems, because of parents or children. Lord, we just let go of all these things and we refuse to let any circumstance or any prejudicial bully limit our lives. We're only limited by our thinking and by you, Lord, and you say God, anything is possible. So we're just going to believe it. We're going to trust the word of God, and it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.