

Invest in You

By Bobby Schuller

Today I want to talk about the value and importance of investing in yourself. Now this is something that cannot be over exaggerated. It is so important that your tank is full, that you're full of joy, that you're growing, that you're learning, that you're reading, that you're studying, that you understand that knowledge really is power. That nearly every problem in your life is a knowledge problem. And that you shouldn't feel guilty doing things that bring you joy. As long as they're not sinful, that if you do things that even though some people may say is lazy, or whatever, it's good. That rest is good, that learning is good, that from time to time pampering yourself, that's a good thing to do, and that is biblical, and we're going to get to that in just a minute.

But it's so important, that if you hear anything I say today, that it is important to grow in knowledge, to grow in the things that you do, even your hobbies, and to invest in you. That more than real estate or stocks or anything that you can do, investing in yourself is one of the best investments you can make in your life. Can I get an amen to kick it off?

We're in a series called As a Man Thinketh. And in this series, we are making the proposition that the bible is true. That when it says as a man thinketh in heart, so is he; as a woman thinketh in heart, so is she.

That you are literally the result of your thinking. Your circumstance, 90% of your circumstance is the result of the kind of thinking that you have been fostering. The kind of thoughts that you have been dwelling on, and the other ten percent that are the result of random chance or whatever, your ability to navigate through those challenges is going to be 100% the result of the kind of thoughts you foster.

The mind is a garden. Everything you tend to in that garden will reap a harvest. Good thoughts will bear good fruit. Bad thoughts will bear bad fruit. Basic noble thoughts will always result in something that you don't want in your life. And though thoughts come in and out of our head, the thoughts that we dwell on, the thoughts that we foster, those become fruit. Like Hannah's grandpa used to say, 'thoughts are like birds that fly around your head but you don't have to let them make a nest in your hair.' And you have a choice. You have more, in fact I believe, and I've said this a lot, I believe you have more power over what you think than over what you do. Have you ever said something you regret? You ever done something out of fear that you really regretted later? Did you ever spend money you didn't have, or eat something you didn't want to eat? Maybe you went back to that old boyfriend or that old girlfriend you swore you'd never go back to them. And all of those life-changing, sometimes, decisions; it's the life altering decisions that we make are the result of the kind of thoughts that we keep in our heart.

And very often, we as people, we war against our circumstance while cherishing the thoughts that led to those circumstance. We war against the effect while nurturing its cause. Every thought has an effect. No thought can be kept secret because every thought you have will crystallize into habit, and those habits will crystallize into circumstance. Therefore, you literally are your thoughts. What a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. What a woman thinketh in her heart, so is she.

And so any achievement that is attained in life is not the result of a fair society. It is not the result of luck. It is not the result of so many things that we often think it is. It is the result of right thinking. Right thinking leads to achievement all the time. Knowledge leads to achievement. Wisdom leads to achievement. And that's it. We want to blame people for where we are in life. You want to blame your parents, you can blame an unfair society, you can blame your friends, you can blame your enemies, you can blame your children, your spouse, but in the end, blame will get you nowhere. If you're looking for someone to blame, you can find them. There are plenty of people to blame. But no one's life is easy. No one. Some people's lives are harder than others, but everybody's life is hard. Everybody faces challenges in life, and the only thing that will get us through those challenges is thinking; is the right kind of thoughts. Can I get an amen?

All right! That's a review. So today, I want to talk about one of the most important parts of the thought life, and that is knowledge and

wisdom. That you devote your life to knowledge, and more than knowledge, that you invest in you. And that doesn't just mean learning, and it is; it doesn't just mean just getting an education. And when I say education today, I don't mean necessarily going to like university or something. I mean learning things. Learning a language! Learning a hobby. Learning about how to be a better husband, wife, or parent or grandparent. Learning about things that interest you. All knowledge is good. And so when I talk about knowledge, I mean an education, I mean about just being a lifelong learner, that you love to learn. Anybody here love to learn? I do, too.

The problem is that very often we put our personal growth and knowledge and our ability to learn new things sort of as a non necessity. It's a desire, something we want to do, but it's not something we make a priority and that is not only a mistake, it's unbiblical. We are supposed to; you are supposed to invest in you. Invest in things, not only that make you learn, but invest in things that fill your tank, that give you life and joy. And don't feel guilty about it. People will make you feel guilty about it because they want to invest in themselves, too, but they're not doing it.

So do you feel tired? You ever go to bed at night and you don't really want to go to bed so you stay up later, not because you don't want to go to sleep, but because you don't want to wake up and start a new day and get back in the grind. You ever get the Sunday night blues? Oh, I

got to go back to school or work tomorrow, whatever. Well I just want to tell you a lot of that is the result of not investing in you. That tiredness that so many of us feel is the result of the wrong kind of thinking. Thoughts of like I've got to prove myself to everybody. Thoughts of guilt and shame. Thoughts of feeling like I have to be everybody's solution. They can't solve their own problems. I'm going to get to that in a minute. I know that sounds very un-Christian what I just said, but there truly is a balance between service and filling your tank.

Or thoughts of fear, dwelling on fear and so I don't take the kind of risks that I want to take, or I don't pursue my dreams because I'm afraid. And these kinds of thoughts kind of drain our tank. And furthermore, we kind of struggle as Christians because Jesus certainly does teach us to serve, that if we lead, we lead by serving others, that we care for others, that we wash the feet of those that we lead. And that we should serve others. But Jesus also teaches us to rest, to pray and to do things that fill our tank.

Hannah and I sort of had to learn the hard way early on. We both met at a church that was very service oriented. We were always doing things for the poor, or witnessing, or doing things with students and like our schedules were full all the time. And nobody in that tradition taught us that you got to take time for you to play, to relax, to do things that fill the tank, to learn, and not just learn about the bible. The bible's the best thing you can learn, but learn other things, too that are interesting to

you. And that God will use even your hobbies for His glory. Who here can let God use their hobbies for His glory? You want to do that? Yea, you can do that. You can, and God wants you to.

I actually believe that very often the reason you love many of those hobbies is that often in God's kingdom there's an even bigger plan for those things. So if you want to learn to sing, or you like model trains, I mean whatever, God can use any of those crazy things. It's not that crazy. Singing's not crazy. All right. Model trains is crazy. Just kidding. It doesn't matter what you do, what your hobbies are, that God can use everything for His glory.

Okay so we struggle as Christians because everybody needs something from me. Your kids need something and you think when they grow up, they're going to stop needing you. How many parent.. don't raise your hand, actually, no, no, no, all right. You think now my kid turned 18, he's not going to need me anymore, and now he's asking for student loans and money for an engagement ring, and maybe shakin' up at your house and you want him to get out there and get a job, so you got your kids, and your colleagues, your colleagues need stuff from you, your friends need stuff from you, your spouse definitely needs stuff from you. And so we have all these people that are pulling on us and very often we feel like I don't have anything to give. So I guess I got to just try harder. I guess I got to just do it because even though I have nothing to give, I don't have a yes to give, I don't have a joy to give, I don't have a

hug to give, I have nothing, we feel like we're on empty, but I just got to try harder. And I just want to say that most of the time that's honestly just not true.

Everyone needs something but you need something, too. You have a lot of needs. They're not wants, they're needs. And don't neglect your needs because if you do, when people need you, you'll have nothing to give them. You'll have an empty tank and you'll be like angry with a smile on your face. Passive aggressive and little tiny things will set you off and you'll be like oh I just got to try harder, just got to try harder. That's not how God wants you to live.

So how can you give what you don't have? And that's the great thing about grace is that God gives it to us. So this is one of the wisest people I know, and that's not a joke. My wife, Hannah Schuller said this, and I thought this was so good. She said investing in you is one of the best things you can do to invest in others. We had to learn that, and that's why a big part of our ministry is this way. If there is something between never serving at all, or serving too much, I do think serving too much is better, but serving too much can burn you out and can leave you hollow, and can make your soul weary.

People who invest in themselves are better at investing in others, did you know that? It's the best investment you can make. When you invest in yourself, you connect better with people because you have energy and you can be empathetic and joyful around those people. When

you invest in yourself, you'll make more money, too. And I know church is not about money, but I was coming home yesterday and there was this magazine on the airplane, and I was reading through it and it was an interview from these two Shark Tank stars, both of them billionaires: Sara Blakely and Mark Cuban. You know the names, maybe? Mark Cuban made his, I think five billion dollars selling his company to Yahoo, and Sara Blakeley made her money selling Spanx. You know what Spanx are? It's that thing; it's like a girdle, right? I know what Spanx are. You got to know what Spanx are. I'm a dude and I know what they are.

Anyway, Sara Blakely was the youngest female billionaire in American history. And so they interviewed each other on sort of like how to make money. The cover said like how to make a million dollars. I was like I'd like to make a million dollars. You don't want to make a million? Who here doesn't want to make a million dollars, raise your hand? God's watching. Yeah, that's what I thought. That's what I thought. So investing in you is one of the best financial investments you can make.

So they interview each other, and they're kind of like.. it's funny because neither of them made their money doing this, but they're saying usual stuff, save more, buy low, sell high, I guess. But then the energy comes to the interview at the end where they both sort of say the most important thing for them was investing in themselves. And here's the interview. Sara Blakeley says, "When you do spend your money, think about what you're spending on and what the return is. For my particular

journey, I spent money on motivational inspirational tapes, and all my friends made fun of me and laughed at me.” All of her friends are wearing Spanx now, by the way.

Mark Cuban then says to her, “I did the same thing! I did the exact same thing.” And then Sara says, “Right? I was spending money investing in myself, just like an athlete. You can have two athletes that have the same kind of physical strength, but which one wins? The one who has the right thoughts.” There it is, right there. “It's always thoughts. It's always mental. Never underestimate the power of your mind, and that's your greatest asset.”

Mark Cuban says, “So true. Absolutely true in my life, as well.”

Sara Blakely says, “We spend a lot of money in our culture on entertainment, but we spend very little money on the inner work of our self. That's an investment that ends up reaping benefits for the rest of your life.”

Mark Cuban says, “I used to ride around all day looking at big houses listening to Zig Ziglar on motivational tapes that I bought for myself at half price. Absolutely.” And she begins to name her favorite authors and writers.

And you hear this a lot from people whether it's in business or other things, you see the power of years of investing in oneself before having real achievement in life. But many of us, most people, we feel guilty setting aside a day to read, setting aside time to recharge, setting

aside time to rest. But you got to rest and you've got to play because if you're tired all the time, you can't do great things.

There's this great quote from Dave Martin, I think it is, tired eyes can't see a bright future. I think that's true. Growth happens when you rest. This is something I'm trying to get buff for Hannah, just get bigger arms and stuff, and so I've been studying a lot about how to get buff. You can't see it because I got this robe on, but it's working, and so I'm getting.. no, it's not really working. I've been eating a lot of pancakes lately. I have the body of a guy who looks like he's about to start P90X and then doesn't.

Anyway, no but I learned that for growing muscles, if you're wanting to lift weights, the growth doesn't happen when you work out, the growth happens when you sleep. That's when your muscles grow. I know a lot of you are like I sleep all the time. Why am I still fat? Lifting weights is the catalyst in your muscles that causes them to grow, like that's the thing that starts it, but growth doesn't happen when you lift weights. It only happens when you sleep. So one of the biggest mistakes people make in weight training is training too much. So if you work your muscles out too much, they're never resting and growing.

And I think that's also true for the soul. That the stress of life.. you know stress will cause you to grow. Stress is good for you. You know that, right? It's good for you. Stress causes you to grow. But it won't cause you to grow unless there's also paired with that times of rest where

you stand back, where you learn from your mistakes, where you fill your tank, where you're able to say to yourself that's not as big of a deal as I'm making it. I've still got the big things in my life are here. And those kinds of thoughts, fostering the right kind of thinking that leads to victory.

That's why investing in you is so important. Never feel guilty investing in yourself because investing in yourself is one of the best things you can do to invest in others. Can I get an amen? And I just believe this. And I believe this because it's biblical, and I believe it's biblical because of the mandate of Sabbath. It's interesting when you read the bible the most common moral command in the bible is the command to Sabbath. Did you know that? The idea of Sabbath is this idea of rest, of prayer, of play, and of learning, learning things; personal growth.

So Moses, tradition says Moses wrote the first five books of the bible, and he's the one who wrote the creation story, and you see at the end of the creation story, it says something like – and when God finished creating the world, He looked and He said it is good. And then He rested. And then Moses kind of pokes you in the ribs and says, hey God rested, so you have to, too. A literal finger comes out of the bible and pokes you in the rib. And this is so important because many of us tough guys, we think I don't need to rest. I'm strong enough. I can keep going. But you have to rest because rest is where fresh vision and life and joy comes from!

For Jews, the day begins when the sun sets and I think they're the only culture that does that. You know for you and me, we say our day begins when the sun rises, right? That's kind of when it starts. I guess it begins at midnight, but we often think of it as beginning when the sun rises. But for Jews, the day begins when the sun sets. So Saturday begins on our Friday night. So for all of us, we sort of think in terms of like you work and then you rest. But for the Jews, the thought is you rest and then out of a place of rest and reflection, comes your work so that your work is thoughtful. That's a big difference. That's a big shift.

For Christians, we do the same thing though we don't know it. Our first day, and I've said this like a million times. Our first day of the week is Sunday. And the last day of the week is Saturday. So the whole week is meant to be sandwiched in rest, reflection, play, prayer, so that on Sunday, when you're with the people you love, and you're worshipping and you're gathered in God's house, you then go into your whole week carrying all of this joy, energy and fresh vision with you. Jesus did this, by the way. Jesus honored the Sabbath and He often would go to lonely places. He would withdraw from a crowd and leave to be with the Father and to be alone. Jesus loved naps! He slept under a tree, He slept on a hill. He slept on a boat in the middle of a storm. And His disciples were like screaming at Him and He just kind of turned over and was like (MUNCHING SOUNDS). Next time your spouse gets mad at you for taking a nap, you just look at them and you say Pastor Bobby is saying I'm

being Christ like. I'm just trying to be more like Jesus. Trying to be like the Lord.

And very often the reason we don't rest, we don't do those types of things is, well, because we don't want to disappoint people. We don't want to let people down. We want to help people. And that's so noble. And yet, it's the wrong kind of thinking sometimes because although you should do that most of the time, you still need to invest in you. You've got to make time for you! Did you know there isn't a single person Jesus didn't disappoint in the bible? Not one. That was so freeing for me to realize that even when people needed Jesus' help, sometimes He said no. Most of the time He said yes, but sometimes He said no.

If you haven't disappointed someone lately, you're probably not investing in yourself enough because to invest in yourself means you have to be willing to say no from time to time and to recognize that you can't say yes when you don't have a yes to give. Invest in you. Investing in you is one of the best investments you can make. Learn. Rest. Be with the people you love. Play. Enjoy life. Never sin, but don't call good things that are restful sinful. Sitting on your porch in a rocking chair with an iced tea and a novel for three hours is not sinful. It's good. That's from the Lord. And if that's what you need to do to recharge your batteries, it's good because investing in you is going to be the kind of thing that helps you invest in others. Can I get an amen? It's easy to think – well that's being lazy. Or that's whatever. But if you're serving others and you're

working hard most of the time, or if you're feeling tired, it's not lazy. It's self-care. You're caring for your soul and that's a good thing.

This is one of things, by the way, that set the Jews apart is this emphasis on rest, and on education, and on investing in themselves. I know this is taboo, but I'm one fourth Jewish, so it's okay. I can do this. Did you know that, by the way? Yeah, I am. Anyway.

So for the Jewish people, this is one minority that historically has been through.. when it comes to a minority that is suffering, I mean the Jews are pretty close to the top. They've been enslaved twice. They had a holocaust in some of your lifetime in this very room. So they've been through a lot. They've certainly suffered prejudice and racism, and yet this group of people who only makes up two percent of our population, according to the New York Times, makes up one third of our Supreme Court, they are two thirds of Tony Award winning composers, and they are one third of Nobel laureates. The average income of a Jewish American is six figures. So what is it that sets Jewish people apart? Is it a conspiracy? No. you're like oh it's because you're one fourth Jew. No, it's not a conspiracy, it is not anything genetic, it's not like in their blood or in their race, it's in their culture, essentially; in their way of thinking. That if you know a good Jewish family that is very Jewish, you're going to find a family that is tight as a family, and they're going to have a big emphasis on Sabbath rest, and in particular on education, on learning

and on personal growth. And there is pressure from the parents on the children to be lifelong learners.

And I mean that to give you hope. That is to say that doesn't matter how persecuted you are, or if you're from a race that experiences prejudice, it doesn't matter what your race is or what your background is, or how poor you are, or how poor you've been, or how uneducated you are now, you can learn, you can grow and you can invest in you, and nothing will stop you from achieving anything that you set your mind to. Don't blame people. Don't let others bring you down and don't get stuck in a rut. You can do it.

You look, and by the way, looking at another minority, East Indians are Americans; East Indian Americans are taking up the rear. The average Indian American now makes \$90,000 a year. That's double the national average. And that is one thing that Jewish people and East Indians share in common is a love for learning and for personal growth. Any East Indians in the house can attest to that? Yeah. That's true, isn't it? That's right. They love to learn.

And so that's the thing. Again, it just reinforces this very simple principle – race will not keep you from succeeding, being poor will not keep you from succeeding, prejudice will not keep you from succeeding, challenges will not keep you from succeeding, sickness will not keep you from succeeding. The thing that will keep you from succeeding is wrong

thinking. And the thing that leads to victory is right thinking. Good thoughts lead to a good life. So invest in you. Learn. Attain knowledge.

Oh I haven't read my scripture yet. I'm going to start my sermon now, is that okay? I'm just kidding! I'm almost done. I'm almost done, all right? I'm sorry. You're like I invest in me. I got to get out of here. I'm actually going to read it from the screen because I grabbed the wrong translation, so I want to read what you're reading.

So Proverbs says, and I want you to listen to it: "Listen my sons to a father's instruction: pay attention and gain understanding. I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching. For I too was a son to my father, still tender and cherished by my mother, then he taught me and said to me, take hold of my words with all your heart. Keep my commands and you will live." I don't need to do the voice. "Get wisdom. Get understanding. Do not forget my words or turn away from them. Do not forsake wisdom and she will protect you. Love her and she will watch over you." You hear that? Nothing is better than wisdom. If you want a joyful life, if you want to know God, if you want to be good in your marriage, you want to be a great parent, if you want to succeed in your business, seek wisdom and knowledge. Take time to learn. How do you do that? He tells us: "The beginning of wisdom is this – get wisdom."

Now I was talking to Hannah about this last night, she's like I don't get that. I said to me, I love it because it's so simple it's easy to not understand it. It's as simple as it is. The beginning of wisdom is this – get

wisdom. It's like saying that wisdom and knowledge is so available. It's been more available today than ever! It's like a ripe harvest full of grain out there for anybody who will go grab it. And yet so often, we wake up every day in the grind and in the rat race, and one day goes by, one week goes by, a month goes by and we haven't attained any knowledge or personal growth at all because as we've given to everybody else, we haven't invested in ourselves. If you wake up every day and say I want to foster right thoughts. I want to learn something new today. I want to gain wisdom. I'm going to read a good book. I'm going to study the word of God. I'm going to find a mentor. If you do these things, your life will be very, very different. Wisdom doesn't just lead to financial success as King Solomon is saying here, but it leads to a full life, a good family, it leads to heaven, it leads to all the things that you want in your life.

So that's why he says, "Though it cost you all you have, get understanding. Cherish her and she will exalt you. Embrace her and she will honor you. She will give you a garland to grace your head and present you with a glorious crown."

Every problem is a knowledge problem. That's a great way to view the world. So that's about 90% true. There are some problems that are not knowledge problems, but almost every problem is a knowledge problem. Cancer is a knowledge problem. There is a cure for cancer out there, and if we can find the knowledge, it'll be cured. Your relationship problems, that's a knowledge problem. Your sin problem, that's a

knowledge problem. Whatever it is that you're facing in life, if you can begin to view life that if I can only attain wisdom and knowledge, I can solve this problem. Your financial problems, everything. Almost everything is rooted in that one simple thing – that the problems you face in life are knowledge problems. If you knew this week's lottery numbers, your financial problems would be solved. Right? Oh I forgot, you don't want to be a millionaire, I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

So that's why the scripture harps on this so much - on Sabbath, on knowledge, on wisdom. Invest in you. It's the best investment you can make. Your spouse will thank me, your kids will thank me, your colleagues will thank me. Taking time for you to grow. Again, I don't mean sin, but to grow and to rest and to reflect on life, these things are going to make all the difference in the world. Invest in you because you're worth it. Amen.

Thank you, Lord, for all you've given us. We want to be the kind of people that foster good thoughts, and we want to change at least one thought today in our mind, one pattern in our thinking, so that we can be more and more like Jesus. It's in His name we pray, amen.