



This week we are thinking about trying to maintain our Christian integrity when reading, listening and responding to the media. Tim tackled this by explaining the difference between 'Thinking fast' and 'Thinking slow' (after a Noble prizewinning study) and sharing ways of becoming more disciplined. **Read James 1: 19-26 and then verse 19 again!**

1. Thinking Fast. (After Khanemann and Tversky)

- Fast thinking is impulsive, intuitive, instinctive & automatic. Gut feelings jump us into to conclusions based on how information is presented to us; it can provoke us to anger and reinforce our prejudices eg: '4,000 foreign murderers and rapists in the UK!' 'Gay marriage: a serious threat to the church.'
- This is exploited by the media, by politicians and by businesses to shape our thinking & perceptions, particularly if we're lazy and want our complex world to be simplified. Just because something is printed doesn't make it true. We need to make the effort to think and understand. **Proverbs 18:2.**

2. Thinking Slow.

- Slow thinking is cautious, rational and reasoned and reflective. Having thought through facts and information we can reason out a decision or come to a conclusion.
- Also, it turns out to be a long term investment because **the more we practise thinking slow, the better we get at thinking fast.** Which is why hospitals practise walking through a terrorist incident.
- As disciples of Christ we, too, want to be able to respond rather than react to the news headlines. We want to respond in a way that is consistent with the values and teachings we believe in. **Prov. 3: 5-7.**

3. Thinking Fast and the Modern Media.

- **Traditional broadcast media** – newspapers, radio and TV, come to us from professional editors and journalists who influence our opinions by the facts they choose and the way they present them. We, the **audience/readership** let our opinions to be reinforced by journalists with similar beliefs to ours.
- **Social media** encourages instant reaction. People publish *their own facts and opinions* via Facebook etc. '**Followers**' track an individual's opinion, who can end up influencing a huge group of followers. Companies, retail outlets and even governments try to direct our likes and dislikes. Some have been found to disseminate 'fake news', which has a bigger influence on people who think fast. Beware manipulation, ending up in an echo chamber of prejudices masquerading as 'the truth' or facts'.
- This all looks uncomfortably similar to discipleship, but we are called to be Jesus' disciples & to share the teachings of the Bible: **do we do so with the same enthusiasm and vigour as the latest news?**

4. Take your Bible and take your newspaper.

- 100 years ago the protestant theologian, Karl Barth advised us to '**interpret the newspapers from your Bible.**' This is a call to think slow and gain God's perspective on the published information.
- It's also a call to engage with media dialogue, offer a more complete perspective and model restraint.
- Jesus teaches us to think slow by answering His disciples' questions through parables. He teaches us to curb our instinctive reactions: to give instead of take, to put ourselves last instead of first. He asks us to be in the world, but not of the world.
- When consuming either traditional or social media, keep **1 Peter 3: 8-12** in mind.
- A helpful social media service comes from the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity who publish a weekly reflective comment on an issue in the news, directly into your inbox. **Licc.org.uk**
'Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise.' **Ephesian 5: 15.**

Things to talk about.

- Do you have a favourite newspaper and/or do you use Social media?
- To what extent do you feel our thinking is shaped by the media?
- Should we shun the media?
- What constitutes a 'Christian response' to a recent news story?
- To what extent is it important for a Christian to show integrity when discussing media stories?