

# The Monkey on the Mind

by David Wilkerson

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of overcoming mind habits, which can control and overpower our lives, and the need to think right to live a healthy and holy life.*

**Duration:** 27:20

**Scripture:** Matthew 9:2

**Topics:** "Mental Purity", "Spiritual Warfare"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of addressing the problems in our minds rather than just focusing on physical issues. He uses the analogy of little monkeys growing on us, representing negative thoughts that can overwhelm and control our lives. The preacher highlights the dangers of lustful thoughts and how they can lead to sin, even without physical contact. He also discusses the concept of mind habits and how God considers them just as sinful as physical habits. The sermon references the story of Jesus forgiving sins and admonishing the scribes and Pharisees for their evil thoughts in their hearts.

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## Transcript

A monkey on the mind. Narcotic addicts, such as these boys who have just testified, describe their habit as a monkey on the back. Ask any drug addict about his habit and he said, I've got a monkey on my back.

This refers to a parable that drug addicts talk about. This is the parable of a man who was walking in the jungle. As he walked through the jungle he saw a cute little monkey playing on a tree.

And he thought he was intrigued by this little monkey. He began to play with it. He gave it a banana.

In gratitude the monkey crawled on his shoulder, put his long arms around his neck and hung on his back. At first the man thought it was kind of smart, it was kind of fun. He was playing with the monkey.

Tried to shake him off and he wouldn't go. He had to feed the monkey. And in the next few days the monkey would leave.

He carried it everywhere he went and he had to feed it and it got bigger. And in just a short time, as the parable among narcotic addicts goes, this little cute monkey became a furry, ugly, small gorilla. It began to take the food.

It began to weigh him down. He would try to shake it. He couldn't move.

That thing had latched itself onto his neck and held on and was clutching at his throat. And as the drug addict's parable on the street, as we know it goes, finally this little ape became a full-sized gorilla. And it was bigger than the man and weighed him down.

His strength was gone. He couldn't shake it. And under the sheer weight of the burden of this little cute monkey that grew into a great gorilla, he crushed under the lobe and fell prostrate.

And only when he fell on his back did the ape walk away and leave him a broken body. And this is why drug addicts claim that they have a monkey on their back. This is a perfect illustration of how sin begins.

And it all starts with a playful little puff on a marijuana stick, a harmless scoop ball, a harmless sniff of heroin into the nostrils. But if that first step is fed with the second and third step, the little monkey climbs on the back and stays for life and books the individual, and there's no way out, they claim, except overdose or suicide. But I'm not going to preach tonight about a monkey on your back.

I want to talk about a monkey on your mind. You may never have the monkey of drugs or alcohol on your back, but you are in just as much trouble if you have a monkey of evil thoughts hooked onto your mind and you can't shake them off. Addicts are not concerned about their physical habits.

They can kick that cold turkey, as we call it, instantaneous withdrawal without any medication. And they can kick that in three days or two weeks at the most. And their body no longer needs narcotics, they don't need drugs.

They can go to a hospital and withdraw through medication. And when they walk out on the street, they don't need, their body does not need another fix. They go to prison and locked up for six months, and they walk out physically clean.

There is no need to shoot narcotics. The physical monkey is gone off the back. But the moment they get out in the fresh air, the moment they set foot outside, they find out that the monkey on the mind is still there, and so they call it a mind habit.

There's two parts to this problem. The physical can be kicked quickly, but they claim the mind habit stays for life. This is a revelation to me.

It should be a revelation to you that the greatest problems of our nature is not that which is physical, but that which is in the mind. And I want to talk about your mind tonight. I want to talk about those thoughts who, like little animals, little monkeys, as this parable illustrates, begin to grow on us until they overwhelm us and drive our life, our spiritual life, completely from us.

Now then, there are not many teenagers that I speak to here tonight who are bothered about thoughts of drugs or alcohol. But you may be fighting a battle in your mind tonight that is just as dangerous and just as vicious as that which an addict or a prostitute fights. Every sin, every habit, every crime, every sex act begins in the mind, and it starts as a simple little thought.

And if you don't feed that little thought, and as Billy Graham says, you can't stop the birds from flying over your head, but you don't have to let them make a nest in your head. You can't stop those evil thoughts sometime to come rushing by because of the things that happen to us in life. But it is another thing.

And if you don't play with it, if you don't toy with it, it will leave you alone. It won't call on board. It won't latch itself to your mind.

But if you feed it, if you toy with it, if you play with it, that little monkey, that little thought is going to grow until it finally obsesses you, until it drives you, until you are totally preoccupied with it, whether it be sex, whether it be any of these things I mentioned. It will control your very life. It will drive you to act out your thoughts.

And this is when we have what we call the sin of the flesh. And I want to do some plain talking tonight about teenage mind habits. And don't ever forget, my young people friends, young persons, God considers mind habits just as sinful as physical habits of the flesh.

And you can act like an angel on the outside and perhaps even look like one, and your friends think you're one, but you can be a beast in your mind. Jesus was and Jesus is a mind reader. In Matthew, the ninth chapter, the first four verses, the story is told of Jesus passing through his hometown of Nazareth, and they brought a man to him, sick with the pulse, and he was shaking from head to toe.

And Jesus looked at the poor, dejected man and he said, My friend, be cheerful, cheer up, thy sins are forgiven. And standing around were some scribes and Pharisees, and they thought to themselves, this man is a blasphemer. They didn't say a word.

But the Bible says in Jesus, listen to it, turned to them and said, Why do you think evil in your minds? Why do you think evil in your hearts? They hadn't said a word. Jesus healed the man and he went on his way. But I want you to listen to me.

I believe that Jesus is still a mind reader. I believe that he is here right now where two or three are gathered together in his midst. That's where he is.

And I believe he's reading your mind right now. I believe he knows your very thoughts. The Bible says, For the Lord searches all hearts and understands all imaginations of the thoughts.

The Bible says, No thought can be withheld from God, in Job 42. In Psalms 94.11 the Bible says, The Lord knows the thoughts of men that they are vanity. The Bible in Matthew 15.19 says that evil thoughts can be classified in four different classifications.

And these come right down to where every teenager lives. Listen to Matthew, the 19th chapter and the 15th verse. For out of the heart, which is the mind, for out of the heart of the mind proceed evil thoughts.

And now the Bible categorizes these evil thoughts. Murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things that defile a person.

All right, let's talk about the first classification of mind habits. The first classification the Bible mentions is thoughts of hatred. And the Bible calls this murder.

God in his word describes hatred as an act of aggressive murder. Here's the scripture, 1 John 3.15. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in his heart.

A man who hateth his brother is a murderer. There are too many teenagers today who are cultivating a bit of hatred in their heart toward parents. I didn't say a lot of them, I said too many.

Often there appears to be a reason why some teenagers have learned to despise their parents. And have allowed these kind of thoughts to hook onto their mind. Usually it's a result of divorce, a father and mother who fight or drink.

And this kind of hatred cost the minister's wife her life two weeks ago. A young 15-year-old preacher's son blamed his mother for driving the father out of the house. He went away, he divorced that wife.

The young man blamed his mother for it. And for three months he began to see inwardly these thoughts, my mother's to blame. My mother's to blame.

And one day, two weeks ago, in a fit of loneliness, this preacher's son. And I can give you the name and address. Picked a butcher knife up, went in the bedroom and thrust it through her stomach.

He killed her. And he was asked why. Because he had cultivated feelings of hatred toward his mother.

Too often hatred for parents is a result of discipline. Mother and dad say you're going to be in at such and such an hour. And this is disagreeable.

You want to set your own standard perhaps. And I know that when I was a teenager, those feelings of resentment, it wasn't hatred. I know I loved my father and mother.

But when my dad laid the law down, I could feel those thoughts of resentment come to me. And I know, I know, there are many, many mothers who have died of broken hearts. And I've had mothers who have written to me cheerful letters of how their teenagers have learned to despise them.

How their teenagers disobey. And how their teenagers show no love and no respect. And feelings of hatred have come to their hearts.

Teenager, the worst kind of feeling you could have, the worst kind of thought, is a thought of resentment against your parents because they try to do the best they can and discipline your life. These are little monkeys. They're hooked on the mind.

I want you to follow me very closely tonight because I feel this message is so important to you. The second classification, the Bible says, is evil sex thoughts. Evil sex thoughts.

I want to talk very plainly. And you know already that I have been very, very careful when I approach such an important subject as this. I have never talked on things that involve sex or morality without fear and trembling.

And this is the most sensitive part of any message I have ever preached. Because all sex habits and acts begin in the mind. He that looketh upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Now follow me. This is the biggest monkey ever to hook itself on a teenage mind today. Today there's a flood of pornography, nudity, and loose moral suggestions that are beginning to create imaginations in the minds of our youth that they find almost impossible to shake off.

You know that all sexual immorality begins in the mind and these are the kinds of thoughts who enter the mind through the eye gate. And I want to let you know right now that all lust of the mind begins with looking. Lust begins with looking.

I want to talk about looking at adult type films, movies. I think it's tragic that on Broadway and other places that I've been where they describe a film and they say for adults only and I looked at the line of people who were lined up and the majority of them are under 19 years of age. And any film today that advertises adults only is guaranteed a teenage audience.

Never have we had such immorality in films. Teenager, there's only one reason. I'm not going to preach against theater going.

I'm not preaching against movies. I'm not a fuddy-duddy preacher trying to set some standards for you that would be from my own personal observation or doctrine. But I know because I've been in the gutter with these kids and I know I've walked in some of the worst hell holes in the world.

I deal with some of the lowest scum on the earth. As far as morality, I've seen and talked to young people who come from the best homes who are groveling like serpents in the gutter because they decided that there was nothing wrong in sitting in a theater and baptizing their minds with pictures and filling their imaginations with those scenes that suggest fornication, adultery, and nudity and all of these things that bring down the downfall of proper thinking. Lustful looking, these nude type magazines today in our newsstands, teenager, it's not difficult for you to find something to feed this little monkey.

There's all kinds of fruit available right at the tip of your fingers. You can walk to any newsstand today in the smallest town in America and you can pick up magazines that 10 years ago would have been banned, but they're not banned anymore. And you can take those books, you can take those pictures and take them home and feast your mind on it.

And I had a boy come to one of my rallies recently, shaking from head to foot. He came to the altar and he said, David, I'm about to lose my mind. He said, I don't know how it happened, but he said, I started just like so many of the kids in my class.

Everything else was pushed out of my mind. I was totally preoccupied. He said, David, I live right across the street here.

My dad's a deacon. He said, would you please wait here for 15 minutes? I don't feel I'll ever get the victory in my life. I don't ever feel that my mind is going to be free anymore.

I'm never going to be able to think straight until I go get a shopping bag and fill it with those books and bring it to you and ask you to burn. No one tells you to do that but the Holy Spirit. But you cannot find freedom.

You cannot find release if you've got a monkey on your mind driving out every other thought, driving out that which is decent and pure and clean. And there is not a teenager in this auditorium tonight that does not need this message. Looking upon another person with lustful eyes, the Scripture says, is most dangerous of all.

Just look and lull and lust and you have committed fornication, the Bible says. God says you don't need to physically contact. You need no physical contact to commit sin.

As far as that which is immoral, all you have to do is to look to lull and to lust. Hear me, I have seen that look when I first went to New York City fresh out of the country. It crushed my heart to walk down the street and see men whose eyes were so full of lust, like craven, driven animals.

I think that bothered me more than anything I first saw in New York City. And then when I walked into my first gang hideout with the Grand Gangsters Incorporated in 135th Street, and I walked down there, got into the gang hideout and stood up there trembling trying to preach my little message and looked around at all those kids. They had been there dancing, interpretive dances.

There was no bodily contact and I saw only five minutes of it and I never want to see it again. To see the eyes, to see the lust that so consumed their very beings. They were burning infernals of lust through the eyes.

Their minds were totally saturated with one evil thought. It had possessed their mind, body and soul. And I've seen that look on the dance floor.

I've seen it a thousand times. When I've walked into dance floors to pass out chicken tracks that I've printed and passed out my book on lust and love and interviewed literally hundreds of teenagers on dance floors and I say, why are you here? Oh, I'm here for the exercise. And then I look at their eyes.

I look in their eyes and I know they're not there for exercise. I know why they're on the dance floor. I know what is happening in the hearts of the mind.

I've seen it a thousand times. No matter how you justify it. No matter how you try to set yourself free from it.

There's only one reason you stand there gazing with lust in your eyes. Because you have it in your mind. There's a monkey on your mind.

And I don't care what you call me teenager. I don't care what any preacher would say this kind of preaching represents. I don't believe that God is pleased with young people who allow themselves to be placed in an inferno of hell with lust and passion on every side and stand on a dance floor with loud music that urges them on and then their eyes begin to open and long and lust.

The Bible says that is sin. You can't be a Christian and live that kind of life. Evil sex thoughts grow the fastest.

They are the hardest to get rid of and they're the most dangerous of all. And I preach like this because I know these kinds of thoughts will overpower you very quickly. The third classification of mind habits, thoughts of theft and dishonesty.

The Bible says and theft and false witness. The Bible calls dishonesty false witness. There are two kinds of stealing going on in America today.

And I call it sophisticated stealing and unsophisticated stealing. The unsophisticated teenager begins to go into the five and dime store during lunch hour and starts stealing ballpoint pens. And then of course he graduates as he feeds his mind on how easy it is and this thought returns to him.

And then of course it becomes hubcaps. And then of course tires and eventually automobiles. And 64% of all auto theft last year were by teenagers.

64% of all auto thefts in America were teenagers. That was released today, those figures. But the majority of teenagers such as we have here would never be as crude as to steal a hubcap or to steal a ballpoint pen from a five and dime.

Would never be so crude as to steal an automobile. Theirs is more sophisticated. What would you call it when you steal answers for tests in school and cheat? What do you call it when you lie and deceive parents or teachers or yourself or God? We are living in a society that is fast becoming the most dishonest society of any generation in history.

We have payola today. We have wheeling and dealing and influence peddling. We've got what we call the white lie society.

We have bribing, shortcuts, half-truths, false witness, an outright shameless lie. But that doesn't make it right because it's becoming a wayward society. And there's a saying in the world today that you're alright as long as you don't get caught.

But oh young person hear me please. These kinds of thoughts, the thoughts that are dishonest, the thoughts of thievery, whether it be stealing an answer for a test, God sees it. God sees it and this is the beginning of cultivating thoughts more dangerous.

These are just little monkeys on the mind. And I pass last but not least to the fourth classification and I think the most important that I could talk to you about tonight. And those are thoughts of blasphemy.

Thoughts of blasphemy. The Bible says all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

Blasphemy is done in the mind. Blasphemy is a matter of a thought life. In plain words I could break it down.

The most simple definition I can give you of blasphemy is to refuse and to reject the claims of God on your mind and soul. Blasphemy is to deny his word and to deny his name. Jesus said he stands outside the door of your mind or your heart and he knocks.

He says if any man opens I will come in and I will communicate with him. Jesus stands at the door of your mind right now and he says I want to put my mind in you. Paul said let the mind of Christ be in you.

You don't have the power to control your thought life and there are many, many teenagers here whose thoughts have run away with them. Now they've overpowered you already. There is only one way to bring your thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ and that is to come to him in simple faith and say Jesus I open my mind.

And when somebody says I've taken Jesus into my heart it has to include the mind. There has to be an understanding as to why you've come. Not just because you feel good but because you think right.

You think right you've got to count the cost. I don't think any teenager should get up here tonight and come forward unless you come because you want God to put a new mind in you and a new heart. You want God to drive out those thoughts of blasphemy.

And listen all over the United States and Canada now the Holy Spirit is falling on groups of teenagers like this and never before in the history of this nation, never before in the history of the world has there been such deep conviction because the Bible says in the last days sayeth the Lord I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. And Ms. Coleman has been talking about how the Holy Spirit has been talking to her heart also about how this would spread what is happening here in this

arena, in this auditorium, it's happening in Vancouver, in Toronto, in Los Angeles, in New York City, in cities now all over the United States teenagers by the thousands are gathering just like you in crusades and the same Spirit that you feel and sense here right now is the same Spirit of God that's falling because the Lord Himself is calling out the people, young people and saying come.

And listen, when the Holy Spirit speaks to you just like He did to these two boys over here when they were paralyzed by conviction that is the work of the Holy Spirit and to reject that is to blaspheme, that is blasphemy to reject the Holy Spirit, to reject the Holy Spirit and I know just as sure as my name is David Wilkerson just as sure as I sense God taking my lips and speaking to me right now to your heart it was though God Himself were here beseeching you by the living mercies of God He speaks to your heart and He says this is your night I'm gonna speak plainly to you I'm gonna convict you of the thoughts you've been thinking those evil sex thoughts I'm gonna convict you of all of those other thoughts of hatred those thoughts that have been consuming your mind and driving everything else I'm gonna convict you of it and I'm gonna tell you it's wrong but then I'm gonna knock at the door of your heart one more time I'm gonna give you one more chance to repent and get it out of your heart teenager that time has come

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