

think of every possible way we can to deal with it, even if they seem ridiculous, think of them. Write them down. Get them before you even if they seem utterly worthless. Do not let your judicial thinking interfere with your creative thinking. But after you have done that, then proceed with your judicial thinking to see the difficulties in them. Very often you will find then that you will think of something that at first sight did not seem to be practical. It won't work, but you put it down and are giving it consideration.

And you find that it perhaps suggests something else that gives you the answer to your problems/ That is true in Bible study. It is true in practical things of life. I think it is important we have in mind the steps in creative thinking. It is very important of course that you gather the facts. How often we move ahead in some direction without having gathered all the facts. And there may be vital facts that show this is the wrong direction to go, but we go quite a distance there before we realize it. But to gather the facts all we can without trying to decide between them.

Then as we gather ideas we think of ways of dealing with the facts. Think of possible methods of operation. Don't try to see all the difficulties in them. Just get all you possibly can. In many corporations they use a method something like this. They call it brainstorming. It is no one can criticize the others for advancing a fool idea so the people are not held back from thinking new ideas but it may suggest a good idea to someone else who would not have thought of it otherwise. They suggest to you a brainstorm.

Gather ideas. Think of all the ways you can. Think of new combinations of the ideas. Then take up the judicial function. Examine the facts for accuracy. Examine the ideas for practicality. Perhaps you'll want to go back to the other stage. But separate the stages. Don't stick the ice cream in the middle of the hot soup! But deal with them separately and get the matter before you impartially whether you are studying the meaning of a Bible passage.

I remember one time I gave a course in Homiletics. There was one fellow who had a marvelous ability as a speaker, but he couldn't get a decent outline. So for his sake I asked the class to take a certain text and I said, Write 15 brief outlines of this text. We had a missionary there and he said later, I thought what a silly idea. How can I make 15 outlines of this one text? And he sat there and put down what seemed to him to be the logical outline. Then he said, Well if I'm going to make 15 I might as well make another try. The next was not half as good. He struck another and it wasn't half as good as that. But he kept trying and his eighth one was far better than the first. If we try to find new ways, new interpretations, new methods and then examine them judicially and use the new ones that are workable. The Lord can use our efforts and our abilities far beyond what we might imagine.