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Part One

The Battle

What's On Your Mind?

*“For **My thoughts are not your thoughts**, Neither are your ways **My ways**,’ declares the LORD.” Isaiah 55:8*

If you want to get a sense of how many thoughts are flowing through your mind, just get in a quiet place and let your mind go for about two minutes. You might be surprised where your mind will take you, especially if you begin thinking about problems with your spouse, your kids, your finances, or your work, etc. You may even try to turn off your thoughts or try to redirect them only to find out that your mind has a “mind” of its own. It is amazing how we can get into “mental squirrel cages” and keep thinking the same things over and over.

The questions are, “What do you do with your thoughts? Do you take ownership of all your thoughts? Do you question the origin of your thoughts? Do you let every thought in? Do you believe all your thoughts, or do you evaluate them?” Before you became a Christian, you had no choice but to believe in and take ownership of the thoughts that were coming into your mind. However, as a Christian you now have two “divine filters” that you can use to discern whether the thoughts in your mind are truth or lies. One of the filters is the Word of God. John 17:17 declares, “Thy word is truth.” You also have an “internal divine filter” Who is the Holy Spirit. John 14:26 says:

*“But the Counselor, **the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in my name, will **teach you all things and will remind you of everything** I have said to you.” John 14:26*

We have the Holy Spirit within us Who will teach us truth and will bring that truth to mind.

Through these two filters we have the ability to discern which thoughts are true and which are lies, which thoughts are from the world, the flesh, and the devil, and which are from God. Where does God want to take us in our thought life? Look at Philippians 4:8 for the answer:

*“Finally, beloved, whatever is **true**, whatever is **honorable**, whatever is **just**, whatever is **pure**, whatever is **pleasing**, whatever is **commendable**, if there is any **excellence** and if there is anything **worthy of praise**, think about these things.”*

You know only too well that there is a constant battle for the control of your mind. Let’s take a few moments to look at the battle that wages war in your mind.

There Is A Battle Raging For The Control Of Your Mind.

“... I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind.” Romans 7:23

I shouldn’t have to tell you as a Christian that there is a battle raging in your mind. It is an ongoing battle in your thought life. This study is designed to lay a foundation of what we need to first understand about the battle of the mind and then explore the truths concerning how to fight this battle. Let’s begin by gaining a better understanding of the foundation for winning the battle in our mind.

What Is The Foundational Truth That We Must Understand To Win The Battle Of The Mind?

Before we go any further in this study of the battle of the mind, we must first understand a basic, fundamental truth:

You CANNOT win the battle of your mind in your own strength and willpower.

Jesus says in the second part of John 15:5:

“.....apart from Me you can do nothing.”

Part of this verse means that you cannot truly win the battle for your mind independent of Christ's power. So many believers that I have counseled believe that they can win the battle that

The BATTLE

“But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me.” Romans 7:23

What Paul is describing in Romans 7:23 is a non-stop battle that goes on in your mind. Part of what is behind this battle is the battle between the flesh and the Spirit.

“For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. For these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.” Galatians 5:17

Paul tells us in Philippians 4:8 where God wants our thought life to be:

“Finally, brothers, whatever is **true**, whatever is **noble**, whatever is **right**, whatever is **pure**, whatever is **lovely**,

booklet online or you can download it for free. You will also see a small group study by the same name. I would recommend this for use by individuals, small groups, married couples, or for Sunday school.

In addition to these materials, you can go to the **Discipleship** section of this website and find more discipleship materials under the section titled **Discipleship-Studies**. I want to thank you for taking your time to go through this study. I trust that the Lord will make what you have learned become an experiential reality in your life as He has in mine.

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(5-12-10)

Lying Beliefs About Others:

Comparing to see if I measure up.
I/They must earn acceptance.
They must meet my needs.
Other's opinions determine my value.
They must love me unconditionally.
They must meet my standards.
I have "rights" concerning others.

Lying Beliefs About How To Live the Christian Life:

1. I must work for God:
 - a. to gain His love.
 - b. for God to be happy with me.
 - c. to earn His acceptance.
 - d. to escape His condemnation.
 - e. to feel good about myself.
 - f. to please others.

2. It us up to me using my intellect and ability (with God's help):
 - a. to keep His commands.
 - b. to make His promises real in my life.
 - c. to transform myself.
 - d. to be happy.
 - e. to be successful.

Do You Want To Know More?

This study may have given you answers to some of your questions but it may have generated more questions as well. If so, I hope that you would go to our website www.christislifeministries.com. and look under the **Store** section. The next booklet I would recommend is called *Living Life From A New Source*. You can either purchase this

whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” Philippians 4:8

I believe that the war is between what God wants us to think in Philippians 4:8 above versus what we are thinking. In fact, Paul is saying that he wants to think about what is true, honorable, just, pure, etc., but it is a struggle to consistently think on those things. I trust that your desire is to think on the things in Philippians 4:8 as well. However, for me there are internal and external enemies whose desire it is to keep me thinking about myself, my sin patterns, and everything else contrary to what God desires that I think about. Let's spend a few moments talking about those enemies.

Key Points To Remember About This Battle:

1. The battle for the control of your mind will last a lifetime.
2. You have unseen enemies in this battle.
3. These enemies seek to keep you in bondage to your lying beliefs and fleshly behaviors.
4. You cannot win this battle apart from the Holy Spirit winning it in your mind.
5. Who wins this battle will determine whether or not you will experience a transformed and an abundant life (or not).

There is an ongoing battle for the CONTROL of your thought life.

The Battleground

*“For My thoughts are **not** your thoughts, Neither are your ways My ways,’ declares the LORD.” Isaiah 55:8*

The battle of the mind is between thinking God's thoughts (truth) versus thinking fleshly, lying, deceiving, tempting, and condemning thoughts produced by the enemies of your mind. Let's look at both sides of this battle starting with God's truth.

God's Truth

We see the power and the necessity of God's truth in Hebrews 4:12:

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12

God's truth is able to discern the ORIGIN of the thoughts and to evaluate them so that we will know if they are of God or not.

God takes His truth and makes it personal revelation through the Holy Spirit. The only way we will know the thoughts of God is for the Holy Spirit to make it personal revelation.

*“For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way **no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.**” 1 Corinthians 2:11*

Remember: It is not enough to just have academic knowledge of Biblical truth. It is not what you know about God's truth, it is what you **believe**. The result of believing God's truth is found in John 8:32

*“You will know the truth, and the **truth will set you free.**”*

LYING BELIEFS

Lying Beliefs About Yourself:

I feel or believe that I am:

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Unworthy | Secure in myself |
| Unacceptable | Fearful |
| Self-confident | Rejected |
| A Failure | Successful |
| Anxious | Self-reliant |
| Inadequate | In control |
| Weak | Worthy in myself |
| Defeated | Competent |
| Insecure | Fearless |

Lying Beliefs About God:

I believe that God is:

Or, in the past in a very stressful situation I felt like God was:

- Angry
- Judgmental
- Unloving
- Cold and distant
- Condemning
- Unable
- Indifferent
- Punishing
- Unwilling
- Not really in control
- Uncompassionate
- Uncaring

Question: What are some areas in your life today that you need God's wisdom, discernment, or understanding?

Engaging God: In those areas, seek Christ to BE your wisdom, discernment or understanding.

What Will Be the Proof of A Renewed Mind?

As God Renews Your Mind,

- You will be thinking God's truth versus your lying beliefs.
- Your discernment concerning the lies versus the truth in your thought life will grow.
- You will know more quickly when you are going back to your lying beliefs versus your walking in the truth.
- You will experience God renewing your mind, and it will create a greater desire to continue walking by faith.
- You will be making choices based upon the truth versus your lying beliefs.
- Your Christ-confidence will grow as you experience more of God's transformation.

Summary

I trust this study on the battleground of the mind and the renewing of the mind has been a source of encouragement and transformation for you. After all the years of counseling, I can't think of a more important focus than this one. I pray that God will continue to renew your mind to the truth of who you are, who He is and how much He wants you to experience the abundant life he offers.

Paul reveals to us that the word of God is part of our divine armor. It is the sword of the Spirit.

*"...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
Ephesians 6:17b*

The Holy Spirit uses God's truth as the DIVINE SWORD to battle with the enemies of your mind and the thoughts that they produce.

Fleshly, Lying, Deceiving, Tempting, and Condemning Thoughts

Fleshly Thoughts – thoughts that lead to fleshly choices and behavior.

The flesh is an attitude or strategy of living that says, "I can live life, solve my problems, control my life, and be happy independent of God." From the flesh flows fleshly behavior. What drives fleshly behavior are fleshly thoughts.

Lying Thoughts – Any thought that contradicts God's truth.

Lying thoughts primarily come from your lying beliefs about yourself, God, and living the Christian life. I define any lying belief as any belief that contradicts God's truth.

Deceiving Thoughts - Thoughts that come in first person that are designed to deceive us and keep us from walking by faith in God's truth.

Deceiving thoughts primarily come from Satan and his demonic forces. These are thoughts inserted in our mind that

come in first person. Deceiving thoughts direct our paths toward thinking which can produce fear, anxiety, worry, etc.

Tempting Thoughts - thoughts that tempt to draw you away from living from the truth.

Tempting thoughts are thoughts usually attached to our lying beliefs and our defeating sin patterns. Since we are most susceptible in these two areas, tempting thoughts will most likely be centered around them.

Condemning Thoughts –thoughts which produce guilt, shame, or self-condemnation.

These are thoughts that also come in the form of first person. They accuse us of wrongdoing and persuade us to condemn ourselves when we fail or sin.

These Thoughts Produce Negative Emotions.

Unfortunately, these thoughts don't just stand alone. They influence our emotions by creating negative feelings. Here are some of the negative feelings produced by our thoughts:

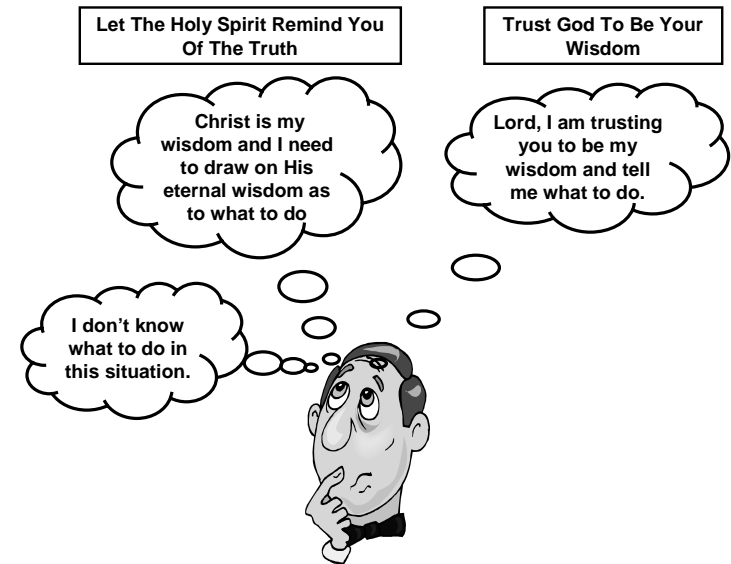
Condemnation	Anxiety	Shame
Anger	Worry	Frustration
Inadequacy	Fear	Insecurity
Rejection	Unworthiness	Guilt

These thoughts will result in DOUBT, CONFUSION, UNBELIEF, and eventually DEFEAT.

What (or Who) Are The Enemies of Your Mind in This Battle?

Paul gives us an amazing promise in 1 Corinthians 2:16. You, as a believer, possess the mind of Christ! What does it mean to have the mind of Christ? Having the mind of Christ means that you have constant access to the wisdom, discernment, understanding and revelation that exists in Christ. What this means to you as a believer is that YOU no longer have to rely on your finite human mind and abilities.

You no longer have to try to use your finite mind or abilities to figure out what is going on. You can draw on the mind that you have in Christ. It is like having access to the “eternal spiritual internet!” Therefore, the next time that you need wisdom, discernment or understanding, move above “the line” by faith and allow Christ to be your SUPPLY for those things! Below is an illustration of this principle.



alone, is in control. He will renew your mind to the truth to the point that your mind will believe that God, **and not you**, is the One in control

Renewing Your Mind Is A Process! It May Take Time! Why?

*“There is a **time for everything**, and a season for every activity under heaven.” Ecclesiastes 3:1*

The question that we might ask ourselves concerning God’s timing in the “mind renewing” process is, “How long has it taken for these lies to develop and the strongholds to have taken hold of my life?” We know that God can remove any lie or stronghold in a moment. However, one of the reasons that He may not do this instantly is to “grow” your faith.

The process of transformation is designed to build your faith and confidence in Him as the One who renews your mind to His truth. Therefore, as He works in and through you, let Him grow in you His patience concerning His renewal timetable. His timing is always perfect. Therefore, when you become frustrated or impatient with God’s timing, what is it that you need in those moments? It is His peace, His patience and His endurance.

You will want God to move faster in the process but remember that He is teaching you faith in the WAITING.

As Part of Your True Identity, You Have The Mind of Christ.

*“...we have the **mind of Christ**.” 1 Corinthians 2:16b*

*“For out of the **heart (soul) come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.**”
Matthew 15:19 (Parenthesis mine)*

I trust that you understand by now that this battle rages in your soul because that is where your mind is located. As we have mentioned before, the soul is very vulnerable when we are not walking from our union with God in our human spirit. Therefore, let’s look at four of the enemies that we face:

The Flesh and the Power of Sin

*“The **mind set on the flesh is death**, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.” Romans 8:6*

*“But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but **(the power of) sin which dwells in me.**” Romans 7:20 (Parenthesis mine)*

You know that within your soul lurks your flesh and the power of sin. **The power of sin** is simply an internal power in your life that seeks to draw you away or tempt you to sin. **Your flesh** is an independent attitude or pattern of behavior within you that says, “I can, apart from God, solve my problems, meet my needs, and resolve my internal and external problems.” When it comes to my thought life, I feel as if the flesh and the power of sin have teamed up to keep me focused on evil thoughts, fleshly thoughts, self-serving thoughts, etc.

There are times when I know that I should be loving and encouraging, but I find myself thinking critical and judgmental thoughts about someone. The Holy Spirit within me exposes those thoughts for what they are, and then the battle begins.

The PROBLEM is that some of my thoughts are so closely attached to my beliefs that I take OWNERSHIP of them without questioning them.

For example, there was a time when I believed that I had the fleshly right to be critical of and to judge others, especially when they were critical of me. The source of my being critical and judgmental was my lying belief that I was inadequate. Therefore, how I dealt with the rejection of someone else was to set myself up as judge as a way of protecting myself or justifying why or what I did. When rejection came my way, my flesh, in collusion with the power of sin, offered up such thoughts as, "I have the right to be critical because they offended me by what they said. I am justified in my being judgmental." Because of my lying beliefs, I instantly took ownership of those thoughts and spoke accordingly.

My lying belief of inadequacy was so strong that I didn't even hear the Holy Spirit say, "Bill, you don't have the fleshly right to criticize and judge. If you were walking in the truth that you are totally adequate in Christ, then you would not be critical or judgmental."

When Romans 8:6 says that the mind set on the flesh is death, it means that I either don't know the truth or else I am not choosing to live from the truth. Either way, it creates death (i.e., misery in my soul). That was true in my case because my criticism of others never made me feel better about myself or filled the hole of inadequacy in my soul.

Meditate: on the truths above and ask yourself if the areas where you most experience fleshly thoughts are truly resulting in anything other than misery of the soul.

*"I will **praise** the name of God with song, and shall magnify Him with **thanksgiving**." Psalm 69:30*

*"I will bless the LORD at all times; His **praise shall continually** be in my mouth." Psalm 63:1*

As we abide in Him and walk in faith that God is working, we need to thank Him for what He is doing. Thank Him for the fact that He is in you and is renewing your mind to the truth. Thank Him that even though you may not be experiencing a change in your belief systems, by faith you know that **change is taking place**. As David said in Psalm 63, let your praise to God be continually in your mouth.

Engaging God: This is a crucial truth in that thanksgiving and praise during the transformation process is a confirmation that you are walking by faith and may not be yet experiencing the results of your transformation.

God's Process of Renewing Your Mind and "The Line"

As an example let's assume that your lying belief is that God is really not in control. Therefore, you believe that it is up to YOU to try to stay in control. What is the truth? The truth is that YOU have no control. It is an illusion! The truth is that God is **totally** in control. We see that truth in Philippians 3:20, 21:

*"...the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables Him to bring **everything** under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body."*

In "the line" diagram below we see this process as we go from the lying belief that we are in control to the knowledge of the truth that Christ is in control. Entrust your lying beliefs to Him for Him to reveal to you the truth that He, **and He**

beliefs with the truth. Your part is to present yourself by faith. His part is to renew your mind.

Engaging God: Develop a habit of presenting your lying beliefs to God every time a thought comes into mind associated with those lying beliefs. You cannot afford to dwell on thoughts that are tied to your lying beliefs.

PERSEVERE in your walk of faith.

*“This requires the **steadfast endurance of the saints** – those who obey God’s commandments and hold to their faith in Jesus.” Revelation 14:12*

During the renewal process you will fall back into your lying beliefs many times. However, don’t be discouraged. Remember that the renewing of your mind is a process. You must continue to take steps of faith no matter how many times that you go back to your lying beliefs until you begin experiencing changes in your beliefs.

Perseverance is the key to transformation. As we have mentioned before, the depth of your lying beliefs will determine how long it may take before you start to experience changes in your beliefs.

Engaging God: Ask Christ to BE your perseverance during the process of God setting you free from a particular lying belief. When you do fall back into your lying beliefs, repent of the sin caused by those beliefs and turn back and continue to walk by faith.

By faith THANK and PRAISE God that He is in the process right now of renewing your mind even though you may not be experiencing that renewal yet.

Engaging God: Ask God to reveal to you the “death” that those fleshly thoughts are causing you.

Satan and His Demonic Forces

*“For our struggle is **not against flesh and blood**, but against the **rulers**, against the **authorities**, against **the powers of this dark world** and against the **spiritual forces of evil** in the heavenly realms.” Ephesians 6:12*

*“...for he (Satan) is a **liar** and the **father of lies**.” John 8:44 (Parenthesis mine)*

We are in a fierce battle with Satan and his demons. These enemies are formidable foes. The problem is that we are dealing with an **unseen** enemy who knows the bible only too well and what God can and will do in our lives if we walk by faith. Therefore, Satan and his demon’s objective is to prevent us from walking by faith, experiencing transformation, and developing a personal, intimate relationship with God.

He wants to negatively impact your thought life and keep you in bondage to your lying beliefs. Satan knows that if he can keep you believing the lies that you will never experience the transformation and abundant life that God promises. We will devote a whole section that deals with Satan’s strategy in our minds later in this study.

Let us never forget that the enemy’s strategy is to STEAL, KILL, and DESTROY our walk of faith and relationship with God.

Questions: What are some recurring, lying, self-condemning, and fleshly thoughts that you might be

experiencing? Is it possible that those thoughts are from Satan and are not coming from you?

Meditate: on the truth that every thought that you have is not from you and that Satan and his demonic forces want to use your mind to keep you in bondage to your lying beliefs.

Engaging God: Begin asking God to expose any thoughts that you are having that may be coming from Satan/demons.

The World

*“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.”
Colossians 2:8*

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.” 1 John 2:16

Turn on the TV, pick up a newspaper, or read a magazine. Immediately you will be bombarded with the world’s thinking. Remember that Satan is the god of this world, and he is using all that the world offers to influence you to compare, to succeed, to win, to be strong, to be self-sufficient, and most importantly to be independent. It is the only message that you will ever get from the world. Why? All that the world can serve up to you, as it says in 1 John 2:16, is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful PRIDE of life.

In addition, world events, politicians, etc. can invoke fearful, angry and anxious thoughts. I know Christians that can’t get past their anger about what the government is doing or is not doing. They let politicians and governmental action (or inaction) steal their peace and rest in Christ. They just

We must first know the truth in order to have our minds renewed to the truth. Knowledge must become revelation before it will renew our mind. We seek God to take that revelation and to use it to root out and to set us free from our lying beliefs.

Engaging God: As you spend time in God’s word, ask Him to take the information to revelation and renew your mind with the truth and begin setting you free from your lying beliefs.

MEDITATE on the Word of God

*“I will meditate on Your precepts and regard Your ways.”
Psalm 119:15*

It is not only crucial to learn the truth; it is crucial that you **meditate** on God’s truth. Throughout this study I have asked you to meditate on God’s Word. As you meditate on His Word, God will give you a deeper revelation that will lead to the renewing of your mind.

Engaging God: Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a greater willingness to meditate on God’s word not only during your quiet time but throughout the day as well.

PRESENT your lying beliefs to Him to renew your mind.

*“and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but **present yourselves to God** as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” Romans 6:13*

Since you are powerless to change your lying beliefs, come to God and present these beliefs to Him. Ask Him to replace your lying beliefs with His truth. Remember that He is the divine surgeon Who can and will replace your lying

In Romans 7:24, 25 Paul did not ask “What ten steps do I have to take to have victory over this body of death?” He didn’t ask WHAT. Rather, he asked, “WHO will deliver me?” The only Person Who can renew your mind is God Himself. There is no amount of self-discipline or self-will that can ever bring you consistent victory in your mind. Jesus says in John 8:32:

“*and you shall know the truth, and the **truth shall make you free.**” John 8:32*

Jesus further says about Himself in John 14:6:

“*I am the way, **the truth**, and the life...*”

Jesus, Who IS the truth, will take His truth and will set you free.

What Is Your Part In The Renewing of Your Mind?

Go to page 53 to the page titled “Lying Beliefs” and find some lying beliefs about yourself, God or living the Christian life. As you go through this section, apply these truths to your lying beliefs.

As you read and learn scripture, ASK God to renew your mind with His Word.

“**Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.**” John 17:17

“*For the **word of God** is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and **able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**” Hebrews 4:12*

“wallow” in their “stinking” thinking. I believe that we would be surprised to know how deeply our culture influences our thought life and how much it can trigger fleshly thoughts of lust, anger, anxiety, etc.

Questions: What areas in your life are being affected or infected by the world? In what way is the world drawing you away from your relationship with Christ?

Meditate: on what you think about when it comes to the things of the world. Try to identify where the world is interfering with your dependence upon God.

Engaging God: Ask God to reveal to you where you may not be aware that the world is negatively impacting your thoughts.

Satan as the god of this world will use everything that the world has to offer to
ENTICE you away from living dependently upon God.

There Are Also The Distracting Thoughts of Daily Living.

Throughout each day we can be distracted from our walk with God just by the every day issues of life. Taking care of kids, job, activities, etc. are not necessarily sinful or Satanic, but they can distract you from your walk with God. “Busyness” is another way that we can lose our focus on Christ. It seems like we are filling every minute with activity. I wonder if we believe that fulfillment in life comes from being busy every moment rather than living from Christ?

The enemy is the “father” of distraction as well. He knows only too well the damage that he can create by just keeping you distracted from spending time in focusing on and abiding in Christ.

Question: Would you take an inventory of your life and determine if you are being driven by the “busy-ness” of the world?

Engaging God: Ask God to expose where your “busy-ness” is taking you away from time that could be spent with Him.

There Are No PACIFISTS In This Battle.

There are no pacifists or anyone sitting on the sidelines for this battle. If you do not enter the battle, it means that you have already lost the battle. You must enter this battle prepared to fight.

“Timothy, ...**fight the good fight.**” 1 Timothy 1:18

You must enter into the battle with alertness and vigilance as it says in 1 Thessalonians 5:6:

“so then let us **not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.** 1 Thessalonians 5:6

We must be alert and vigilant because we have three primary enemies that want to defeat us.

Your VICTOR In The Battle Lives Within You.

“Therefore, **prepare your minds for action,** keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
1 Peter 1:13

in our lying beliefs we will continue to go back to our self-confidence to try to live life. Paul tells us how he went from great self-confidence in Philippians 3:4, 5 to great Christ-confidence in Philippians 1:6.

Engaging God: Ask God to reveal to you where in your life your self-confidence is greater than your Christ-confidence.

#5 - Impatience

“But he must ask in faith without any doubting, ***for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.***” James 1:6

Now that you know the truth, your desire is that God will renew your mind immediately! You want your mind renewed ASAP so that you can start walking in and enjoying the freedom that comes from living from the truth. However, as God **does not** (and for the most part **won't**) meet your timetable, impatience starts to grow. From that impatience comes doubt.

Satan will use your impatience to insert thoughts such as, “Turn back to yourself. God will not come through. You will never be set free from your lying beliefs.” If you give in to your impatience, you will turn back to the flesh and will never experience the freedom that God offers.

Good News! The RENEWER Of Your Mind Lives Within You!

“but thanks be to **God**, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
1 Corinthians 15:57

“Wretched man that I am! **Who** will set me **free** from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Romans 7:24, 25

a nuisance than anything else. At the other end of the scale are flesh patterns that are so deeply rooted in our lives to a point where that they have become strongholds or addictions in our lives.

Since they are so deeply rooted in our beliefs and in our behaviors, we strongly resist God in His sanctifying work in our minds concerning these areas of our lives. We will discuss the issue of strongholds in Lesson Five.

Fleshly STRONGHOLDS have become so firmly entrenched that there will be GREAT resistance when we engage God to renew our minds..

#4 - Too Much Self-Confidence and A Lack of Christ-Confidence

*“If anyone else thinks he has **reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:** ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee.” Philippians 3:4, 5*

*“**I am (Christ) confident** of this very thing that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ.” Philippians 1:6 (Parenthesis mine)*

When we first start out on our faith journey, we have very little Christ-confidence that God is really Who He says that He is and that He will do what He promises to do! Our problem is that we have great self-confidence in our abilities and intellect to deal with the issues of life.

But, we lack Christ-confidence in what God is able and is willing to accomplish in renewing our minds. If we don't walk in faith long enough to experience supernatural changes

In preparing for this battle we must first understand the key truth that the VICTOR of this battle lives within us. It is the Holy Spirit.

“for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” Romans 8:13

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.” Galatians 5:17

“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” John 14:26

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.” John 16:13

“for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” Romans 8:13

As your Victor the Holy Spirit will:

- 1. Teach you God's truth.**
- 2. Make God's truth become revelation to you.**
- 3. Renew your mind to believe God's truth.**
- 4. Remind you of God's truth in the midst of the battle.**
- 5. Overpower your enemies.**

Most importantly, it is the Holy Spirit who will take your thoughts CAPTIVE.

Part Two

Taking Thoughts Captive

Taking Our Thoughts Captive

*“...we (Christ in us) destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we (Christ in us) take every thought captive to obey Christ.”
2 Corinthians 10:4b, 5 (Parentheses mine)*

You will see that I have inserted parentheses within this verse. It is key to understand that Paul is not saying that the responsibility for destroying speculations or taking every thought captive is your responsibility. The truth is that apart from Christ taking those thoughts captive through you, you cannot take your thoughts captive.

What Paul means through this verse is that the Holy Spirit can discern and can tell you whether that thought is from God, the flesh, or Satan. As we draw closer to God through our walk of faith, we develop a “divine filter” by which we, through the Spirit’s discernment, know the source of where our thoughts are coming from.

What It Looks Like To Participate With God In Taking Thoughts Captive

As Thoughts Come Into Your Mind, ASK the Lord To Reveal To You the Origin of Your Thoughts.

As we just mentioned, part of taking a thought captive is to seek God to reveal the origin of the thought. Let’s look at an example:

You have a flesh pattern of being critical of others. Let’s assume that some person said something negative about

#2 - Unforgiveness

“Then Peter came and said to Him, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’” Matthew 18:21-22

Unforgiveness is a major roadblock to God’s work in renewing our mind. Jesus is trying to emphasize this point with Peter in Matthew 18:21-22 above. Why is it a roadblock? An attitude of unforgiveness cuts off the life of Christ Who is the Source for change in your life. It may be unforgiveness toward one another or towards yourself. One of the enemy’s strategies is to insert thoughts in your mind to justify your angry, bitter, and unforgiving attitude toward yourself or others.

An attitude of unforgiveness BLOCKS Christ’s life from penetrating into your soul in order to transform your mind.

Engaging God: Ask God to expose any unforgiveness in your life and ask Him to replace the unforgiveness with His forgiveness.

#3 - Overwhelming Defeating Sin Patterns Or Strongholds

“let us lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us....” Hebrews 12:1

We understand that we all have flesh patterns. The interesting thing about our flesh patterns is that they vary in degree as to how much that they control what we think, feel, and believe. At one end of the scale, a flesh pattern is more of

The longer that you continue believing the lies, the more reinforced those lying beliefs become and the more they become the truth to you. Now that we understand that God wants to renew our mind, a new battle will begin taking place. It is a battle of believing God's truth over the lies that we have believed for some time. This is part of the fight of faith that we have previously discussed. This battle is fought one thought at a time. Before we discuss how to engage God to renew our minds to the truth, let's gain an understanding of some of the hindrances to a renewed mind.

Hindrances To God Renewing Your Mind

#1 - Feelings and Emotions

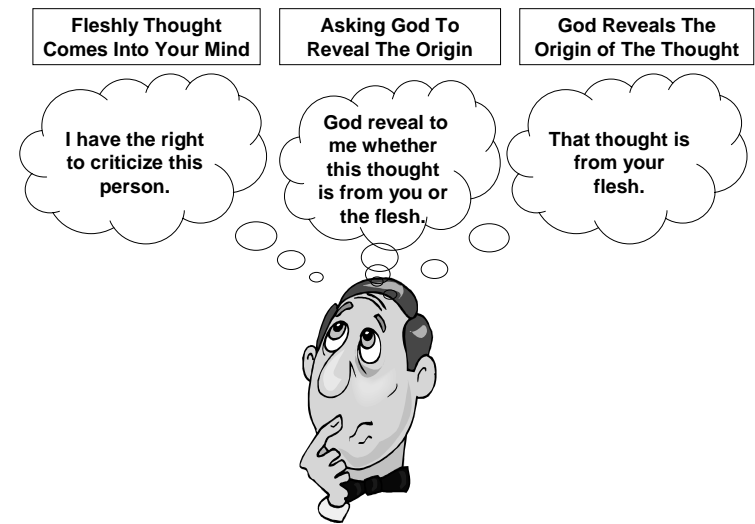
“And Jehovah God called unto the man and said unto him, ‘Where art thou?’ ¹⁰And he said, ‘I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself’” Genesis 3: 9,10

Our emotions play a critical part in the process of the renewal of our mind. Why? It is because they are closely attached to our belief systems. Let me explain. If I believe that I am a fearful person, events will occur that trigger feelings of fear. If fearfulness is a strong belief, then the tendency will be to give into the feelings of fear which will reinforce the belief that you are a fearful person. Therefore, feelings wrapped around false beliefs can cause you to resist God's renewal process. We will talk more about this in the next lesson.

If your feelings are tied to your lying beliefs, then every time that you have those feelings, it will REINFORCE your lying beliefs about yourself.

you behind your back. You find out about it, and the first thought that comes into your mind is, “I have the right to be critical of that person. After all, they said negative things about me behind my back!” If you take ownership of that thought, you will end up committing sin by being critical of that person.

However, what can result if when the fleshly thought comes into your mind, you engage God by faith and ask Him to reveal the origin of that thought? God responds by revealing that the origin of the thought is your flesh. The process of God revealing the origin of that thought is illustrated in the next diagram as you read from left to right:

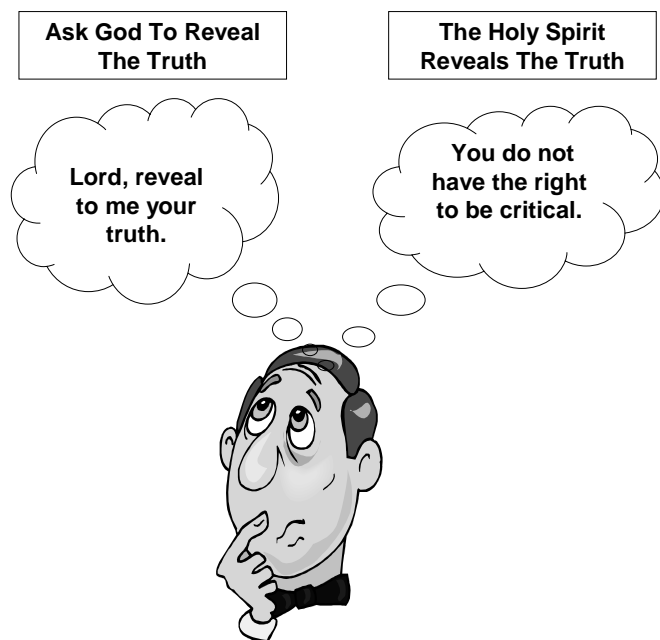


Important to Remember: The Spirit will always be revealing to you the origin of your thoughts whether you ask or not. The question is, “Will you be tuned into the Spirit enough to hear what He is saying?”

Engaging God: Begin asking God to reveal to you the origin of your thoughts.

Ask God to REVEAL the truth concerning your thoughts.

Since one of the responsibilities of the Holy Spirit is to reveal to you the truth, ask God to reveal to you what the truth is concerning the thoughts that you are having. Continuing to use our previous analogy, we see in the next diagram that when you ask God to reveal the truth, the Holy Spirit reveals that you do not have the right to be critical:



Engaging God: Begin asking God to reveal to you what is the truth concerning your thoughts.

How Lying Beliefs Are Formed

We have previously discussed that repeated negative or positive messages from parents, siblings, friends, teachers, etc. lead us to form lying beliefs about ourselves, God, and living the Christian life. Let's explore how a lying belief system starts with a thought and results in a full blown lying belief. To show how lying beliefs are formed, I will use one negative flesh thought of unacceptability and one positive flesh thought of self-sufficiency to illustrate:

I THINK THAT I AM unacceptable or self-sufficient.

Because **I THINK** this way,

I ACT as if **I AM** unacceptable or self-sufficient.

Because **I THINK** and **ACT** this way,

I BELIEVE that I am not acceptable or that I am self-sufficient.

Your belief system is formed when you go from **thought** to **action** and finally to **belief**. As you reinforce those lying beliefs, the words in Ephesians 4:14 become a reality:

*"Then we will no longer be like children, forever, changing our minds about what we believe because someone has told us something different or because **someone has cleverly lied to us and made the lie sound like the truth.**" Ephesians 4:14 (NLT)*

If you believe the lies long enough, they WILL become the truth to you.

Part Five

Renewing Of Your Mind To Believe The Truth

Introduction

*“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:2*

In addition to engaging God to deal with our thought life, we also want to engage Him to renew our minds. I believe that the beginning of freedom and victory for the Christian starts in the mind. The mind is the place of our beliefs. The question is, “Is what you believe the truth, or is it a lie?” You have heard me say it many times, but for the sake of this lesson it is worth repeating.

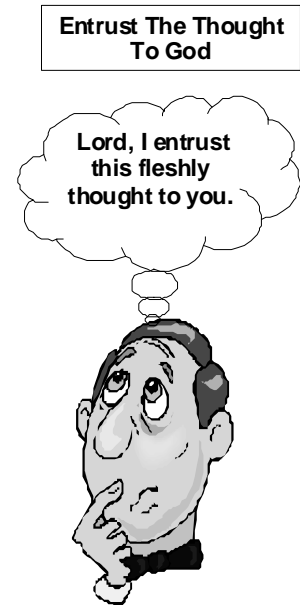
You will not live beyond what you believe. If what you believe is a lie, then you will be making choices to live from your lying beliefs.

Unfortunately the choices that we make from our lying beliefs about God, ourselves, and living the Christian life take us back to our flesh to try to live life independently of God. For us to make choices based on the truth, God must first renew our mind to the truth. In this lesson we are going to focus on God’s process of renewing our minds to believe His truth. Remember that a lying belief is any belief that contradicts God’s truth.

ENTRUST Your Fleshly Thoughts To God.

*“**Throw all your worry on Him, because He cares for you.**”
1 Peter 5:7 (ISV)*

Once the Spirit has revealed to you the truth of the thought, He wants you to entrust that thought to Him by faith. **Entrustment means that you give God the ownership of that thought.** If you don’t entrust that lying/fleshly thought to God, the temptation is to continue thinking this thought until you take ownership of the thought and let that thought cause you to sin.



This is why you can’t waste time with your fleshly or lying thoughts. It is crucial that you entrust them to God immediately. That is why Peter says in 1 Peter 5:7 to “throw all your worry on Him.” Throw your temptations, your lies, and your condemnation on Him. If you do throw it on Him, where does that leave you? Could it be that if you have really entrusted it to Him, you can then experience His peace and rest? Think about it!

Engaging God: As God reveals the truth about your thoughts, learn to entrust those fleshly and lying thoughts to God.

Other Key Truths To Remember Concerning Your Thought Life

In Christ's power, REFUSE to take ownership of that thought.

*“do **not** let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.” Romans 6:12*

Many Christians believe they have to take ownership of all their thoughts. The truth is that you can refuse to take ownership of any thought that is not of God. In Christ's power, you have His power to say **NO** to any sinful, fleshly thought. As someone once said, “If a fleshly or lying thought comes through the front door of your mind, simply open the back door and let it out.”

The problem is that you have been AUTOMATICALLY taking ownership of the recurring fleshly, lying thoughts, and it is easy to continue taking ownership.

Engaging God: Ask God to reveal to you some of the fleshly, lying, or condemning thoughts that you automatically take ownership of without presenting them to God for Him to tell you whether they are true or not. As He reveals those thoughts, draw on His power to say “NO” to these thoughts.

For example, “Lord, You have revealed to me that I have recurring fearful thoughts. I am asking You to BE my power to say “No” to these thoughts and to not continue taking ownership of these fearful thoughts.”

then not go. The truth is that we never heard God's voice concerning whether or not He wanted us to go. We realized that the greater issue other than hearing from God was to learn how to walk by faith.

The key to hearing from God is to take steps of faith UNTIL you do hear from Him or to CONTINUE to walk by faith if you don't hear from Him.

One option is that you decide to take matters into your “fleshly” hands and step out and do something independently of God. Secondly, you continue waiting to hear from God. Thirdly, you step out on faith and move in a direction that you believe is the right one. The key to this option is to continue listening as you walk by faith in the direction that you think is right. You then continue to be open to a change of direction from the Spirit as you move forward.

An analogy might be to imagine yourself being in a sailboat. The Holy Spirit is the wind that moves the sails and is also the spiritual rudder that moves you in the direction that He desires. Your part is to let the Spirit be your “divine” energy and to guide you. The temptation will be to take control of the rudder. This is where you get into trouble. You feel that God is not answering soon enough or does not care, so Satan or the flesh says, “Grab the rudder and steer in the direction that you want.” However, if you keep your hands off of the rudder and keep walking by faith, then you are depending on the Spirit to guide you.

We believe that we need to always be hearing from God in order to know His direction, will, and purpose. However, many times you may not hear from God because He is simply wanting you to walk by faith and know by faith that He will redirect your steps if necessary. What God is teaching us when we don’t hear from Him is faith.

Let me give you an example. My wife and I were asked by a mission director to go to Ecuador to minister to missionaries there. We both started seeking the Lord, but we did not receive a “yes” or “no” answer. We continued to walk by faith and yet still did not hear from God. On the last day to buy the discount tickets we had still not heard from the Lord, but we bought the tickets with an attitude of dependence. We told the Lord that even though we bought the tickets that He could say “No” prior to the plane departing, and we would

When You Are Tempted To Live In The Future Or In The Past, FIX Your Eyes On Him In The Present Moment.

“fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith...” Hebrews 12:2

Most Christians live in the “what ifs” of the future or the “if onlys” of the past. “**What if** I don’t get this promotion? **If only** I had made a different decision, things would be different today.” I believe that if you were to take a daily inventory of your thoughts, you would find yourself amazed at how many of those thoughts focus on the “what ifs” or the “if onlys.” Dwelling on the past or the future can produce fleshly thoughts of anger, anxiety, regrets, insecurity, etc. It also robs you of the peace, rest, and joy that you have in Christ in the present moment.

The truth is that you cannot afford to live in the past or in the present. Why? It is because that you do not have the God of “I will be” or the God of “I was.” Your God is the God of the “I AM.” In other words, God does not want you to squander the present life, peace, and rest for anxious, worrisome, condemning, and guilty thoughts of the future or the past.

As God renews your mind, you will see the futility (and waste of time) to live from the “what ifs” or the “if onlys” in life.

Engaging God: Ask God to reveal the “what ifs” or the “if onlys” that your mind is dwelling upon. Entrust those thoughts to Him and ask Him to keep your eyes fixed on Him moment by moment.

For example: “Lord, reveal to me where I am focusing on the past or the future rather than on You. Move me to a place of willingness to not focus on the ‘what ifs’ or the ‘if onlys.’”

A Litmus Test For Whether or Not A Thought Is A CONDEMNING Thought

*“Therefore, there is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1*

*“and be found in him, not having a **righteousness** of my own that comes from the law, but that **which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.**” Philippians 3:9*

I know that many Christians experience self-condemning thoughts. These self-condemning thoughts usually arise when we sin, catch ourselves thinking in the flesh, or fail to measure up to what we think that God expects as to where we should be in our Christian walk. I find that many Christians spend more time in self-condemnation for these things than in the actual sin or the fleshly thinking that brought on the self-condemnation.

The key truth to remember is that our CONDEMNATION was COMPLETELY dealt with at the cross. You are NO longer condemned.

One of the most crucial verses to the Christian is Romans 8:1. Since you are in Christ, there is no more condemnation for you as a Christian. The truth is that according to Philippians 3:9, you are RIGHTEOUS. This means that you do not have to spend even a moment condemning yourself. God no longer condemns you, so why should you? If you are

Note: God may also speak audibly, but I find that extremely rare. I have never heard from God audibly, and most people may not during their lifetime.

The Key: Are You Listening?

I have noticed that the closer that I walk with God, the better my “spiritual” hearing becomes. Early on in my walk of faith I could not discern very well when the Spirit was speaking. However, as I continue my faith walk, His voice is clearer and clearer. The problem is that many folks are hoping that they hear from God even though they are not walking with Him by faith. The truth is that part of the spiritual benefit from walking by faith is that your spiritual hearing will improve, and you will discern more quickly the origin and the truth or the lie concerning your thoughts.

There are no SHORTCUTS when it comes to hearing God.

Only as you walk with Him continuously will His voice grow louder and clearer.

What Is Your Part When You Want To Hear From God, But You Don’t?

Christians many times share with me that they are truly seeking God for an answer to a specific request. They continue seeking God and are waiting on an answer, but they either can’t hear God, or He has not spoken. The question then becomes, “What do I do since I have not heard from God?” It is at this point that you have several options.

Part Four

Hearing From God

How Do We Hear From God?

The one question I hear very often is, “How do I hear from God?” The second question that is asked is, “How will I know that it is His voice?” These are very good questions, and I will attempt some short answers to these complex questions.

Through His Word

God speaks to us through various means. The foundation of how God speaks to us is through His Word. As we read and meditate on the truths of the bible, God reveals to us His truth. That revelation is one way that God speaks to us.

Through Your Thoughts

The Holy Spirit is working non-stop through your thoughts to reveal the origin of your thoughts and to let you know whether or not those thoughts are the truth or a lie. The Holy Spirit also convicts you when you end up taking ownership of a fleshly thought and commit sin(s) as a result. The Holy Spirit is also guiding and directing your life every moment.

Through People and Circumstances

God can use people and circumstances to reveal His will or His truth to you. Many times God has spoken through my wife and close friends to reveal to me if I am moving in God’s will and direction or if what I am thinking is from God or not. He also uses pastors and teachers to reveal His truth as they preach and teach from His Word.

unsure whether or not you are experiencing self-condemning thoughts, add the words “in Christ” to your thoughts.

For example, the thought may be, “I am a failure,” or “I am unworthy.” This may sound like the truth to you. But when you say, “I am a failure in Christ,” or “I am unworthy in Christ,” you can readily see that this is a lie.

***Inserting the words “IN CHRIST” will expose
whether that thought is
from God or not.***

Engaging God: Ask God to reveal any thoughts that you have that might be self-condemning. Use the words “in Christ” with some of your thoughts to expose whether they are condemning or not. As these self-condemning thoughts come to mind, ask God to remind you and to renew your mind to the truth that “there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

Part Three

Satanic Influence On Your Thought Life

Dealing With Satan and His Demonic Forces

“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” 1 Peter 5:8

We see in 2 Corinthians 12:7 that Satan can bring his demons against our soul. This is what happened to Paul when Satan sent him a demon (messenger of Satan) to torment him:

“To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.” 2 Corinthians 12:7

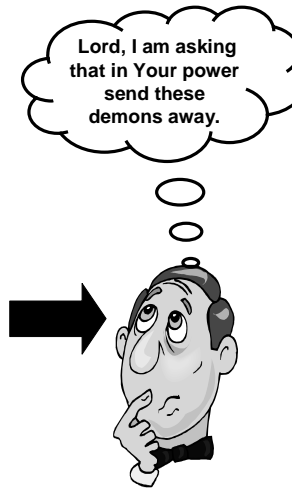
KEY TRUTH

Satan and his demons CANNOT INDWELL you as a Christian. Because you are in union with God, Satan and his demons can now only try to INFLUENCE your soul, but they cannot indwell it.

Satan and his demons can come against Christians to:

- Distract from or destroy their faith walk with God.
- Keep them in bondage to their lying beliefs.
- Keep them turning back to themselves to be the source for life.

When Oppressed By A Demonic Attack Draw On God's Power To Send The Demons Away

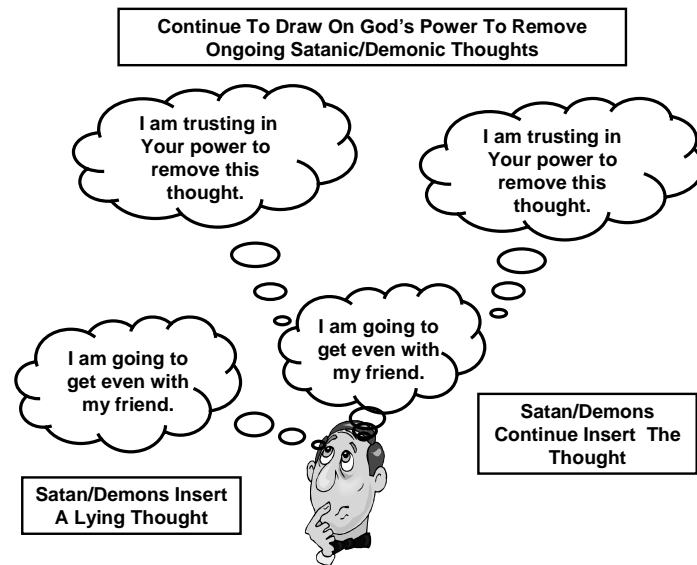


Summary

There is so much more that we can say about Satan and his demonic forces. However, the key truth in this part of the study is that you are defenseless against these enemies of your soul. They are working non-stop to stir up your soul. They first want you to take ownership of their thoughts and use them to cause you to sin. Then they will bring condemning thoughts so that you will condemn yourself for sinning.

one to resist Satan. You are powerless to do that in your own strength.

It may take some time before Satan FINALLY gives up, so continue to seek God to REMOVE any Satanic/demonic thoughts.



When you sense that you are under DEMONIC attack, seek God and His power to send those demons away who may be OPPRESSING you.

There will be times in your faith walk that you will experience non-stop oppression by demons. It will feel like an all-out attack on your mind. You cannot keep them from influencing your mind in your own strength. Therefore, ask God to use His power to remove the demonic influence that is oppressing you.

- **Continually drawing them back to self to try and deal with their problems independent of God.**

I have said it before, but we truly need to understand that Satan and his forces are plotting to steal, kill, and destroy our walk with God. I believe that there is an “unholy” trinity of Satan/demons, flesh, and the power of sin that work together to keep us from walking by faith and from experiencing the renewing of our mind to believe God’s truth.

A key truth to remember is that, even WITHOUT Satan’s influence, the FLESH and the POWER OF SIN can tempt you and draw you into sin.

When you insert Satan and his demons into the mix, you now have powerful enemies who will collaborate with your flesh and the power of sin to keep you focused on yourself as the source for living life. Let’s explore Satan’s strategy concerning your thought life.

Satan/Demon’s Strategy Part One - INSERTION Of Their Thoughts Into Your Mind.

It is important to remember that Satan and his demonic forces know your past history. They know your strengths and weaknesses. They know intimately your flesh patterns and the strength of those flesh patterns. Therefore, they can strategize on how best to keep you focused on yourself and will use your flesh patterns against you and draw you into sin.

As we studied earlier, their strategy focuses on your thought life. Therefore, part of their strategy is to insert

fleshly, lying, condemning, and tempting thoughts. The key truth to remember concerning Satan and your thought life is:

When Satan/demons insert thoughts into your mind, they will always come in FIRST person.

Read Matthew 16: 21-23 below to see a perfect biblical example of Satan's strategy to insert thoughts into our minds:

"From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 'Never, Lord! he said. 'This shall never happen to you!'" Matthew 16:21-22

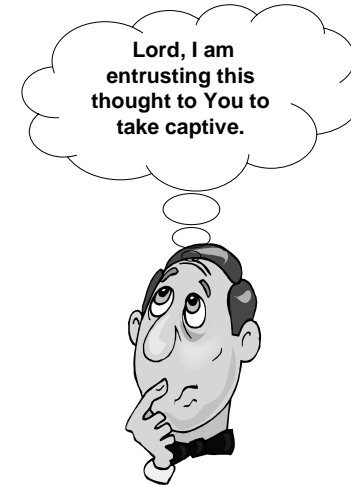
"But He (Jesus) turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's.'" Matthew 16:23 (Parenthesis mine)

. When Peter responded to what Jesus had told His disciples about His death and resurrection, Jesus's response was, "Get behind Me, Satan." Jesus knew who was behind the thoughts that were verbalized by Peter. He knew that Satan had introduced that thought because He did not address Peter.

Rather, He addressed Satan. Since Satanic/demonic thoughts come in the form of first person, then it can be extremely difficult (if not impossible) for us to discern whether or not our thoughts are our own or whether they are from Satan himself.

those Satanic/demonic thoughts. It means that you are handing them over to God for Him to take captive.

Entrust The Satanic/Demonic Thoughts To God For Him To Take Captive

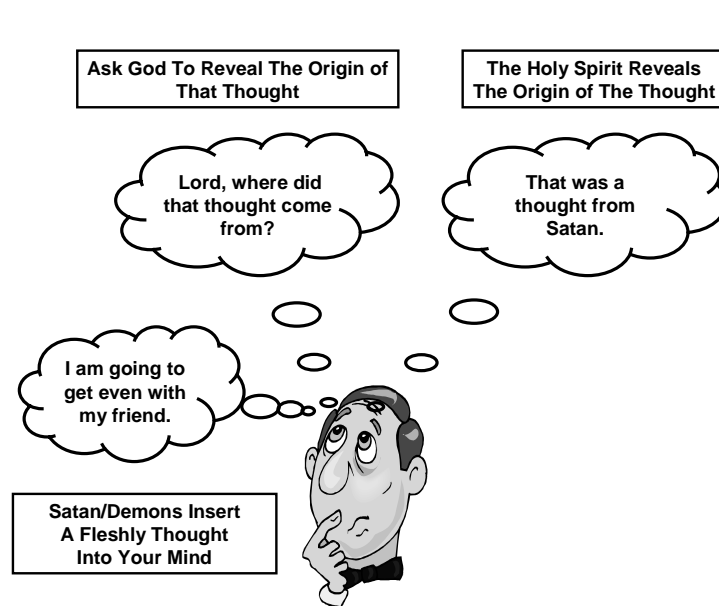


If the thoughts keep coming, keep drawing on God's POWER to remove those thoughts.

"Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7

Many times Satan will not just insert a thought only once . He may continue to insert the same thought over and over again in order to wear your faith down to a place where you will finally take ownership of that thought and give in to sin. Therefore, you must persist in drawing on God's power to remove those thoughts. In James 4:7 you can see that you must submit your thoughts to God, and God will resist Satan/demons through you. Apart from God you are not the

thought. Listen closely to what the Holy Spirit reveals to you. Below is an illustration of what this might look like:



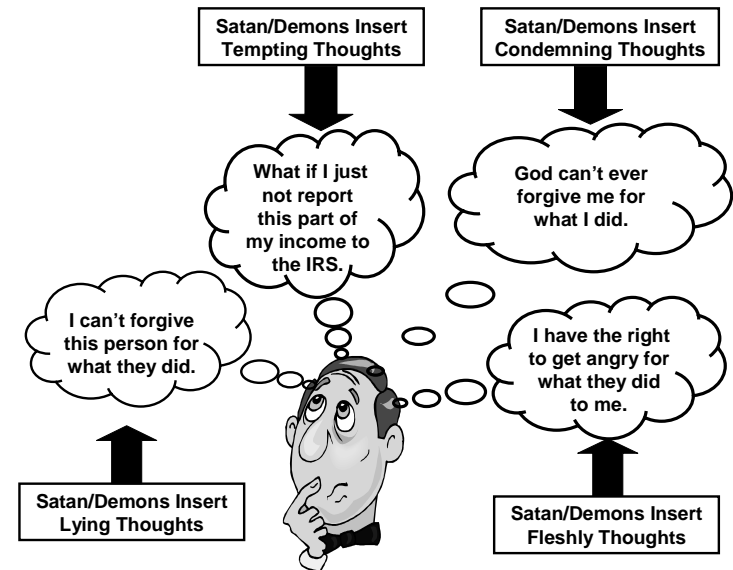
Meditate: on the truth that if you continue to walk by faith, you will be fully protected from Satan/demons by the armor of God.

Engaging God: Seek God to give you a greater desire to walk in His armor so that you will be able to withstand the fiery darts of the enemy.

Ask God to take CAPTIVE the Satanic/Demonic thoughts.

Once the Holy Spirit reveals to you that the thoughts are coming from Satan/demons, then entrust those thoughts to Him for Him to take captive. Remember that entrusting the thoughts to God means that you are not taking ownership of

Look at the illustration below of some of the types of thoughts that Satan/demons can insert in your mind:



Another scheme of the enemy is to insert thoughts to blame God such as, “God is the one responsible for why you are in this mess. He is the cause of all this pain.” If you take ownership for these thoughts, then you will be blaming God instead of realizing that Satan was the origin of those thoughts.

Questions: What are some recurring lying, tempting, self-condemning, and fleshly thoughts that you might be experiencing? Is it possible that those thoughts are from Satan and are not coming from you?

Meditate: on the truth that every thought that you have is not from you and that Satan and his demonic forces want to use your mind to keep you in bondage to your lying beliefs.

Engaging God: Begin asking God to expose any lying, tempting, condemning, or fleshly thoughts that you are having that may be coming from Satan/demons.

Satan's/Demon's Strategy Part Two - DECEPTION

*“But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”
2 Corinthians 11:3*

“And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.” 2 Corinthians 11:14

Satan's objective is to insert these first person thoughts into your mind and hope that you will take ownership of them by believing that they are your own thoughts. This is the great deception of Satan. This is where that He is most dangerous. Why? If you take ownership of Satan's/demon's thoughts, they then can keep you in bondage to your lying beliefs and further draw you into false conclusions.

For example, Satan or his demons might insert first person condemning thoughts such as, “Why can't I attain victory over my sin problem? I keep getting defeated over and over again. I must be doing something wrong.” If you stay focused on these Satanic/demonic thoughts, then they might deceive you further by tempting you to come to false conclusions such as, “God is not really working in my life.

He must really not want me to change. I think that I am going to give up on God.” If you take ownership of these thoughts and act on those thoughts, then you will conclude that you need to go back to the flesh and take control because God is not going to come through for you.

you walk dependently upon God, you have the full protection of His armor against Satan, his demons, your flesh, and the power of sin. However, every time that you choose to live independently of God, it is as if you have taken His armor off.

Now it is up to YOU to protect yourself against all your internal and external enemies. You might as well have your hands tied behind your back because you are defenseless against all of these enemies. Therefore, it is crucial that you continue to walk by faith so that the armor of God will continually protect you from the “fiery darts” of the enemy.

*“above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”
Ephesians 6:16*

Meditate: on the truth that if you continue to walk by faith, you will be fully protected from Satan/demons by the armor of God.

Engaging God: Seek God to give you a greater desire to walk in His armor so that you will be able to withstand the fiery darts of the enemy.

Ask God to REVEAL to you if the thoughts that you are thinking are of Satan/demons.

“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God.” 1 John 4:1

Let's assume that you have a thought to get even with a friend who rejected you. Let's also assume that this thought came from Satan. It might sound like, “I can't believe that my friend said that to me. I can't let this go. I am going to have to get even with this person.” Before you act on that thought, ask God to tell you who was the origin of that

and destroy by the splendor of his coming.” 2 Thessalonians 2:8 (Parenthesis mine)

Since you are fighting an unseen enemy, you can't possibly fight Satan and his demonic forces. Therefore, do not talk to Satan or his demons. That is God's job. Your part is to engage God and His power to deal with these enemies.

Truth #3 - Satan and his demons are powerless when we walk in God's POWER.

“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He (Jesus) might render powerless him (Satan) who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Hebrews 2:14 (Parentheses mine)

As we walk by faith, we are walking in God's power over Satan/demons. This is another key reason why it is so critical to walk by faith. Satan is a “toothless” lion when we depend upon, rest upon, and draw upon God's power.

Meditate: on the passages above and other passages in the bible that refer to Satan.

Engaging God: Seek God to give you greater revelation of the truth concerning Satan and his demons.

Truth #4 - Now that you are in union with God, you have His full protection (armor).

“Put on the full armor of God so that you (in God's power) can take your stand against the devil's schemes.” Ephesians 6:11 (Parenthesis mine)

Imagine yourself clothed in impenetrable armor. Nothing can penetrate this armor because it is the armor of God. As

DECEPTION is the key strategy of Satan and his demons.

They constantly try to deceive you by making you believe that your OWN mind is the origin of THEIR thoughts.

Question: Are there recurring thoughts that you continue to take ownership of that continually take you to sin?

Engaging God: Ask God to expose those thoughts and the lying beliefs that those thoughts are tied to.

Satan's Strategy Part Three – Persuading You To DOUBT God

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” Genesis 3:1

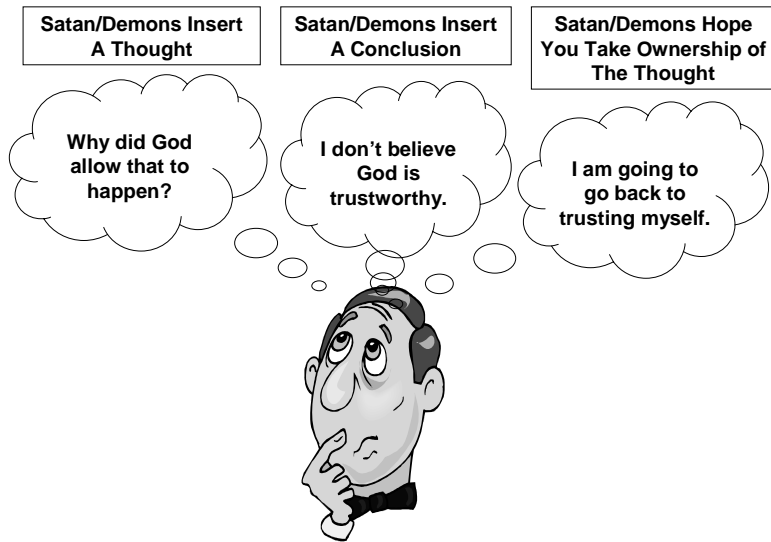
*“When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, **she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.**” Genesis 3:6*

Satan/demons hate God. They rebelled against God early on, and they know that their eventual eternal destiny is hell. Their primary objective is to do everything in their power to keep mankind from being saved. Their strategy in your life does not stop even after you are saved.

Their objective now is to create havoc in your soul by persuading you to doubt God, His love, His power, His goodness, and His desire for your transformation, etc. Satan

knows that if he can just create one ounce of doubt, you will be tempted to turn back to your flesh to live life in your own self-effort.

For example, let's assume that you lose a close friend to a freak accident. Look at the illustration below and see how Satan might use this to create doubt in your mind and to turn you back to the flesh:



Question: In what areas of your life are you doubting God's love, grace, mercy, goodness, ability, and His desire to transform your life?

Engaging God: Ask God to expose whether or not the thoughts behind your doubts are coming from Satan/demons.

How Do We Engage God To Deal With Satan and His Demons?

LEARN the truth about Satan from God's Word.

There are four key truths that we need to learn about Satan:

Truth #1 - Learn the SCHEMES and STRATEGIES of Satan and his demons.

"The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy...."
John 10:10a

"lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his schemes."
2 Corinthians 2:11

We have already discussed several of Satan's strategies. The key is spiritual **vigilance**. I simply define spiritual vigilance as staying spiritually aware and sensitive to the Holy Spirit's revelation to you of Satan's schemes. Satan wants to steal the rest, joy, and peace that you have in Christ, kill your momentum of walking by faith, and to destroy your desire and willingness to continue depending upon God.

Another ongoing scheme of the enemy is to persuade you that God is the source of your problem when it really was Satan, not God, that was the source. Ultimately, Satan's main objective is to keep you focused on yourself as the source to live life.

Truth #2 - You, in your own power, are POWERLESS to fight Satan and his demons.

"And then the lawless one (Satan) will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth