

The Battle Of The Mind

Bill Loveless

Christ Is Life Ministries

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The Battle Of The Mind

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Lesson One

The Renewing Of Your Mind

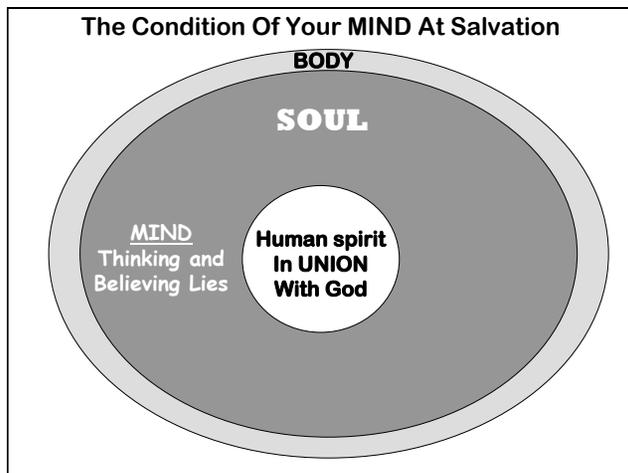
Introduction

“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

I believe that the key to transformation of the soul is the renewing of the mind. The reason is as follows:

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.

The problem is that at salvation we all had lying beliefs about God, ourselves, and living the Christian life. The diagram below illustrates the condition of the mind at salvation:



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 will go to our website www.christislifeministries.com and look under the **Store** section. The next booklet I would recommend you read is called *Living Life From A New Source*. You can either purchase this 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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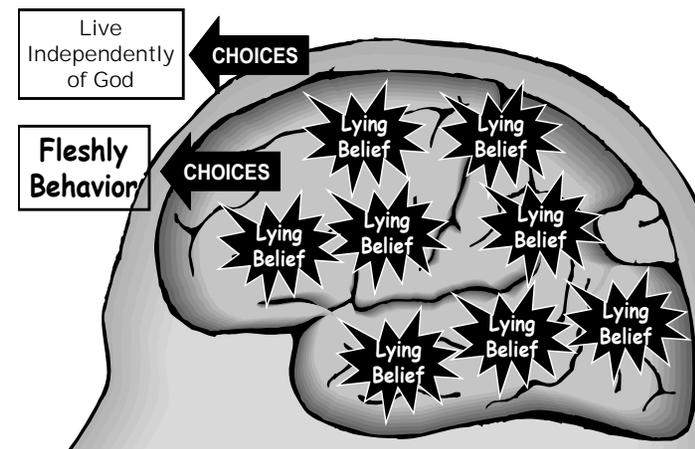
but we bought the tickets with an attitude of dependence. We told the Lord that even though we bought the tickets that He could say “No” prior to the plane departing, and we would then not go. The truth is that we never heard God’s voice concerning whether or not He wanted us to go. We realized that the greater issue other than hearing from God was to learn how to walk by faith.

Summary

Live Independently of God
I hope this study has given you further understanding of the battle that is ongoing in our minds. Without the power of the Holy Spirit doing battle for us, we cannot win. However, as we learn to engage Him to do battle for us then we will experience a supernatural work by the Spirit to discern, expose, and take our thoughts captive. The result will be a renewed mind and a transformed life.

The choices that we tend to make from our lying beliefs are choices that result in fleshly behaviors as well as choices to try to make life work independently of God. Remember that a lying belief is any belief that contradicts God’s truth. The next diagram illustrates this. (I am using the brain in the diagram as an illustration of the mind even though they are different from one another.)

Choices Are Made From Your Lying Beliefs



For us to make choices based upon the truth, God must first renew our minds by replacing our lying beliefs with His truth. In this lesson we are going to focus on God’s process of renewing our minds to believe His truth.

What Is God’s Objective Concerning Your Lying Beliefs?

“and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:32

God's objective and promise is to set you free from your lying beliefs. "Know" in this verse does not mean an intellectual understanding. "Know" is translated to have revelation of and to believe the truth. Part of believing the truth is to take steps of faith, trust God to renew your mind, and let Him set you free from your lying beliefs.

God's process of renewing your mind and setting you free looks like the following:

- * **LEARN the truth.**
- * **Receive REVELATION about the truth from the Spirit.**
- * **BELIEVE in the truth.**
- * **CHOOSE to walk by FAITH in the truth.**

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal to you the areas where you have learned the truth but do not really believe the truth. In those areas, seek Him to give you personal revelation and a desire to believe the truth.

A Lying Belief Begins With One Thought.

A key truth to understand in the formation of lying beliefs is that they began with one thought. They were followed by additional thoughts that over time were reinforced. Much like building a brick wall, each brick laid represents a thought that is being laid on top of another thought. As we take ownership of the lying thoughts, they become reinforced and will eventually form lying beliefs. The diagram below illustrates this process:

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 living 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,

or not. He also uses pastors and teachers to reveal His truth as they preach and teach from His Word.

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.

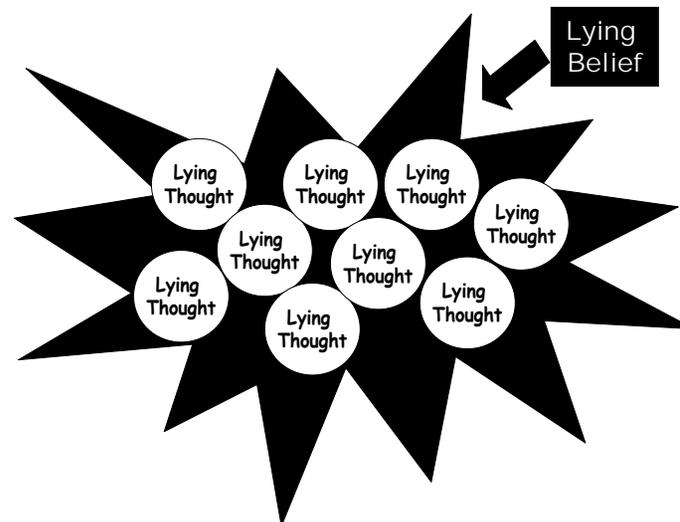
The problem is that many folks are hoping that they hear from God even though they are not walking with Him by faith. The truth is that part of the spiritual benefit from walking by faith is that your spiritual hearing will improve, and you will discern more quickly the origin and the truth or the lie concerning your thoughts.

There are no SHORTCUTS when it comes to hearing God. Only as you walk with Him consistently 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.

Lying Beliefs Are Formed Through Lying Thoughts



Engaging God: Seek the Lord to reveal to you how your recurring lying thoughts are reinforcing your lying beliefs.

How Lying Beliefs Are Formed

We have previously discussed that repeated negative or positive messages from parents, siblings, friends, teachers, etc. help us 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, let's assume that you were raised in an environment where you experienced mostly rejection from your parents. The process of forming a lying belief starts with your thinking.

I THINK THAT I AM rejected.

Lesson Six

Hearing From God

Because **I THINK** this way,

I ACT as if **I AM** rejected.

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

I BELIEVE that I am rejected.

Your belief system is formed when you go from **thought** to **action** and finally to **belief**. As you reinforce 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.

The longer that you continue believing the lies, the more reinforced those lying beliefs become and the more they become the truth to you.. Before we discuss how to engage God to renew our minds to the truth, let's gain an understanding of some of the truths concerning our lying beliefs.

Lying Beliefs Have Varying Strengths

Every lying belief is different in terms of the strength of its grip on your mind. Let me use the following diagram to illustrate the point. In the diagram this person's strongest lying belief is anger, which is 90 on a

How Do We Hear From God?

The one question that 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

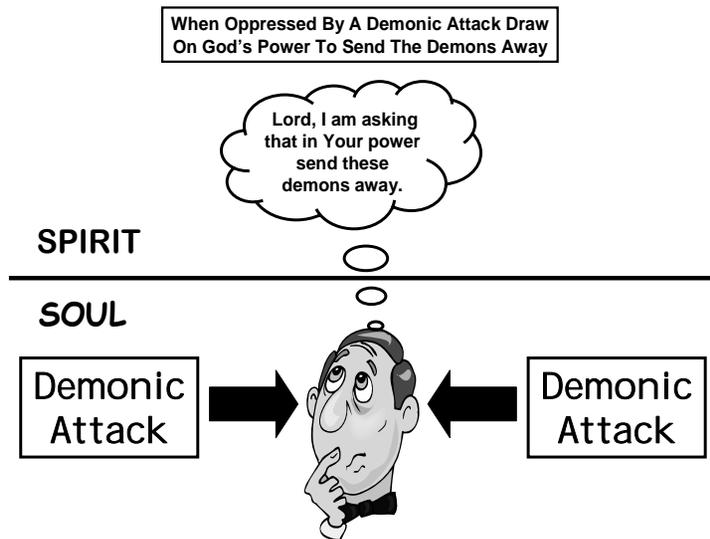
God speaks to us through various means. The foundation of how God speaks to us is through His Word. As we read and meditate on the truths of the bible, God reveals to us His truth. That revelation is one way that God speaks to us.

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. He 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

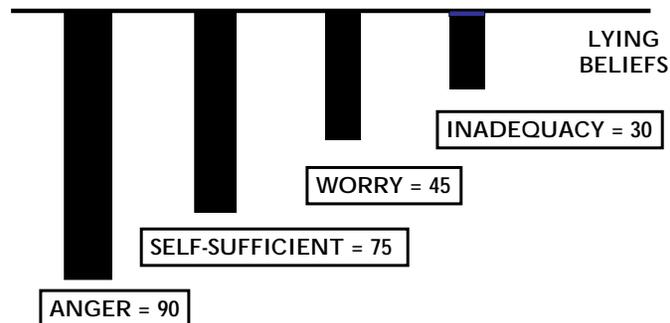


Summary

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 Satan/demons apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. However, as you engage God, the Holy Spirit will expose the thoughts that are from Satan/demons and will take those thoughts captive.

scale of 1-100. Inadequacy is the weakest lying belief at 30. The key point is that not all lying beliefs are equal. What I have found in my own life is that my strongest lying belief (i.e., stronghold) is tied to certain flesh patterns which have been reinforced by my thinking.

Lying Beliefs Have Different Degrees Of Strength



Question: Why do you think that it is important to understand that some of your lying beliefs are stronger than others?

Engaging God: Seek God to reveal to you which of your lying beliefs have a stronger hold on you.

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

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. Look at what 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 use His truth and will set you free.

God's Process of Renewing Your Mind

1. Learn God's TRUTH.

“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

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.

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

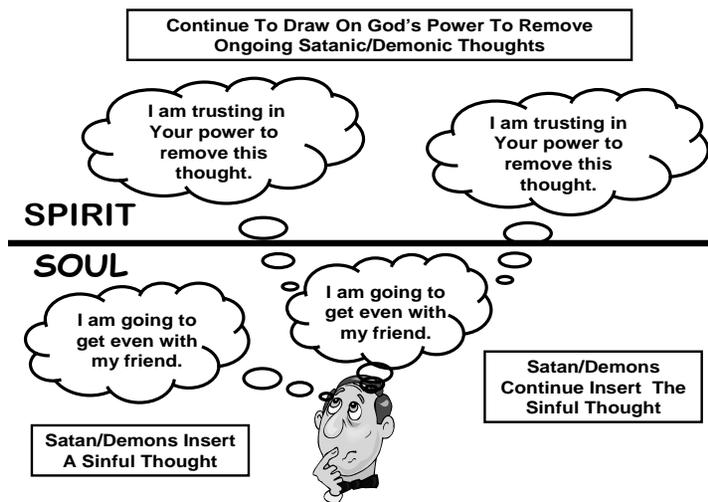
There will be times in your faith walk that you will experience ongoing oppression by Satan or demons. It will feel like an all-out attack on your mind. You cannot keep them from influencing your mind in your own strength. Therefore, ask God to use His power to remove the Satanic/demonic influence that is oppressing you. Here again you may have to fight the fight of faith by continually asking God to remove the oppression. During a demonic attack, the demons will not usually give up after only one attack. This is especially true in areas of your reinforced lying beliefs and sin strongholds. This is illustrated in the next diagram.

Using “The Line” analogy, let's assume that you come under demonic attack. Immediately seek God in His power to send the demons away. This may have to be repeated several times depending upon the severity of the attack. The key is to continue seeking God in His power to remove the demonic influence until the attack is over.

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.

The diagram on the following page uses “The Line” analogy to show how we continue to draw on God’s power to deal with Satanic/demonic thoughts. Reading from left to right, you first have Satan/demons inserting a fleshly thought in your mind below “The Line.” If you go above “The Line” and engage God’s power, then you entrust the thought to Him. However, the enemy may come at you again with the same sinful thought below “The Line.” You then must go above “The Line” and once again seek God’s power to remove that thought. This process may have to go on and on until the enemy quits attacking you with those thoughts.



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

2. 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 spend time meditating 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.

3. Begin taking STEPS of FAITH.

“for we walk by faith and not by sight.” 2 Corinthians 5:7

“...seek and you will find...” Matthew 7:7

Without seeking God by faith no real change will take place. Therefore, begin taking steps of faith. A step of faith might look like the following:

“Lord, I am asking You to renew my mind to the truth that I am not an angry person.”

Remember that it is a walk of faith. As you continue to seek God to renew your mind, He will begin to replace the lies with His truth.

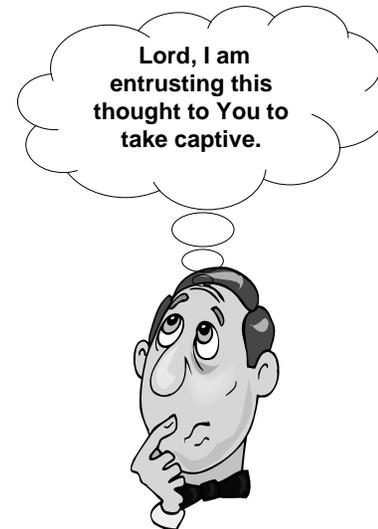
Engaging God: Begin seeking God to renew your mind concerning one or more of your lying beliefs.

4. As you begin to take steps of faith and seek God to renew your mind, He begins to replace your lying beliefs with His truth.

This process takes place one thought at a time. As He replaces the lying thoughts with His truth, the lying belief decreases in strength and influence in your thinking and choices. Let's use the same illustration that we used for the varying strengths of lying beliefs. In that diagram, anger had a strength of 90, self-sufficiency was a 75, worry was a 45, and inadequacy was a 30.

As you seek God to renew your mind and to set you free from your lying beliefs of anger, self-sufficiency, worry, and inadequacy, you will see that as you continue to walk by faith the strength of these lying beliefs will decrease. In the next illustration, anger has gone from a strength of 90 to a strength of 70.

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

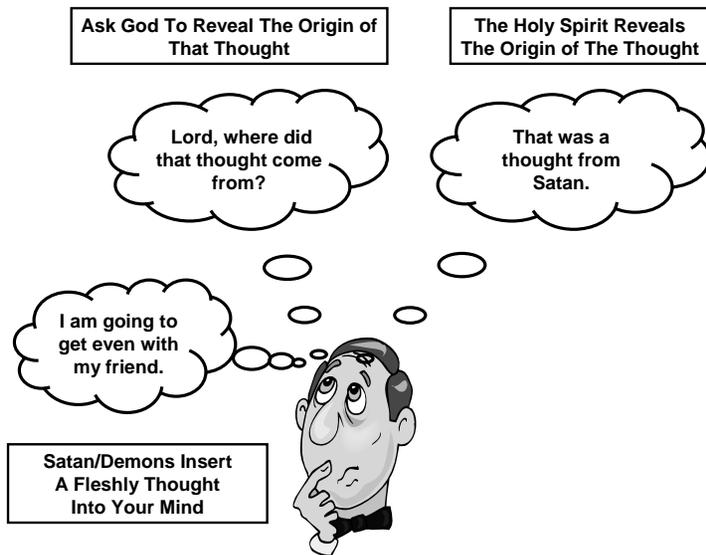


4. If the thoughts keep coming, KEEP drawing on God's POWER to remove those thoughts.

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

Many times Satan will not 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 upon God's power to remove those thoughts.

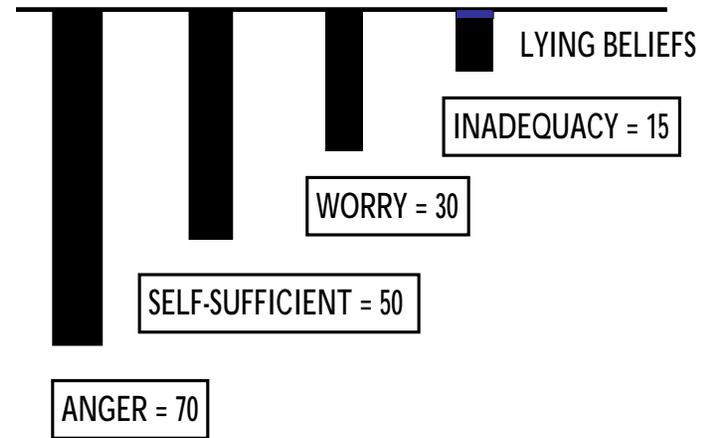
In James 4:7 you can see that you must submit your thoughts to God, and God will resist Satan/demons through you. Apart from God you are not the one to



Engaging God: Develop a habit of asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the origin of your thoughts. Ask Him to expose those thoughts that are coming from Satan/demons.

3. ENTRUST The Satanic/Demonic thoughts to God, and ask the Holy Spirit to take those thoughts captive.

Once the Holy Spirit reveals to you that the thoughts are coming from Satan/demons, 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 those Satanic/demonic thoughts. It means that you are handing them over to God for Him to take captive.



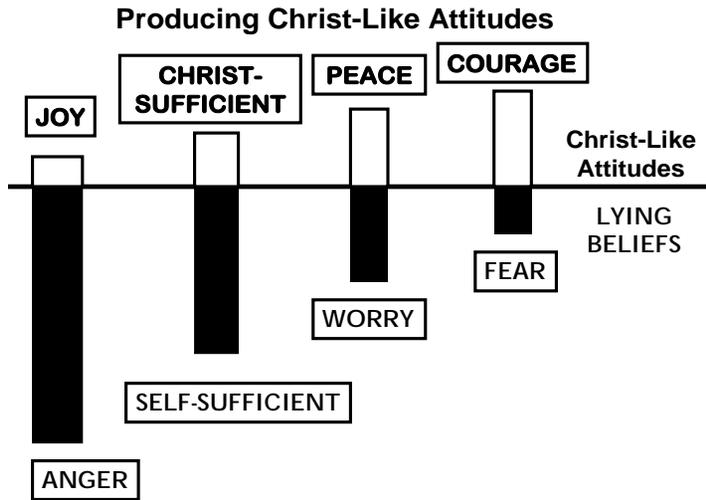
If you continue seeking God to renew your mind with His truth, you will begin to experience a DECREASE in the influence that your lying beliefs have over you.

Question: Why is it important to know that as you walk by faith God is decreasing the strength of your lying beliefs? How might it begin impacting the choices that you make if your lying beliefs have less influence in your life?

Engaging God: As you are seeking God to renew your mind, ask Him to reveal to you the decreasing strength or power that your lying beliefs are having over you.

5. As you continue to walk by faith, the Lord will begin to TRANSFORM your lying beliefs into Christ-like ATTITUDES.

The illustration below depicts this transformation. In addition to the lessening of the strength of your lying beliefs, Christ-like attitudes will begin replacing your lying beliefs.



We see in the previous diagram that anger is not only decreasing, but a Christ-like attitude of joy is also beginning to be produced. Therefore, know with confidence that your lying beliefs are being transformed into Christ-like attitudes.

As God renews your mind to the truth, Christ-like ATTITUDES replace your lying beliefs.

Engaging God: As you seek God to renew your mind, ask Him to give you an awareness of the Christ-like attitudes that He is producing as He replaces your lying beliefs with His truth.

6. PERSEVERE in your walk of faith.

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

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.

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

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.

c. 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.

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

d. 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 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

"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 process of renewing your mind 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.

Step of faith: "Lord, I succumbed to sin as a result of my lying belief. I repent of that sin, and I am continuing to walk in Your truth. I am asking You to be my perseverance as I continue to walk by faith."

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.

7. 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.

*"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 His 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.”

Step of faith: “Lord, even though I am not experiencing any change, I thank You and know by faith that you are renewing my mind and are setting me free.”

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 even though you may not yet be experiencing the results of your transformation.

Key Truths To Remember As Your Mind Is Being Renewed

1. ONLY God can renew your mind to the truth. You are not capable of renewing your own mind.
1. The renewing process begins as you take STEPS of faith in God’s ability to renew and transform your mind.
2. Remember that you, for the most part, won’t FEEL or EXPERIENCE God replacing the lying beliefs with His truth.

a. Be VIGILANT concerning the schemes and strategies of Satan/demons.

*“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*

*“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 in dealing with Satan’s strategies is **spiritual vigilance**. I simply define spiritual vigilance as staying spiritually aware and sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s revelation of Satan’s schemes. Satan wants to steal the rest, joy, and peace that we have in Christ, to kill our momentum of walking by faith, and to destroy our desire and willingness to continue depending upon God.

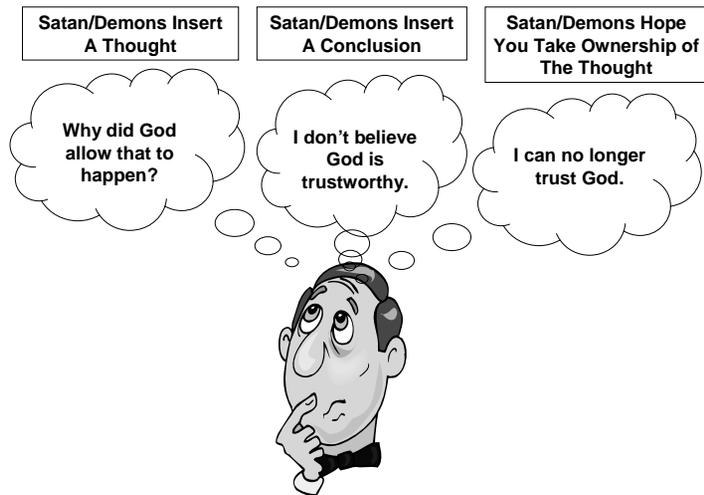
Another ongoing scheme of the enemy is to persuade you that God is the source of your problem when it really was Satan, not God, that was the source. Ultimately, Satan’s main objective is to keep you focused upon yourself as the source to live life.

b. We, in our 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 and destroy by the splendor of his coming.” 2 Thessalonians 2:8 (Parenthesis mine)*

Since we are fighting an unseen enemy, we can’t possibly fight Satan and his demonic forces. Therefore,

For example, let's assume that you lose a close friend through a freak accident. Look at the next illustration to see how Satan might use this to create doubt in your mind about God and to turn you away from trusting Him.



Satan/demons know that once you begin to doubt God, you will turn back to living from yourself as the source.

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?

1. LEARN the truth about Satan from God's Word.

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

3. However, during the renewing process you will find yourself living LESS and LESS out of your lying beliefs and the fleshly behaviors that they produce.
4. Your desire to live from your lying beliefs will DECREASE, and your desire to live from the truth (Christ-like attitudes) will INCREASE.
5. God's transformation process will produce a BATTLE in your mind.

Engaging God: Seek the Spirit to remind you of these truths as you walk by faith.

The last point concerning the battle of the mind is crucial to understand because there will be resistance to God's renewing process. We will be discussing the battle of the mind in the next lesson.

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 in to the feelings of fear which will reinforce the belief that I am a fearful person. Therefore, feelings wrapped around false beliefs can cause us to resist

God's renewal process. We will talk more about this in Lesson Five.

If your feelings are tied to your lying beliefs, your lying beliefs about yourself will be reinforced every time that you have those feelings.

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 blocks the life of Christ Who is the Source for change in your life. It may be unforgiveness toward one another or toward yourself. One of the enemy's strategies is to insert thoughts into 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.

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.

Engaging God: Ask God to reveal to you if Satan/demons are trying to deceive you concerning recurring fleshly or sinful thoughts.

Satan's/Demon'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.

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 with the 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 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 these 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.

3. Overwhelming Defeating Sin Patterns/ 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 they control what we think, feel, and believe. At one end of the scale, a flesh pattern is more of 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 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 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.

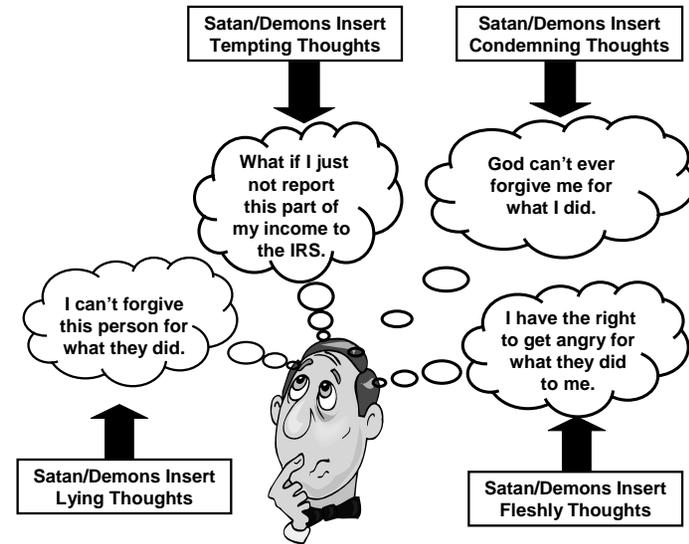
5. Impatience

“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 God's 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

can insert into your mind as well as what they might sound like in first person.



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

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/demons are capable of INSERTING fleshly, lying, condemning, and tempting thoughts into your mind.

“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 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. Jesus knew that Satan had introduced those thoughts 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.

The key truth to remember concerning Satan and your thought life is:

When Satan/demons insert thoughts into your mind, they will come in FIRST person and will sound a lot like your voice.

When Satan inserts thoughts into your mind, they will never be in third person. They will always come in first person (“I” or “me”) in order to persuade you that the thought originated with you. The diagram below reveals different types of thoughts that Satan/demons

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.

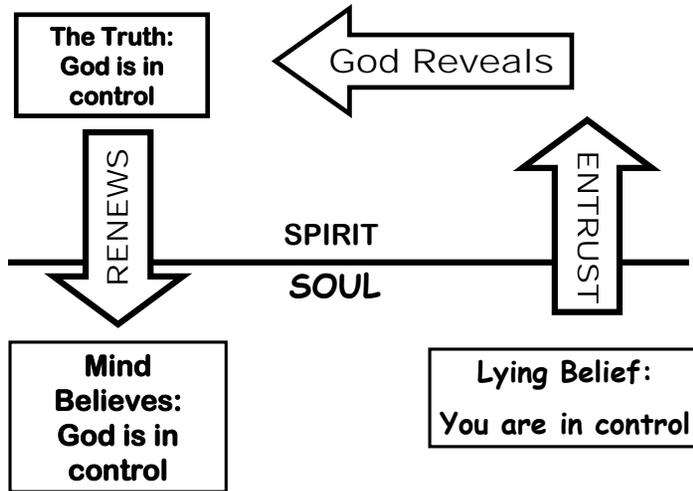
God’s Process of Renewing Your Mind and “The Line”

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

Renewing Your Mind To God's Truth



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

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

Paul gives us an amazing promise in 1 Corinthians 2:16. As we have discussed previously concerning your true identity, you possess the mind of Christ! What does it mean to have the mind of Christ? Having the mind of Christ means that you have available to you every moment the wisdom, discernment, understanding, and revelation that exists in Christ. As a result, you no longer have to depend upon your finite human mind. You can always rely on the mind of Christ.

As God continues to renew your mind to this truth, you will find yourself thinking more from the mind of Christ than from your finite mind. In other words, you will find yourself spending more time above “The Line” thinking with Christ’s wisdom, discernment,

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*

Satan's Strategy

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

We must remember that Satan’s strategy is three-fold: steal, kill, and destroy. Let’s look at some of the ways that Satan/demons implement this strategy.

Satan's/Demon's Strategy Part One - INSERTION Of Their Thoughts Into Our Minds

It is important to remember that Satan and his demonic forces know our past history. They know our strengths and weaknesses. They know intimately our flesh patterns and the strength of those flesh patterns. Therefore, they can strategize on how best to keep us focused on ourself and to use our flesh patterns against us to draw us into sin. Their strategy focuses on our thought life. Therefore, part of their strategy is to insert **fleshly, lying, condemning, and tempting thoughts** into our minds.

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

Satan and his demons can come against Christians by:

1. Distracting them from their faith walk with God.
2. Keeping them in bondage to their lying beliefs.
3. Keeping them in ongoing defeat concerning their defeating sin patterns.
4. Turning them back to themselves to be the source for life.
5. Persuading them to deal with their problems independently of God.
6. Moving them to a place of committing suicide.

This is why Christians must be very aware of the power and capability of Satan/demons. We do not have to fear their power, but we must be spiritually knowledgeable and vigilant concerning them.

Before we go any further in the study, I want to address the issue of the indwelling of Satan/demons versus the influence of Satan/demons in our lives.

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. They cannot indwell it.

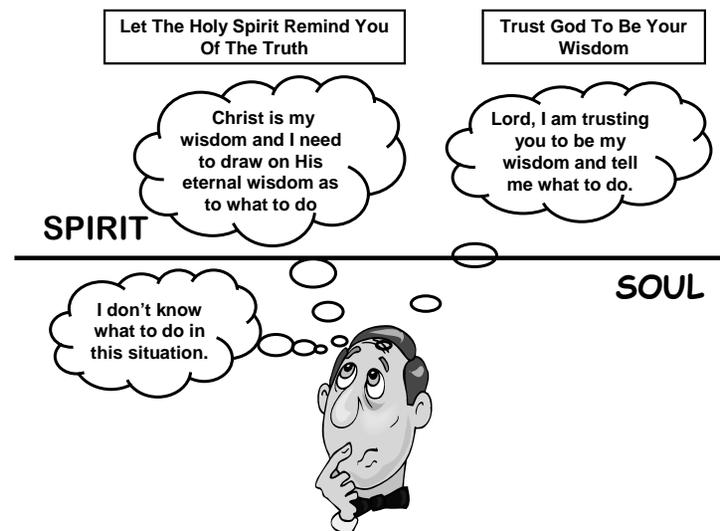
Mind of Christ

His wisdom
His discernment
His solution
His omniscience
His understanding
His will

Finite human mind

Your finite understanding, wisdom and intellect

Using “The Line” illustration, let’s assume that you are in a situation where you need God’s wisdom. Below “The Line” you come to the place in your mind where you need His wisdom. You then go above “The Line” and let the Holy Spirit remind you of the truth. You then ask Christ to BE your wisdom in this situation.



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 discern 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.

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.

Lesson Five

Satanic Influence On Your Thought Life

*"The god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."
2 Corinthians 4:4*

Introduction

We talked in Lesson Two about Satan and his demonic forces being enemies of our minds. I think that it would be profitable to spend a lesson focusing on the influence that Satan has on our minds and on how to engage God in spiritual warfare to deal with Satan and the demonic forces.

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

The word "devour" in 1 Peter 5:8 means "to destroy" in the original Greek. Think about this for a moment. Satan/demons are intentionally seeking to destroy Christians and non-Christians. Destruction for non-Christians means that Satan/demons will try to keep them from being saved at the very least and at the other extreme will try to get them to commit suicide. What are some examples of how Satan/demons can destroy Christians?

*“so then let us **not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober”***

If you do NOT enter into the battle, you have already LOST it!

Engaging God: Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the areas where you have not entered into and are not fighting the fight.

Summary

I hope that this lesson has been helpful in gaining a better understanding of what it means to engage the Holy Spirit to fight the battle for your mind. In the next lesson we will see how Satan influences our thought life.

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.

Lesson Two

The Battle Of The Mind

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?” If you do not think about what you are thinking, then you are subject to taking ownership of thoughts that come into your mind.

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, that has changed since you have become a Christian.

whether or not they are condemning. As these self-condemning thoughts come to mind, ask God to remind you and renew your mind to the truth that “there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

“Holy Habits”

Involving the Holy Spirit in our thought life is a process that must be learned. It is like learning to drive a standard transmission. Early on you had to be very focused on the connection between the brake, gas pedal, and the clutch. However, after a period of time you did it automatically. It is the same with your thought life.

At the beginning, it is important to be intentionally focused on engaging the Holy Spirit to reveal the origin and truth of a thought and to entrust those thoughts for the Spirit to take captive. However, as you develop a “holy habit” of doing this, it will come automatically.

Remember That There Are No PACIFISTS In This Battle.

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

There are no pacifists nor anyone sitting on the sidelines in this battle. Even though there may be Christians that are acting like conscientious objectors, you cannot afford to not fight this battle. That is why Paul exhorts Timothy to fight. If you do not enter into the battle, it means that you have already given up the battle. You must fight this fight in the Spirit with alertness and vigilance as it says in 1 Thessalonians 5:6:

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 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 or not the 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

As A Christian You Have Two “SPIRITUAL” Filters.

As a Christian you now have two “spiritual filters” you can use to discern whether the thoughts in your mind are truth or lies. Let’s look at those two filters.

Filter #1 - God’s Word

*“For the word of God is **living and active**. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it **judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.**” Hebrews 4:12*

One of the key reasons that we learn God’s Word is because it is a vital filter concerning our thought life. The word “judge” in Hebrews 4:12 means “to discern.” Therefore, as we learn God’s Word we are able to discern or filter our thoughts and determine whether or not that thought is a lie or the truth.

Filter #2 - The Holy Spirit

The second filter that God has given us is the Holy Spirit. One of the responsibilities of the Holy Spirit is to take the truth that we have learned and make it revelation to us.

*“but God has **revealed it to us by his Spirit**. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:10*

Revelation is simply the Holy Spirit’s process of taking you from **knowing** God’s truth (intellectual knowledge) to **believing** His truth. As the Spirit moves you from knowledge to revelation to belief, you will become better able to discern the origin of your thoughts as well as the truth of those thoughts.

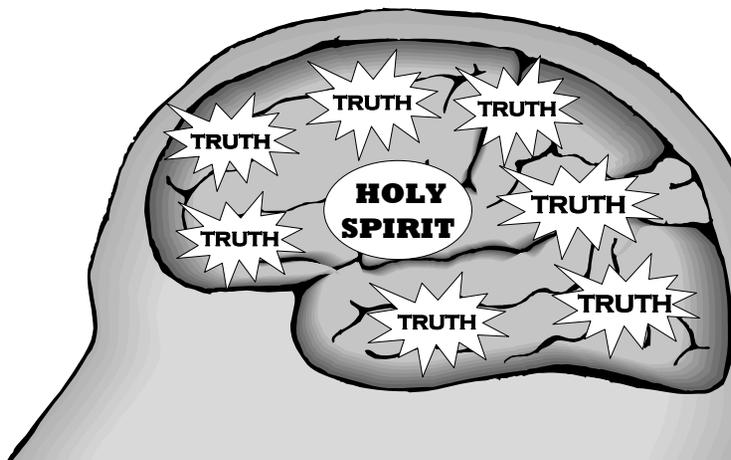
*“For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way **no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.**”¹² We have not received the spirit of the world but the **Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.**” 2 Corinthians 2:11, 12*

The Holy Spirit is not only the revealer of the truth, but He is also the **teacher** and the **reminder** of God’s truth.

*“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*

As you learn and believe biblical truth the Holy Spirit will bring that truth back to mind at critical points in your thought life. Through the two filters we have the ability to discern which thoughts are true and which thoughts are lies, which thoughts are from the world, the flesh, and Satan/demons, and which are from God. (The diagram below illustrates the divine filters of God’s truth and the Holy Spirit.)

Spiritual Filters



The truth is that you cannot afford to live in the past or in the future. 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.’”

3. 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*

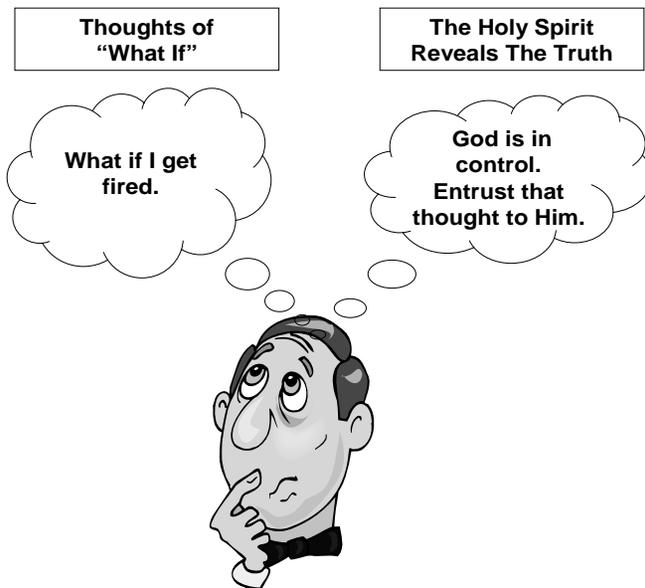
*“and be found in him, not having a **righteousness** of my own that comes from the law, but that **which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.**” Philippians 3:9*

I know that many Christians experience self-condemning thoughts. These self-condemning thoughts

2. When You Are Tempted To Live In The Future Or In The Past, FIX Your Eyes On Christ 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.



Engaging God: In those areas, ask the Holy Spirit to give you revelation of His truth, and use that truth to filter out your lying thoughts.

Where Is God Taking Us With Our Thought Life?

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.**”*

God clearly lays out in this verse that He wants us thinking what is true, honorable, pure, etc. As we do, then we can expect:

- To be set free from our lying beliefs.
- To experience victory in our thought life.
- To gain increasing discernment concerning our thoughts.
- To experience Christ’s peace.

In addition, as God renews our mind to think His thoughts, He promises to transform our lives:

*“Do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**....” Romans 12:2*

Transformation will result in:

- Thinking, believing, and choosing to live from God’s truth.
- Our behavior lining up with God’s truth.
- Living from Christ-like attitudes.

There is not one of us who does not want to experience transformation in these areas. However, we have a problem.

THE PROBLEM:

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

Engaging God: Ask God to renew your mind and to transform your thought life.

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

*“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*

Paul is describing an ongoing battle that rages in our minds. He tells us in Romans 7:19 what can result if we don't understand that there is a battle.

“For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.”

I don't know about you, but I feel the same way that Paul did. It can be frustrating because I can know the truth, but I do not always choose to walk in it. Every one of us wants to live from the truth and make godly choices as we move down the path of our Christian journey. The problem is that this journey includes a battle that can keep us from enjoying and experiencing the promises of God. Before we enter into this battle, we need to understand some basic truths about it.

Other Key Truths To Remember Concerning Your Thought Life

1. 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 that 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.”

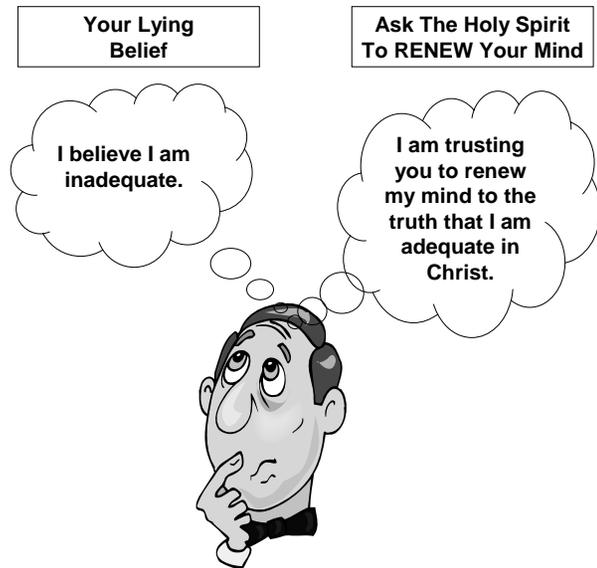
The problem is that you have been AUTOMATICALLY taking ownership of the recurring fleshly, lying thoughts, and it is easy to continue taking ownership.

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.”

renewing your mind to the truth. Therefore, begin taking steps of faith for the Spirit to renew your mind.

Example: Your lying belief is that you are inadequate. Begin asking the Spirit to renew your mind to the truth. The following diagram illustrates this truth.



Remember as you begin to engage the Spirit to renew your mind to the truth that it will take time to renew your mind and to set you free from your lying beliefs. It is important to remember as well that deeply entrenched belief systems will take more time to experience freedom from than for other beliefs.

What are some truths that we need to understand about this battle?

1. The battle for the control of our mind is non-stop and will last a lifetime.
2. We have unseen enemies in this battle.
3. These enemies seek to keep us in bondage to our lying beliefs and fleshly behaviors.
4. We cannot win this battle apart from the Holy Spirit winning it in our minds.
5. Who wins this battle will determine whether or not we will experience a transformed and an abundant life.

We will be exploring each of these truths in more depth throughout the rest of the study. The next question that we need to ask ourselves is, “To what extent are we aware of the battle?”

If we don't know the truth about the battle for the mind, then the battle will NEVER be won!

Engaging God: Ask the Holy Spirit to give you deeper revelation of these truths, and seek Him to make you aware of these truths as you enter into the battle for your mind.

How Aware Are You Of The Battle?

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

Paul’s words “I see” tell us that he was aware that there was a battle that was being waged in his mind. What “I see” is too many Christians that are not aware of the battle that is

going on in their thought life. When we do not recognize the battle, it leaves us vulnerable in many ways:

- It leaves us vulnerable to Satanic/demonic forces inserting lying, condemning, and tempting thoughts into our minds.
- We will tend to take ownership of thoughts that need to be taken captive.
- Taking ownership of lying thoughts will reinforce our lying beliefs.
- Taking ownership of thoughts that should be taken captive will lead us to fleshly living and fleshly behaviors.

Engaging God: Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a greater awareness of the height and length and depth of the battle that is taking place in your mind.

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

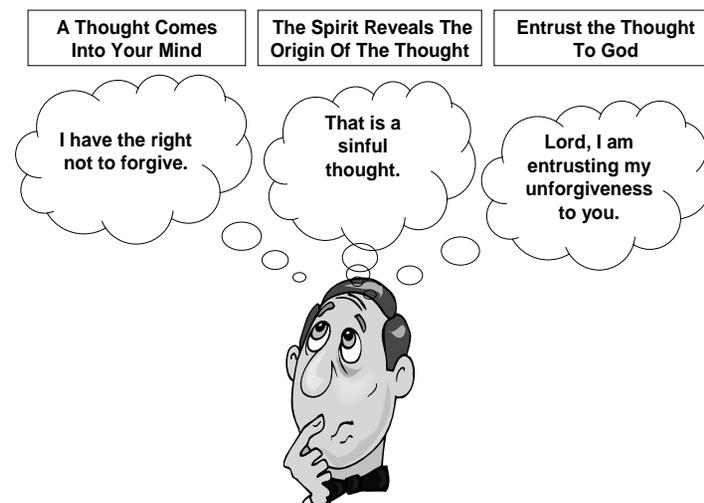
Before we go any further in this study of the battle of the mind, we must first understand a basic, fundamental truth:

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.”

As it applies to our study, this verse means that you cannot truly win the battle for your mind independently of Christ’s power. So many believers I have counseled believe



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 the Spirit for Him to take captive.

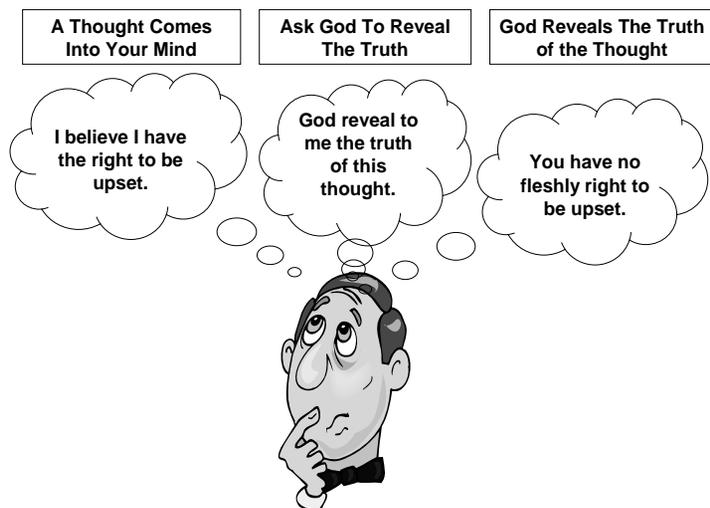
Engaging God: As God reveals the truth about your thoughts, learn to entrust those fleshly and lying thoughts to God.

5. Concerning Your Lying Beliefs, Begin Asking The Holy Spirit To RENEW Your Mind To The Truth.

*“Be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**.....” Romans 12:2a*

*“You will know the truth and **the truth will set you free**.” John 8:32*

The only way that you will be set free from your lying beliefs is to engage the Holy Spirit to begin



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

4. When The Spirit Exposes Sinful, Lying, Deceiving, Tempting, Fleshly, or Condemning Thoughts, ENTRUST Your Fleshly Thoughts To God.

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

Once the Holy Spirit has revealed to you the truth of the thought, He wants you to entrust that thought to Him by faith for Him to take captive. **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.

they can win the battle that goes on in their minds in their own strength and willpower.

However, winning the battle of the mind is like living the Christian life. There is only One Person who can accomplish it, and that is the Holy Spirit. We will go further into this truth in the next lesson.

Only the HOLY SPIRIT in you can win the battle of the mind.

Remember That There Are No PACIFISTS In This Battle.

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

There are no pacifists or anyone sitting on the sidelines in this battle. Even though there may be Christians that are acting like conscientious objectors, you cannot afford to not fight this battle. That is why Paul exhorts Timothy to fight. If you do not enter into the battle, it means that you have already given up the battle. You must fight this fight in the Spirit 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*

If you do NOT enter into the battle, you have already LOST it!

Engaging God: Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the areas where you have not entered into and are not fighting the fight.

Summary

I hope that this lesson has laid some groundwork for understanding that there is a real battle that takes place non-stop in your mind. My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will give you a greater awareness of the battle and will give you a greater desire to participate with the Holy Spirit in winning the battle of the mind. In the next lesson we will explore what the battleground is and who or what the enemies are that we face in this battle for our minds.

Engaging God: Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a greater awareness of what you are thinking about. Ask Him to reveal the origin of your thoughts.

Sinful thoughts: It is important to understand that sinful thoughts will be exposed by the Holy Spirit. The problem is that we may not be aware of the Spirit's exposure. Therefore, a step of faith might look like the following:

“Lord, I am trusting You to increase my awareness and sensitivity to sinful thoughts.”

Engaging God: Ask the Holy Spirit to increase your awareness and sensitivity to sinful thoughts as they occur.

As you take steps of faith, you will become more SENSITIVE to the Holy Spirit's exposure of SINFUL thoughts.

3. Ask God to REVEAL The Truth Concerning Your Thoughts.

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.” John 16:13a

Since one of the responsibilities of the Holy Spirit is to reveal the truth to you, ask God to reveal to you what the truth is concerning the thoughts that you are thinking.

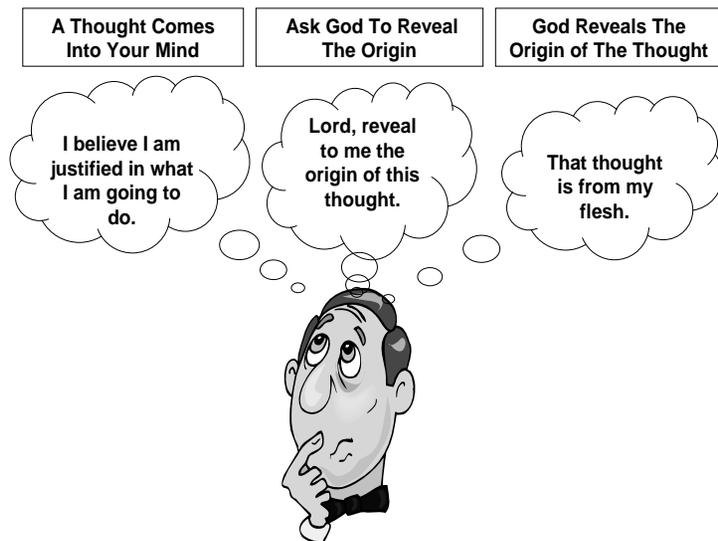
Engaging God: Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a greater awareness of what you are thinking about.

2. Ask God To Reveal The ORIGIN of Your Thoughts.

“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?” 2 Corinthians 13:5

The key thing that we need to understand in 2 Corinthians 13:5 is that when Paul is telling us to examine ourselves, he means to bring the Holy Spirit’s discernment into play to examine our thoughts and to tell us the origin of that thought.

There are some thoughts that come into your mind that you need to examine and ask God to tell you the origin of that thought. The next diagram illustrates engaging God to discern for you the origin of your thoughts:



Lesson Three

The Battleground and The Enemies In The Battle

The Battleground

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

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.

Fleshly, Lying, Deceiving, Tempting, and Condemning Thoughts

Fleshly Thoughts - Thoughts that lead to fleshly choices and behaviors.

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

Lying Thoughts - Thoughts that contradict God’s truth.

Lying thoughts primarily come from our lying beliefs about ourselves, God, and living the Christian life.

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

Deceiving thoughts primarily come from Satan and his demonic forces. These are thoughts inserted into our minds that come in first person. Deceiving thoughts direct our paths toward thinking which can produce fear, anxiety, worry, etc.

Tempting Thoughts - Thoughts that tempt you and 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 there.

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.

The diagram below gives us an illustration of the battle between God's truth and all of the thoughts that contradict God's truth:

*brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”
1 Peter 1:13*

1. THINK About What You Are Thinking About.

“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” Proverbs 23:7

The first thing that we need to do is to be more aware of what thoughts are coming into our minds. We have developed habits of taking ownership of thoughts that God does not want us to take ownership of.

Therefore, begin to take an inventory of:

Recurring thoughts - Many of our recurring thoughts can be those which are tied to our lying beliefs.

Fleshly thoughts - Look at the flesh patterns that you marked down in Lesson Two, and identify some of the fleshly thoughts that revolve around your fleshly behavior.

Fantasy thoughts - If you tend to fantasize, take inventory of those thoughts.

Evil thoughts - Take inventory of recurring evil thoughts because they are almost always associated with the Satanic or demonic.

The key is to take steps of faith in bringing God's discernment to bear on your thought patterns. A step of faith might look like the following:

“Lord, I am asking You to give me a greater awareness of what I am thinking. Expose any thinking that is sinful.”

**6. Overpower your enemies in this battle. 2
Corinthians 10:4**

***Most importantly, it is the Holy Spirit Who will take
your thoughts CAPTIVE***

Taking Our Thoughts Captive – Can You Do It?

“...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.

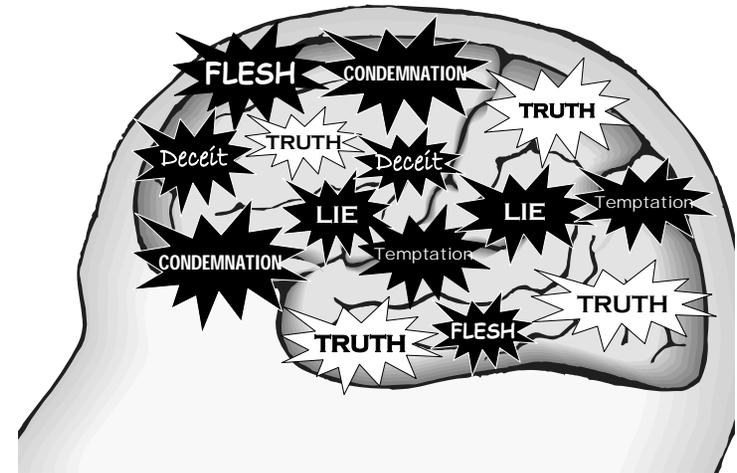
***The truth is that APART from the Holy Spirit
taking those thoughts captive
THROUGH you, you CANNOT take
your thoughts captive.***

What Paul means through this verse is that the Holy Spirit can discern and can tell whether the thought is from God, the flesh, or Satan. In addition to the Holy Spirit discerning our thoughts, He wants to build within our minds a “divine filter” as we participate with Him.

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

“Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be

THE BATTLEGROUND!



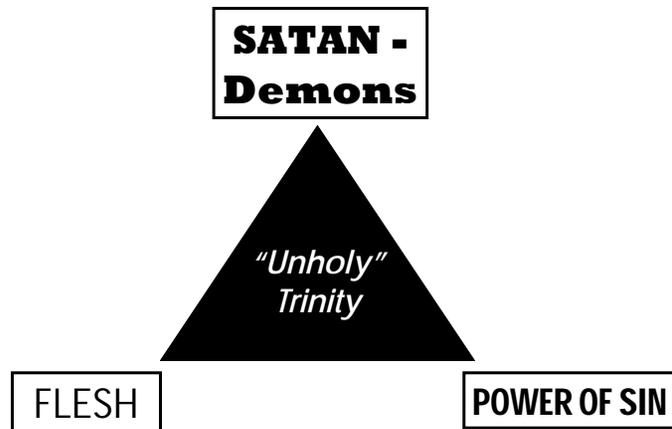
**What (or Who) Are The Enemies of Your Mind in
This Battle?**

*“...My deadly enemies that surround me.”
Psalm 17:9*

One of the first axioms of war is to know your enemy. In the case of the Christian there is more than one enemy. Even though David was referring to human enemies in Psalm 17:9, we as Christians are surrounded by unseen “deadly” enemies that seek to steal, kill, and destroy our walk of faith. I call these enemies the “unholy trinity.”

**The “Unholy Trinity” – The Flesh, The Power of
Sin. And Satan/Demons**

The "Unholy" Trinity



Let's explore how the "unholy trinity" negatively impacts our thinking.

1. How The FLESH Impacts Our Mind

"The mind set on the flesh is death," Romans 8:6

THE 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 become a success."

As an attitude, the flesh continues to produce fleshly thoughts which can lead to fleshly behavior. However, equally destructive is the fact that the flesh impacts your thinking by drawing your thoughts to self versus to God. For example, let's assume that you are struggling with a difficult decision. The flesh can introduce thoughts such as, "You can reason yourself through this decision.

of sin, or Satan/demons. What are some reasons why we need the Holy Spirit to do battle for us?

The reasons that we cannot win this battle APART from the Holy Spirit are:

- We can be deceived in our thinking.
- We can't discern between the truthful thoughts and the lying thoughts.
- We have taken ownership of thoughts that do not line up with God's truth for so long that they have become reinforced lying beliefs that we cannot free ourselves from.
- Our willpower is no match for the thoughts inserted into our minds by the flesh, the power of sin, and Satan/demons.

I have a question for you. If you believe that you can win this battle apart from the Holy Spirit, how is it working for you?

You know, or you will figure it out, that your willpower is no match for the power of the "unholy trinity." Therefore, we have the indwelling Holy Spirit to do what we cannot do in the battle of the mind.

As your Victor the Holy Spirit will:

1. Teach you God's truth. John 14:26
2. Make God's truth become revelation to you. John 16:13
3. Renew your mind to believe God's truth. Romans 12:2
4. Discern for you truthful versus lying thoughts. 1 Corinthians 2:12
5. Remind you of God's truth in the midst of the battle. John 14:26

“The weapons we use in our fight are not the world’s weapons but God’s powerful weapons, which we use to destroy strongholds.”

So many believers that I have discipled early on believed that they could win the battle in their minds in their own strength and willpower. However, winning the battle of the mind is like living the Christian life. There is only One Person who can accomplish it, and that is the Holy Spirit. Look at Romans 8:13:

“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.”

Key Truth:

Only the HOLY SPIRIT in you can win the battle of the mind.

When Jesus said in John 15:5 that “apart from Me you can do nothing,” part of what He meant is that apart from the power of the Holy Spirit, you cannot win the battle of the mind. This is another reason why God put the fullness of Himself in us.

“For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.” Colossians 2: 9, 10

God knew that without His power indwelling us, we would never overcome the power of the flesh, the power

Given enough time you can figure out what to do.” Even though this is a normal tendency, what part does God want to play in this decision-making process? Does He not want you to depend upon His wisdom and discernment instead of your own finite thinking?

Since the flesh is for the most part our default position, then it is easy to be drawn by the flesh to use our finite ability and power to solve our problems and meet our needs.

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

2. How The POWER OF SIN Impacts Our Thought Life

“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)

THE POWER OF SIN:

an INTERNAL and ONGOING power in your life that seeks to DRAW you away or to TEMPT you to live independently of God.

As we have studied previously, the power of sin and the flesh work as partners seeking to draw you in to independent living. The power of sin also serves up fleshly and sinful thoughts which seek to keep us in bondage to our lying beliefs. 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 fleshly thoughts as, “I have the right to be critical because they offended me by what they said. I am justified in my being judgmental.” Every time that I would take ownership of these thoughts, they reinforced my lying belief.

Therefore, become aware in your own thought life about how the power of sin and the flesh function with each other.

The FLESH and the POWER OF SIN function in PARTNERSHIP to act upon your fleshly thoughts and produce fleshly behavior.

Engaging God: Ask the Holy Spirit to expose the areas in your life where the power of sin is serving up fleshly thoughts that are reinforcing your lying beliefs.

3. 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)*

Lesson Four

Taking Your Thoughts Captive

Taking 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)

Now that we have a better understanding of what the battleground looks like and who or what the enemies are that we are facing, let’s look at God’s process of taking our thoughts captive. The first truth we need to remember is:

The VICTOR In The Battle Lives Within You!

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...**”*

As it applies to our study, this verse means that you cannot truly win the battle for your mind independently of the Holy Spirit’s power. Only the power of God can fight this battle. We see this in 2 Corinthians 10:4:

Throughout each day we can be distracted from our walk with God just by the everyday issues of life. Taking care of kids, job, activities, etc. are not necessarily sinful or Satanic, but they can distract us from our walk with God.

“Busy-ness” is another way that we can lose our focus on Christ and lose the battle of the mind. It seems like we are filling every minute with activity. “Busy-ness” has become so pandemic that I believe it has become the substitute for thinking about or spending time with God.

As busy as we make ourselves, I wonder if we believe that FULFILLMENT in life comes from being busy every moment rather than from spending time communing with God?

Another ploy of Satan/demons is to keep you distracted. 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. He will use any and every form of distraction to keep you from thinking on Christ.

Engaging God: Ask the Holy Spirit to expose where your “busy-ness” is taking you away from time that could be spent with Him. Ask the Spirit as well to reveal where Satan may be using distraction as a ploy to keep you from thinking about or spending time with God.

Satan will use BENIGN thoughts of daily living to keep us distracted from God.

We must realize that we are in a fierce and ongoing battle with Satan and his demons. Since Satan can't be everywhere at once, he depends upon his army of demons to carry out his evil strategies. These enemies are formidable foes in that they are unseen. In addition, they know the Bible only too well and clearly understand what God can and will do in our lives if we walk by faith. Therefore, Satan's and his demon's objectives are to prevent us from walking by faith, experiencing transformation, and developing a personal, intimate relationship with God.

He/they accomplish this strategy primarily by inserting lying, condemning, deceiving, tempting, and fleshly thoughts into our minds. They know precisely which thoughts to insert because they have a complete file on our life. They know our flesh patterns, our strongholds, our woundedness, and our weaknesses. Therefore, they use all of this information plus our relationships and circumstances to insert these thoughts into our minds so that we will take ownership of them with the result that we will commit sins.

Satan knows that if he can keep us thinking and believing the lies about ourselves, God, and living the Christian life, we will never experience the transformation and abundant life that God promises. In Lesson Three we will discuss further Satan/demon's strategy to win the battle in our minds.

Satan and his demons have primarily one FOCUS and that is to keep you in BONDAGE to your lying beliefs.

The following diagram illustrates the flesh, the power of sin, and Satan's/demon's impact on the soul:

The UNHOLY Trinity and The Soul



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

4. Another Enemy of The Mind Is 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. Satan uses our culture to entice you to want bigger, better, and always more. 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 “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, envy, anger, anxiety, etc.

Engaging God: Ask God to reveal to you where you may not be aware that the world is negatively impacting your thoughts and are causing you to lust for the things of the world.

Satan, as the god of this world, will use the things of the world to **NEGATIVELY influence your thinking.**

5. Distracting Thoughts of Daily Living