

The Battle Of The Mind

Bill Loveless

Christ Is Life Ministries

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Biographical Sketch

Bill was born and raised in College Station, Texas and moved to Dallas, Texas in 1986. He was a commercial general contractor there for 25 years. Bill and his wife, Paige, were married in October 1988.

Although he was saved at age 18, Bill didn't understand Christ as his source for life until he was 48 years old. As a Christian for thirty years Bill wandered in a wilderness of spiritual performance for God trying to earn His love, acceptance, and worth. He had severe internal struggles with fear, anxiety, and worry that overcame him for most of those thirty years. He would ask, "Where is this abundant life that the Lord promised in John 10:10? Why, after living the Christian life so long, am I still being defeated by the same sin patterns? Why am I not experiencing God's peace and rest in the midst of adverse circumstances?"

Bill's defeat in the Christian life got to a point that in 1998, while an elder at a former church, he told Paige that he wanted out of the Christian life. He was spiritually exhausted. In late 1998 Ian Thomas, founder of Torchbearers, was invited to Bill's church to speak. The first words that he shared were, "**God never intended for you to live the life that only Christ can live in and through you.**"

The Lord showed Bill through Ian Thomas's words that he had been living much of his Christian life out of self-effort and self-sufficiency. The Lord also revealed to Bill that God has designed us to be His vessels through which His life and His power would flow. He realized for the first time that God didn't want to help us live the Christian life, but He actually wants to be our **Source** for living the Christian life. This was such a transforming time for Bill that five months later God called Bill out of his business and eventually led him into full-time ministry with Exchanged Life Ministries Texas (ELMT) in Dallas. During his 2 and ½ years with ELMT, Bill shared the Christ-life message in conferences and in follow-up discipleship curriculum. He was the conference coordinator for all the ELMT church conferences. While ministering in the churches, he recognized a growing need to partner with them on a continuing basis. He and Paige prayed for God's will concerning his growing passion to be more involved with churches.

Then in September 2003 the Lord called him and Paige to form a ministry with the primary focus being to teach, develop curriculum, and disciple "multipliers" in the local church. In November 2003 he and Paige formed Christ Is Life Ministries. They moved to San Antonio in April 2004, and they are now working with several churches in the area and throughout Texas.

The Battle Of Mind

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The Layout of This Study

I want to thank you for choosing this study. I believe that this is a crucial study for every Christian to understand. God has been using the truths of this study to radically change my life. Therefore, my desire is for you to not only learn these truths but to also apply them personally to your life. I would first like to share with you how this study is laid out.

There are six lessons, and each lesson has five daily readings. This will allow you to break down the material into five separate parts each week. Throughout each lesson will be exercises, questions, and scriptures for you to meditate upon in an “Engaging God” section.

Engaging God

The “Engaging God” section is designed for you to seek out the Holy Spirit for personal revelation and understanding of what you have just read. This is especially crucial when you come to truths that contradict what you believe. If we don’t seek God to reveal the truth, then we will never move beyond the false beliefs that we may be believing.

The Word “Meditation”

Some people struggle with the word “meditation” because of the New Age connotations. However, it is a biblical word that we do not need to shy away from. The key is what and Who that we are meditating on. The focus of our meditation will be on God and His truth. If you really have a struggle with the word “meditate,” then use the word “think” instead.

The Word “Revelation”

I will be using the word “revelation” several times throughout the study. This is a key word that simply means that God supernaturally takes His truth and makes it personal to you and to your life situations. Revelation is God’s way of giving you understanding of what you are reading. Revelation takes you beyond cognitive understanding in that it gives you spiritual understanding of God’s truth.

What Do You Believe?

Remember this key truth as you go through this study:

You will not live beyond what you believe.

This is key because if you have false or lying beliefs about living the Christian life, then you will be making choices from those false beliefs. What you believe affects what you think, how you feel, and the choices that you make. Therefore, one of God’s objectives is to expose your lying beliefs about God, yourself, and the Christian life. He then wants to move you from believing the lies to believing the truth. Therefore, I would encourage you throughout the study to ask God to expose any lying beliefs that you may have and to ask Him to renew your mind to His truth. (Romans 12:2)

Lesson One

What We Must First Understand About The Battle of The Mind

DAY ONE

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 goes on in their minds in their own strength and ability. This is because they don't understand a very critical truth about living the Christian life. Therefore, we are going to focus in the rest of this lesson on answering the following question:

What is the TRUTH concerning living the Christian life?

What I Believed About The Christian Life

I trusted Christ for salvation at age 18. As I began my Christian journey I asked the questions, **“WHAT is the Christian life, and HOW do I live it?”** The response that I got was, “Here is a list of the things that you need TO DO to live the Christian life.” Below are some of the things that were on that list:

- Have a quiet time with the Lord.
- Learn the Word of God.
- Evangelize.
- Go to church.
- Give to the church.
- Be involved in ministry in the church.

All of these things are certainly scriptural, but the difference was that I was told that these are the things we must “do” **FOR** God in order to “truly” live the Christian life. In other words, the Christian life became a series of rules, formulas, and checklists that I had to accomplish in order to please God and to truly be a Christ-follower. This is the life that I lived for thirty years. I was told (and eventually believed) that if I did enough for God, He would be pleased, and I would be happy. I felt like a pole vaulter trying to jump over all the “bars” of expectations that I thought were from God. The only difference was that I did not have a pole! The problem was that my life became a thirty-year endurance contest of trying to please God. I never became happy. So, I concluded that I had not done enough to please God.

There Was Another Problem.

Even before I was saved, I had ongoing deep struggles with anxiety, fear, and inadequacy. I brought those struggles into my Christian life. What I was hoping for was that if I did enough for God that He would then free me from these strongholds. In other words, “Let’s make a deal, God. I will do for you, and You will do for me.” The problem was that after 30 years of doing all that I was told to do for God, I didn’t really feel that He had done anything in me or for me. In fact, I was in even deeper bondage to anxiety, fear, and inadequacy and was moving toward total despair. Eventually I gave up on God and His ability to make any difference in my life.

What Do Most Christians Believe About the Christian Life?

What will most Christians tell you when you ask them, “What is the Christian life?” Most Christians will answer this question by telling you “how to” live the Christian life. It might be a “to do” checklist like the one that I mentioned to you earlier:

- Have a quiet time.
- Pray.
- Memorize scripture.
- Learn how to evangelize.
- Go to church.

Others might make it formula:

- Have a quiet time every morning.
- Pray at least twice a day.
- Evangelize to at least one person a day.
- Be in church every Sunday.

Others will make it a list of “laws:”

- You **must** have a quiet time every morning.
- You **must** pray at least twice a day.
- You **must** evangelize to at least one person a day.
- You **must** be in church every Sunday.

The Result: A Performance-Driven Life

The truth is that our “default position” coming into the Christian life is one of **performance** and **legalism**. In every area of our life since birth we have had to do certain things and to

measure up to certain standards in order to feel valued, accepted, or loved. Therefore, the performance/legalistic grid is firmly in place when a person is saved. Consciously or unconsciously we come into the Christian life with a mindset that says, “I must do something to please God, please others, or please myself.” In other words, if I keep striving, with God’s help, I will eventually arrive at spiritual maturity. If any of this is true in your Christian life, you might have fallen prey to what I believe is the #1 lie of the Christian life:

“The Lie”

You, as the source, using your own intellect and ability (with God’s help), can arrive at spiritual maturity and abundant living by keeping checklists, legalistic standards, and doing something for God.

Questions: Is it possible that you believe that your Christian life is about what you need to do (or not do) to please God? Do you believe on some level that it is up to you with God’s help to arrive at spiritual maturity? If so, do you feel that your Christian life is satisfying and fulfilling? Is God producing in you the changes that He promises?

Question:

Is what you believe about living the Christian life the LIE or the TRUTH?

To answer this question, let’s look at what the Bible says about living the Christian life.

DAY TWO

Is It Possible That We Are Asking The Wrong Question?

Is the right question “How do I live the Christian life?” To understand the truth let’s begin by looking at what Jesus and Paul say about the Christian life.

Jesus describes the Christian life:

“...I AM the way, the truth, and the LIFE...” John 14:6

“...I AM the resurrection and the LIFE.” John 11:25

“He who has the Son has the LIFE....” 1 John 5:12

I must admit that I had read these passages many times before realizing that what God was trying to tell me was that the Christian life is a PERSON. It is Christ Himself. I had fallen prey to the lying belief that the Christian life was something that I had to achieve in order to please God. I must admit that I failed miserably. I never felt that I measured up to what I thought was required of me.

The truth is that the Christian life is not a “what.” It is not “what” we need to do nor “what” we have to do (or not do) to please God. The Christian life is not about checklists, keeping a set of rules, and doing things for God.

The Truth:
The Christian life is a Person. It is Christ Himself

Questions: If you have read these verses before, what have you believed that Jesus meant? Have you ever thought about the Christian life being about a Person rather than a list of rules, a checklist, or a formula? How might it change your view of the Christian life if you believed that the Christian life is a Person (Christ Himself)?

Meditate: on the verses above and think about the truth that the Christian life is a Person rather than something that you are expected to **do** in order to please God.

Christ Is YOUR Life

Paul takes the truth of Christ as the life to a more personal level when he says in Colossians 3:4:

“..Christ who is YOUR life...”

John further confirms this in John 20:31:

“But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing YOU may have life in His name.”

What is being said in these two verses? The life of Christ is more than the eternal life that He gave us at salvation. Christ wants to BE our life. Jesus wants to be involved in every area of our life. Look at the beginning of Philippians 1:21:

“For me, to live IS Christ....”

Paul leaves no doubt that Christ is his life. Paul did NOT say in this verse, “To live the Christian life means that I live FOR Christ, and to live the Christian life means that I must keep checklists and rules in order to please God.” He says, “To live to me **IS** Christ.”

Questions: Have you ever thought about the truth that Christ wants to be your life? What do you think that Paul meant when he said that for him “to live IS Christ?”

Meditate: on the verses above and ask God to give you a deeper understanding as to what He means that Christ is your life.

What Does It Mean That Christ Is Your Life?

The next question that you may be asking is, “What does it mean that Christ is your life?” I believe that God sums up the meaning in 1 Corinthians 1:30:

*“**He is the SOURCE of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.**”*

God gives us the answer to our original question in the first part of this verse. When He says that He is the life, it means that through His life He is the SOURCE for your life. This may be a new concept for you because so many Christians have been taught the lie that they are to be the source for living the Christian life with God’s help. However, God makes the truth very clear in 1 Corinthians 1:30 when He says that He is your Source from which to live the Christian life.

Look at two other verses that reveal that God is your Source for living the Christian life:

*“**In Him we live and move and have our being.**” Acts 17:28*

*“For **from Him and through Him and to Him** are all things.....” Romans 11:36*

To give you a clearer understanding of Christ as your Source, let’s look at some of God’s promises concerning the Christian life.

The Promise: Abundant Life

What does God promise Christians that their Christian life should look like? We see at least a partial answer in the second part of John 10:10:

*“...I have come that they might have life and have it **abundantly.**”*

In this verse Jesus promises **abundant life** for the believer. What kind of abundance is Jesus talking about? Is it an external abundance of health or wealth? Or could it be that the Lord is referring to an internal, spiritual abundance? We know that God never promises external abundance. Therefore, Jesus must be referring to a spiritual abundance that comes from within. If this is true, you may be asking, “What is spiritual abundance? When can I expect to truly experience this abundance in my life? Most importantly, what must I do to experience abundant life?”

What I Believed That I Had To Do To Produce Abundant Life

Like so many Christians, I believed that it was up to me to produce or to manufacture abundant life. In other words, if abundant living was going to take place, it was up to me, with God’s help, to make it happen. As hard as I tried, I never experienced the spiritual abundance which Jesus promised. Therefore, since I could not attain abundant life through my own self-effort, I came to the conclusion that abundant life must occur when I get to Heaven.

The Truth:

In John 10:10 Jesus is telling us that abundant life is available to us today.

We don't have to wait until we get to heaven to experience it.

Questions: Do you believe that the promise of abundant living is for you today, or will you have to wait until you get to heaven to experience it? If someone asked you, could you honestly answer that you are experiencing an abundant life? What do you think internal abundance looks like?

Meditate: on John 10:10 and begin asking God to give you further understanding of what internal abundance looks like.

To better understand the meaning of abundant life, let's look at God's promises and plan for abundant life.

God's Promises Of Abundant Living

The following are some of the promises that God gives us concerning abundant living:

- **Victory – over the power of sin, the flesh, the world, and Satan.**

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

- **Freedom – from sin patterns and strongholds that we can't seem to overcome.**

*“So **Christ has really set us free**. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.” Galatians 5:1*

- **Renewing – of our mind to believe God's truth versus our lying beliefs.**

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

- **Healing – of our past and present woundedness.**

“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” Psalm 147:3

- **Supplying – God Himself as our Source to meet every need in our life.**

*“My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 4:19*

- **Transforming** – our lives into Christ-likeness.

*“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being **transformed into His likeness** with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”
2 Corinthians 3:18*

- **Intimacy** – with God.

*“His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into His own family by **bringing us to Himself** through Jesus Christ. And this gave Him great pleasure.” Ephesians 1:5*

Question: Which of these promises concerning abundant living would you most like to experience?

Consider the following question:

If God

- **gave you victory** over sin, the flesh, the world, and Satan,
- **provided freedom** from your defeating sin patterns,
- **renewed** your mind to believe His truth,
- **healed** your internal woundedness,
- **supplied** your needs,
- **transformed** your life so that you would live from a Christ-like attitude, and
- **drew you into a deeper relationship** with God,

would you consider that abundant living?

DAY THREE

The Result Of Experiencing God’s Promises Is A CHANGED Life.

I believe that most of us would agree that if God would accomplish these promises in our lives, we would be living abundantly! If you look closely at these promises, you will see that they all involve change. As we begin to experience the reality of these promises, change will take place.

The word of God confirms this in the first part of Romans 12:2:

*“do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed...**”*

Questions: What are the changes that you would like to see in your life? How have you been taught that those changes would occur? Is what you were taught bringing about the desired changes? If not, why not?

Meditate: on the verses concerning the promises listed above. Begin asking God to make these promises a reality in your life.

God As Your Source Concerning His Promises

I hope by this point that you not only have a clearer understanding of what abundant living looks like but that you want to experience it for yourself. Before we go any further, I have a very critical question for you:

Question:

WHO is going to make God's promises an experiential reality in your life?

God gives us the answer in Philippians 1:6:

*“being confident of this, that **He** who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6*

God began a good work in you at salvation. However, after you were saved, God was not going to turn you loose to be the source for living life. “Carry it out to completion” means that God will be the cause and effect of change in your life.

As it pertains to God's promises for abundant living, God is the Source in causing those promises to be an experiential reality in your life. In other words,

- **God will be your VICTORY over sin, the world, the flesh, and Satan.**
- **God will FREE you from the sin strongholds that you can't overcome.**
- **God will RENEW your mind to replace your lying beliefs with His truth.**
- **God will be the HEALER of your past and present woundedness.**
- **God will be your SUPPLY to meet your needs.**
- **God will TRANSFORM your life in order for you to experience Christ-likeness.**
- **God will draw you into an INTIMATE relationship with Himself.**

I was taught that I was to be the cause and effect of change in my own life. In other words, if any change was to occur, it was up to me to transform myself. It is because of this false belief that so many Christians have either given up or else are trying harder to live the Christian life.

The Truth:

Only God, as our Source, is the cause and effect for true transformation in our life.

Here are some other ways that God is to be your Source for living life:

- **He will restore hurting or broken relationships.**
- **He will be your wisdom and discernment in making decisions.**
- **He will be your peace and rest in unstable situations or conflict.**

Questions: Is it possible that you have been believing that it is up to you to be the source with God's help to transform your own life? If so, have there been any real significant changes in your

life? How might it affect how you live your Christian life by knowing that only God, **not you**, can bring about real transformation in your life?

Meditate: on Philippians 1:6 and ask God to give you deeper insight into what it means for Him to be your Source for living the Christian life. Ask Him to expose areas in your life where you are the source for living life.

Christ Wants To Live His Life IN You.

The truth is that the Christian life is not a life that we live FOR God. It is His life that He wants to live in us. God's intention from the beginning was to not only be your Source for salvation but to also be your Source for living the rest of your life. Therefore, He put His life **IN** you to live His life **IN** you. Paul makes this clear in the first part of Galatians 2:20:

*"I am crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but **Christ lives IN me...**"*

Question: If you have believed that the Christian life is about living for God what do you think it means that Christ wants to live His life in you?

Meditate: on Galatians 2:20 and ask God to give you a deeper personal understanding of this truth.

Now that you understand that God wants to live His life in you, what is your part in living the Christian life?

DAY FOUR

What Is Your Part In Living The Christian Life?

Even though God is the cause and effect of transformation in your life, you have a vital part to play in order for Him to live His life in you. Let's look at John 15:5 to give you a better idea of what that part is:

*"**I AM** the **VINE**, **you** are the **branches**; he who **abides** in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit..." John 15:5a*

Jesus is saying that as the physical branch is designed to be **totally** dependent on the physical vine for life, you, as a spiritual branch, are designed to live **totally** dependent upon God, the spiritual Vine, for life. The word "abide" is another word for **dependence**. It is important to understand at this point a very key truth:

KEY TRUTH:

God created man to be *DEPENDENT* upon Him.

His design from the beginning was for you to depend on Him.

We saw this with Adam and Eve who were totally dependent upon God to meet their every need. God reveals this dependency as well in John 15:5. As we abide in Christ, we are living dependently upon Him.

Why do you think that Jesus uses the example of the branch and vine? What happens to the branch when it is separated from the vine? It begins to die because it is no longer abiding in or living dependent upon the vine for life. If you, as a spiritual branch, decide to try to live independently of Christ, the spiritual Vine, then what can you expect?

Your Part In Living The Christian Life:

Live with an ATTITUDE of DEPENDENCE upon God as the Source for living life.

Side note: The word “bear” in John 15:5 does not mean “produce.” The word “bear” means “to carry.” The key point is that the branch does not produce the fruit. The vine is the source for producing the fruit while the branch is the agent through which the fruit is produced.

KEY POINT

As you walk with an ATTITUDE of DEPENDENCE upon God, He, as your Source,

PRODUCES in you freedom, victory, healing, and transformation.

Question: What do you think might be some of the results in your life if you, as a spiritual branch, decide to live independently of God, the spiritual Vine?

Questions: Have you believed up to this point that YOU are to produce the fruit? If so, how would it change your attitude towards your Christian walk if you believed that your part is “dependence,” and God’s part is “production” of the fruit in you? How does this truth differ from what our culture or religion is telling us?

Meditate: I know that John 15:5 is a very familiar verse, but Christians seem to give ascent to it without realizing the eternal depths of what Jesus is saying. Therefore, spend time going through the verse by meditating on it slowly and deliberately.

Engaging God: Ask God to give you a deeper spiritual understanding of the eternal implications of the branch-Vine relationship with Christ.

To Better Understand Dependence, Let's See How Jesus Lived.

You may be wondering at this point what dependence looks like. To gain a fuller understanding of dependence, let's look at how Jesus lived His life on earth. We need to first understand that Jesus as the "God-man" laid aside His privileges of deity. We see this in Philippians 2:6, 7:

*"He (Jesus) had equal status with God but didn't think so much of Himself that He had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, **He set aside the privileges of deity** and took on the status of a slave and became human!" NLT (Parenthesis mine)*

It doesn't mean that at any time while Jesus was on this earth that He was not fully deity. What it means specifically is that Jesus laid aside His right to be **co-equal** with the Father in order to live as a man. How then did Jesus live in regard to His relationship with the Father?

Let's look at three scriptures that describe Jesus's relationship to His Father:

*"Jesus therefore answered and was saying to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do **nothing of Himself**, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.'" John 5:19*

*"I can do **nothing on My own initiative**. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." John 5:30*

*"Jesus therefore said, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do **nothing on My own initiative**, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.'" John 8:28*

The common theme in each of these verses is that Jesus said that He could do **nothing apart from** the Father. In other words, Jesus lived in moment by moment **dependence** upon the Father as His **Source**.

***This means that Jesus was not functioning out of His OWN
life and power but out of the life and power of His FATHER.***

Could this mean that the Father, not Jesus, was the Source for all that Jesus accomplished while He was on earth? We see the answer in John 14:10 when Jesus says:

*“Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I say are not my own, but my **Father who lives in Me** does His work through Me.”*

What this verse is telling us is that it was the Father’s **life** and **power** through Jesus healing the lame, giving sight to the blind, and raising the dead. In other words, Jesus was dependent, and the result of His dependence was that the Father **produced** the miracles through Christ. Jesus’s life in relationship to His Father was a perfect example of the branch-Vine relationship. This leads us to the following question:

***If Jesus, as a man, lived in total
DEPENDENCE upon His Father as the Source with the result
that the FATHER lived His life in and through Jesus,

HOW SHOULD YOU LIVE?***

Question: Referring back to God’s promises of victory, freedom, healing, and transformation that we discussed earlier, what does God promise to do in your life as you live dependently on Him?

Meditate: on the verses above and think about this question, “If Jesus as our example lived from the Father’s life and power, how does God expect you to live?”

Engaging God: You may not have understood until now the relationship between Jesus and His Father and the application of this relationship to your relationship with God. Therefore, ask God to reveal to you how Jesus’s relationship with the Father applies to you in your daily life.

DAY FOUR

Man Was NOT Designed To Live Independently of God.

I believe that this is the place where we need to understand why man was not designed to live independently of God and what the consequences will be if we choose to live independently. In the last part of John 15:5 Jesus gives us the key reason why man was not designed to live independently of God:

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

What does Jesus mean when He says that “apart from Me you can do nothing?” This part of John 15:5 creates problems for many Christians. Why? It is because man is capable of doing many things apart from God. Man learns how to do a job, to master a hobby or a sport, or to manage his finances. So what does Jesus mean?

***Jesus means that apart from Him you CANNOT PRODUCE
a life of freedom, victory, healing, transformation, or intimacy with God.***

Apart from dependence on God there will be:

- **NO power** over sin.
- **NO victory** over your flesh.
- **NO freedom** from your defeating sin patterns.
- **NO healing** of your past or present woundedness.
- **NO fruit** of the Spirit produced in your life.
- **NO transformation** of your life.
- **NO intimacy** with God.

What else can you expect if you choose to live independently of (apart from) God?

- You will never experience the joy and happiness that only God can provide.
- You will never be able to experience Christ's joy, peace, or rest in the midst of adversity (in health, job, finances, relationships, etc.).
- You will never see God's purposes in your life through your struggles.
- You will be unable to understand God's divine "good" purpose in your life concerning your internal and external conflicts.
- You will experience more of the same or worse.

Questions: Are there sin patterns in your life that you have tried in your own strength to have victory over, but you don't have victory? Is there past woundedness that has really never been healed? Is there fleshly behavior that you want to be free from but you can't set yourself free?

KEY POINT

***The problem is that living from your OWN power, strength, and ability CANNOT
produce the Christian life that only God can produce.***

Does this give you a better idea of what some of the results will be if you live independently of or apart from God? Let's explore this idea further by defining independence:

INDEPENDENCE is an ATTITUDE that says:

***"I can live my life, meet my needs, solve my problems, and be a success
APART from God."***

We will find that living independently of God is defined as living from the "flesh."

Question: Since your design as a Christian is for dependence, what might be some of the consequences for you if you choose to walk independently of God?

Questions: Is there some impossible circumstance or relationship that you can't fix, handle, or resolve? What do you believe that God might be teaching you through those impossible circumstances or relationships?

Meditate: on John 15:5b and ask God to reveal to you those areas of your life where you might be trying to live the Christian life apart from Him and how that may be adversely affecting your life.

Engaging God: Ask God to give you a deeper understanding of what it means that "apart from Him you can do nothing."

The Truth Is That We CAN'T Live The Christian Life (Period!).

*"I am crucified with Christ and **I no longer live**, but Christ lives in me..." Galatians 2:20a*

What is Paul saying when he says, "I no longer live?" He is admitting that he **CAN'T** be the source for living the Christian life. I know how Paul feels. I should title my autobiography for the first thirty years of my Christian life "How I Proved God Right!" I proved God right in that as hard as I tried I could not produce the victory, freedom, healing, and transformation that only God can produce. It took God 30 years to bring me to the place of "I Can't." What is the meaning of "I Can't?"

"I CAN'T"

*is the place where you come to believe that
you CANNOT produce the Christian life that God promises and
that you must depend on God to produce that PROMISED life.*

What are some practical meanings of "I Can't?"

1. **I can't** meet the needs that only God was designed to meet.
2. **I can't** set myself free from my sinful behavior and lying beliefs.
3. **I can't** obtain victory over the sin patterns that continually defeat me.
4. **I can't** heal my damaged emotions.
5. **I can't** move my will from choosing to live in the flesh to living in the Spirit.
6. **I can't** produce harmony, intimacy, and oneness in my marriage.

7. **I can't** solve the impossible problems in my circumstances, marriage, job, with my kids, or in my other relationships.

“I CAN’T”

Control my thought life independent of the power of Christ in me.

Questions: What items in the above list most apply to you? How do you think that it might change your Christian walk if you were at the place of “I Can’t” in those areas?

Question: What do you believe will continue to occur in your life if you don’t come to the place of “I Can’t” in those areas?

Meditate: on the first part of Galatians 2:20. Think about the application in your life if Paul is admitting that He can’t live the Christian life.

Engaging God: Ask God to reveal to you the areas in your life where you have not arrived at the place of “I Can’t.”

Summary

1. The Christian life is NOT a formula, checklist, or a set of legalistic standards that God expects you to keep.
2. The Christian life is a PERSON. It is Jesus Christ.
3. The Christian life is about Christ living His life IN you.
4. God is to be your SOURCE for living life.
5. As your Source He PROMISES to heal, to free, to restore, and to transform you.
6. Your part in the Christian life is DEPENDENCE.
7. Faith is an ATTITUDE of dependence that allows Him to be your Source.
8. The OUTCOME of allowing God to live in you is freedom, victory, healing, supply, and transformation.
9. The ultimate outcome of God living in you is a deeper, more personal relationship with Him.

Lesson Two

The Battle For The Mind

DAY ONE

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*

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

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

We see the power and the necessity of God's word 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**.”*

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.

DAY TWO

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

“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. As we studied previously, 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.

Exercise: Go to the two pages at the end of this lesson and write down five areas where you most habitually experience fleshly thoughts.

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.

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.

DAY THREE

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 "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. "Busy-ness" 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 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.

“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.

DAY FOUR

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.

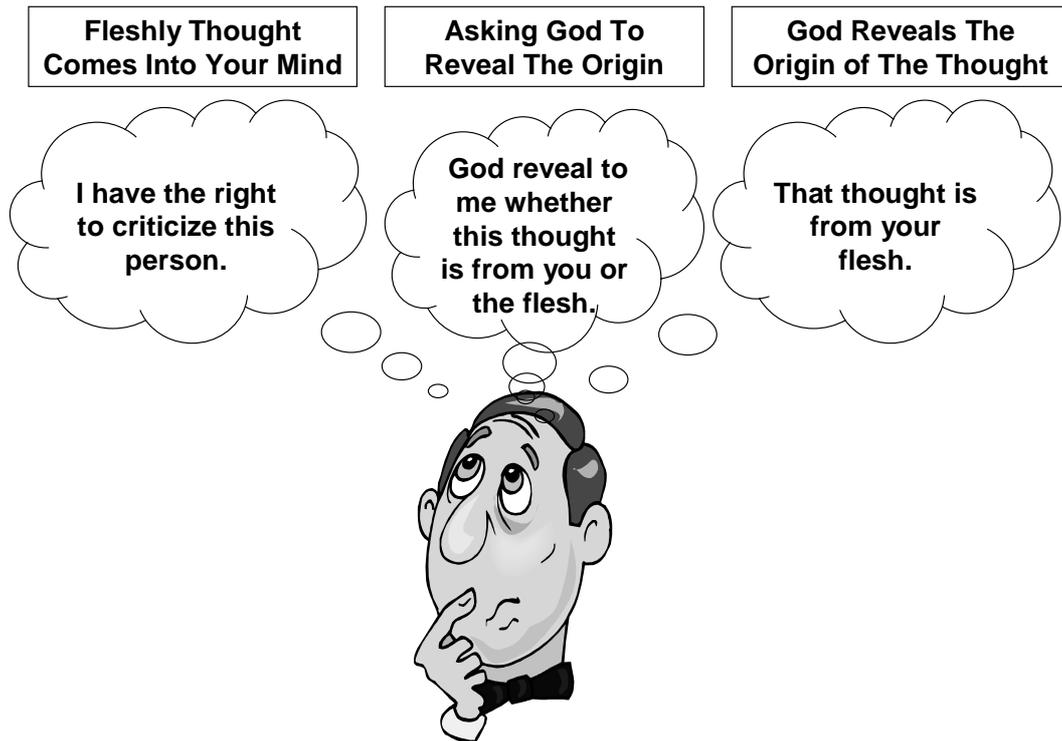
What It Looks Like To Participate With God In Taking Thoughts Captive

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 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:

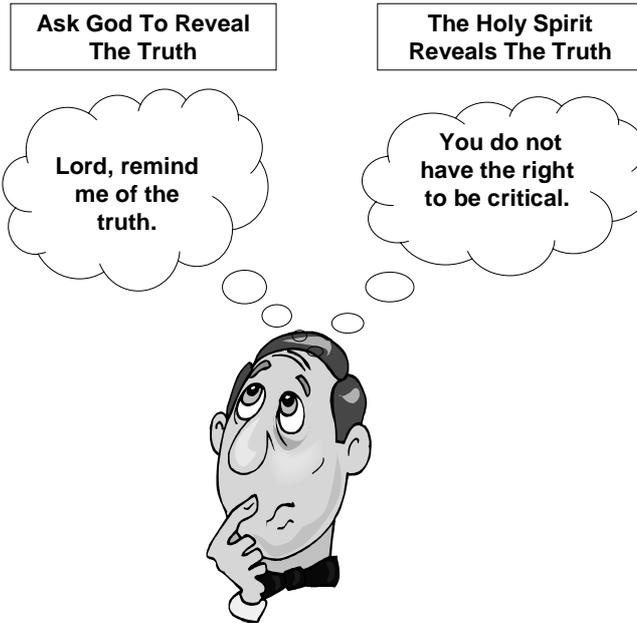


Important to Remember: The Spirit will always be revealing to you the origin of your thoughts whether you ask or not. The question is, “Will you be tuned into the Spirit enough to hear what He is saying?”

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.

ENTRUST Your Fleshly Thoughts To God.

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

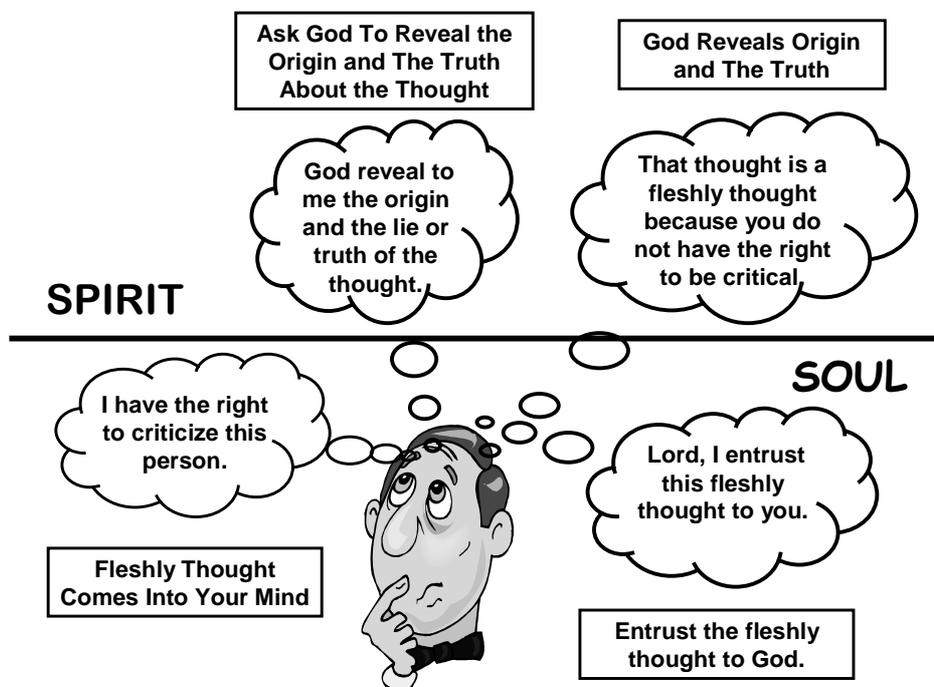
Once the Spirit has revealed to you the truth of the thought, He wants you to entrust that thought to Him by faith. Entrustment means that you give God the ownership of that thought. If you don’t entrust that lying/fleshly thought to God, the temptation is to continue thinking this thought until you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

Applying “The Line” Analogy To God Taking Thoughts Captive

Let’s take the two truths that we learned previously and see what they look like using the line analogy:



Below “the line” in your soul, the fleshly thought comes into your mind that you have the right to criticize. By faith you go above “the line” and ask God to reveal the origin and the truth of that thought. Above “the line” the Holy Spirit reveals the origin and the truth of that thought, and from your will you choose to entrust that fleshly thought to God.

DAY FIVE

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.”

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 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).

Lesson Three

Satanic Influence On Your Thought Life

DAY ONE

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

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.

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 and his demons can come against Christians to keep them:

- **Distracted from their faith walk with God.**
- **In bondage to their lying beliefs.**
- **Turning back to themselves to be the source for life.**
- **Trying to deal with their problems independently 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.***

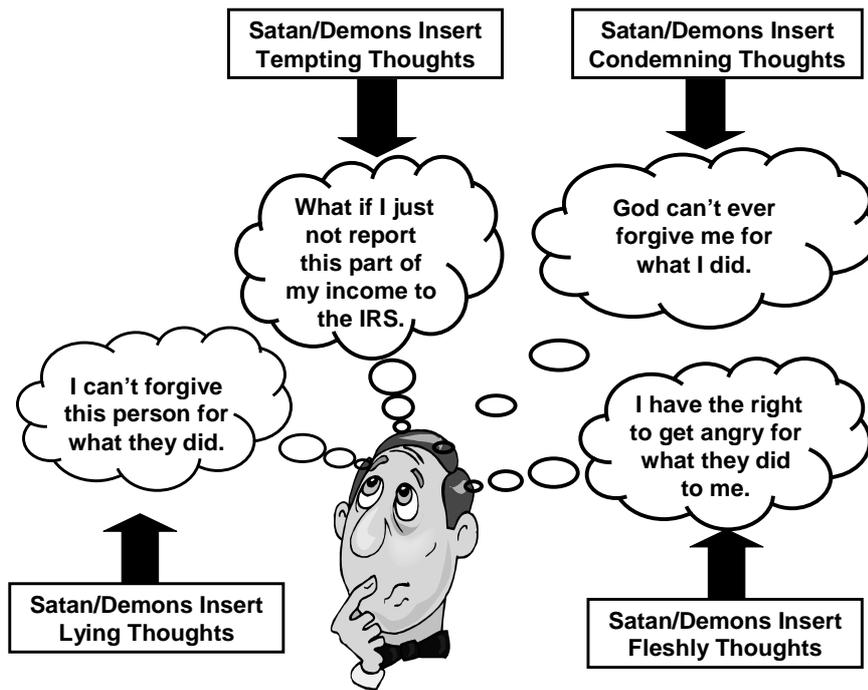
Read Matthew 16:21-23 below to see a perfect biblical example of Satan's strategy to insert thoughts into our minds:

"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 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.

Look at the next illustration 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.

DAY TWO

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.

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.

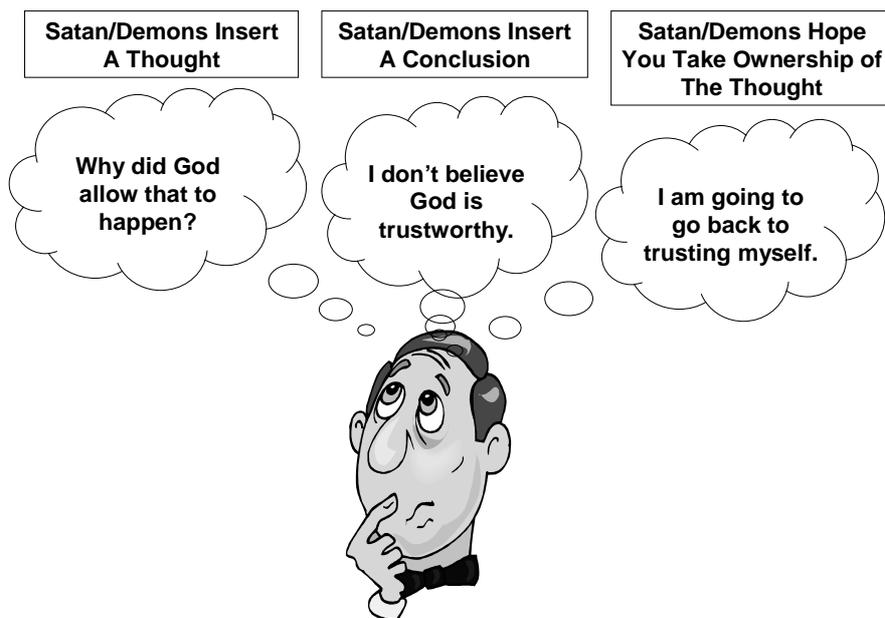
Satan's Strategy Part Three – Persuading You To DOUBT God

"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 next illustration 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.

DAY THREE

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:

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.

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 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.

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.

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 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.

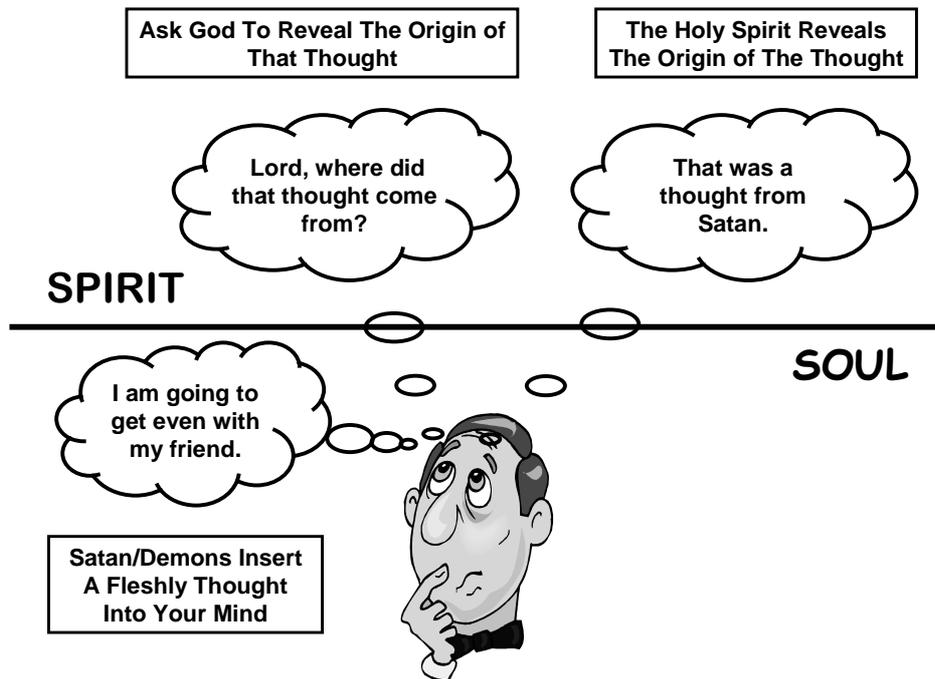
Engaging God: Seek God to give you a greater desire to walk in His armor so that you will be able to withstand the fiery darts of the enemy.

DAY FOUR

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 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.

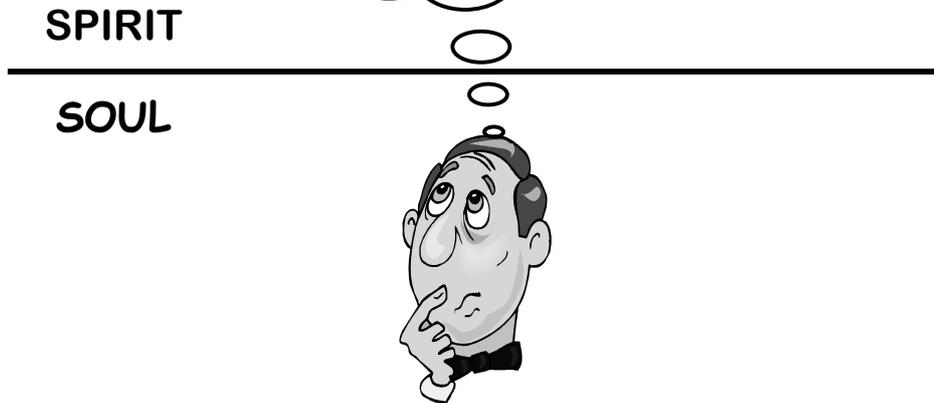
Engaging God: Seek God to give you a greater desire to walk in His armor so that you will be able to withstand the fiery darts of the enemy.

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 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**

Lord, I am
entrusting this
thought to You to
take captive.



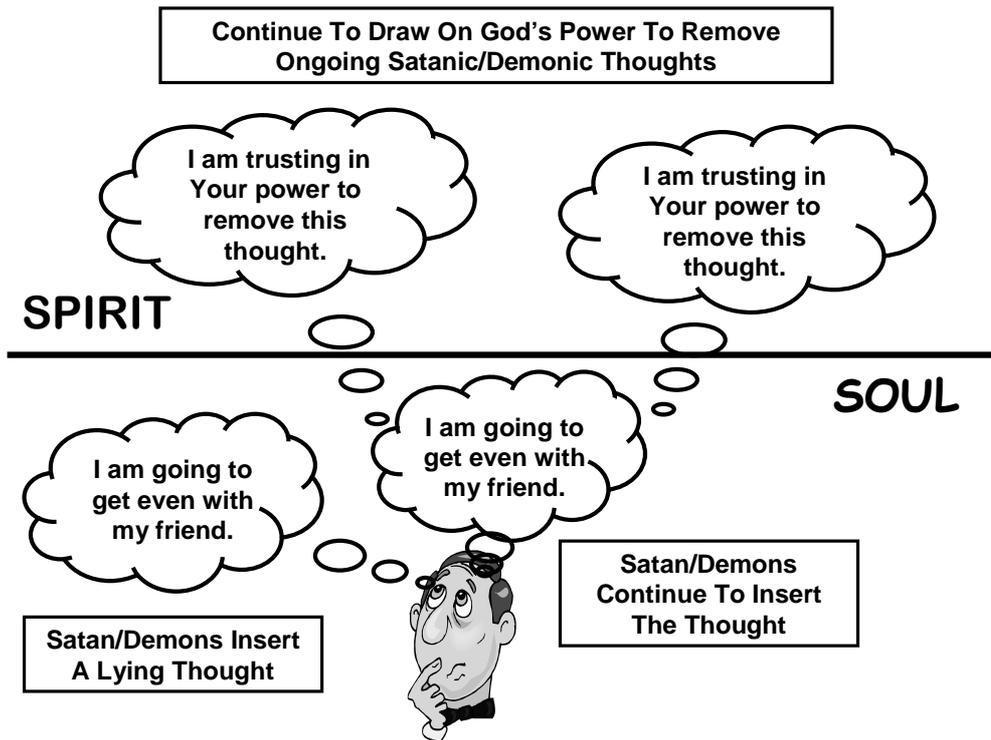
If the thoughts keep coming, keep drawing on God's POWER to remove those thoughts.

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

Many times Satan will not 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 one to resist Satan. You are powerless to do that in your own strength.

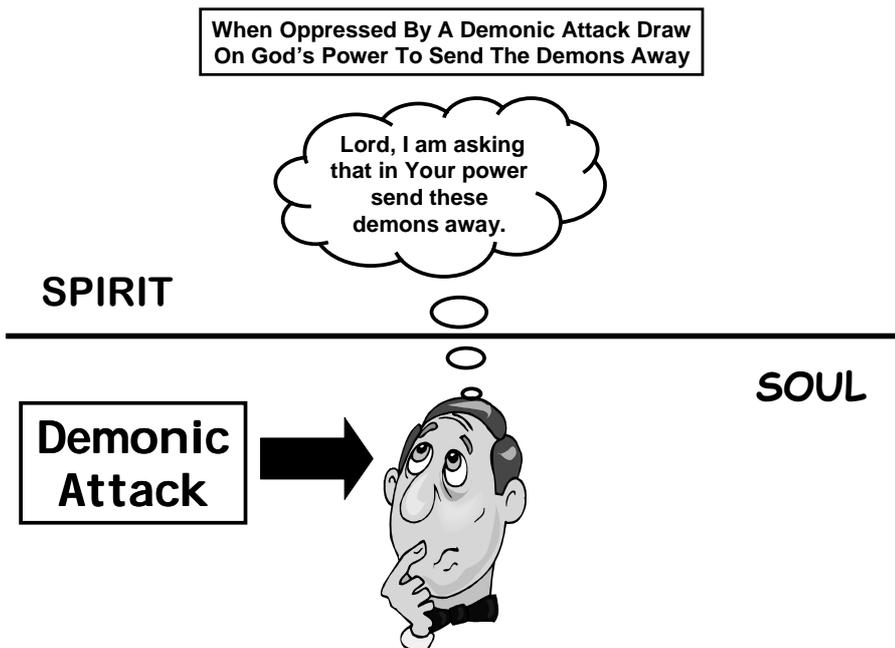
It may take some time before Satan FINALLY gives up, so continue to seek God to REMOVE any Satanic/demonic thoughts.

DAY FIVE



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.



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.

Lesson Four
Hearing From God
Renewing Of Your Mind To Believe The Truth –
Part One

DAY ONE

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. 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.

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.

DAY TWO

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.

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, 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.

***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.***

DAY THREE

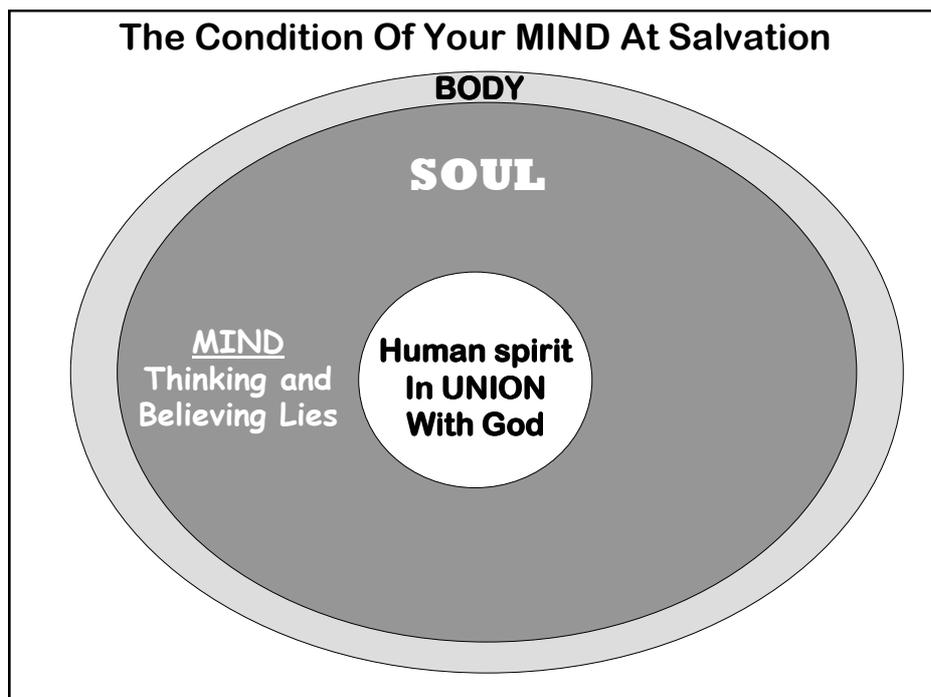
Renewing Of Your Mind

*“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. The diagram below illustrates the condition of the mind at salvation:



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.

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.

DAY FOUR

Hindrances To God Renewing Your Mind

Feelings and Emotions

*“And Jehovah God called unto the man and said unto him, ‘Where art thou?’¹⁰ And 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.

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.

DAY FIVE

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 that 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 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.

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.

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.

Lesson Five

Renewing Of Your Mind To Believe The Truth – Part Two

DAY ONE

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. 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...”*

<p>Jesus, Who IS the truth, will take His truth and will set you free.</p>

What Is Your Part In The Renewing of Your Mind?

Go 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*

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, to renew your mind with the truth, and to begin setting you free from your lying beliefs.

DAY TWO

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 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.

*“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.

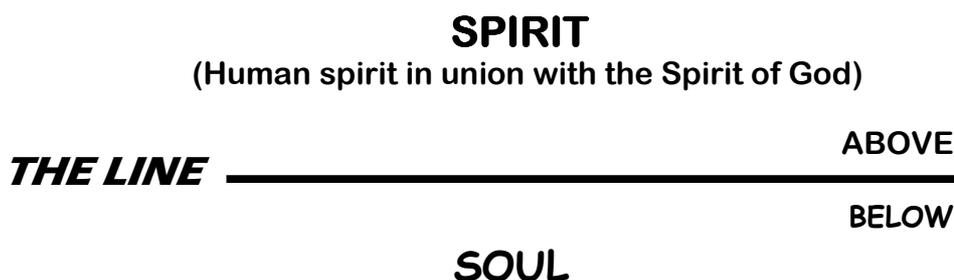
Engaging God: This is a crucial truth in that thanksgiving and praise during the transformation process is a confirmation that you are walking by faith and may not yet be experiencing the results of your transformation.

DAY THREE

“The Line”

*“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**...” Hebrews 4:12*

In Hebrews 4:12 we are reminded that the soul and the spirit are separate. Now that we understand the condition of the two, look at an illustration that we will use throughout the rest of the study that I call “**The Line**.” In the illustration below I call above “the line” living from your spirit. Your spirit is your human spirit in union with the Spirit of God. Below “the line” is living from your soul.



Two More Things That We Need To Know About The Soul and Spirit

Unseen Versus The Seen Realm

2 Corinthians 4:18 says:

“So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

The unseen realm is the spirit realm in which God lives and moves. As Christians we live in the unseen realm of our union with God as we walk in dependence on Him. The seen realm is the place where life takes place in our soul. It is the place of our five senses.

Being able to live in the UNSEEN realm is a reality only for Christians.

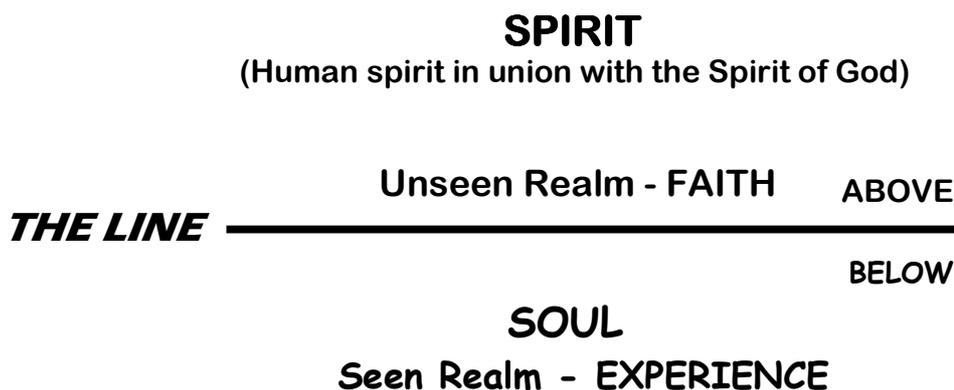
Faith Versus Experience

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

There are two more distinctions that we need to make concerning the seen and the unseen realms. The place where we walk by faith referred to in 2 Corinthians 5:7 is in the unseen realm of our union with God. The seen realm in our soul is the place of “sight” or experience. It is in the soul that we feel and experience life moment by moment.

God’s desire is that the realm of faith will become a GREATER reality than the realm of experience.

It is important to separate the two “lives” because faith does not necessarily include feelings and/or experience. (We will study this principle in greater depth later in the study.) Remember that faith must always have an object, and the object of the Christian’s faith is God. Let’s now add these two principles to our line diagram:



Question: Why do you think that God wants the unseen realm of faith to become a greater reality than the seen, experiential realm?

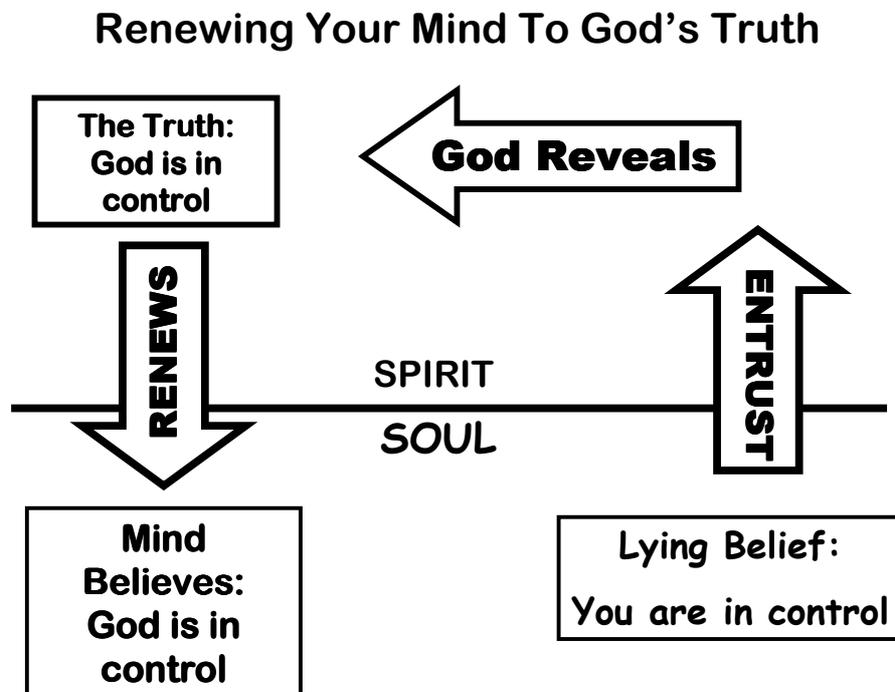
Engage God: Ask God to begin transforming your life so that you will have spiritual eyes to see and live from the unseen realm of faith.

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 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.



DAY FOUR

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

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 in the “seen” realm below “the line.” You can live above “the line” and 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!

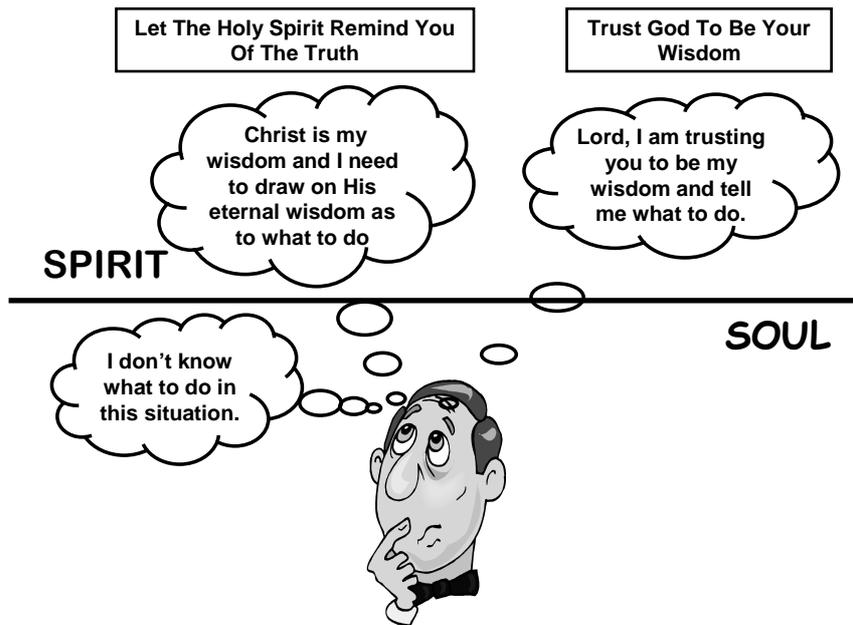
Mind of Christ

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.



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

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

DAY FIVE

Some Examples of Thinking in the Flesh Versus Thinking With The Mind of Christ

The Mind Will Say:

“It’s impossible.”

“I can’t figure it out.”

“He/she is not meeting my needs,”

“I can’t do it anymore.”

“I can do it.”

“I feel incomplete.”

The Mind of Christ Says:

“All things are possible in Christ.”
(Luke 18:27)

“I will direct your steps.”
(Proverbs 20:24)

“I will supply all your needs.”
(Philippians 4:19)

“My grace is sufficient for you.”
(2 Corinthians 12:9)

“Apart from Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

“In Him you are complete.”
(Colossians 2:10)

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.**

LYING BELIEFS

Lying Beliefs About Yourself:

I feel or believe that I am:

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

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	Uncaring	Not compassionate
Only loving conditionally	Expecting performance	A taskmaster

Lying Beliefs About Others:

I must compare 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 do something 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 is 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.

Fleshly Behaviors

Be self-absorbed (self-consumed)

become overly introspective
feel sorry for myself (self-pity)
get depressed
beat up on myself
play the role of victim/martyr
focus on my suffering to get
attention and sympathy
be jealous of another's success
and happiness

Withdraw (isolate myself)

be aloof (pull away)
distance myself from others
avoid others (be a loner)
go into a shell
become unapproachable
give them the silent treatment
refuse to communicate

Escape (pain/pressure) by using:

promiscuity carousing
drugs and alcohol talking
staying busy school
hobbies/games reading
computers fantasy
television movies
pornography sleep
overeating religion
work/career sex

Be anxious (worry and fret)

be fearful (apprehensive)
lack peace and rest
become paralyzed (numb)
be paranoid (overly suspicious)
refuse to see the positive
(gloom and doom thinking)
assume the worst

Seek guidance from:

astrology/horoscopes,
fortune telling and/or
the occult

Be self-disciplined (self-reliant)

base acceptance of self and
others on performance
become a perfectionist
try hard so as not to fail
fear making mistakes
be legalistic:
live "by the book"
feel obligated (have to's,
should's, ought to's)
be too hard on myself/others
set unrealistic standards for
myself/others

Become obsessed with:

accomplishments
recognition/status
acquiring material things
what others think of me
how I look physically
my physical health
the past (especially past hurts
and failures)
a devotion to a cause
structure, order and regulations

Become dominant

be dictatorial (bossy)
be demanding (pushy)
be overbearing (controlling)
intimidate others
refuse to give in

Stay in control through:

blackmail (making threats)
manipulation (use of guilt, pity,
silence, flattery, etc.)
coercion (physical threats)
profanity (swearing)
passivity (playing helpless)
not eating (anorexia/bulimia)

Lack compassion, gentleness

understanding, kindness, love
become defensive

Be self-righteous (self-justifying)

make excuses (rationalize)
cover up and hide mistakes
have to prove my point
assume I am never the problem
blame someone or something
else as the problem
avoid taking responsibility for
failure or problems
have difficulty: apologizing,
admitting I was wrong,
asking for forgiveness,
asking for help, and/or
expressing gratitude
have a superior attitude
(saying in effect):
"I know what is best"
"My way is the right way"

Be critical (judgmental)

find fault with others, myself
and everything around me
nit-pick things to death
be prejudiced (intolerant)
complain a lot (nothing is
ever good enough)

Be self-assured (self-confident)

depend on myself instead of
God or others
become proud (haughty)
be egocentric (act pompous)
brag (be boastful)
become arrogant (cocky)
become conceited (smug)

Come across as insensitive,

uncaring, unsympathetic,
indifferent or unconcerned

Be complacent (nonchalant)

say things like, "it's okay" or
"it doesn't matter."

Fleshly Behaviors (Continued)

Be pessimistic (negative)
lack confidence and optimism
be skeptical (suspicious)
distrust others, myself, God,
church and/or government
expect the worst
never be pleased with self
or others
never be satisfied or content

Become hostile

be unfriendly
be sarcastic (caustic)
be cynical (contemptuous)
be hateful (mean-spirited)
be cruel (malicious)
have a quick temper
rant and rave to vent my anger
be physically abusive
be verbally abusive
break things

Hold a grudge (be resentful)
become moody (sulk)
harbor bitterness
be unforgiving
keep a scorecard of offenses
try to get even (seek revenge)
want others to fail or get hurt
punish myself or others

Fight unfair (take cheap shots)
be slanderous
misrepresent the situation
gossip (talk behind their back)
engage in passive-aggressive
behavior: use humor to hide
real feelings, forget things,
refuse to communicate, be
late, procrastinate, etc.)

Be self-deprecating

assume I am always the problem
become overly apologetic
be too hard on myself
be uncomfortable with success
or happiness
have difficulty receiving: love,
compliments, forgiveness

be unable to forgive myself

Challenge others

resist authority
be uncooperative (inflexible)
be unteachable (close-minded)
cause dissention (strife)
be irritating (aggravate others)
be argumentative
be stubborn (unyielding)
be unreasonable

Deny reality

ignore problems and hope they
will go away
deny anything is bad or wrong
be subjective instead of objective
deceive others and myself
lie to self and others
exaggerate (overstate matters)
play games to hide real intent

Put up a front

hide what I really think and feel
pretend to be something I'm not
put on a show to impress others
and/or get attention
fake it (act like I know something
even when I don't)
be pretentious (phony, unreal)
be superficial (never let anyone
get to close)

Be passive (lack initiative)

quit too easily (give up)
don't take chances (play it safe)
wait for someone to tell me how
to think and what to do
vacillate (be too changeable)
be indecisive (let others make
decisions for me)
avoid failure at all costs
procrastinate (put things off)
be irresponsible (unreliable)
be lazy (apathetic, lethargic)

Be tense ("on guard")

find it hard to relax
be restless (feel like I have to be
doing something)

become impatient

be easily agitated

Become emotionally insulated

avoid intimacy
have difficulty expressing
feelings and opinions
suppress (stuff) emotions
be inhibited (restrained)

Live by my feelings

believe that truth is what I feel
be too sensitive to criticism
take things too personally
(be hypersensitive)
be touchy (irritable)
be controlled by fear, anger,
doubts and insecurities
automatically, read in rejection
(think "it's about me")

Be a pleaser (be nice)

try to keep everyone happy
avoid conflict/keep the peace
say what I think others want
be overly compliant
submissive
have difficulty saying "no" and
setting boundaries
can't stand up for myself
afraid to disappoint others
give in to others too easily

Be a caretaker (rescuer)

be overprotective
be overly responsible
become too involved with
other's affairs/concerns
be possessive (too invested)
talk too much and listen poorly
make decisions for others
give unsolicited advice

Be too serious (intense)

be overly analytical
become stoical (unemotional)
not be able to have fun
be formal and businesslike
lack joy or life

