

THE BATTLE OF THE MIND



Disillusioned
Dependent
Unforgiving
Frustrated
Worthless
Peace
Helpless
TRUSTING
Hopeless
FREE
VICTORIOUS
Worthy
LOVED
Insecure
Rejected
Condemned
Ashamed
CHRIST-CONFIDENT
GUILTY

Bill Loveless
Christ Is Life Ministries

The Battle Of The Mind

Bill Loveless

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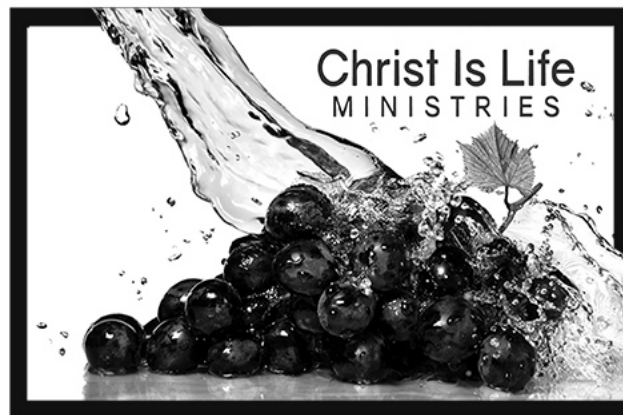
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The Battle Of The Mind

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The Layout of This Study

I want to thank you for choosing this study. I believe this is a crucial study for every Christian to understand. God has been using the truths in this study to radically change my life. My desire is that you not only learn these truths but 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 the “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 we have. My hope is you will see “Engaging God” as a “stop sign” and take a break from the study to talk to God. This is the primary way you will move from intellectual understanding to life application of these truths.

The Word “Meditation”

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

“Just consider and meditate on Him who endured from sinners such bitter hostility against Himself....” Hebrews 12:3 (AMP)

The Word “Revelation”

I will be using the word “revelation” several times throughout the study. This is a key word that simply means 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 and 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 make 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, others and the Christian life. He then wants to move you from believing the lies to believing the truth. 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.

LESSON ONE

The Foundational Truth For Winning The Battle of The Mind

DAY ONE

What Are You Thinking?

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

You have an average number of 50,000 thoughts per day. Concerning these thoughts, let me ask you a question:

Do you **THINK** about what you think **ABOUT**?

What I mean by this question is, “What do you do with your thoughts? Do you evaluate or question or filter your thoughts? Do you take ownership of all your thoughts? Do you question the origin of your thoughts? Do you believe all your thoughts, or do you measure your thoughts against God’s truth? How many of these 50,000 thoughts do you think are godly, truthful thoughts versus sinful, fleshly, and lying thoughts? What most people tell me is that they don’t think about what they think about. Their mind is like living in a home with no front door. Any and every thought that wants to come into their minds simply comes in.

Imagine if you were living in a crime-ridden neighborhood and I told you to unbolt your deadbolt, unlock your lock and then take the door off the hinges and put it in the garage. What would be your response? You probably would say I am crazy. However, aren’t you doing the same thing with your mind by letting every thought come through the door of your mind? So many Christians I have talked to tell me that they never thought about questioning or filtering their thoughts. As a result, they let every thought come into their minds. Therefore, it is crucial that we think about what we are thinking about.

If you want to get a sense of how many thoughts are flowing through your mind, 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 ongoing problems with your spouse, your kids, your relationships, your finances, or your work, etc. You may even try to turn off your thoughts or try to redirect them only to find out your mind has a “mind” of its own. It is amazing how we can get into these “mental” squirrel cages and keep thinking the same things over and over.

What might be some of the results you don't filter your thoughts? Especially if they were sinful, fleshly thoughts? Here are some results I have personally experienced and some I have observed in others I have ministered to.

- Take ownership of every thought comes into your mind including fleshly, lying, sinful thoughts.
- Those thoughts can tempt you or lead you into sin.
- Thoughts eventually create false beliefs.
- Repetitive sinful thoughts can lead to sin strongholds/addictions
- Keep you from living a Christ-centered and abundant life.
- You will lose the battle for your mind.

I don't know how you answered all the questions in this section, but if you are not really thinking about what you think about then some of these results above might apply to you. None of those things listed are what God intends for any Christian. In fact, He intends just the opposite.

There Is a Non-Stop Battle Raging for Control of Your Mind.

According to Romans 7:23, there is a non-stop battle being waged in our minds:

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

As a Christian, you likely already recognize there is a battle raging in your mind. It is an ongoing battle for control of what you think.

Therefore, since most of our current struggles started with one thought, it is crucial to:

- Know the ORIGIN of that thought (Is it from God or my flesh or Satan?)
- Know the TRUTH of that thought (Does it line up with God's truth?)
- Take every fleshly, sinful thought CAPTIVE (Engage God's power to take the thought captive.)
- Seek God to RENEW your mind and REPLACE the sinful, fleshly thoughts with His truth. (Only God can accomplish this.)

Think about it for a moment. If we could develop “holy habits” of practicing just these four things I listed above, how might that change our thought life? Therefore, I have written this curriculum for you to:

- Better understand the battle in your mind.
- Understand the foundation necessary to win this battle.
- Know the enemies we are facing in the battle.
- Learn the consequences if we don't fight this battle.
- How to engage God to win the battle.
- God's process of renewing our minds.

This battle is between your thinking spiritual, truthful thoughts versus sinful, fleshly lying thoughts.

The Battle Is Between The Truth and The Lie

Another way of expressing this is that the battle is between the truth and the lie. You may know John 8:32 which says:

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

We know the “truth” that John is referring to is God’s truth. The good news is God’s truth will set us free. Think about the converse of this verse:

***If the truth will set you free, what does BELIEVING
and LIVING from the LIE result in?***

Continuing to live from the lie results in bondage to your false beliefs and fleshly behaviors and will keep you from living THE Christian life. I know this is true because I lived a lie for thirty years concerning living THE Christian life with the result that I continually lost the battle for my mind and I stayed in bondage to my false beliefs. Therefore, I want to start this study with the foundational truth that is essential to understand in order to win the battle for your mind.

The Foundation For Winning the Battle of The Mind

***The FOUNDATION for winning the battle of the mind is
UNDERSTANDING and LIVING “THE” Christian life.***

I share this because there are two ways that Christians are living the Christian life: either “A” Christian life or “THE” Christian life. I would like to share a short version of my story which includes living “A” Christian life versus “THE” Christian life.

“A” Christian Life

I trusted Christ for salvation at age 18. As I began my Christian journey I asked the questions, “**Tell ME what to DO to live the Christian life?**” I thought this was the right question to ask because everything in my life up until that point I learned to do and then did it. What I was told was that it was up to me with God’s help to live the Christian life. In other words, I was to use my ability, intellect, willpower, and self-discipline to live a successful Christian life.

I call this form of Christian living “A” Christian life. It was a “self-sufficient, God help me” Christian life. To live the “A” life I was told to do the following things:

- **TRY** to keep a set of rules.

- **TRY** to keep God's commands.
- **TRY** to change or transform myself.
- **TRY** to stop sinning.
- **TRY** set myself free.
- **TRY** to produce the fruit of the Spirit

I was told that these things were what I must **TRY** to “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 tried to accomplish in order to please God and to truly be a Christ-follower. I was told (and eventually believed) that if I did enough for God, He would be pleased and I would be happy. I was also taught that if I did these things God would reciprocate by giving me such things as freedom, victory, and transformation. I “tried” for 30 years to do these things because I believed they were the truth. I felt like a pole vaulter trying to jump over all the “bars” of expectations that I thought God had for me. The only difference was that I did not have a pole!

However, after 30 years of living “A” Christian life, I experienced no victory, no freedom, no healing of my deep woundedness and no spiritual transformation. In fact, over those thirty years my sin strongholds of fear, anxiety, rejection and unworthiness actually got worse. By 1998, living “A” Christian life left me exhausted, depressed, suicidal and hopeless. In addition, I was losing the battle in my mind because I was told that it was up to me to win it. Where I really was is the place of “I can’t.” What do I mean by “I can’t?”

I CAN'T:

- **Stop myself from sinning.**
- **Keep God's rules and commands.**
- **Set myself free from my anxiety, inadequacy, and rejection.**
- **Attain victory over the sin patterns of anger, manipulation, and being controlling that continually defeated me.**
- **Experience healing from my woundedness.**
- **Change or transform myself.**

What about you? Is what you believe about living the Christian life working for you? Are you being set free from your fleshly behaviors? Are you experiencing ongoing victory over your sin strongholds? Are you being transformed to think, feel, choose, and behave like Christ? Are you winning the battle that is going on in your mind?

<i>If NOT, is it possible that you have been living “A” Christian life?</i>

Question: Would you take a moment and look over your Christian life and ask yourself the questions listed above? If the answer to most of these questions is “no,” it is very possible that you have been living “A” Christian life. If so, is this the Christian life that God intends for you to live or is it possible that He desires for you to live “THE” Christian life?

DAY TWO

What Is “THE” Christian Life?

When I came to the place of “I can’t,” I didn’t realize that I was at the perfect place to hear the truth about living “THE” Christian life. It was on October 4, 1998 when Ian Thomas, founder of Torchbearers, was invited to our church to speak. I didn’t know who he was but God radically changed the direction of my life when I heard Ian Thomas say these words: **“God never intended for you to live THE life that only Christ can live in and through you.”**

These words pierced my heart because the Lord revealed to me two critical truths. One is that I can’t live THE Christian life and two, there is only One person who can and that is Jesus. You see, if I had been living out of the truth then I would have been experiencing God’s promises of victory, freedom, and transformation. However, I was not experiencing any of these promises. The problem is that the “truth” that I was told was actually a lie (false belief). I am not saying that the person who shared these things with me was intentionally lying to me. They were only sharing with me what they believed to be true. Let me sum up the lie or false belief about living the Christian life.

***I can never SUCCESSFULLY live THE Christian life by
My trying to be the SOURCE with God’s help.***

What God revealed to me at that moment was that my living “A” Christian was a lie since that was not the Christian life that God intended for me to live nor was it even possible. This started me on a new journey of understanding and living “THE” Christian life. You may be at the same place I was. If so, I want to share with you a few truths that will change the way you look at your Christian life.

The Truth Concerning “THE” Christian Life

To define THE Christian life, I want to start with the words of Jesus:

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

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

What is Jesus telling us in these passages? He is telling us this:

The Christian life is a PERSON. It is Christ HIMSELF.

Have you understood before now that Christ Himself is THE Christian life? Think about this for a moment. If “THE” Christian life is a Person, does that mean “THE” Christian life is not about completing a checklist, trying to keep a set of rules, trying to keep from sinning, or trying to do your best to live for God?

The truth is that the Christian life is not about living “A” life. It is about living “THE” life. The problem is that you and I cannot live “THE” life. There is only one Person who has led a perfect Christian life and that is Christ.

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.

Paul Affirms That THE Christian Life Is Jesus Christ

We see Paul affirming THE Christian life being Jesus Christ in Philippians 1:21:

*“For me, to live **IS** Christ [Himself]....”*

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 is saying, “To live to me **IS** Christ.”

Question: Does it make any difference to you that Paul himself believed that THE Christian life is Christ Himself rather than Paul trying to keep certain rules, keep God’s commands, etc.?

Question: Have you tried to keep God’s commands? Have you kept every command and kept it consistently? If not, is it possible that the only person who can keep God’s commands is Christ?

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

Engaging God: If you are having a difficult time understanding the words of Jesus or Paul, ask the Lord to give you divine understanding of these verses.

What Does It Mean That Christ Is THE Life?

The next question that you may be asking is, “What does it mean that Christ is THE life?” Paul sums up the answer to that question in 1 Corinthians 1:30 (NRV):

*“**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 in the first part of the verse when He says that He is the SOURCE of your life in Christ. One of the definitions for the word “source” is “the one who produces.” This may be a new truth for you because so many Christians have been taught falsely,

as I was, that they are to be the source to produce the Christian life with God's help. There can only be ONE true source from which to live the Christian life.

***The truth is that CHRIST, NOT you, is the SOURCE
to PRODUCE THE Christian life.***

Look at two other verses that reveal that Christ 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

Question: What are some words that come to mind when you think of the word "source?"

Meditate: On 1 Corinthians 1:30. Acts 17:28 and Romans 11:36

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to give you a deeper understanding of what it means that Christ is your Source for living the Christian life.

To give you a clearer understanding of Christ as your Source, let's look at two key ways that occurs.

DAY THREE

Christ Is The Source To Meet Your Needs

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

Another way of saying this is that Christ is the Source to meet every one of your needs. Look at the list below. What are the things you need from this list?

When it says that God will supply your needs IN Christ, that means that Christ as your Source IS your:

Unconditional love	Victory	Worth	Acceptance	Faith
Freedom	Patience	Strength	Peace	Power
Forgiveness	Understanding	Security	Fearlessness	Wisdom
Discernment	Adequacy	Humility	Christ-Confidence	Boldness
Righteousness	Selflessness	Rest	Compassion	Courage
Hope	Gentleness	Christ-Control	Faithfulness	Joy

Even though we can apply human connotations to these words, these are Christ-like characteristics that are supernatural (not human) and can ONLY be provided by Christ. Let me give you an example of what it looks like to appropriate these Christ-like characteristics.

Example: “Lord, I am experiencing rejection. I am trusting You to BE my acceptance.”

Think about this for a moment: All of these things listed above are available to you through Christ every moment.

Which of these Christ-life characteristics do you want to experience more of?

Steps of faith: Take each of the characteristics listed above and begin taking steps of faith:

“Lord, I am experiencing _____. I am trusting you to BE my _____.”

Another way to explain Christ as our Source is that He is the Source to produce His promises.

God Will Be Your Source To Produce His Promises

The following are some of the promises that God, as your Source will produce in your life.

- **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 your mind to believe God’s truth versus your false beliefs.

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

- **HEALING** – of your past and present woundedness.

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

Question: Which of these promises would you most like to experience in your life? Can you produce these promises using your intellect, willpower, knowledge of the Bible, and self-discipline?

Meditate: on these promises and ask the Holy Spirit to begin making them an experiential reality in your life.

The Result Of Experiencing God’s Promises Is A TRANSFORMED Life

If you were experiencing those promises, would you agree that your life would be changed? I think you would. You see, God promises to transform your life in Romans 12:2:

*“Do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed....**”
Romans 12:2*

We all want to be changed but we must come to the place where we realize that the only Source for change is Jesus. In addition to transforming us by His promises, He wants to transform us to be like Christ to reflect the Lord’s glory.

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

Paul is telling us that we can be changed into Christ-likeness. What does Christ-likeness mean?

**Christ-Likeness is THINKING, BELIEVING, CHOOSING,
and BEHAVING like Christ.**

Can you imagine how your life would change if you were thinking, believing, choosing, and behaving like Christ?

Questions: What are the changes that you would like to see in your life? How have you been taught it is up to you to produce those changes? If so, are you changing?

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

Since Christ Is THE Christian Life What Should You Do?

Since Christ is:

- **THE Christian life;**
- **THE Source to live THE Christian life;**
- **THE only One to lead a perfect Christian life;**

then what should we do? Paul answers this question in Galatians 2:20

“..... I no longer live, but Christ lives IN me...”

Think about what Paul is saying in this verse. When Paul says, “I no longer live,” he in effect is saying that he CANNOT be the source for living the Christian life. This is amazing considering all of Paul’s credentials, intellect, and capability. He clearly acknowledges that none of those things qualify him to be the source. After he admits that he cannot live the Christian life, he says, “Christ lives in me.” Paul recognizes his absolute need for Christ to live the Christian life in him.

Christ living His life in you may be a new concept for you. It was a radical concept for me, especially after trying (and failing) for thirty years to live the Christian life on my own. However, as the Lord gave me greater revelation of the meaning of Christ living in me, I became convinced that I cannot live THE life that only Christ can live.

Since you CANNOT live THE Christian life, the KEY to living THE Christian life is to LET Christ live HIS life in you.

Questions: Have you realized before now that the Christian life is about Christ living His life in you? How might this truth change the way you think about how you are to live the Christian life?

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

DAY FOUR

How Does God Being My Source Apply to the Battle for My Mind?

The answer to the question is this:

God will be the SOURCE to WIN the battle for your mind.

In addition to God being the Source to meet your needs and make His promises a reality in your life, He is also the Source to win the battle in your mind. Look at Romans 8:13.

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

As your Source to win the battle for your mind, God will:

1. TEACH you His truth.

*“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*

2. Make His truth become REVELATION to you.

*“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of **revelation in the knowledge of Him**.” Ephesians 1:17*

3. RENEW your mind to believe His truth.

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

4. REMIND you of His truth in the midst of the battle.

*“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*

5. OVERPOWER the enemies in the battle of the mind.

*“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)*

We will talk about this last point in a later chapter. The key truth to understand for now is that God is the only One who can win this battle for your mind. Why can't we win this battle?

Why Can't You Win the Battle for Your Mind?

Look at the last part of John 15:5 which answers this question:

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

When I teach this verse in a conference, the question I always ask is, “What does nothing mean?” The answer is simple: **Nothing**. In reference to the battle of the mind “nothing” means that apart from the power of God, you cannot win the battle of the mind. This is another reason why God put the fullness of Himself in us.

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

God put His life and power in us because without His power indwelling us, we would never overcome the enemies that we face and win the battle.

Here are some other key reasons why we need God to do battle for us?

- We can be deceived in our thinking
- We can't discern between truthful thoughts and lying thoughts.
- We have “established” patterns of fleshly thinking that we are not aware of how much they are negatively impacting our lives.
- We have taken ownership of fleshly thoughts for so long that they have become reinforced false beliefs/strongholds that we cannot set ourselves free from.
- Our willpower is no match for the thoughts inserted into our minds by the flesh, the power of sin, and Satan/demons.

I hope that this section helps you understand that apart from the power of God, we have no chance to win the battle.

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

Meditate: on John 15:5 as it relates to the battle in your mind. Also meditate on the reasons listed above that reveal why we need the Holy Spirit to do battle for us.

DAY FIVE

What Is YOUR Part In Winning The Battle?

Even though God is the One who will win the battle for your mind, you have a vital part to play in the battle. 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 living 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 is for us to live in moment by moment

DEPENDENCE 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.

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.

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? The same holds true when it comes to the battle for your mind. Here is your part in the battle:

Your Part In The Battle:

Live with an ATTITUDE of DEPENDENCE upon God as the Source to

OVERPOWER your enemies in the battle and win the battle.

You may be asking yourself questions like these at this point. "How can living dependent on Christ win the battle of my mind? This seems so passive. Is there more for me to do to win this battle?" I understand if you are asking these questions. However, I believe that you will see

as we get further into the study what it looks like practically to depend on God for Him to win the battle.

Question: In addition to winning the battle in your mind, what do you think might be some of the results in your life if you, as a spiritual branch, lived in moment by moment dependence on 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 assent 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 concerning the battle in your mind as well as the rest of your spiritual walk.

The Rest of My Story

I want to end this section by sharing with you how God transformed my life since I have allowed Christ to live THE Life in me. Since I heard the truth about Christ being THE Life on October 4, 1998, God began a work to transform the way that I think, feel, choose, and behave. By trusting Christ to live in me, I have been set free from my strongholds of inadequacy, fear, anger, rejection, and unworthiness. I have been set free from the bitterness and unforgiveness I had towards my dad who physically, emotionally, and verbally abused me. Don’t get me wrong. There are still issues that God is transforming but these are some examples of what the Lord can do when we depend on Him to live His life in us.

God so transformed my life that I left a very good business to go into ministry to share these same truths with other Christians who, like I was, are living “A” life and not “THE” life. From this point on, my prayer for you is that you will engage the Holy Spirit to give you further revelation and understanding of what it means for Christ to live THE life in you.

[Note: If understanding the difference between “A” Christian Life and “THE” Christian life is a new concept for you, I would encourage you to learn more through two resources that we offer on our website. There is a booklet under the Discipleship Booklet section of our website called “A” Life? or “THE” Life?. There is also a curriculum called *Living Life From A New Source* under the Discipleship Curriculum section of our website. The curriculum outlines in greater depth how to live THE Christian life and how to apply these truths to every area of your life. There are also videos that accompany this study.]

Summary

The key points in this lesson:

- Do you THINK about what you think ABOUT?
- There is a NON-STOP battle going on in your mind.
- The FOUNDATION for winning the battle of the mind is knowing the difference between “A” Christian life and “THE” Christian life.
- “THE” Christian life is Christ HIMSELF.
- Christ is our SOURCE to meet our needs, keep his promises, and win the battle for our minds.
- We CANNOT win the battle in our minds using our strength, willpower, and self-discipline.
- Our part is to TOTALLY DEPEND on God to win the battle for our minds.

LESSON TWO

Key Truths Concerning the Battle of The Mind Your Enemies in the Battle

DAY ONE

Introduction

In this lesson, first, we are going to look at some key truths that will help you better understand the battle; and second, we are going to look at each of the four main enemies that we face in the battle.

Key Truths Concerning The Battle Of The Mind

Here are some key truths that I hope will help you understand the battle that goes on in your mind.

TRUTH #1 - The battle for the control of your mind will last a LIFETIME.

I wish I could tell you that there is a point in your Christian walk where the battle will be over but the truth is that this battle lasts a lifetime. This is because we live in fallen bodies influenced by our flesh, the world and Satan. These negative influences are not going away until we die. I don't want to discourage you by this but I feel it is important for you to understand that we never reach the place this side of heaven where the battle will be over. That is why we must learn how to engage God to fight this battle.

TRUTH #2 - WHO wins this battle will determine whether or not you will experience a TRANSFORMED and ABUNDANT life.

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

I see so many Christians living in “defeat” in the midst of victory. Jesus not only won our victory at the cross, He is our victory moment by moment. The key is understanding how to live FROM the victory we already have. Therefore, as we continue to engage God, we will be transformed. If we fail to engage God to win this battle, then we will never experience a transformed or abundant life.

Question: Have you realized before that you are not trying to gain the victory but you already have the victory in Christ?

Meditate: on the truth that we are not working FOR victory but we are living FROM the victory Jesus won on the cross.

TRUTH #3 - There are no PACIFISTS in this battle.

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

There are no pacifists or anyone sitting on the sidelines in this battle. Even though there may be Christians that are acting like conscientious objectors, you cannot afford to not fight this battle. That is why Paul exhorts Timothy to fight. Remember this key truth:

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

TRUTH #4 – There will be CONSEQUENCES to LOSING the battle of your mind.

If we don't engage in the battle, then this is what we can expect:

- **NO power** over your sin.
- **NO victory** over your fleshly behaviors.
- **NO freedom** from your defeating sin patterns.
- **NO healing** of your past or present woundedness.
- **NO transformation**

Each one of these consequences represents a promise that God made us that we can receive only as we live in moment by moment dependence on Him. If you decide not to fight the battle, you will lose out on ever experiencing God's promises. Another potential consequence is that you will harden your heart towards God which will result in increased resistance to God and the work of the Holy Spirit to transform your life. Let me sum it up this way:

***To AVOID these consequences, you really have NO other
OPTION but to engage God to WIN the battle in your mind.***

Question: Are you experiencing any of the consequences listed above? If so, is it possible that you are not engaged in the battle for your mind?

In the next lesson we will see further consequences of not entering into the battle.

TRUTH #5 - As a Christian You Have Three SPIRITUAL FILTERS to Win the Battle

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

Filter #1 – GOD'S WORD

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

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

***God’s truth is able to discern the ORIGIN of your thoughts and to
EVALUATE them so you will know if they are from God or not.***

Meditate: on Hebrews 4:12 and seek the Spirit to give you a deeper understanding of this verse and how it applies to the battle in your mind.

DAY TWO

Filter #2 - 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.

What this means to you as a Christian is that you no longer have to try to use your finite mind or discernment to figure out whether or not your thoughts are the truth or not. Rather, you can draw on Christ’s discernment, wisdom, etc. to filter your thoughts. We will learn how to practically engage the mind of Christ in Lesson Four.

Meditate: on 1 Corinthians 2:16.

Questions: Have you or are you now trying to figure some issue or struggle in your finite mind and can’t seem to come up with an answer? Write that issue/struggle down.

Is it possible that God won’t let you figure it out apart from drawing on His wisdom, discernment or understanding? Here is a step of faith to engage God.

Step of faith: “Lord, I can’t figure out what (or why) this is going on? I am asking you to BE my wisdom, discernment and understanding and figure this situation out for me?”

Engaging God: Seek the Lord to give you a deeper understanding of what it means to have the mind of Christ and how living from Christ’s wisdom, discernment, etc. can become your spiritual filter.

Filter #3 - The HOLY SPIRIT

Just knowing the word of God intellectually is not enough. Biblical information must become revelation which is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. Revelation means that the Holy Spirit supernaturally takes His truth and makes it understandable and applicable to you and your life situations. Look at the following verses that bear this out:

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

*“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*

Why must Biblical truth move from just information to revelation?

Spiritual REVELATION creates a SPIRITUAL filter for your thoughts.

Let's use the truth that you have the mind of Christ as an example. For years when I read 1 Corinthians 2:16 that I had the mind of Christ, I had no clue what that meant. Since it was information and not revelation, it did me no good practically. However, when the Holy Spirit revealed to me that having the mind of Christ means that I have Christ's discernment, wisdom, etc. then I began drawing on Christ's discernment to determine the origin of my thoughts.

Paul also reveals to us that the word of God is the sword of the Holy Spirit.

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

I believe this is important because:

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

Questions: Is scripture for the most part just information for you or are you experiencing ongoing revelation from the Holy Spirit about God's word? If it is more information than revelation, then begin asking the Lord to make that information revelation for you. Here is an example of what that might look like.

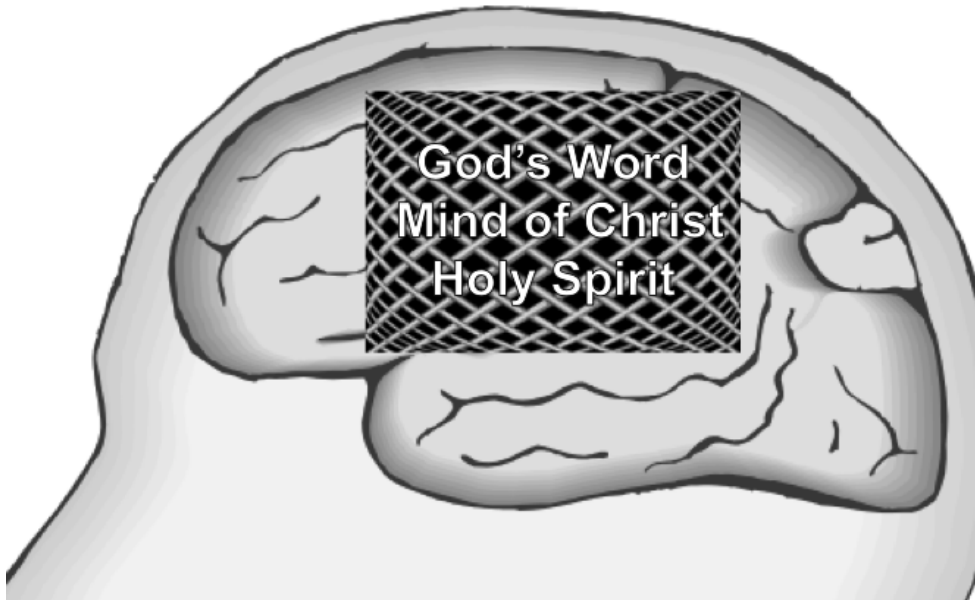
Step of Faith: "Lord, this part of your Word does not make sense to me. I am asking You to take this verse from information to personal revelation."

Meditate: on why it is crucial to engage the Holy Spirit to take God's word and make it personal revelation to you.

Engaging God: Begin asking the Holy Spirit to give you revelation of His truth, and use that truth to filter out your fleshly, sinful thoughts.

Here is an illustration showing the three filters in your mind. (I am using the brain in the diagram as an illustration of the mind even though we know they are different from one another.)

You Have Three “Spiritual” Filters



Exercise: Write down what you believe might be some of the consequences if you don't use these three filters in fighting the battle in your mind.

DAY THREE

What (or Who) Are the Enemies of Your Mind in this Battle?

Introduction

One of the key axioms of warfare is to know your enemy. It is no different with the battle of the mind. It is essential in fighting the battle of the mind to know your enemies. In order to lay the groundwork for understanding our enemies, let's look at the makeup of man.

The Makeup Of Man

1 Thessalonians 5:23 reveals to us God's design of man:

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your [human] spirit and soul and body be preserved complete....”

We know that spirit in this verse refers to human spirit because it is spirit with a small “s.”

This verse reveals that man is a three-part being. We are made up of a **body**, a **soul**, and a **human spirit**.

BODY – The body represents the **physical** body or that part of you which is seen. This is how you relate to the physical world. This is the place of your five senses. This is the dwelling place of the next two parts of your being: the soul and the human spirit. They may be a little more difficult to understand because they are unseen. The body will pass away, but the soul and the spirit are eternal.

SOUL – The soul is your **personality** or the psychological part of you through which you relate to people and to the circumstances of life. The soul is made up of your **mind** (Proverbs 23:7), **will** (1 Corinthians 7:37a), and **emotions** (Luke 10:33).

HUMAN SPIRIT – The third part of your being is your human spirit. (The human spirit is not to be confused with the Holy Spirit because everyone has a human spirit from birth.) When God said in Genesis 1:26 that He created man in His likeness, He meant that He created man first and foremost as a “**spirit**” **being**. John 4:24 reveals that we, as spirit beings, can worship God:

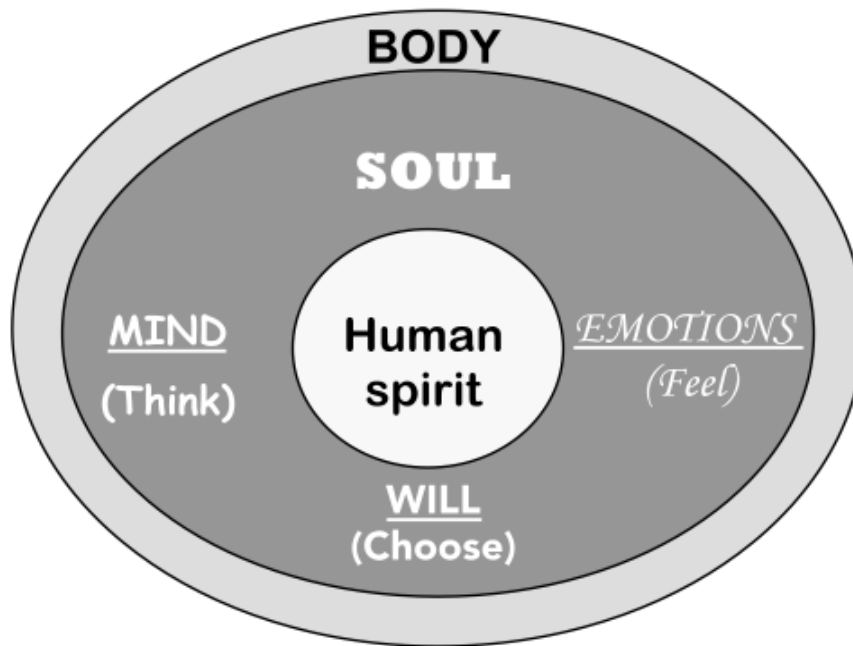
“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

In addition to worshipping God from our human spirit, it is also from our human spirit that we learn from God (Job 32:8); commune with Him (Psalm 51:12); receive His revelation and wisdom (Ephesians 1:17); and, most importantly, are able to have an intimate relationship with God (Romans 8:16).

However, this ability to have an intimate spiritual relationship with God is only available after you received the Holy Spirit who is in union with your human spirit, which occurred at the point you trusted Christ by faith for salvation. On the following page is a diagram that illustrates the three parts of man.

The Makeup of Man

1 Thessalonians 5:23



I will use this diagram in the next section to illustrate how our enemies in the battle of the mind negatively impact our soul and body.

What We Need to Know to Understand These Enemies

1. Our enemies are UNSEEN.

*“For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the **unseen world**, against mighty powers in this **dark world**, and against evil spirits in the **heavenly places**.” Ephesians 6:12*

The first thing we need to understand about our enemies is that they are unseen. In Ephesians 6:12, we see the words, “unseen world,” “dark world,” and “heavenly places.” These all refer to an unseen realm that we are blind to. This is why we can’t win this battle apart from the Holy Spirit because only He has “spiritual” eyes to see our enemies.

Without engaging the Holy Spirit to fight the battle we are fighting BLIND.

Questions: Can you possibly fight an enemy you cannot see? Do you see how necessary God is in being your spiritual eyes to see the enemies we face?

Meditate: on Ephesians 6:12 and why we need the Holy Spirit to fight for us against these unseen enemies.

2. The enemies' OBJECTIVES in the battle.

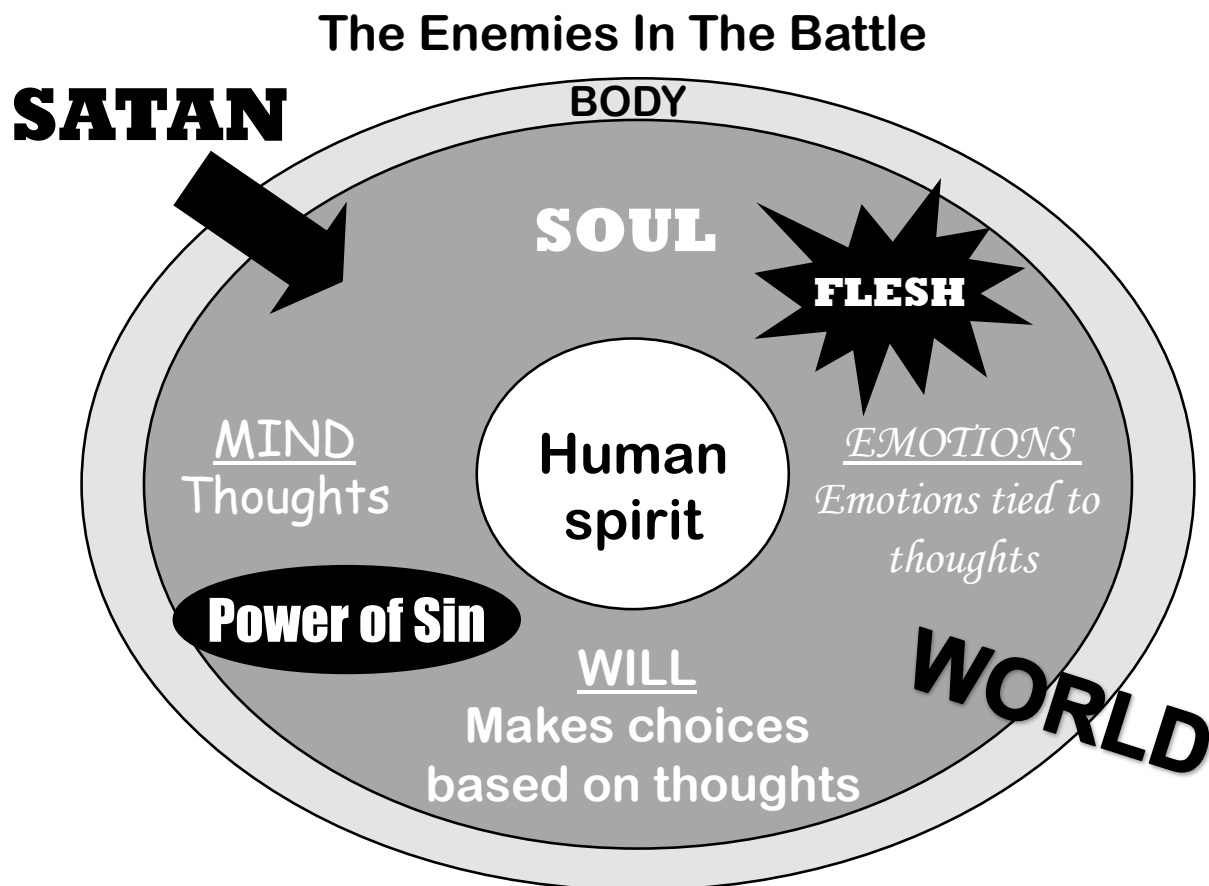
The second thing we need to understand is what these enemies' objectives are in the battle. Let's look at a few of those objectives:

- To insert thoughts into your mind that will TEMPT you to live from your flesh.
- To insert thoughts that will REINFORCE your false beliefs.
- To keep you in BONDAGE to your false beliefs.
- To eventually MOVE YOU AWAY from living dependently on Christ.

While there are other objectives our enemies have as well, keep these four objectives in mind as you go through the rest of this lesson. Let's look more closely at the enemies we face.

Who Are The Enemies In The Battle?

There are four enemies in the battle of the mind: **the flesh**, **the power of sin**, **Satan/demons**, and **the world**. Let me illustrate these enemies using the makeup of man diagram.



As you can see from the diagram, you are being bombarded internally and externally with thoughts from these enemies that result in emotions linked to those thoughts. If you accept

unexamined these thoughts and resulting emotions, they will negatively impact your will and influence you to make bad fleshly choices. Let's get some insight into these four enemies of our minds.

Enemy #1 – THE FLESH

*“For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my **flesh**; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.” Romans 7:18*

THE FLESH

***is an INDEPENDENT attitude or pattern of behavior within you that says,
“I can, APART from God, solve my problems, meet my needs, and
resolve my internal and external problems.”***

DAY FOUR

1. Characteristics of The Flesh

Living from the “flesh” results in fleshly thinking which says:

- I can be in control.
- I can meet my needs.
- I can handle or overcome all of my problems.
- I can deal with every circumstance concerning my marriage, family, job, finances, etc.
- I can be a success.
- I can be my own god.

Because the DESIRE to live in the flesh is so strong, fleshly thinking ALWAYS brings us to the place of “I CAN” live INDEPENDENTLY of God.

2. Why The Flesh Is Such A Huge ROADBLOCK

“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

If you have been a Christian and have walked by faith very long, then you heartily believe what Paul said in Galatians 5:17. Look at what Paul’s flesh is causing in Romans 7:15

“For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.” Romans 7:15

Can you identify? We will struggle the rest of our life with fleshly thinking. The bad news is that our going back to our fleshly, independent thinking and living is the “default” position for all of us. In other words, it is easy to go back to the flesh because that is what we are used to doing. However, now that we are Christians, we have another option: to have our thinking controlled by the Spirit.

***Continuous fleshly thinking will lead to ONGOING
defeat in the battle of the mind.***

If you choose to live from fleshly thinking, where will that lead?

3. Living From the Flesh Leads to Living in “The PRODIGAL PIGPEN.”

When you choose to live from your fleshly thinking, the Bible tells us in Romans 8:6 that it results in “death:”

*“.. the **mind set on the flesh is DEATH**, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.”*

The word for “death” is defined in Strong’s Lexicon as “**the misery of our soul as a result of sin.**” If you continue to let your flesh influence your thinking, the inevitable result will be “misery” in your soul.

What are some examples of “misery” of the soul?

Condemnation	Stress	Anxiety	Shame	Unforgiveness
Unhappiness	Anger	Guilt	Arrogance	Bitterness
Self-pity	Inadequacy	Fear	Worry	Frustration
Unworthiness	Blame	Rejection	Insecurity	Dissatisfaction

Questions: As you read through this list, write down any of these characteristics that you are experiencing? Is it possible that these characteristics flow from your fleshly thought life?

When I give in to my fleshly thinking and live there for a while, I call that going to the “prodigal pigpen.” Remember the prodigal son who decided to live independently and ended up in a pigpen? [Luke 15:11-32]. This is what happens to us when we go to the flesh. We end up like the prodigal son “wallowing” in the mud and muck of our flesh. Peter addresses this truth in 2 Peter 2:22:

*“Of them the proverbs are true: ‘**A dog returns to its vomit**’ and, ‘**A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.**’”*

The dog returning to its vomit or a pig returning to wallowing in the mud are great pictures of the results of fleshly thinking. If this is the case, then why do we take ownership of our fleshly thoughts? Here again, it is what we are used to. As sick as it sounds, we have learned to be at home and to be comfortable with the misery of our fleshly thinking. Does that sound troublesome to you? I hope so!

The FLESH is our GREATEST enemy in the battle of the mind.

Questions: Do you find yourself going back to your “prodigal” pigpens because of the impact of your flesh on you? How do you think your flesh negatively impacts your thinking and your choices?

Meditate: on the previous truths 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.

DAY FIVE

Enemy #2 - THE POWER OF SIN

“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

What is the power of sin?

THE POWER OF SIN:

***An INTERNAL and ONGOING power in your life that seeks to
DRAW you or TEMPT you to live independently of God***

This verse says “sin” not “sins.” All of your sins were dealt with at the cross. However, you still have within your body and soul, the power of sin that is always tempting you to live life in your own intellect and ability apart from God’s life and power. This is a power that you cannot have victory over apart from Christ because your willpower is no match for the power of sin.

The power of sin interacts with your fleshly thinking. To give you a picture of how they work together, imagine eating at your favorite restaurant. The server brings you the dessert tray with all of your favorite desserts. You can’t resist, so you take one or more of the desserts. The power of sin is the server in this example, and the desserts are your fleshly thoughts. The power of sin is always serving up fleshly thoughts for you to choose to live from.

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 underlying source of my being critical and judgmental was my false belief that I was inadequate. 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, the power of sin, offered up such fleshly thoughts as, “I have the right to be critical because they offended me by what they said. I am justified in my being judgmental.” Because of my false beliefs, I instantly took ownership of those thoughts and spoke accordingly.

My false 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, you would not be critical or judgmental.”

To better engage in the battle, it is important that you become aware, in your own thought life, how the power of sin and the flesh interact with each other.

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

Question: How does the “power of sin” differ from the “flesh”? What are some of the fleshly thoughts that you think are being “served” up to you by the power of sin? (You can refer to a list of fleshly thoughts/behaviors on pages 47-48)_____

Meditate: on how the power of sin works in your life to serve up fleshly thoughts, which if taken ownership of, will produce fleshly behavior.

Engaging God: Ask the Holy Spirit to expose the areas in your life where the power of sin is serving up fleshly thoughts to you.

Enemy #3 - SATAN and HIS DEMONIC FORCES

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

“...for he [Satan] is a liar and the father of lies.” John 8:44

We are in a fierce battle with Satan and his demons Satan is a formidable foe. As I shared earlier, 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. The objective of Satan is to prevent us from walking by faith, experiencing transformation, and developing a personal, intimate relationship with God.

Satan wants to negatively impact your thought life and keep you in bondage to your false beliefs. He knows that if he can keep you believing the lies, you will never experience the transformation and abundant life God promises. In Lesson Five we will look at Satan’s strategies to defeat us in the battle for our minds.

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

Enemy #4 – 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 and immediately you will be bombarded with the world's thinking. Remember that Satan is the god of this world, and he is using all that the world offers to influence you to compare, to succeed, to win, to be strong, to be self-sufficient, and most importantly, to be independent. Satan uses our culture to entice you to want bigger, better, and always more. This infernal message, designed to sow discontentment, is the primary one you will receive 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 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 we would be surprised to know how deeply our culture influences our thought life and how much it can trigger fleshly thoughts of lust, envy, anger, anxiety, etc.

Questions: Think for a moment how our culture or the events in this world are negatively impacting your thought life? What are some thoughts that come to mind that are from the world and are negatively impacting life? _____

Engaging God: Ask God to reveal to you areas where the world is negatively impacting your thoughts and causing you to think and live from your flesh.

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

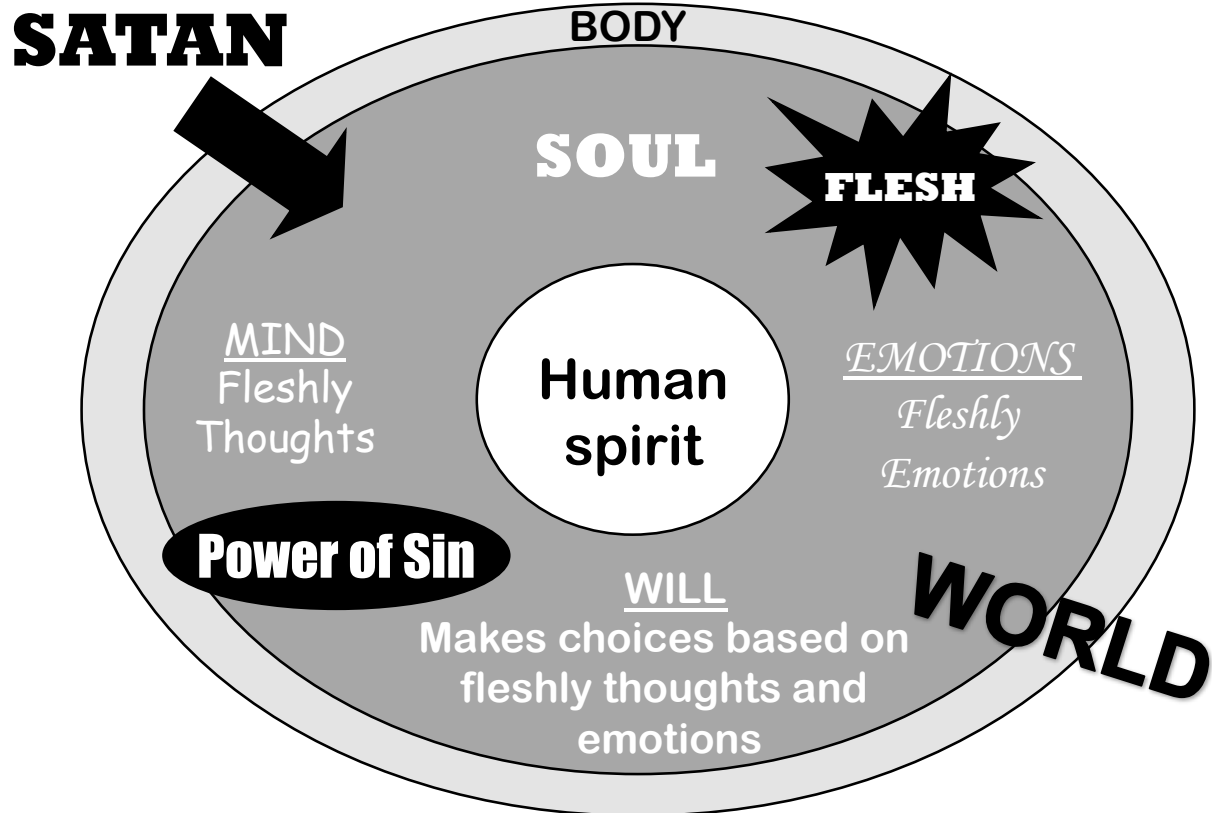
The NEGATIVE Impact Your Enemies Have On Your Soul

These enemies negatively impact your soul in the following ways:

1. Introduce fleshly thoughts into your **mind**.
2. Fleshly **emotions** will result from your fleshly thoughts.
3. Your **will** makes choices based on your fleshly thoughts and emotions.

The following diagram illustrates the impact your enemies have on your soul.

The Negative Impact of Your Enemies



Summary

I hope that this lesson has given you deeper insight into the battleground as well as the enemies that we face in this battle and the negative impact on you. What are the consequences if we don't engage God to win the battle in our minds? We will see those consequences in the next lesson

LESSON THREE

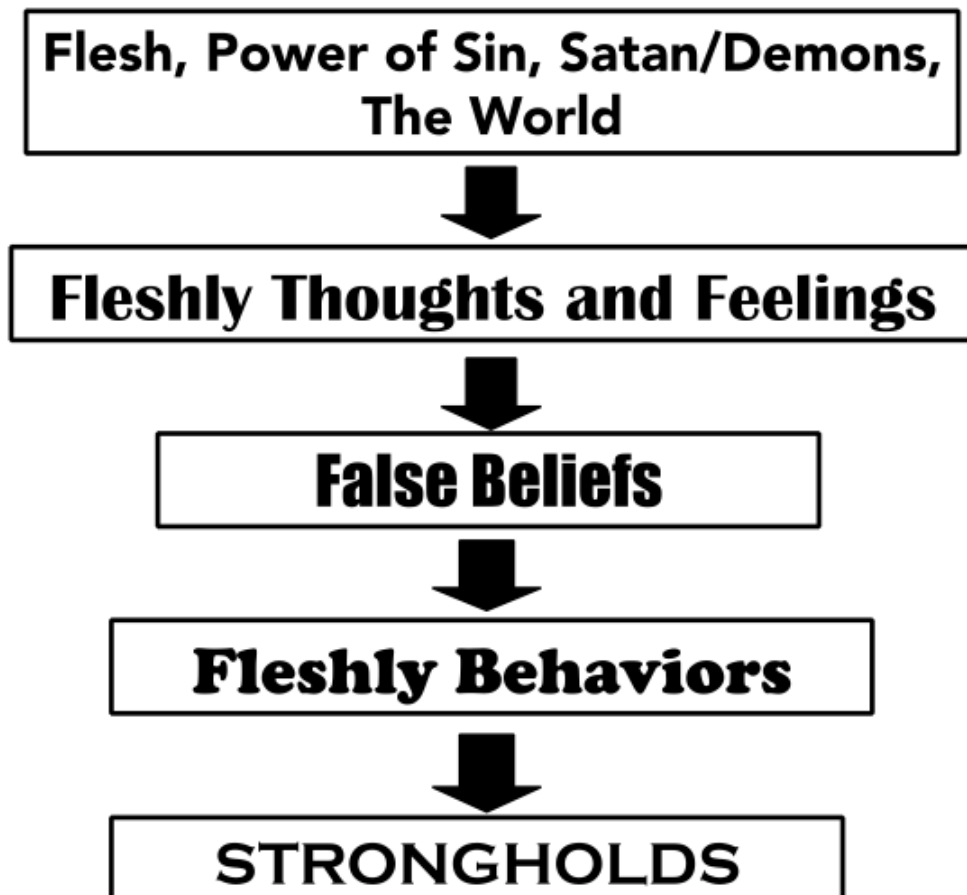
Where Does It Lead If We Don't Engage God To Win The Battle?

DAY ONE

Introduction

Now that we understand the four enemies in the battle, I want to look at where it will eventually lead if we are not engaging God to take our fleshly thoughts captive.

The enemies of your mind will insert fleshly, sinful thoughts into your mind. Unchecked, these thoughts become reinforced and will eventually become false beliefs. Out of your false beliefs flow fleshly behaviors which can eventually become sin strongholds. The following diagram illustrates the progression from fleshly thoughts to sin strongholds.



Let's break each one of these down to better understand why every thought must be taken captive.

1. The FLESH, POWER OF SIN, SATAN/DEMONS, and The WORLD

We talked about these four enemies in the last chapter. If we don't engage God to deal with these enemies the initial result will be fleshly thoughts and feelings.

2. FLESHLY THOUGHTS and FEELINGS

A. Fleshly Thoughts

Since all of our sinful thoughts flow from our flesh, let's look at some of the types of fleshly thoughts.

1. LYING Thoughts – Any thought that contradicts God's truth.

Lying thoughts primarily come from your false beliefs about yourself, God, and living the Christian life. (I will discuss false beliefs later in this lesson.)

Example of a lying thought: "I am unworthy and rejectable."

Write down some of your lying thoughts: _____

2. DECEIVING Thoughts - Thoughts that are designed to deceive us and keep us from walking by faith in God's truth.

While deceiving thoughts can come from our flesh, deceiving thoughts are the primary weapon that Satan and his demonic forces use against us. We will discuss more about how Satan uses deceiving thoughts in Lesson Five.

Example of a deceiving thought: "I have the right to reject that person for what they said to me."

Write down some of your deceiving thoughts: _____

3. TEMPTING Thoughts - thoughts that tempt you to live out of your flesh.

Tempting thoughts are usually attached to our false beliefs and our defeating sin patterns. Since we are most susceptible in these two areas, tempting thoughts are frequently centered on them.

Example: “I could fudge on my taxes and no one would know.”

Write down some of your tempting thoughts: _____

4. SELF-CONDEMNING Thoughts – thoughts that produce guilt, shame, or self-condemnation.

We tend to experience self-condemning thoughts after we commit a sin. Instead of repenting and moving on, we tend to wallow in guilt, shame, and condemnation. These kinds of thoughts are a favorite of Satan’s. He loves for you to wallow in these self-condemning thoughts.

Example: “I can’t believe I rejected that person again. I just hate myself.”

Question: Do you find yourself living in self-condemnation when you sin or when you think about your past sins?

Write down some of your self-condemning thoughts: _____

5. FANTASY Thoughts – thoughts that are used to escape reality.

People will entertain fantasy thoughts to escape their present reality. Things like a troubled marriage, bad financial condition, or wanting to get married can lead to thoughts that divorce you from reality.

Example: “If I could just live in the mountains of Colorado then life would be wonderful.”

Write down some of your fantasy thoughts: _____

6. RELATIONAL Thoughts – fleshly thoughts you have about other people.

Relational thoughts can be positive but it is the negative fleshly thoughts we have about our spouse, our kids, our friends, etc. that create the problems. Unforgiving, lustful, critical, and judgmental thoughts are some examples of relational thoughts.

Example: “I can’t forgive that person for what they did to me.”

Write down some of your fleshly relational thoughts: _____

Question: What are some of the results of your lying, deceiving, tempting, self-condemning, fantasy, and relational thoughts?

Below is a visual of the battleground in our minds.



DAY TWO

Two More Categories of Thoughts

1. DISTRACTING Thoughts of Daily Living

I think that all of us who are learning how to walk by faith struggle with what I call “spiritual” attention to God disorder or “SAGD.” Our lives are full of distractions. By this I mean that we can be easily distracted from our focus on Christ and our walk with Him. Can you identify?

I believe that like no other time in our history, we are now being inundated with an overload of information. As one person said, we are living in a 40 gig (of memory) world with a 1 gig brain. Take smart phones for example. Look at how much information we can access through them. There are scientific studies out now that reveal how “addicted” we are becoming to our smart phones. We have so much information coming to us from so many directions that it is hard to keep our attention fixed on Christ and our spiritual walk. Satan will even tempt us to information overload to keep us distracted from God. Whether it is distracting thoughts or information overload, the problem comes when these kinds of thoughts “rob” us of our thinking about God and His word.

Question: Think about thoughts that distract you from your walk in Christ. Can you identify any of them? If so, write them below.

2. REPETITIVE or OBSESSIVE Thoughts

Thoughts that continue to repeat themselves can become obsessive with the result that they can eventually result in fleshly thinking. Let me give you an example. Have you ever awakened in the morning and instead of directing your thoughts to God, you start making your “to do” checklist for the day. I have struggled with this. Making a “to do” list is not intrinsically a problem. But sometimes, as I focus more and more on what needs to be done, I can become obsessed with getting the list done. More often than I like my fixation with the list can prevent me from having quiet time with the Lord or seeking Him during the day.

If you apply this to people, instead of thinking Christ-like thoughts towards people, we can be tempted to be repetitive in our thinking about people’s shortcomings, failures, or flesh patterns. We can put them in our personal “boxes” instead of thinking Christ-like thoughts about them. For example, in the past, every time I would think about a former pastor of mine, I would have repetitive/obsessive condemning, critical, and judgmental thoughts because of how he treated me and other people instead of having godly thoughts of forgiveness and grace towards this pastor.

Question: Are there any things or people that you find yourself in repetitive or even obsessive negative thoughts about? How are those thoughts distracting you or even taking you to sin?

b. Fleshly Emotions

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

Discouraged	Hopeless	Dejected	Wounded	Helpless	Forgotten
Worthless	Rejected	Miserable	Inadequate	Burdened	Frustrated
Condemned	Worried	Critical	Judgmental	Unhappy	Dismayed
Regretful	Angry	Abused	Inadequate	Spiteful	Vindictive
Confused	Bewildered	Trapped	Paralyzed	Troubled	Perplexed
Guarded	Neglected	Unworthy	Sorrowful	Empty	Melancholy
Anxious	Fearful	Resentful	Lonely	Guilty	Powerless
Defeated	Insignificant	Judged	Ashamed	Insecure	Incapable
Vulnerable	Unimportant	Deceived	Depressed	Jealous	Overwhelmed

Exercise: From the list above write down some fleshly emotions that you feel as a result of your lying, deceitful, condemning, tempting, fantasy and relational thoughts concerning yourself, God, your spouse, your kids, your job, or your Christian walk.

Question: Where do these fleshly emotions take you?

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to expose the fleshly feelings that are associated with your thought life.

Summary

Ephesians 4:26 says, "*Be angry and do not sin.*" What this verse tells us is that we can have initial fleshly thoughts and emotions that are not sin. However, if those thoughts are not taken captive then they can take us to sin. If we continue to take ownership of our fleshly thoughts, they will over time develop into false beliefs.

3. FALSE BELIEFS

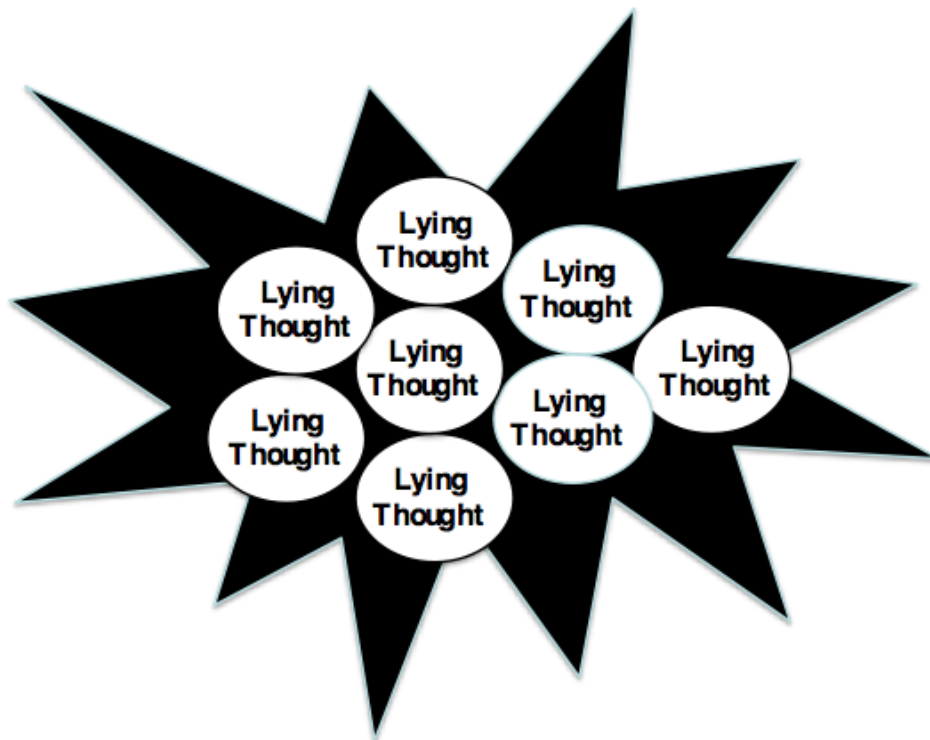
What flows out of recurring fleshly thoughts are false beliefs about ourselves, God, others, and living the Christian life. I define a false belief as follows:

A FALSE belief is any belief that does NOT line up with God's truth.

a. How False Beliefs Are Formed.

A key truth to understand in the formation of your false beliefs is that they all began with one lying thought. If you don't take ownership of that thought then it passes out of your mind. However, if you take ownership of that one lying thought and continue taking ownership of similar lying thoughts then they will eventually form a false belief. The diagram below illustrates this:

How False Beliefs Are Formed



b. Example of How a False Belief Is Formed

Let's look at an example of how false beliefs are formed. Let's assume you had a rejecting father. Over and over again he would say rejecting remarks like, "You are a failure or You can't do anything right." The very first rejecting statement from your father had no long lasting impact.

However, as he continued rejecting you, the thought came to mind that said, "I am rejectable or I am a failure." Each time the recurring lying thought came to mind it started connecting to the previous lying thoughts with the result that you formed a false belief that you are, in fact, rejectable and a failure. Let me give you an example of moving from lying thoughts to false beliefs.

Let's assume that I am having thoughts of rejection.

I begin **TAKING OWNERSHIP** of the lying thought that says: "**I AM rejected.**"

And I **CONTINUE** to take ownership of those lying thoughts that say: "**I AM rejected.**"

Over time these lying thoughts will form a **FALSE BELIEF** that says: "**I AM rejected.**"

With the result, I **BELIEVE** that: "**I AM rejected.**"

A false belief can also form from our fleshly emotions. Let's use the same example to illustrate this point.

I begin **TAKING OWNERSHIP** of the fleshly feeling: "**I FEEL rejected.**"

And I **CONTINUE** to take ownership of the fleshly feeling: "**I FEEL rejected.**"

Over time these fleshly feelings will form a **FALSE BELIEF** that says: "**I AM rejected.**"

With the result, I **BELIEVE** that: "**I AM rejected.**"

DAY THREE

c. False Beliefs About Self, God, Others and Living the Christian Life

When false beliefs are formed from lying thoughts and fleshly emotions, these false beliefs, for the most part, are associated with the following four categories:

1. False beliefs about SELF

False beliefs about self are the result of not knowing your true identity in Christ. Let me give you some examples of false beliefs about yourself:

I believe or I feel that I am:

Unworthy	Secure in self
Unacceptable	Self-confident
Rejected	Self-sufficient
A failure	Successful in self
Anxious	Self-reliant
Inadequate	Self in control
Weak	Resourceful in self
Defeated	Competent in self
Insecure	Fearless in self
Fearful	Strong in self

The column on the left I call NEGATIVE false beliefs, and the column on the right I call POSITIVE false beliefs. The positive false beliefs look appealing but how do we know they are false beliefs? The key word is “self.” Anything that you believe about yourself that has self attached to it is a false belief.

Question: Do any of these false beliefs apply to you? If so, write them down below.

Question: In what ways do you believe your false beliefs about yourself might be negatively impacting your life?

If you picked one or more of the beliefs above as being true of you, then you are still believing false beliefs about yourself.

If you don't know your TRUE identity in Christ, then you will CONTINUE to live from your false beliefs about yourself which will keep you in BONDAGE.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to expose your false beliefs about yourself and how they might be negatively impacting your life.

[Note: If you haven't learned about your true identity in Christ, I would recommend going to our website: www.christislifeministries.com and looking under the Discipleship tab. You will find a study titled "*Do You Know Your True Identity?*" You can download this study for free. There is also a video for this study.]

2. False Beliefs About GOD

When it comes to our beliefs about God, we all tend to have two images of God. One is our **theological** God who is loving, good, merciful, etc. Our theological God is based on what the Bible tells us about God grounded on objective facts.

However, there is another image of God and that is our **experiential** God. Your experiential God is what you really believe about God when you are faced with stress, unmet expectations about God, negative life experiences, and past woundedness. This image is often based on subjective negative experiences with others, and/or distorted thoughts and ideas.

In the past or present, what do you believe about God when you are stressed, when God is not meeting your expectations, in the midst of negative or traumatic life experiences or past woundedness?

I believe that God is:

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

Question: Based on trauma (divorce, accident, etc.) or your past woundedness (verbal, emotional, physical, sexual abuse) or some stressful situation you are facing now, do any of these characteristics apply to what you think about God? If so, please write those down.

Question: In what ways can these false beliefs about God negatively impact our Christian walk?

I grew up in a home with physical, emotional, and verbal abuse from my dad. When I became a Christian I didn't realize it but I put my earthly father's face on God the Father's face with the result that I believed that God was distant, uncaring, unloving, and angry.

Expectations about God create false beliefs about God. If you struggle with pornography and you expect God to set you free immediately and He doesn't then you might conclude that God is unable or unwilling to free you.

False beliefs about God will CRIPPLE your Christian walk because your false beliefs can create DOUBT about who God is and what He can do.

Engaging God: You may have some hidden false beliefs about God. Ask the Lord to expose those false beliefs.

3. False Beliefs About OTHERS

I disciple many married couples and this is where I see false beliefs about others play out. If one spouse believes that the other spouse should meet his/her needs, what is the result when those needs are not met? Or what if one spouse believes the other spouse should love, accept, or value them in certain ways and they don't?

Here are some examples of false beliefs about your spouse, kids, friends, or other relationships:

I must compare to see if I measure up.
Others will meet my needs.
Others will love me unconditionally.
I have "rights" concerning others.

Others must meet my expectations.
Other's opinions determine my value.
Others must meet my standards.
Others will unconditionally accept me.

Exercise: Write down some of your false beliefs you have about people in your life.

Question: In what ways can these false beliefs people in your life negatively impact your relationship with them?

Engaging God: You may have some hidden fleshly thoughts or feelings for people around you. Ask the Lord to expose those thoughts and feelings and ask Him how they are negatively impacting your relationship with them.

DAY FOUR

4. False Beliefs About Living THE Christian Life

Another area I see so many Christians struggle is in the area of their Christian walk. The reason is that they have false beliefs about THE Christian life. False beliefs begin with false teaching. If we continue to believe the false teaching then inevitably it will lead to false beliefs. Let me give you three examples of false beliefs.

Example #1 – False Belief that You Are the SOURCE to Live the Christian Life

Remember in Lesson One we learned that the #1 false belief about living THE Christian life is that you, being the source, using your own IQ, ability, willpower and self-discipline with God's help, can live THE Christian life. Here are some examples of what it means for you to be the source.

It is up to me using my intellect and ability (with God's help):

- to keep God's commands.
- to be victorious.
- to set myself free.
- to heal me of my woundedness.
- to transform myself.
- to be happy.

Question: Do you believe it is up to you to produce these things? If so, is what you are doing working to produce them?

The truth is that there is only One person who has lived a perfect Christian life and that is Jesus. However, if you have lived or are living from this false belief it will only result in failure. This is a foundational false belief about living the Christian life. There are others as well.

Engaging God: If you are struggling with the false belief that it is up to you to live THE Christian life, ask the Lord to persuade you that only He can live THE Christian life and He wants to live it in and through you.

Example #2 – False Belief that God Expects You to Do Something FOR Him

Another false belief about living the Christian life is that God expects you to do something FOR Him to get something from Him. Here are some examples.

I must do something FOR God:

- to gain His love.
- to be pleasing to Him.
- for Him to be happy with me.
- to earn His acceptance.

Questions: Do you believe what you just read is true? How might it change the way you look at God if what you just read was not true?

First of all you need to understand that you don't need to do one thing for Him to gain any of those things listed above. Why? Because He already fully and completely loves you; is pleased with you; is happy with you; and accepts you, regardless of what you do (or don't do) for Him. You see how God feels about you has nothing to do with you. It has everything to do with His character.

Another reason that God expects you to do nothing for Him is because you can't do anything for Him. Remember in the last part of John 15:5 where is says, "Apart from Me you can do nothing." Since God is the Source, then He is the initiator and the cause and effect of what He wants to accomplish. We see this in Philippians 1:6:

*"For I am confident of this very thing, that **He who began a good work in you will perfect it [carry it to completion] until the day of Christ Jesus.**"*

God began the work in you at salvation and He will be the one to complete it. Therefore, your part is to "receive," not try to "achieve," His work in your life by participating with His work in your life through moment by moment dependence on Him.

Engaging God: If you are still struggling with the false belief that you need to do something for God, meditate on Philippians 1:6 and seek Him to reveal to you that He will do the work and He doesn't need you to do anything for him. (Note: He does want you to participate with (depend on) Him so that He can do His work in and through you.)

Example #3 – False Belief That You Should Condemn YOURSELF When You Sin

Many Christians believe they should condemn themselves when they sin. In fact, I used to spend more time in self-condemnation after the sin than in the sin itself. However, you have no right to condemn yourself when you sin because according to Romans 8:1:

*"So now there is **no more condemnation** for those **who belong to Christ Jesus.**"*

Therefore, you no longer have to condemn yourself because Jesus took all our condemnation on Himself at the cross.

Question: Do you struggle with self-condemnation? How would it make you feel if you no longer lived in self-condemnation?

Engaging God: If you are still struggling with self-condemnation, seek the Holy Spirit to persuade you according to Romans 8:1 that you no longer have to condemn yourself.

Exercise: Write down some of your false beliefs you may have about your Christian life.

Question: In what ways might your false beliefs be negatively impact your Christian walk and your relationship with God?

***False beliefs about living THE Christian life will result in DEFEAT and FAILURE.
NONE of God's promises will become an EXPERIENTIAL reality and
there will be NO spiritual transformation.***

Summary

I hope this section has helped you better understand how false beliefs are formed and how they negatively impact what you think, how you feel and the choices you make. False beliefs, in and of themselves, are bad enough but we will discover in the next section that the overflow of false beliefs are fleshly behaviors.

DAY FIVE

4. FLESHLY BEHAVIORS

“Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these....” Galatians 5:19-21a

Out of your false beliefs will flow **fleshly attitudes** or **fleshly behaviors** like those listed in Galatians 5:19-21. Fleshly behaviors and attitudes come in two forms: **positive** flesh and **negative** flesh. Below are some examples of negative and positive flesh.

Examples of NEGATIVE fleshly behaviors: anger, inadequacy, unforgiveness, envy, controlling, fear, worry.

Examples of POSITIVE fleshly behaviors: self-confidence, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, success, strong in self.

Note: Positive flesh is harder to recognize because it can look very appealing, but it is still the flesh. The key word in defining positive flesh is “self.”

Let’s go back to the previous example of the person with the rejecting father. Your false beliefs were that you were rejectable and a failure. From those beliefs can flow fleshly behaviors. Since these were part of my past false beliefs, the fleshly behaviors that flowed out of my false beliefs were anger, unforgiveness, being critical of others, and envy. Through my false beliefs, my fleshly behaviors were toxic to me and everyone around me. However, the problem only got worse as you will see in the next section.

Exercise: Go to the two pages at the end of this lesson titled “Fleshly Behaviors” and write down five behaviors that flow out of the false beliefs you wrote down in the previous section about yourself, God, others, and living the Christian life.

Fleshly Behaviors That Flow From False Beliefs About YOURSELF

Fleshly Behaviors That Flow From False Beliefs About GOD

Fleshly Behaviors That Flow From False Beliefs About OTHERS

Fleshly Behaviors That Flow From False Beliefs About LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

5. **STRONGHOLDS**

Once a false belief is formed, every time a thought comes into your mind associated with that false belief (if it is not taken captive), it reinforces your false beliefs. If these false beliefs are reinforced long enough, they become strongholds. I define a stronghold as:

A REINFORCED false belief that is SO STRONG that apart from the power of the Holy Spirit, you will NOT be set free from it.

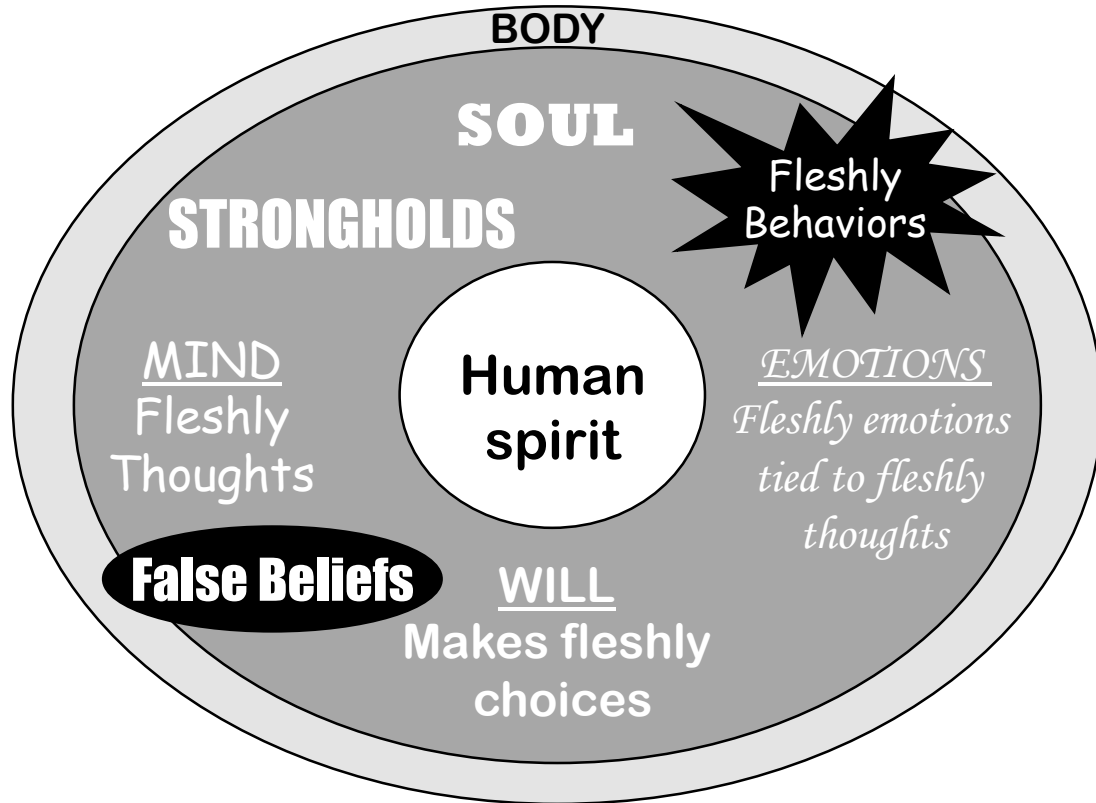
The bad news gets worse because the flesh patterns that grow out of these strongholds result in fleshly strongholds. As my false beliefs continued to be reinforced, my fleshly behaviors of being rejecting, angry, unforgiving, and critical towards others became deep-seated strongholds. (Other forms of strongholds include addictions: alcohol, drugs, pornography, etc.).

Question: How do you think your strongholds will negatively impact yourself, your Christian walk, your relationship with God and your relationships with others?

Summary

Let's summarize this lesson by looking at what happens in the soul when we don't engage God to fight and win the battle in our minds. The diagram on the following page illustrates the results in the soul.

The Results Of Not Fighting The Battle Of The Mind



You can see from this diagram that if we do not engage God to fight the battle in our minds it leads to:

- taking ownership of our fleshly thoughts;
- then taking ownership of fleshly emotions tied to those fleshly thoughts;
- that eventually produce false beliefs;
- that produce fleshly choices and fleshly behaviors;
- that over time produce sin strongholds.

Summary

I hope this chapter was a sobering one. You can see the consequences if we don't engage in the battle for our minds because one thought not taken captive can eventually result in sin strongholds. Therefore, we will see in the next lesson how to engage God to win the battle concerning our thoughts

Fleshly Behaviors

Be self-absorbed

become overly introspective
feel sorry for myself
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
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,
should, ought to)
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 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
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

uncomfortable with success
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
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
pretend
try 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

Be passive (lack initiative)
quit too easily (give up)
don't take chances
wait for someone to tell me
how to think and what to do
vacillate (be too changeable)
be indecisive
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
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
be hypersensitive
be touchy (irritable)
be controlled by fear, anger,
doubts and insecurities
automatically read in rejection

Be a pleaser (be nice)
try to keep everyone happy
avoid conflict/keep the peace
say what I think others want
have difficulty saying "no"
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

Be too serious (intense)
be overly analytical
not be able to have fun
lack joy or life

LESSON FOUR

Engaging God To Win The Battle

DAY ONE

Introduction

Now that we know (1) God is the Source to win the battle of the mind, (2) who the enemies in the battle are, and (3) the consequences of not entering the battle, we're now ready to focus on the practical application of engaging God to take every thought captive in order to win the battle of the mind. Before we start, I would like to introduce two other types of thoughts that are not necessarily fleshly (even though they might turn into that) but are thoughts that might need to be taken captive.

Engaging God To Win The Battle For Your Mind

Now that you have a deeper understanding of God being the source to win the battle, the enemies we face in the battle, and the consequences of not engaging God to win the battle, let's look at some practical truths in engaging God to win the battle in our minds.

1. Take INVENTORY of What You Are Thinking About.

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

Remember when I asked you the question in Lesson One, “Do you think about what you think about?” This is the first step in winning the battle of the mind. We need to start taking an inventory of what we think about. Here is an example of what that inventory looks like:

- **What are my recurring fleshly thoughts?**
- **What thoughts of mine are reinforcing my false beliefs about God, others, myself, and living the Christian life?**
- **What thoughts of mine are leading to my fleshly behaviors?**

As we take inventory, sometimes the thoughts that need to be taken captive are obvious. However, since we can deceive ourselves or be deceived by Satan in our thinking, we need to engage God to reveal our sinful, fleshly thoughts. Here is an example of what that might look like:

Step of Faith: “Lord, I am drawing on Your discernment to reveal those recurring thoughts that are reinforcing my false beliefs and are resulting in fleshly behaviors.”

Step of Faith Concerning A False Belief About God: “Lord, what thoughts am I having about You? Do they line up with the truth or are they lying thoughts?”

Step of Faith Concerning False Beliefs About Yourself: “Lord, what thoughts about myself do I continue taking ownership of that do not line up with my true identity?”

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal to you the thoughts that are fleshly, that are reinforcing your false beliefs, or thoughts that lead you to your fleshly behaviors.

DAY TWO

2. Seek The Lord to Give You an AWARENESS of the Fleshly Thoughts Coming into 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*

Paul’s words “I SEE” tell us that he was aware there was a battle being waged in his mind. What “I see” is too many Christians that are not aware of the battle that is going on in their thought life. When we do not recognize the battle, it leaves us vulnerable in many ways:

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

Therefore, we must constantly seek the Lord to give us “spiritual” eyes to see the non-stop battle that is raging in our thought life. Let’s look at an example of a step of faith to engage God for a greater awareness of the battle and what we are thinking.

Step of Faith: “Lord, I am asking You to give me a greater awareness of what I am thinking. Expose any thinking that does not line up with Your truth. Give me “spiritual” eyes to see and discern what kind of thoughts I am thinking.”

Questions: How aware are you of the battle that is ongoing in your mind? What thoughts are you taking ownership of that God does not intend for you to? Is it possible that you are not even aware of some of the lying, deceiving, or condemning thoughts that you are taking ownership of?

Meditate: on how vulnerable we are if we do not recognize the battle we are involved in.

Engaging God: Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a greater awareness of every thought you are having that does not line up with His truth.

Remember the following key truth about awareness of the battle.

<i>If we are not AWARE of the battle for our mind, we have already LOST the battle.</i>
--

3. Engage The Holy Spirit To Take Your 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

You will see that I have added bracketed words within this verse. It is key to understand that Paul is not saying the responsibility for destroying speculations or taking every thought captive is your responsibility.

The truth is that APART FROM the Lord taking those thoughts captive through you, you CANNOT take your thoughts captive.

Therefore, let us look at some key truths to understand in taking thoughts captive.

Questions: Have you believed up until now that it is up to you to take your thoughts captive? Do you realize that since we can be deceived by our thoughts that we need Someone greater than ourselves to “see” and then take captive those thoughts?

a. Be ALERT to the Spirit

You must learn how to engage God to fight this fight in the Spirit with alertness and vigilance as it says in 1 Thessalonians 5:6:

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

Step of faith: “I am asking You to give me an alertness to You and to the fleshly thoughts I am thinking.”

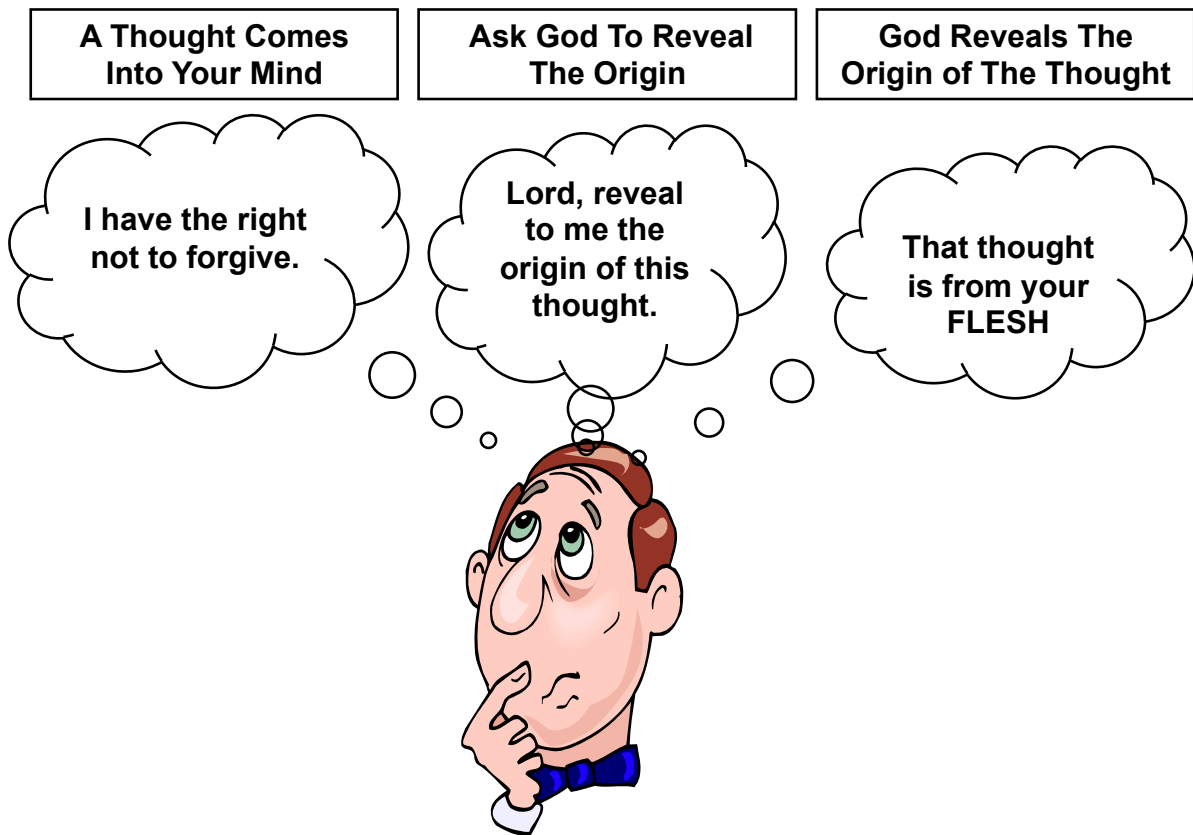
Engaging God: Seek the Lord to give you a great vigilance concerning your thoughts.

b. Before You Take OWNERSHIP of a Thought, 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. By this I mean asking Him whether that thought from God, the flesh, the world, or Satan? Let’s look at an example this point.

Let’s assume, you have a flesh pattern of unforgiveness. 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 not to forgive that person for what they said.. After all, they said negative things about me behind my back!” If you take ownership of that thought, you will end up committing a sin of unforgiveness.

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’s revealing the origin of that thought is illustrated in the next diagram as you read from left to right:



Step of Faith Concerning a False Thought About God: “Lord, I believe You don’t love me because You let me be abused by my father. Is that thought justified?”

God’s response: “No, that thought is from your flesh.”

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?”

Questions: Write down some of the lying, tempting, or fleshly thoughts that you might be taking ownership of: _____

Engaging God: Ask God to begin revealing to you the origin of those thoughts

DAY THREE

c. Draw on Your Divine Filters to DISCERN that Thought

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

Remember the discussion from Lesson Two about the three “divine filters” we possess to discern our thoughts: the word of God, the mind of Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Engage these divine filters to discern what kind of thought you are having: a truthful or lying, condemning, deceiving thought, etc.

Step of faith: “Lord, I am thinking that You are not a good God because of what You allowed in my life. However, I choose to believe you are good because your word says that Your goodness does not depend on what You do or don’t do. Your goodness is based on your character.”

Question: What might be some of the negative repercussions if you don’t use your divine filters concerning your thought life? _____

Engaging God: Begin running your fleshly, lying, tempting, etc. thoughts through the three divine filters.

d. 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 not forgive:



Step of Faith Concerning a Lying Thought About Yourself: “Lord, I believe that I am a failure. Reveal to me the truth.”

The Holy Spirit’s response: “The truth is that you are more than a conqueror in Christ.” (Romans 8:37)

Step of Faith Concerning a Lying Thought About Living the Christian Life: “Lord, I believe that I can solve this problem without You.”

The Holy Spirit’s response: “My word says in John 15:5, “... apart from Me you can do nothing.” This means that you need My wisdom and understanding to solve this problem.”

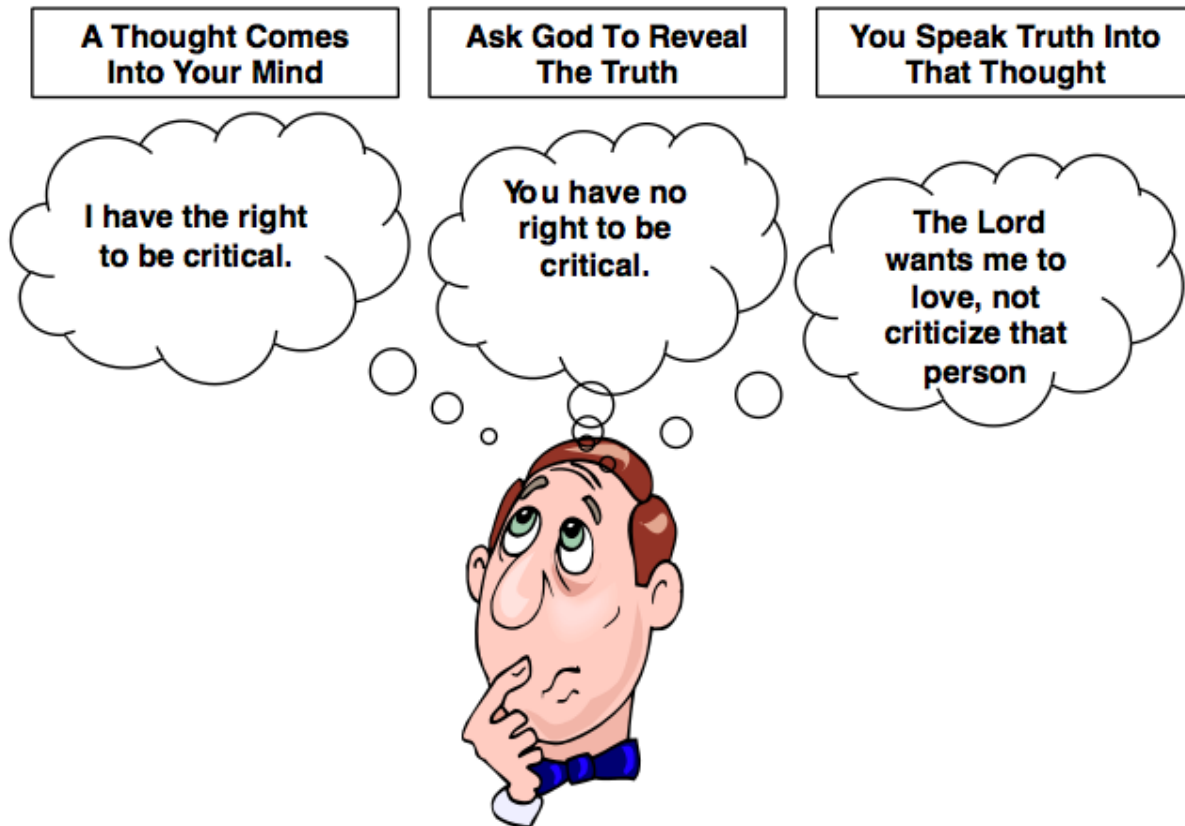
Exercise: Take one (or more) of your lying, fleshly, etc. thoughts and write down God’s truth associated with them.

Engaging God: Begin asking God to reveal to you what the truth is concerning your lying, condemning, tempting and fleshly thoughts.

DAY FOUR

e. SPEAK truth into that thought

When the Spirit reveals the thought is not the truth, then ask the Spirit to bring to mind His truth concerning that thought. Then speak that truth into that thought. The thought comes into your mind that you have the right to be critical. You ask the Lord to reveal the truth which is, “You have no right to be critical.” You ask the Spirit to remind you of the truth which is, “The Lord wants me to love, not be critical of this person.”



A Thought Comes To Mind Concerning a False Belief About God: “Lord, I believe You are cold and distant from me. What is the truth?”

God’s response: “I can’t be any closer to you than I am now because I am in union with you.”

Speaking Truth Into That Thought: “I am not taking ownership of that lying thought because I am in constant union with God.”

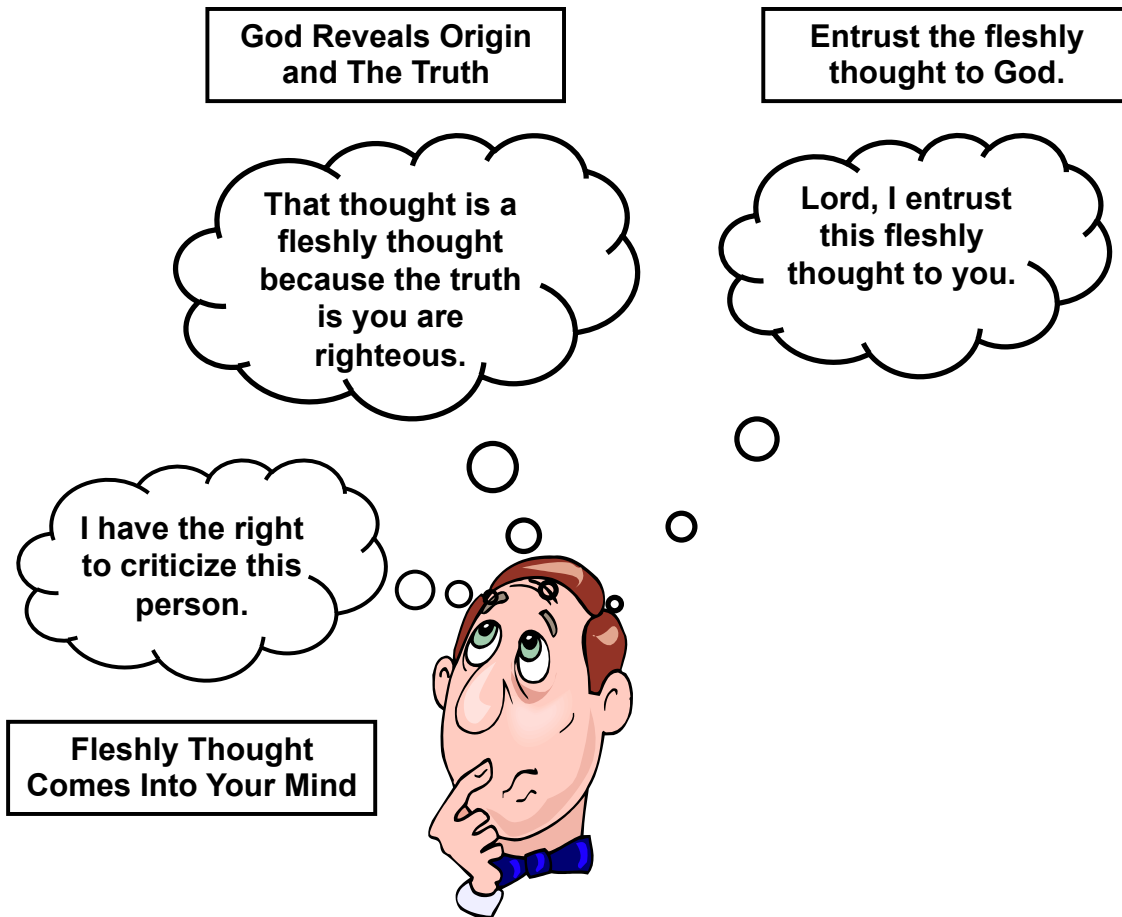
Exercise: Take some of the thoughts you wrote down in the previous section and speak truth (out loud if you would like) into each of those thoughts.

Engaging God: As thoughts come into your mind, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth and then speak truth into that thought.

f. ENTRUST Your Fleshly Thoughts to God.

*“Throw all [entrust] 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. **Entrusting means that you give over to God the ownership of that thought.** If you don’t entrust that lying/fleshly thought to God, you will be tempted to continue thinking this thought until you take ownership of it and then let that thought lead you into sin.



This is why you can’t waste time holding on to 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!

Questions: What thoughts are you holding on to? What might be some of the negative results if you continue holding on to those thoughts? _____

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

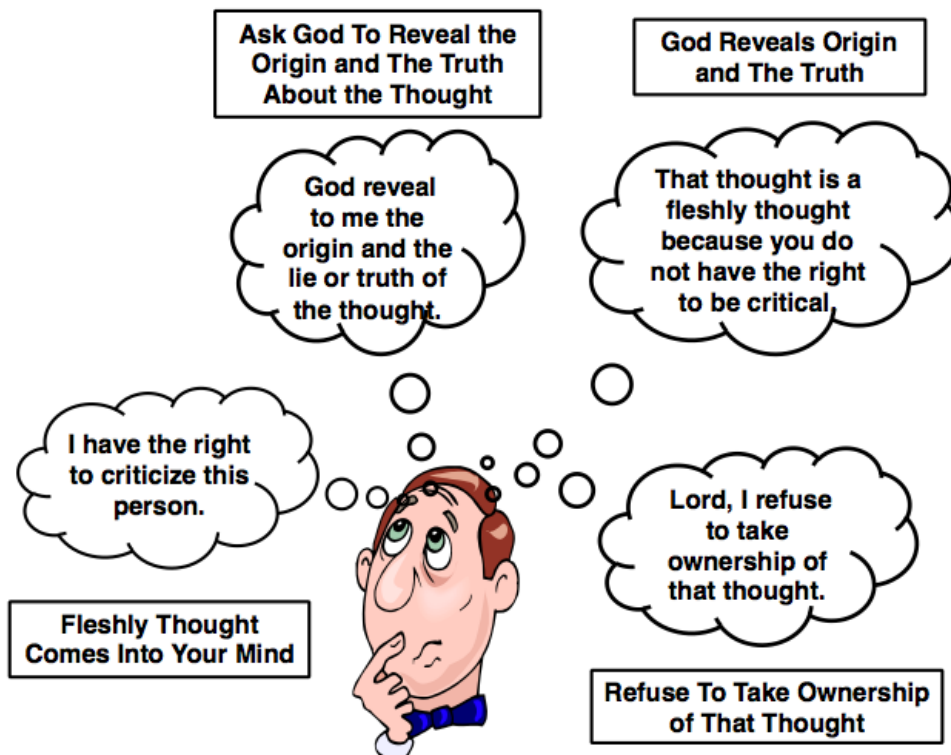
DAY FIVE

4. 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

Taking every thought captive simply means to REFUSE to take OWNERSHIP of any thought that does not line up with God's truth.

Once the Spirit tells you the origin of the thought or reveals to you the truth concerning a fleshly thought, then by drawing on Christ's power, you can refuse to take ownership of that thought. In Christ, 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 illustration on the following page shows us the process of moving from the original thought to ultimately refusing to take ownership of the thought.



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

Step of Faith: “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 no longer continue taking ownership of these fearful thoughts.”

Exercise: As your fleshly thoughts come into your mind begin refusing to take ownership of those thoughts.

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.

5. Ask God to REPLACE that fleshly thought with His truth.

“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.” John 17:17

We not only want to speak truth into our fleshly thoughts, we want God to permanently replace those thoughts with His truth.

Step of faith: “Lord, I am asking you to permanently replace my fleshly thought of being a failure with your truth that I am more than a conqueror in Christ according to Romans 8:37.

Engaging God: Begin asking God to replace your fleshly thoughts with His truth.

Summary

I hope this lesson has helped you by giving you practical applications in taking your thoughts captive. As these principles become “holy habits,” you will find yourself discerning your thoughts more quickly and refusing the fleshly, sinful thoughts. This is the key to winning the battle of the mind.

The key to WINNING the battle in your mind is to ENTRUST and/or REFUSE to take OWNERSHIP of any thought that does not line up with God’s truth.

LESSON FIVE

Engaging God To Deal With Satan and His Demonic Forces

DAY ONE

Introduction

Hundreds of books have already been written about spiritual warfare. My goal here isn't to provide a deep study of spiritual warfare. Instead, my objective in this lesson is to give you biblical truth about Satan's strategies and some practical application on how to engage God to do battle with Satan and his demonic forces.

What Are Some Of Satan's Objectives With Christians?

*"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 false beliefs.**
- **In ongoing defeat concerning their defeating sin patterns.**
- **Turning back to themselves to be the source for life.**
- **Trying to deal with their problems independent of God.**

I have said it before, but we truly need to understand that Satan and his forces are continuously plotting to steal, kill, and destroy our walk with God. I believe there is an “unholy” trinity of Satan/demons, flesh, and the power of sin that work together non-stop to keep us from walking by faith and from experiencing the renewing of our mind to believe God’s truth. Some Christians believe that Satan is the reason for everything that happens to them. This is not true because:

***Even WITHOUT Satan’s influence, the
FLESH and the POWER OF SIN can tempt you and draw you into sin.***

However, when Satan and his demons insert themselves into the mix, you now have powerful enemies who will collaborate with your flesh and the power of sin to defeat you in every way possible. Let’s explore some of Satan’s strategies concerning your thought life.

[Note: From this point on when I refer to Satan, that will include his demonic forces as well]

Satan’s Strategies

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

We must remember that Satan’s goal is three-fold:

***Satan’s ultimate OBJECTIVE is to STEAL, KILL, and
DESTROY your walk with God.***

Let’s look at three strategies he uses to try and accomplish that goal.

Strategy #1: INSERT Fleshly, Lying, Condemning and Tempting Thoughts Into Your Mind

It is important to remember that Satan cannot read your mind. However, he knows every detail about your past history. He knows your strengths and weaknesses. He knows intimately your flesh patterns and the strength of those flesh patterns. No doubt he was involved in influencing the creation of these destructive patterns in your life, and in your parents’ lives and the lives of earlier generations. Consequently, he can strategize on how best to keep you focused on yourself and how to use your flesh patterns against you and draw you into sin. As we studied earlier, Satan’s strategy focuses on your thought life. Therefore, part of his strategy is to insert into your mind **fleshly, lying, condemning, and tempting thoughts**.

[Note: Satan is a fallen angel and not omniscient like God (he cannot, for instance, know what you are thinking). While scripture is clear that Satan influences what we think with his thoughts, we do not know how he delivers his thoughts whether by whispered suggestions or some type of mind to mind connection. For simplicity sake, I have chosen to say Satan inserts his thoughts in our minds even though exactly how he does it remains a mystery]

Many Christians I have taught over the past didn't realize or don't believe that Satan can insert thoughts into our minds. I believe the best biblical example that proves this is true is in Matthew 16:21-23:

"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)

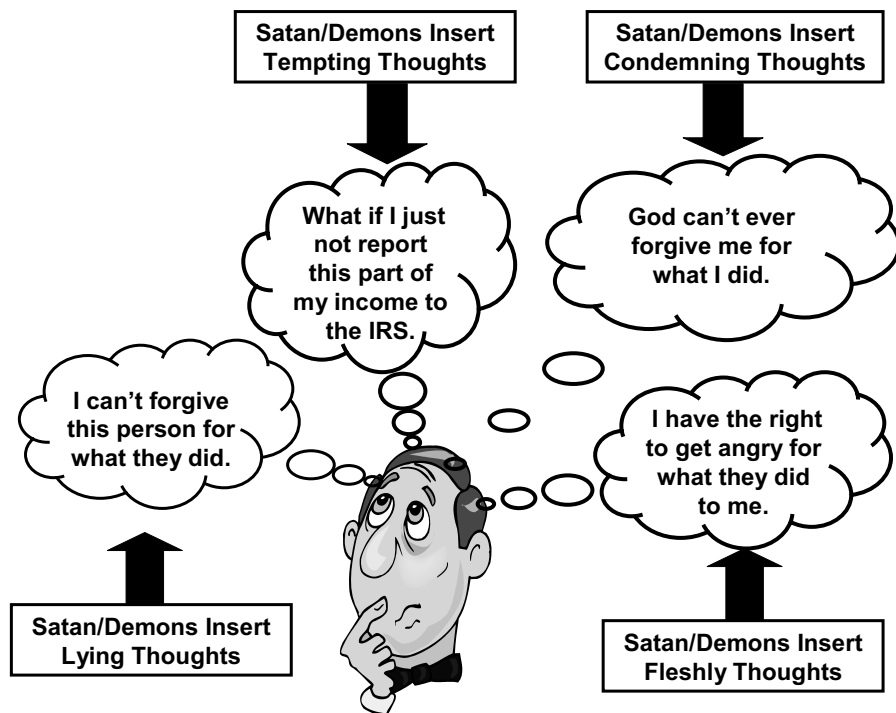
When Peter responded to what Jesus told His disciples about His death and resurrection, Jesus's response was, "Get behind Me, Satan." Jesus knew who was behind the thoughts that were verbalized by Peter. He knew that Satan had introduced that thought because He did not address Peter. Rather, He addressed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

Other examples include Satan's tempting Judas to betray Jesus (John 13:27); inciting Ananias and Sapphira to lie to Peter (Acts 5:1-11); and persuading King David to take a census of his army (1 Chronicles 21).

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

***When Satan insert thoughts into your mind,
they will ALWAYS come in FIRST person.***

When Satan inserts thoughts into your mind they will never be in third person. They will always come in first person (I or me) and be in your own voice. Since Satanic thoughts come in the form of first person, it can be extremely difficult (if not impossible) for us in our human discernment to determine whether or not our thoughts are our own or whether they are from Satan himself. The diagram below reveals the types of thoughts as well as how they come in first person.



Another scheme of the enemy is to insert thoughts blaming God such as: “God is the one responsible for why I am in this mess. He is the cause of all my pain!” or, “Why did I get cancer if God is good?” or, “Why isn’t God answering my prayers if He really loves me?” If you take ownership of 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 false 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.

DAY TWO

Strategy #2 - 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 He is most dangerous. Why? If you take ownership of Satan’s thoughts, they then can keep you in bondage to your false beliefs and further reinforce your sin strongholds.

For example, Satan 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 induced 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.

***He constantly tries to deceive you by making you believe that your
OWN mind is the origin of HIS thoughts.***

Question: Are there recurring thoughts that you continue to take ownership of that continually take you to sin? Is it possible that Satan, not you is the origin of those thoughts?

Engaging God: Ask God to give you a spiritual awareness when Satan is trying to deceive you by inserting thoughts in first person.

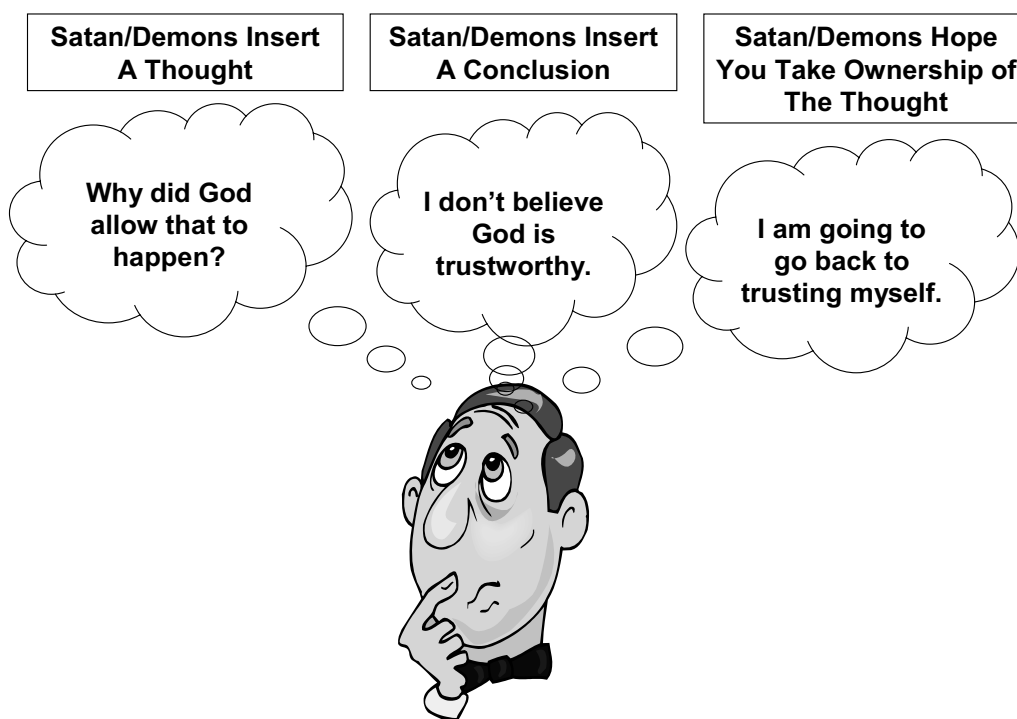
Strategy #3 – Insert Thoughts To DOUBT God’s Character

*“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 hates God. He and his demonic forces rebelled against God early on, and they know that their eventual eternal destiny is hell. Satan's primary objective is to do everything in his power to keep mankind from being saved. His strategy in your life does not stop even after you are saved. His objective now is to create havoc in your soul and destroy your godly influence on others by persuading you to doubt God's character, His power, and His ability and willingness to transform your life. Satan knows that if he can just create one ounce of doubt about God, you will be tempted to turn back to your flesh and 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:

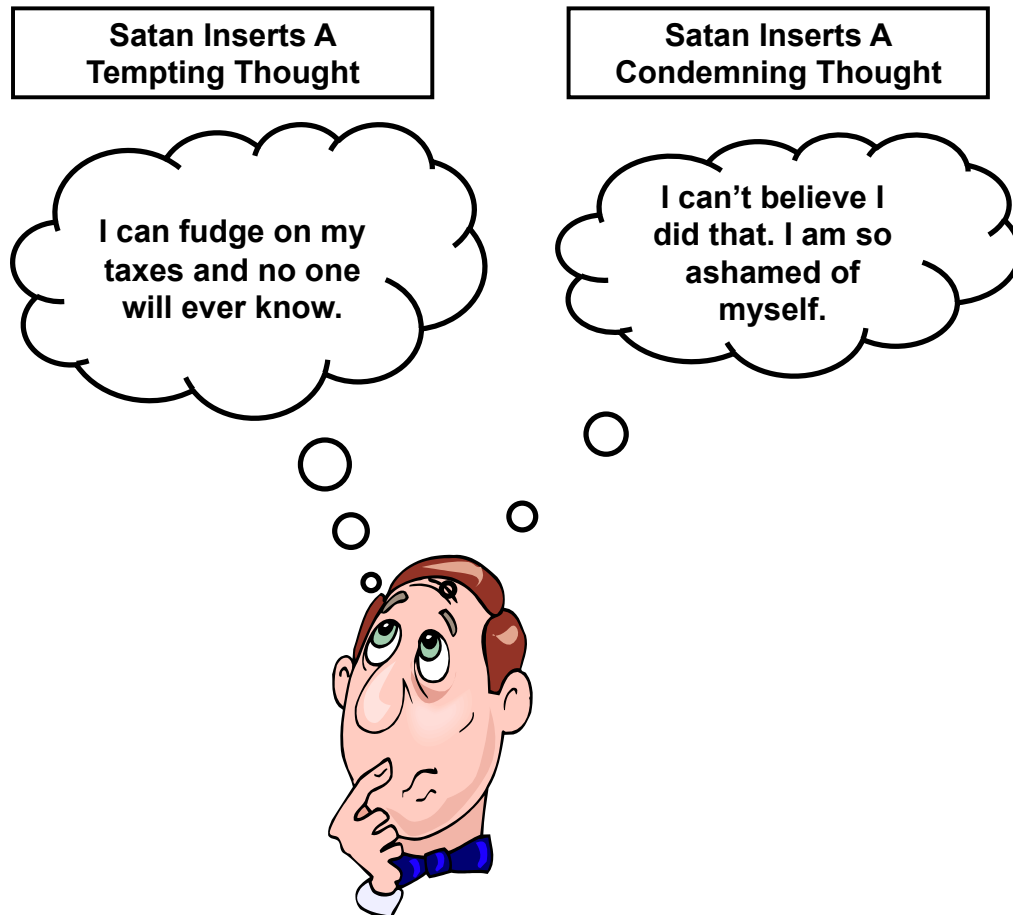


Question: In what areas of your life are you doubting God's love, grace, mercy, goodness, ability, and His desire to transform your life? Write those down.

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

Strategy #4 – Satan First TEMPTS You To Sin and When You Sin He CONDEMNS You For That Sin

Satan gets you coming and going. First of all, he will insert a tempting thought and then if you fall for it and it leads you to sin, he will insert condemning thoughts. He is an enemy who trips you and then kicks you when you're down. Here is an example.



DAY THREE

How Do We Engage God To Deal With Satan?

Below are some practical truths to use in engaging God to do battle for you with Satan.

1. LEARN The Truth About Satan From God's Word.

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

a. Truth #1 – Satan is CONSTANTLY scheming to steal, kill, and destroy your Christian walk

*“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*

Satan wants to steal the rest, joy, and peace that you have in Christ; kill your momentum of walking by faith; and 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 problems when it really is Satan, not God, that is the source. Ultimately, Satan's main objective is to keep you focused on yourself as the source to live life and persuade you of the futility of seeking God.

Meditate: on the two scriptures on the previous page.

Engage God: to give you a greater awareness of Satan's schemes in your life and the reality that he wants to steal, kill, and destroy your walk with God.

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

*“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. Even if you could see him you are powerless against him in your own strength. Your part is to engage God and His power to deal with Satan. Even heaven's most powerful archangel had to call on the Lord to rebuke Satan during one of their battles:

“But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” Jude 1:9

Meditate: on 2 Thessalonians 2:8 that only through God's power can Satan be defeated concerning your thought life.

c. Truth #3 – God has already DEFEATED Satan and is SOVEREIGN over him

*“....greater is He (God) who is in you than he who is in the world.”
1 John 4:4 (Parenthesis mine)*

The good news is that Satan is a defeated foe. Since God lives in you, every moment you walk in the Spirit, you are walking in Christ’s victory over Satan. Therefore, you have nothing to fear from Satan while you live in an abiding relationship with Christ.

Question: Have you been trying to fight Satan in your own strength? If so, how has that been working for you? _____

Meditate: on the truth that Satan has been defeated and that when you walk in the Spirit you are walking in Christ’s victory over Satan.

Engaging God: Seek God to persuade you in a deeper way that as you walk in dependence on Christ, you have nothing to fear from Satan.

d. Truth #4 - Satan is 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. 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.

Question: Have you been fearful of Satan’s influence in your life? What impact does realizing that Jesus has rendered Satan powerless have on those fears?

Meditate: on Hebrews 2:14.

Engaging God: Seek God to persuade you that Satan is powerless as you abide in Christ.

e. Truth #5 - 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.

When you walk unprotected by God's armor, it is now 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. As a result, 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*

Question: Can you think of a time when you faced defeat by Satan by leaving off God's armor and trying to defend yourself? How do you think the outcome would have been different if you had let God defend you? _____

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

2. Be VIGILANT

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

The key to spiritual warfare is spiritual **vigilance**. I simply define spiritual vigilance as seeking the Lord to keep you spiritually aware of Satan's thoughts inserted into you mind. Here is a diagram that illustrates this principle.

Engaging God: Begin asking the Lord to BE your vigilance and to make you aware of when Satan is working in your thought life.

**Ask God To BE Your Vigilance and Make You Aware
of When Satan Is Working In Your Life**

Lord, I am asking
you to **BE** my
vigilance.

Make me aware of
Satan's schemes
against me.



DAY FOUR

3. Ask God to REVEAL to you whether the thoughts you are thinking are of Satan.

*“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 that originated with Satan to get even with a friend who rejected you. The thought is, “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. Below is an illustration of what this might look like:

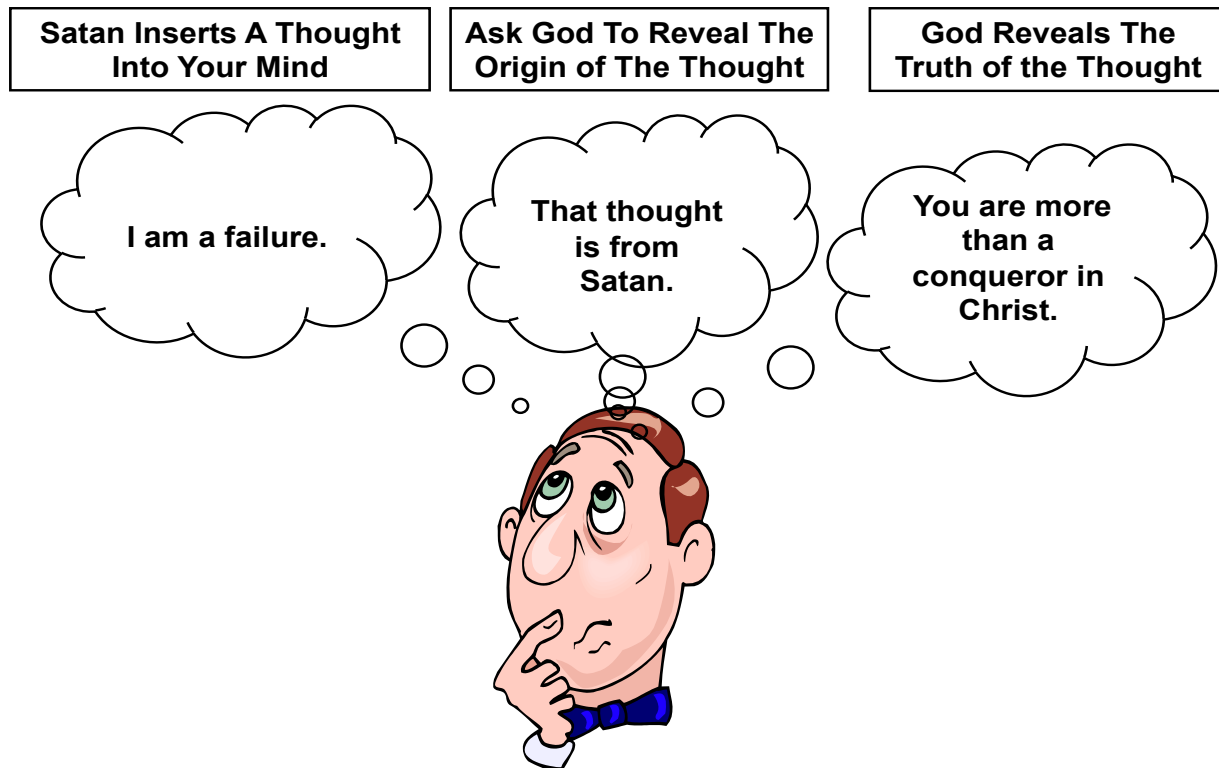


Engaging God: As thoughts come into your mind seek the Lord to show you whether the origin of that thought is Satan.

4. Put Your Thoughts On PAUSE and Ask The Holy Spirit to Speak Truth Into Your Thoughts

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

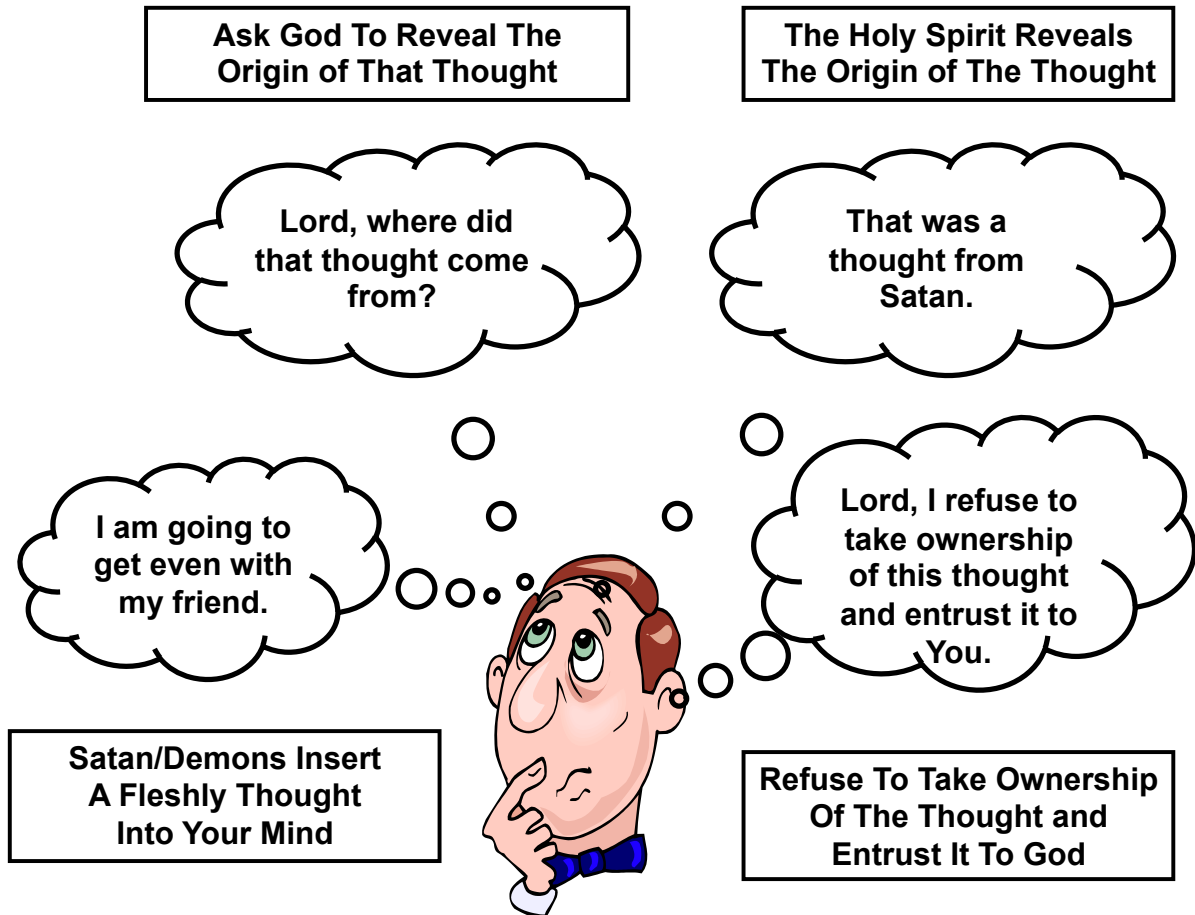
Whenever a thought comes to mind, suspend that thought or put it on pause and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you if that thought is from Satan and what the truth is concerning that thought. You can see how this works practically with the illustration on the next page.



Engaging God: Seek God to reveal to you whether or not a thought is from Satan and ask the Holy Spirit to speak truth into that thought.

5. Don't Take Ownership of That Thought. Rather, ENTRUST The Satanic Thoughts To God and Ask Him To Take Those Thoughts Captive.

Once the Holy Spirit reveals to you that the thoughts are coming from Satan, then refuse to take ownership of those thoughts and entrust them to Him to take captive.



Engaging God: When the Lord reveals to you that a thought is from Satan, refuse to take ownership of it and very quickly entrust that thought to God.

DAY FIVE

6. If Demons CONTINUE To Insert Thoughts In Your Mind, KEEP Drawing On God's POWER To Remove Those Thoughts.

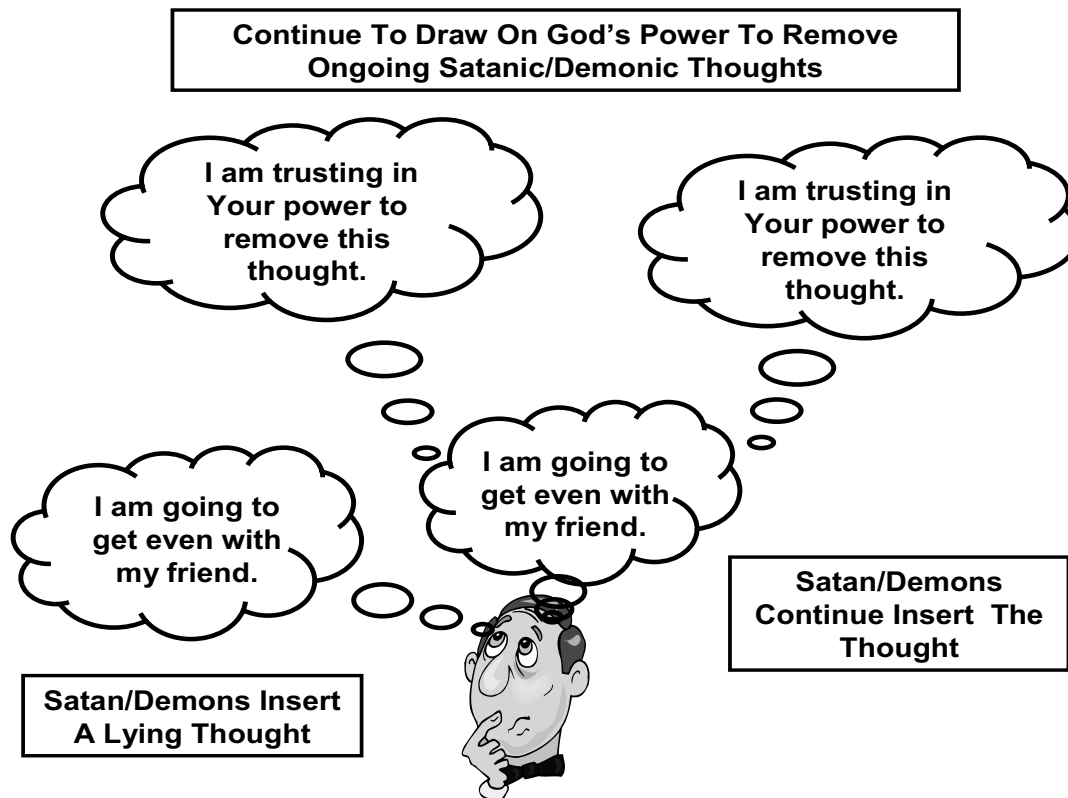
“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7

Many times Satan or his demons 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 strong enough 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.

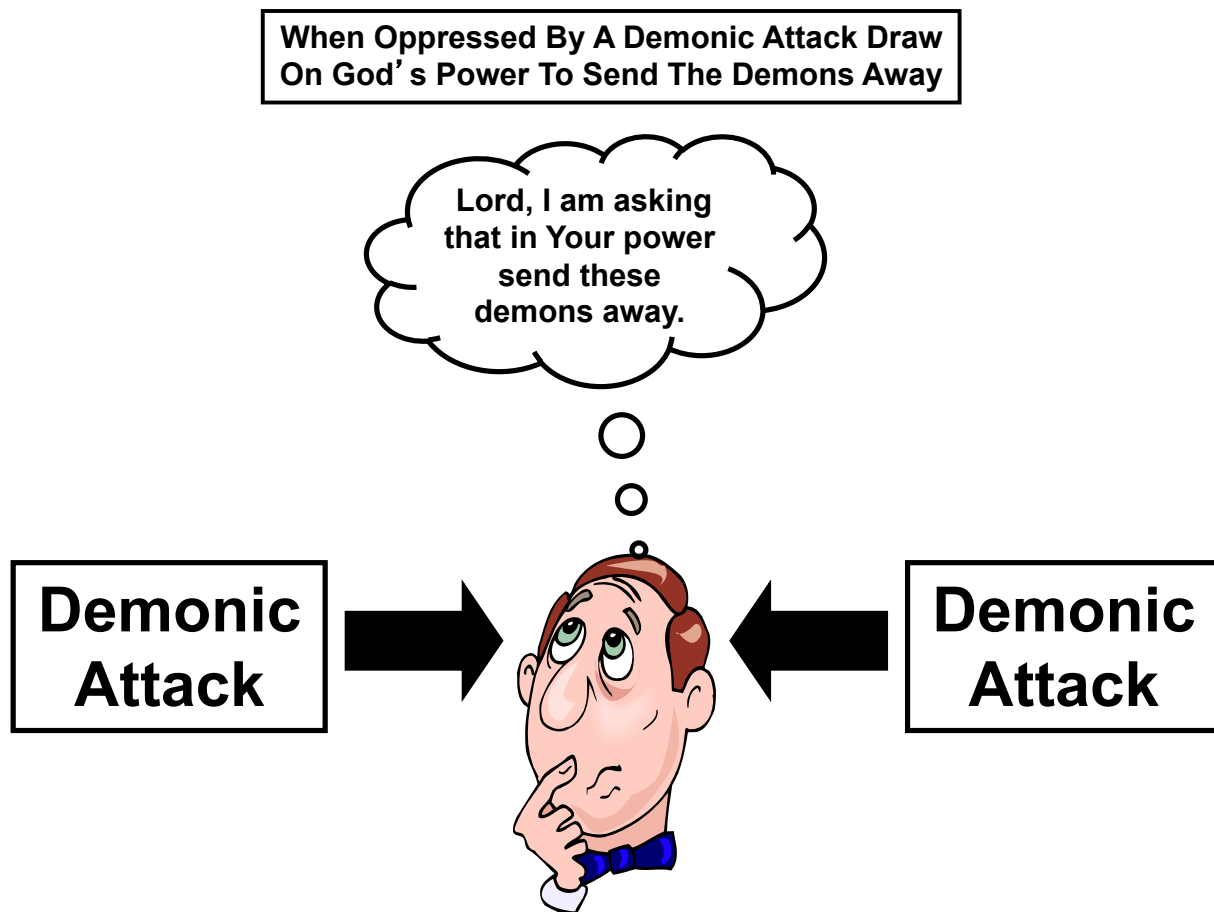
The diagram below illustrates how we continue to draw on God's power to deal with the Satanic/demonic thoughts



Engaging God: What are some thoughts that seem to be recurring? Start drawing on God's power to remove that thought and continue drawing on His power until Satan quits inserting that thought.

7. When You Are Under DEMONIC Attack, Seek God and His Power To Send Those Demons Away Who Are 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, seek the Holy Spirit to use His power to remove the demonic influences that are oppressing you.



It is important to remember that Satan has a good sense of where you are in your Christian Walk and how strong your faith is (or is not) concerning the issues that you struggle with. If he senses that you are being set free from some sin pattern, he may initiate an all-out attack on you. Therefore, don't be alarmed that you are under attack. Instead, press into the Lord and continue to ask Him to remove the demonic presence until He does so. You may have to ask continuously until you sense the Lord has removed the demonic presence.

Engaging God: Whenever you sense you are under demonic attack, continuously seek the Lord to remove them from your presence.

Summary

There is so much more that we can say about Satan and his demonic forces. However, I hope that this lesson has given you some key truths in how to engage God to overcome Satan's strategies concerning your thought life. Remember, that Satan is a defeated foe and calling on the Lord will overcome him every time you experience an attack if you are persistent and don't give up. Don't let Satan bluff you into defeat when you have God as your mighty defense.

LESSON SIX

The Renewing Of Your Mind What Are The Results Of A Renewed Mind?

DAY ONE

Introduction

*“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*

The focus of this study is learning how to engage God to win the battle for your mind. However, that is not the ultimate objective of the Lord concerning your mind. He not only wants to win the battle in the present moment, He wants to renew your mind with the ultimate goal of transforming your soul. Accordingly, I want to end this study by looking at how we engage God to renew our minds to the truth and be set free from our false beliefs, fleshly behaviors, and sin strongholds.

God Promises to RENEW Our Minds

***The KEY to being transformed and being set free from your
false beliefs is for your MIND to be RENEWED.***

*“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. Our feelings and our choices flow from what we think. 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 FALSE beliefs.***

Unfortunately the choices that we make from our false beliefs about God, ourselves, and living the Christian life result in fleshly behaviors. For us to make choices based on the truth, God must first renew our mind to the truth. Let me end this section with this truth.

The FOUNDATION for a transformed soul is the RENEWING of your mind.

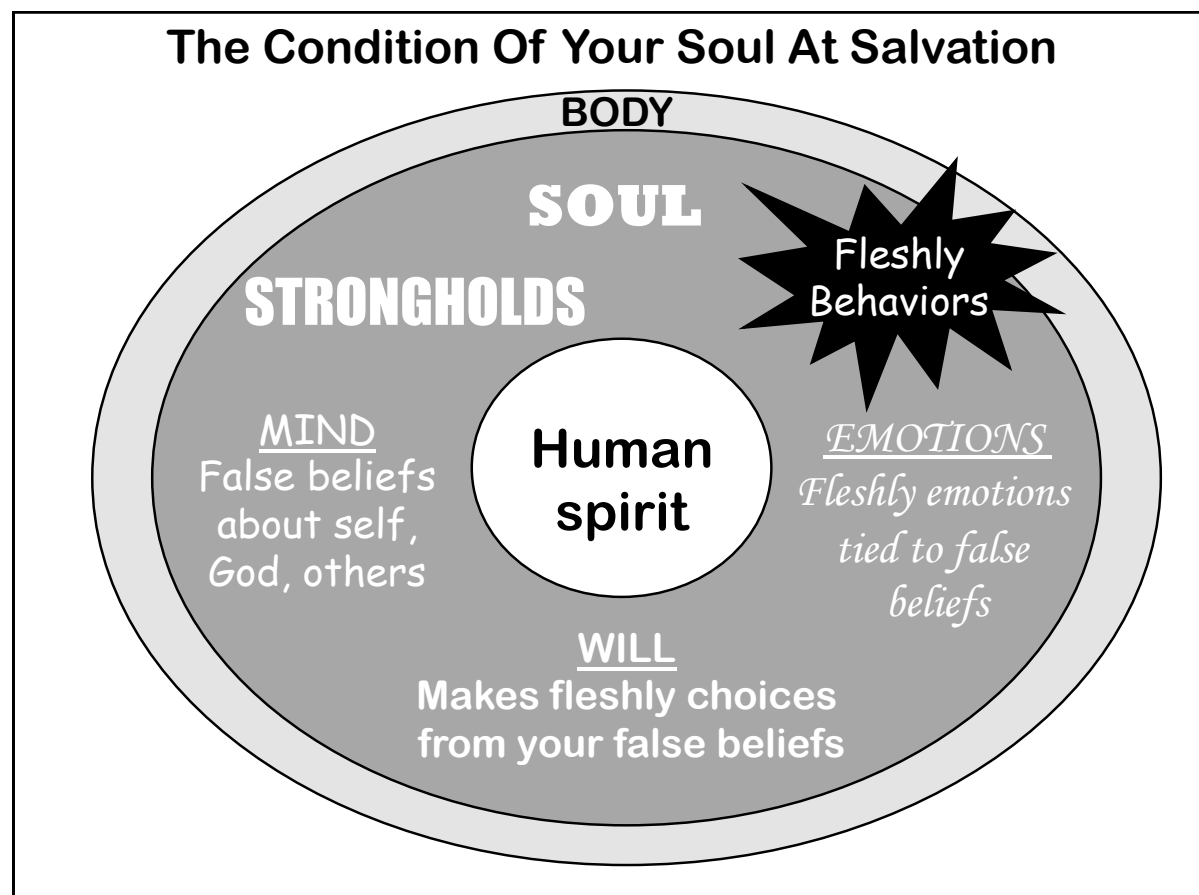
The Condition of Your Soul BEFORE and AFTER The Process of Renewing Your Mind

1. The Condition of Your Soul At SALVATION

Let's begin by looking at the condition of your soul at salvation.

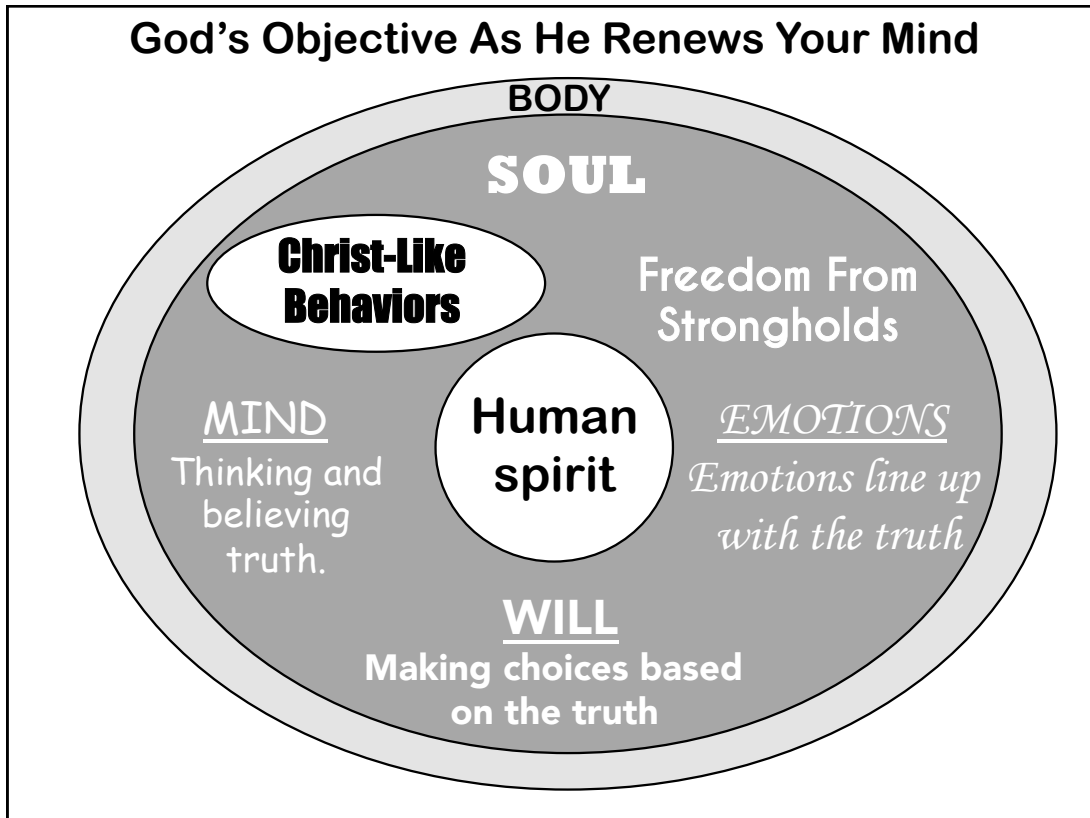
- **Mind** –has false beliefs about yourself, God, others and living the Christian life.
- **Emotions** – your fleshly or damaged emotions are tied to your false beliefs.
- **Will** – your will is choosing to make fleshly choices based on your false beliefs.
- **Fleshly Behaviors** – result from your false beliefs.
- **Strongholds** – are reinforced false beliefs and fleshly behaviors.

This diagram on the following page reveals the condition of your soul before the renewing of your mind.



2. The Condition of Your Soul As God RENEWS Your Mind

This is how we all looked at salvation but this is not where God ultimately wants us to be. Here is where the Lord is taking us in the process of renewing our minds.



This is the condition of your soul as your mind is being renewed.

- **Mind** –has been renewed to believe the truth.
- **Emotions** – line up with the truth.
- **Will** – makes choices based on the truth
- **Christ-like Behaviors** – replace fleshly behaviors.
- **Freedom From Strongholds** – you are set free from your sin strongholds.

Before we look deeper into the process of renewing our minds, let's look at some key truths regarding the process.

DAY TWO

Key Truths About the Renewing Process

1. The Renewing of The Mind Is a Life-Long-Term Process

*“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 will it take be set free?” Unlike the battle of the mind which deals with thoughts in the moment, the renewing of the mind is a life-long process. The good news is that along the way you can experience growing freedom and transformation in many areas of your life.

I wish I could tell you there will be a place in our journey that we will “arrive” and experience a completely transformed soul; but, because of our indwelling flesh and the power of sin, we cannot fully be transformed this side of heaven. But the good news is that you can experience greater and greater transformation the longer you walk in Christ.

We know that God can remove any lie or stronghold in a moment. However, one of the reasons that He usually doesn’t do this instantly is to “grow” your faith and build your relationship with Him. The process of transformation is designed to increase your faith and confidence in Him as He renews your mind to His truth. God is creating a foundation designed to deepen the intimacy between the two of you as He teaches you to depend on Him.

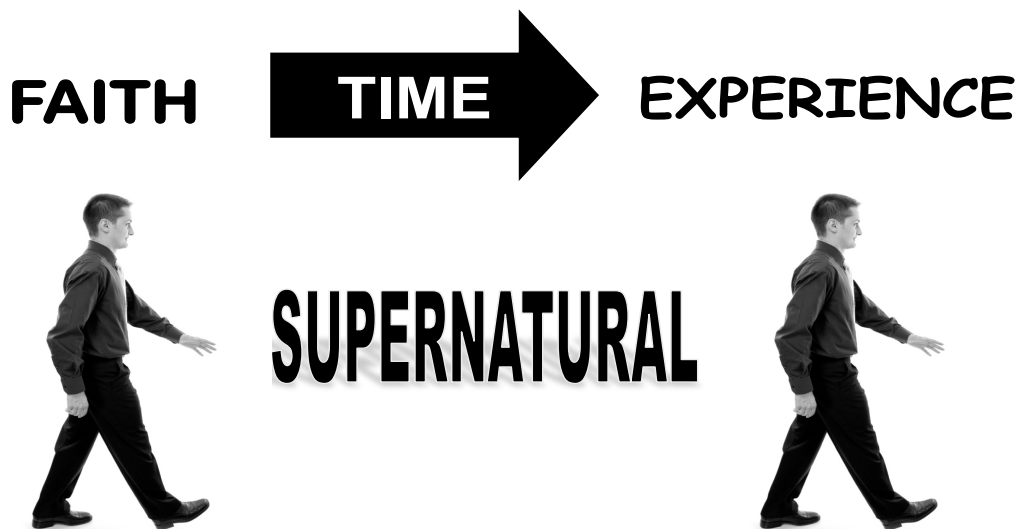
You will want God to move faster in the process, but remember that He is teaching you FAITH while you wait to EXPERIENCE transformation.

2. The Renewing of Your Mind Is a SUPERNATURAL Process.

A word that is crucial to understand concerning God’s work in our lives is the word “supernatural.” The reason this word is so important to understand is because everything that God accomplishes in your life is a “supernatural” work. Therefore, before we go any further let me define a “supernatural” work as it concerns the renewing of your mind.

***A “SUPERNATURAL” WORK
is a transforming work that God accomplishes in your soul as you walk
by faith for which there is NO natural or man-made explanation.***

I wish I could explain how and what God does to accomplish His work in our lives but since everything He does is supernatural, we will never know on this earth. While we will eventually experience His work, during the time between faith and experience we won’t know what He is doing or how He is doing it. We see this in the following diagram:

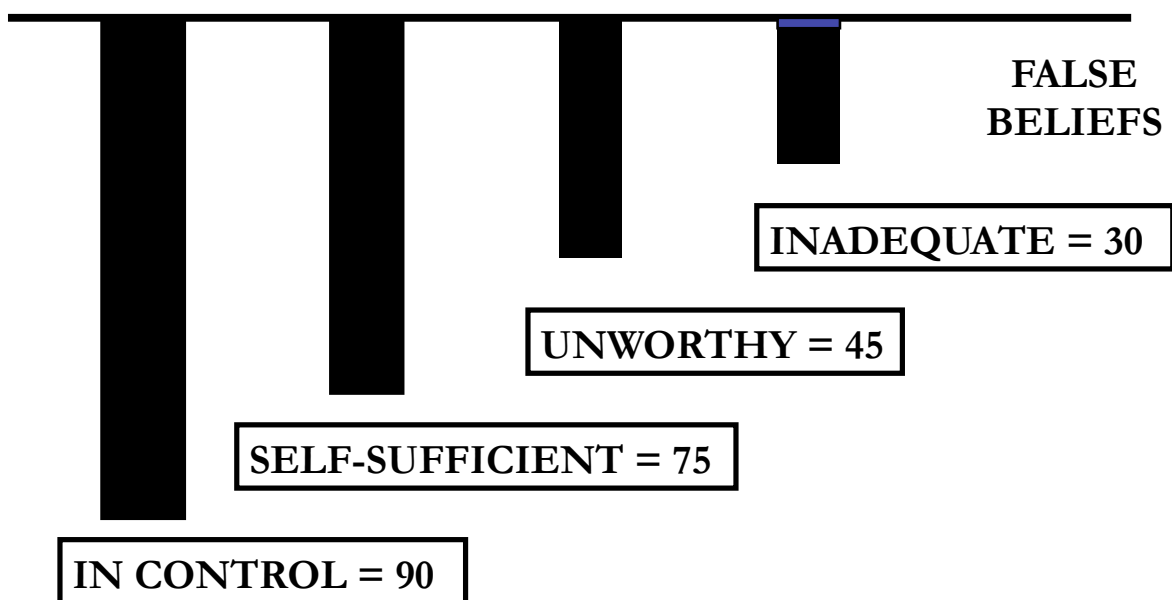


Moving From FAITH To EXPERIENCE

2. Your False Beliefs Have Varying STRENGTHS

Another key point in understanding false beliefs is that they have varying degrees of strength. Let me use the following diagram to illustrate this point. In the diagram below, let's use some examples of false beliefs we have about ourselves. This person's strongest false belief is that he is in control, which is 90 on a scale of 1-100. Inadequacy is the weakest false belief at 30.

False Beliefs Have Different Degrees Of Strength

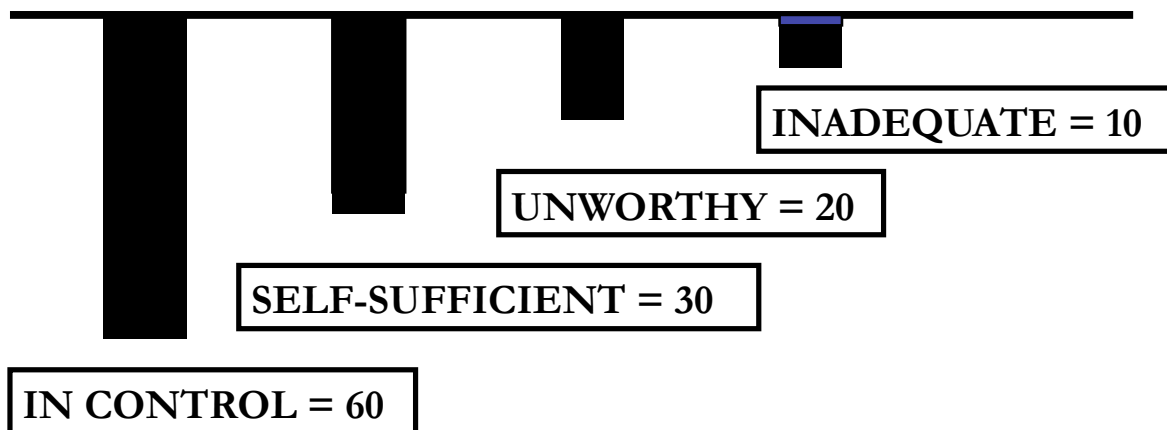


The truth is that we cannot quantify our false beliefs. Nonetheless, this concept illustrates the truth that our false beliefs are not equal in the grip they have on our soul. Why is it important to understand that some of your false beliefs have a greater grip on your mind than others?

3. You Will Be Set Free from the Weaker False Beliefs SOONER Than From the Stronger Ones

The Lord is very efficient in that during the process of renewing our minds, He works on all our false beliefs at the same time. In the illustration below, you can see that it is more likely you will be set free sooner from “inadequacy” than you will be from the false belief you are “in control.” Part of the reason I share this is because we tend to focus on our stronger strongholds than our weaker ones.

To apply this point using the diagram on the following page, my focus will be more on my stronghold of controlling than on my inadequacy. As the Lord, frees me from inadequacy, Satan tendency is to keep my eyes focused on where I am still in bondage versus where the Lord has successfully set me free. That is our fleshly tendency as well. But if you focus only on your most powerful strongholds, you will overlook all the other areas where the Lord is working and thus be tempted to be discouraged.



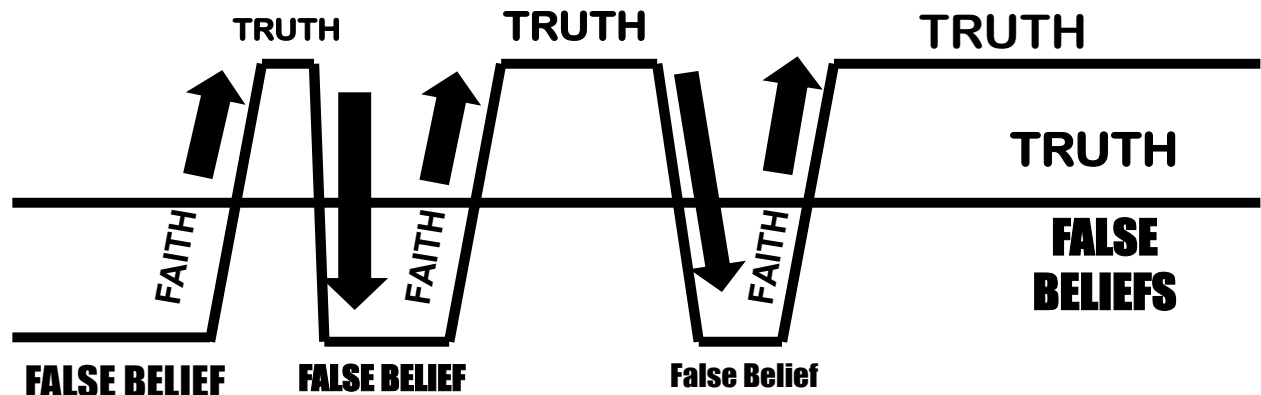
DAY THREE

4. During This Process You Will FALL BACK into Each of Your False Beliefs Many Times

I, like you, would like to move in a straight line in believing the truth and not going back to believing our false beliefs. However, early on in the renewing process, you will find yourself going back to your false beliefs more often than you would like. Let me illustrate this point with the diagram below.

Below the line is your false beliefs and above the line is the truth or truthful beliefs. As you take steps of faith and engage the Holy Spirit, He will take your lying thoughts captive and replace your lying thoughts with the truth. However, early on in the process, since your false beliefs have a greater grip on you than the truth, you will find yourself falling back into believing your false beliefs over the truth. However, as you continue to engage God to renew your mind to the truth, the grip of the truth on your thoughts will become greater than the grip of your false beliefs. You will find yourself going back to your false belief less and walking more in the truth.

Moving From FALSE BELIEFS To THE TRUTH



Let me give you another illustration to further clarify this point. Let's assume you have a very strong false belief that you are rejected. The truth is that you are accepted in Christ. As you allow the Holy Spirit to renew your mind, your false belief of rejection will grow weaker in its grip on your mind. Conversely, as your mind is being renewed to the truth that you are totally accepted in Christ, this truth will have an increasingly stronger grip on your mind.



GOD'S TRUTH

FALSE BELIEFS



5. There Will Be RESISTANCE Because Your FLESHLY WILL Wants To Hold Onto Your False Beliefs.

“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

You have a “spiritual” will and a “fleshly” will. Your spiritual will always desires and chooses to walk in the truth. Your fleshly will always desires and chooses to walk in your false beliefs. Since at the beginning, your fleshly will is stronger than your spiritual will, your fleshly will successfully resist the work of the Holy Spirit. This resistance creates what Paul calls the “fight of faith” in 1 Timothy 6:12.

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 1 Timothy 6:12

Any time we seek the Spirit to transform us in any way, the flesh will always resist.

Isn't it frustrating that we, in our spiritual will, want to be set free and yet because our fleshly will is so strong, we can't simply let go of our false beliefs? The good news is that over time as you grow stronger in the truth, you will eventually let go of your false beliefs.

6. Don't Try To MEASURE Your Progress

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

There is a tendency among all of us to try and measure how far we have come as our minds are being renewed. This can be a problem for two reasons. First, we have no real idea how far we have come because there is no way to truly measure progress. Second, the Lord wants you to focus on Him rather than on the progress you think you have or haven't made. He is the only One who knows how far down the road of transformation you really are.

Where might it lead if you try to measure your progress?

***SELF-CONDEMNATION if you don't feel you are progressing fast enough
and SELF-COMMENDATION if you feel you are.***

What Is Your Part In The Renewing of Your Mind?

Since you are not the Source to renew your mind, your part in the renewing process is to participate with (depend on) God in the process. Here are some key truths concerning your participation.

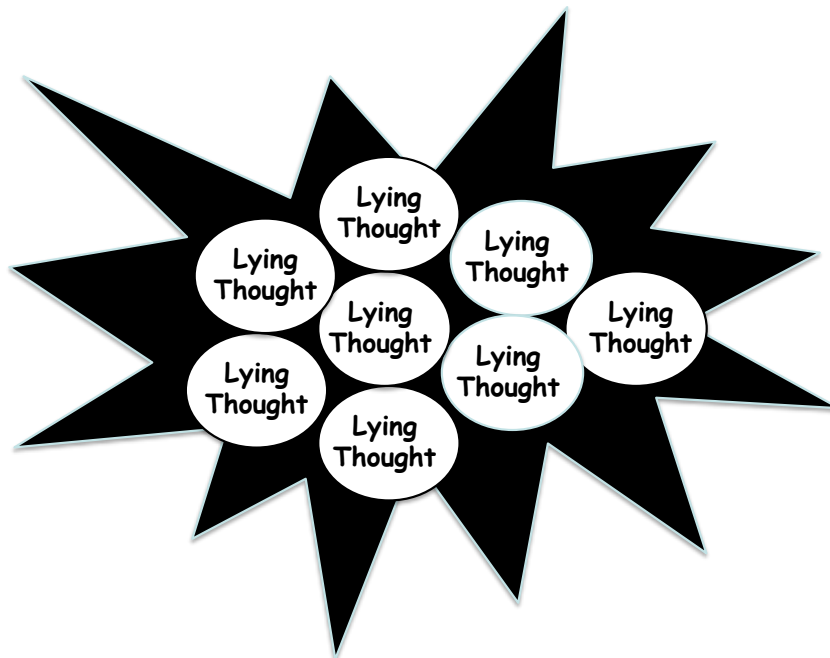
1. Learn God's word and seek the Holy Spirit to give you REVELATION OF God's word to replace your false beliefs with the truth.

"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth." John 17:17

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

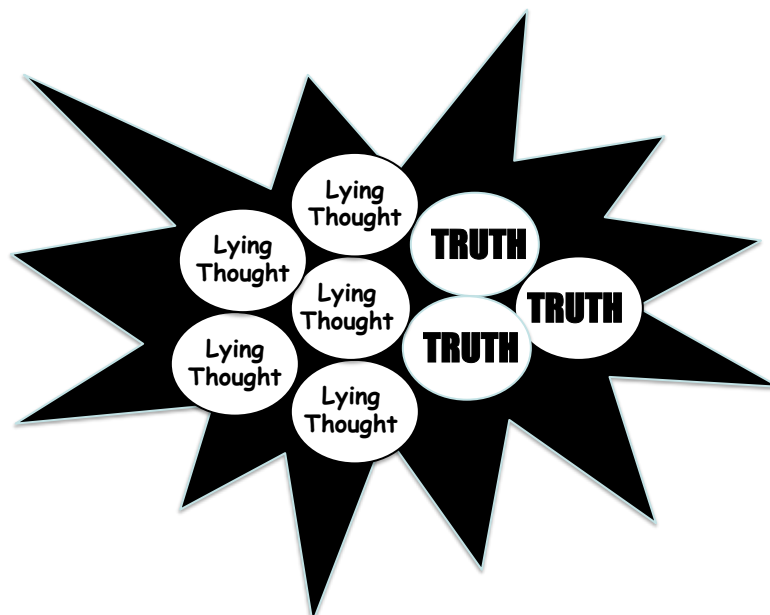
The key to moving from believing a false belief to believing the truth starts with replacing the lying thoughts with the truth. Remember the diagram below from Lesson Three that illustrates how false beliefs are formed.

How False Beliefs Are Formed



To renew your mind to the truth starts with seeking the Holy Spirit to replace the lying thoughts with the truth. The drawing below illustrates this.

Renewing Your Mind To The Truth



As you began to take the lying thoughts captive and seek the Holy Spirit to replace the lies with the truth, then over time the false belief will be replaced with a belief based on the truth. You may not even realize He has accomplished this until you find yourself no longer thinking the lying thought.

DAY FOUR

Forming The FALSE Belief of Rejection

I begin **TAKING OWNERSHIP** of the lying thought that says: **“I AM rejected.”**

As I **CONTINUE** to take ownership of those lying thoughts that: **“I AM rejected.”**

Over time these lying thoughts will form a **FALSE BELIEF** that: **“I AM rejected.”**

With the result, I **BELIEVE** that: **“I AM rejected.”**

Let's look at how the Lord replaces a false belief with the truth.

Forming The TRUTHFUL Belief of Acceptance

I **DON'T TAKE OWNERSHIP** of the lying thought that says: **“I AM rejected.”**

I **SEEK THE HOLY SPIRIT** to replace the lying thoughts with the truth that: **“I AM accepted,”**

Over time, the Holy Spirit will **REPLACE** the false belief with the **TRUTH** that: **“I AM accepted.”**

With the result that I will begin **BELIEVING** that: **“I AM accepted.”**

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 false beliefs.

Step of Faith: “Lord, I am asking (trusting) You to renew my mind to the truth that You are the only One in control. Replace my false belief that I am in control with Your truth.”

Engaging God: As you spend time in God's Word, ask Him to take His word from information to revelation and to begin replacing the lying thoughts with the truth.

2. Be STILL and MEDITATE on God's word.

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

“Be still and know that I am God” Psalm 46:10

What I find with so many Christians is that they are too busy to be still before God and meditate on His word. However, you will find that as you cultivate the habit of being still, you will increasingly desire that stillness. Let me share with you a few thoughts on stillness and meditation. Here are some things I have learned over the years about meditation that might help you (please don't interpret this as a “to do” list):

- Find yourself a quiet place free from distraction or interruption.
- Take a few deep breaths to relax your body and mind.
- Begin thinking about a verse of scripture that relates to one of your false beliefs.
- As you think on this verse, ask the Holy Spirit to use the truth of this verse to begin replacing your false beliefs.
- Continue to sit in stillness before the Lord knowing by faith (because you may not experience anything) that the Holy Spirit is answering your prayer.

If you are new to meditation, then realize that early on in your stillness you may have several unwelcome thoughts racing through your mind. Your tendency will be to grab hold of those thoughts and start running down “mental” rabbit trails. When you realize you are moving down one of those trails, simply ask the Spirit to bring your focus back on Him or the verse that you are meditating on. I would initially plan on spending 2-3 minutes in meditation and gradually add time each time you meditate. I would encourage you to journal what the Lord may reveal to you as you are still before Him. As you cultivate this holy habit you will find yourself not wanting to leave the stillness before the Lord.

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

3. Draw on Christ’s PATIENCE and PERSEVERANCE in the process.

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

Don’t be discouraged when during the renewal process you fall back into your false beliefs. This will happen many times. Remember that the renewing of your mind is a process. You must continue to take steps of faith no matter how many times you go back to your false beliefs before you begin experiencing changes in your beliefs. **Patience** and **perseverance** is the key to transformation. As we have mentioned before, the depth of your false beliefs will determine how long it may take before you start to experience changes in your beliefs.

Step of Faith: “Lord, it seems like nothing is changing in what I believe. I continue to go back to my fleshly behaviors. I am asking you to BE my patience and perseverance, so I will press on and not turn back in my spiritual journey to freedom.”

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

4. THANK and PRAISE God during the process.

*“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*

I believe that one of the greatest acts of faith is praise and thanksgiving. As we abide in Him and walk in faith that God is working, we need to thank Him for what He is doing. Thank

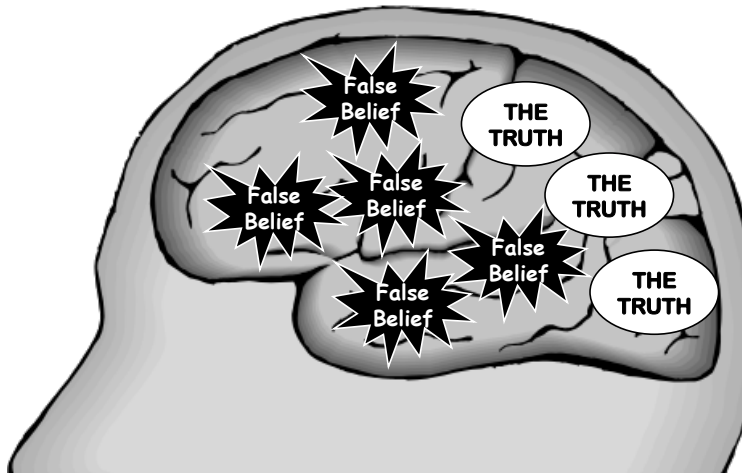
Him for the fact that He is in you and is renewing your mind to the truth. Thank Him that even though you may not be experiencing a change in your belief systems, by faith you know that **change is taking place**. As David said in Psalm 63, let your praise to God be continually in your mouth.

Engaging God: Begin thanking and praising God for the work He is doing in you even if you are not feeling or experiencing it.

What Will Be the Proof of A Renewed Mind?

As you begin to seek the Spirit to renew your mind God will begin to replace your false beliefs with the truth as illustrated below.

The Spirit Begins Replacing False Beliefs With The Truth



How will you know your mind is being renewed?

- You will be **THINKING** God's truth versus your false 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 false beliefs versus 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.

DAY FIVE

What Will Be The Overflow of a Renewed Mind?

In addition to what you will experience as God renews your mind, there will be an overflow of that renewing that impacts your thoughts about God, yourself, and others.

1. You will be thinking GOD'S thoughts.

*“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*

Not only will you be thinking the truth, but you will also begin thinking the thoughts listed in Philippians 4:8. For example, when you think of people (especially those you struggle with) you will see them through the eyes of Christ and will be able to love and accept them rather than judge or reject them.

Question: How will it change how you feel about God, others, and yourself if you are thinking the thoughts mentioned in Philippians 4:8?

2. You will be free FROM and free TO.

Freedom has two parts. When you are set free you are set free FROM certain things and you are set free TO do certain things. Let me give you some examples.

Concerning God

You will be set free FROM:

- False beliefs about God.
- Your negative feelings towards God.
- Needing to be in control.

You will be free TO:

- Receive God's love
- Love God
- See that God is who He says He is.
- Praise and thank Him.

Concerning Others

You will be set free FROM:

- Negative thoughts and feelings towards others.
- Being critical, judgemental,
- Be from comparison
- Unforgiveness

You will be free TO:

- Love others with God's love
- Be others' focused
- Give grace to others
-

Concerning Your Christian walk

You will be set free FROM:

- Needing to be the source.
- Feeling like you need to do something for God.
- Striving and trying to live the Christian life.
- Judging other's Christian walk.

You will be free TO:

- Depend on God as the Source
- Experience His promises of victory, freedom, and healing.
- Experience a transformed life.

You will be set free FROM:

- Bondage of your sin strongholds.
- Your fleshly behaviors.
- Your false beliefs about God. (i.e. cold, indifferent, uncaring, unloving, etc.)
- Your false beliefs about yourself (i.e. inadequate, insecure, unworthy, rejected, etc.)
- Being judgmental and critical of others.

You will be free TO:

- Love God
- Love others
- Love your true self (i.e. your true identity)

Question: What are some things you want to be set free from and be set free to?

3. You will be being transformed into the LIKENESS of Christ.

*“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*

You may remember this list from Lesson One as a list of needs that the Lord will supply. However, in addition to supplying these things, He will transform you to live from these Christ-like characteristics. In other words, as God renews your mind to the truth you will be transformed to live from Christ’s unconditional love, acceptance, forgiveness, rest, etc.

Unconditional love	Victory	Worth	Acceptance	Faith
Freedom	Patience	Strength	Peace	Power
Forgiveness	Understanding	Security	Fearlessness	Wisdom
Discernment	Adequacy	Humility	Christ-Confidence	Boldness
Righteousness	Selflessness	Rest	Compassion	Courage
Hope	Gentleness	Christ-Control	Faithfulness	Joy

Question: What are some things in this list you most want to experience?

Engaging God: Begin seeking the Lord to renew your mind and transform you in those areas.

3. Your CHRIST-CONFIDENCE will grow.

“Such confidence we have through Christ toward God.” 2 Corinthians 3:4

If you are not sure what I mean by Christ-confidence, let me define it for you.

As you EXPERIENCE the renewing of your mind and the FREEDOM that comes with it, you will develop a CONFIDENCE that says, “I believe God is who He says He is and that He will do what He PROMISES to do.”

I see so many Christians that are walking around without any Christ-confidence. That is because they are not experiencing any supernatural changes in the way they think, feel, choose, or behave. Christ-confidence comes as we experience supernatural changes in our thoughts, emotions, and choices. As we grow spiritually, our Christ-confidence grows. As it does, people will see that Christ-confidence in us and be drawn to Christ through it. Therefore, Christ-confidence is not just for you but it is for all those around you as well.

Engaging God: What do you feel is your Christ-confidence level today? Begin seeking the Lord to grow your Christ-confidence as He renews your mind and transforms your life.

4. You will enter into a deeper REST

*“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and **I will give you rest.**”
Matthew 11:28*

There are many spiritual results to the renewing of our minds but there is one that is particularly attractive to me. That is entering a deeper rest with God. Let me define what I mean by “rest.”

Rest is an ATTITUDE that results from EXPERIENCING God’s transforming work in our lives and from a GROWING trust in Him.

The kind of rest we are talking about is a “divine” rest rather than a physical rest. This divine rest comes as we experience the renewing of our minds with the result that our overall trust in God grows stronger. I divide rest into two categories. Things we can rest FROM and things we can rest IN. Let me give you some examples of both.

We can rest FROM:

- Striving to fix ourselves or others.
- Using our finite minds to try and figure life out.
- Trying to figure God out.

We can rest IN:

- God’s sovereignty/control.
- God’s goodness.
- God’s will.
- God’s love.

Question: What are some things you want to rest FROM and rest IN?

Engaging God: Begin seeking the Lord to move you into a deeper rest concerning what you wrote down.

5. The END Result of God Renewing Our Minds: We will be drawn into a deeper INTIMACY with God

“See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are...” 1 John 3:1

*“And immediately **there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized.**” Acts 9:18*

A very key word in this verse is “see.” “See” means to experience and know with certainty that God loves us. We know theologically that He loves us but do we know it experientially? I believe that as we experience the renewing of our minds and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit then we will have “spiritual” eyes to see how much God loves us. I know in my own life that I doubted God’s love for me for many years.

However, as I experienced more of His transforming work in my life, the “scales” — much like what is referred to in Acts 9:18 above — fell from my eyes and I began to see more clearly God’s love, grace, and goodness and be drawn into deeper intimacy with Him. This is the end result because God’s plan all along has been for us to know, understand, and receive His love for us.

Meditate: on the two verses on the previous page.

Engaging God: If you struggle with receiving God’s love, ask Him as He renews your mind to draw you into a deeper intimacy with Him.

Summary

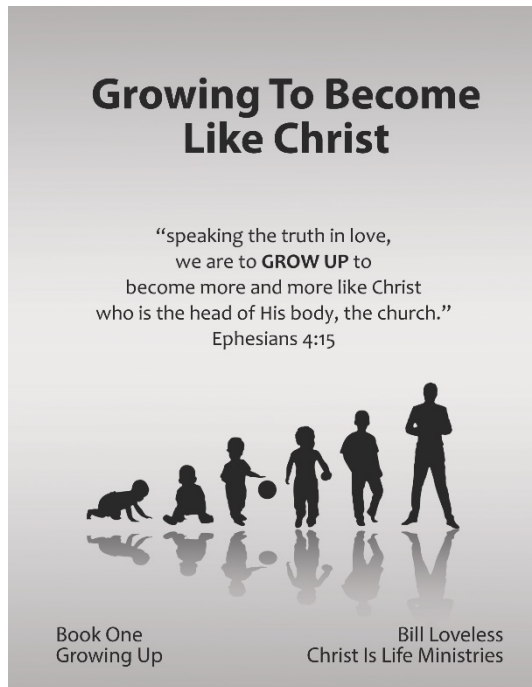
I hope this study has helped give you a better understanding of the battle of the mind as well as God’s process of renewing our minds. I trust that you will continue to go over this material and seek God to give you further revelation of these truths. As God gives you further revelation, engage Him by faith to not only do battle with the enemies of your mind but to renew your mind to the truth about yourself, God, and living the Christian life.

Christ paid the ultimate price to set you free. But you have a critical part to play in appropriating this freedom: trusting Him to truly set you free from all the false beliefs that have kept you in misery for far too long. When the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed! Amen? (John 8:36).

Where Do I Go From Here?

At our website listed below, we encourage you to check out our four-part discipleship series called ***Growing Up – Growing Out – Growing Deep*** designed to teach Christians how to fulfill their purpose and calling. The first book in the series is called ***Growing to Become Like Christ***.

Book One covers the following topics:



- What it means to grow up spiritually to become like Christ.
- The difference between living “A” Christian life versus living “THE” Christian life.
- What it looks like practically to grow to become like Christ.
- What are some of the hindrances to spiritual growth and how we overcome them.
- How becoming like Christ transforms every area of our lives.

CILM DISCIPLESHIP MATERIALS

CILM has this series and many other studies, booklets and videos at our website listed below. To purchase ready-to-use copies from **Amazon** or **download for free** and do your own printing, copying and binding, please go to the **Discipleship** tab of our website. We hope you will take advantage of these materials.

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