

Talk It Over

(Week 1)

Trust The Process

SMALL TALK

1. Rank your average day of thoughts on this one-to-10 scale. One represents negative, worried, and self-centered; 10 represents peaceful, positive, and God-centered. How'd you come up with your number?

Worried
Negative
Self-Centered

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Peaceful
Positive
God-Centered

2. Do you think it's easier to notice negative thinking in yourself or in others? Why?

VIEWPOINT

3. **READ Luke 6:45 and John 8:31-32:** Jesus came to set us free from the bondage of sin. With his help we can change! State in your own words what Jesus is asking us to do?

4. **READ Romans 12:1-2 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.** What are we asked to do? What are we promised in return?

GETTING PERSONAL

5. How do you personally battle negative thinking? What have you found that works?
6. What's one negative thought about yourself that you sometimes believe?
7. What can you change, or start, to allow God to renew your mind?
8. Pick your strongest negative thought, and find an even stronger truth to combat it daily. (For ideas do the reading plan below)

MAKING PROGRESS

9. One of our core statements is: "Everyone has a next step." What is your next step in taking captive your thoughts? Which thought? Which truth do you use to change your thinking?

Start a 7 day Mastermind reading plan online at: tinyurl.com/y5j4hlgj

September 1, 2019

Series: MASTERMIND

(Change Your Thinking, Change Your Life)

1-WINNING THE WAR IN YOUR MIND

Do you ever have unwanted thoughts!? Like...

- Anxious thoughts? Perhaps these are even irrational...
- Accusing thoughts?...like, *"I'm no good."* *"Nobody likes me."* *"Nobody can ever love me."* *"if people knew what I was really like, they'd have nothing to do with me."* *"I will never get passed this"* *"I will never amount to much..."* etc...
- Dangerous Fantasy thoughts? ...and you know these take you in the wrong direction? Addictive thoughts and desires that take you to a place you know is not good for you? These can be lustful thoughts...fueled by pornography for example.
- Angry thoughts, or revengeful hateful thoughts...
- How about **Thoughts of denial** where you consciously or subconsciously deny there is a problem with your life when people who know you best are telling you there is a problem?

How do you deal with thoughts like these? Do you just tolerate them? Do you tolerate other pests at home?

The Pests We Tolerate

24% of adults—that's one in four—will pay an exterminator to kill spiders.

27 % of adults, will pay to annihilate ants.

56 % will pay to banish bedbugs.

56 %, will pay to get rid of rodents.

58% will pay to kill cockroaches.

90+% will pay to will pay to terminate termites.

What if your place was infested with rattlesnakes? Would you tolerate them? This series is about what we can do to address troubling thoughts.

Series Description: Too often we become prisoners to thoughts telling us to worry, or telling us that we aren't good enough, or that we can't ever change our behavior. This series is designed to shine a light on the dark strongholds that hold us down. Through the healing power of Christ and practical focused thinking practices we can renew our minds and be transformed for the better forever.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 (NIV) For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

ὀχύρωμα (ochyrōma): stronghold, fortress; prison:
Dominating thoughts that have a strong hold on you, dominating your life.

Imagine this scene: You are held hostage. You are locked up in a room. There are terrorists outside the door. There is no window, no other door. The door is locked. But then one day, someone whispers, the terrorists are gone you can come out now. Just count to 30, this gives me time to leave. You are free. Start counting to 30 now. But you don't believe them, and you are afraid to open the door. Now you are held hostage by what? It isn't the terrorist. It isn't the lock. It is your mind that holds you. Your thoughts! It is the lying fear that says there is no way out and you are still trapped. That's a stronghold. That's a mind prison. Held by dominating thoughts!

Imagine another scene: Imagine you had a checking account that your parents set up for you when you were a teenager. Imagine, they said they were trying to teach you financial management principles. Imagine that they told you that every

month they would give you \$100 for doing a certain set of chores, and that this would keep coming as long as 1) you were responsible with your chores, and 2) you were responsible with your money. You could spend your money on whatever you wanted as long as you did not overspend, and what you spent it on fit within their rules for “responsible” spending.

Everything went well for years into your adulthood, but then your parents died, and an attorney came to you to explain your parent’s will and your inheritance. You get the shock of your life. Your parents were telling you lies all these years. What they deposited each month was not \$100, but \$100,000 a month! They had been working with this law firm to send you bogus bank statements based on the real bank statements. Your account now had many millions in it but you never knew it so you never knew you could spend any of it.

Here’s the point of the story. Do you see how what you believe affects how you live. What you think affects your life.

Strongholds are lies that are so dominating that they have a strong hold on us. These ingrained habits of thoughts that imprison us affect the way we live.

Paul does not leave us there. He teaches us what to do.

***2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV)** We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

Jesus taught the same kind of truth this way.

***John 8:31-32 (NIV2011)** ... Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. {32} Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

If you want to be set free from dominating thoughts that have a strong hold on you, you need to take these thoughts captive, and make them obedient to Christ, the truths he taught.

The solution ... the truth!

How? **“HOLD TO my teachings”**

Unplug from the wrong input, plug in the right input.

It is not enough to hear it once and agree... you must **store it. Hold on to it. Reflect on it. Act on it.**

I. Your life is always moving in the direction of your strongest thoughts.

Luke 6:45 (NIV) A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

Jesus used the word “heart” like the center of who we are. This includes storing thoughts in our mind. What thoughts we store up inside of us affects us hugely! Our thoughts lead and direct our actions.

If we store up good thoughts and train our hearts and minds and we will train our lives. Change your thoughts and you will change your life.

There is now actually a lot of science behind how our thoughts change our lives.

[Neuroplasticity VIDEO by SENTIS:]

The good news is that new neuropathways can be developed by focused thinking. Thoughts change the brains pathways. New

pathways can be created, and old ones can be changed over time. Science confirms what the Bible teaches. You can transform your life by the renewing of your mind. Isn't it amazing that we can take a thought captive? Thinking is not just the product of our brain. We can redirect our brain. We can renew our minds and be transformed. Which makes me think the mind is definitely more than the brain, something the Bible teaches.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. ... Romans 12:2

Our brain does not control us; we control our brain through our thinking and choosing. We can capture our thoughts and redirect them. We can capture thoughts. We are marvelously made!

Secular neuroscientists are now saying that changing our thought habits create changes in the brain making these new thought habits easier, and the old thought soon can drop away. Science just caught up to what the Bible described as reality thousands of years ago!

For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. ... Proverbs 23:7 NKJV

II. Do A THOUGHT AUDIT

Human beings are marvelously created beings. We can actually think about what we are thinking about. We can actually change what we are thinking about. We don't have to think what our brains are chemically firing off. We can think about a thing from multiple perspectives. We can think about what we are thinking about. We can take captive a thought and redirect it. That is amazing.

Right now in this thought audit, I want us to think about our pattern of thinking. Where is your default pattern on a scale of 1 to

10 in the following? Do you tend to be more ... This is a mental audit... a subjective guess.

Worried	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Self-Centered	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	God-Centered

A. Identify the number one stronghold that is holding you back.

If you know what that is, write it down. If you aren't sure take some time and prayer asking God to show you what to work on next.

B. Name the truth that demolishes that stronghold.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

In the coming weeks we will be looking at more details about how to win the war in our minds, and how to change the way we think. I encourage you to read the Mastermind 7 day reading plan to help you get started. Start a 7 day Mastermind reading plan online at: tinyurl.com/y5j4hlgj

Heavenly Father, You are so good and trustworthy. Thank You for giving us the power of Your Word and the Holy Spirit living in us to combat the negative thoughts we face. Please give us the

strength to create new paths in our brains that lead straight to You.
In Jesus' name, Amen!