

Talk It Over

MASTERMIND (Week 2) TRAINING THE MIND

SMALL TALK

1. What do you think of when you hear the word “meditation”?
2. In hindsight, what’s one of the most irrational decisions you’ve made lately that you’re willing to share?

VIEWPOINT

3. **READ Romans 8:5-8 and Colossians 3:2.** What does it mean for someone to “have their *minds set* on” something? What affect does this have?
4. **READ Psalm 119:15-16.** What is “meditation” according to the Bible and how is this different from what many people call “meditation”. What do you think most distracts you from keeping your thoughts focused on God’s truth?
5. **READ Philippians 4:8.** How does someone go about using this verse as a filter for the mind? Explain and give examples.
6. **READ Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 19:14.** Making your faith thoughts *audible* is part of the training practice built into the Hebrew word for “meditation”. Which phrases in these verses bear this out?

GETTING PERSONAL

7. Review the process Pastor Jim described for rewiring the brain and body.
8. Talk about the handout “Positive Affirmations list” / “Identity in Christ” list. Which affirmations do you want to incorporate into your training practice?

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 8, 2019

Series: MASTERMIND—

Change Your Thinking, Change Your Life

2—TRAINING YOUR MIND

3 Men With 2 Sacks

(Adapted from H Norman Wright, The Perfect Catch)

There is an old story about three men with 2 sacks. Each man had two sacks, one tied in front of his neck and the other tied on his back. When the first man was asked what was in his sacks, he said, "In the sack on my back are all the good things friends and family have done. That way they're hidden from view. In the front sack are all the bad things that have happened to me. Every now and then I stop, open the front sack, take the things out, examine them, and think about them." Because he stopped so much to concentrate on all the bad stuff, he really didn't make much progress in life.

The second man was asked about his sacks. He replied, "In the front sack are all the good things I've done. I like to see them, so quite often I take them out to show them off to people. The sack in the back? I keep all my mistakes in there and carry them all the time. Sure they're heavy. They slow me down, but you know, for some reason I can't put them down."

When the third man was asked about his sacks, he answered, "The sack in front is great. There I keep all the positive thoughts I have about people, all the blessings I've experienced, all the great things other people have done for me. The weight isn't a problem. The sack is like sails of a ship. It keeps me going forward.

"The sack on my back is empty. There's nothing in it. I cut a big hole in its bottom. In there I put all the bad things that I can think about myself or hear about others. They go in one end and out the other, so I'm not carrying around any extra weight at all."

It is easy to see we are not really talking about sacks, but rather this is a story about the way we think. How we think affects our lives deeply! Today we are talking about “Training Your Mind.”

Review:

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

This is true whether you are dominated by good thoughts or dominated by bad thoughts. What are your strongest dominating thoughts? Are they good? Are they bad? Are you aware of how your thoughts are affecting your life?

Review: God’s Word and science agree: 1) We can train our minds. 2) We can deconstruct harmful thought patterns and replace them.

If you missed last week, about Neuroplasticity, you can catch it online.

Although science is catching up with ancient theology with regard to how the right thoughts can renew and change our lives, believers have a huge advantage because we have divinely powerful weapons to deconstruct the negative dominant thoughts in our minds.

I. **THINK about what you THINK about**

Our thoughts are the catalysts that set our courses. This is where positivity or negativity and good or poor choices come from. The easiest thing to do is to let the mind run rampant, but we have to recognize that not every thought is helpful or true. So, think about what you think about!

A. Use God's FILTER

Philippians 4:8 (NLT2) ...Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

Whatever you are streaming in your thought life
will become your life movie.

The video opener we watched is so vivid. We need to unplug some of the wrong input connections and plug them into better sources. This is how we create new ways of thinking. This is how we literally form new ways of living by creating new thought habits that become life habits.

B. STORE the right stuff

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.

Psalm 119:11 (NIV2011) I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:15-16 (NIV) I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. ¹⁶ I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

meditation: to engage in mental exercise;
to focus one's thoughts on God's truth.

NOT the practice of "emptying" one's mind
to achieve an altered state of consciousness.

Don't confuse the Hebrew way of Meditation with another kind of meditation. This is NOT the technique of emptying your mind with a chant or humming "Ohm" or something, it is the technique of focusing your mind on God's truth.

***Romans 12:2 (NIV2011)** Do not conform 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.*

C. DEMOLISH the wrong stuff

***2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (NIV2011)** {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.*

Strongholds are usually much darker than we realize and it takes work to capture these.

diabolos (διάβολος), “**accuser**” is used 34 times as a title of Satan, the **Devil** (the English word is derived from the Greek).

The Devil is an “accuser”—that’s what that title means.

He will first tempt you to think wrongly. Then he will accuse you when you fall for his temptation. Here are 3 examples.

The Devil’s lie: Your identity comes from what you have done.
God’s truth: Your identity comes from what God has done for you.

The Devil's lie: Your identity comes from what people say about you.

God's truth: Your identity comes from what God says about you.

The Devil's lie: Your behavior tells you what to believe about yourself.

God's truth: Your belief about yourself determines your behavior.

II. REWIRE your brain and body

Is it true? Keep it! Is it a lie? Throw it out! There is a method for how to be transformed by the renew your mind. Let's talk about the specifics.

A. WRITE the wrong thought—confess the lie

"I'm a horrid person because I did _____, and thought _____"

B. REWRITE it to make it the right thought—affirm the truth

"In Jesus, I am loved, forgiven, and accepted, and made new and Jesus is purifying my thoughts and my behaviors."

C. AUDIBLE your faith affirmations

Making your faith thoughts *audible* is part of the training practice built into the Hebrew word for "meditation".

*Joshua 1:8 (NIV2011) Keep this Book of the Law **always on your lips; meditate on it day and night**, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*

Psalm 19:14 (NIV 2011) May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight...

D. PRACTICE new behavior projects

I have a list of personalized faith Affirmations that I've included in my daily prayer time for the last 19 months. And this has helped me more than I can describe to you. To help you create your own, I have a handout for you today, and we will also include this on our website.

Dear God,

We need Your help. It's not easy changing the way we think, and we can't do it without Your power. Holy Spirit, give us the strength to speak God's Word to the lies and negative thinking in our brains. Jesus, thank You for Your grace that heals and restores us as we seek You.

In Your name, amen!