

THE BATTLE OF THE MIND

(Are You Winning The Battle?)



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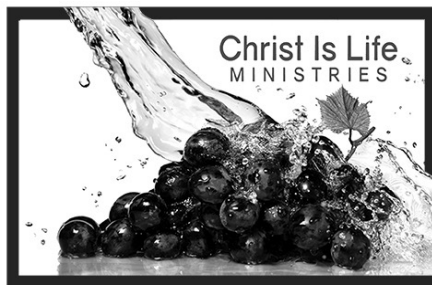
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INTRODUCTION

Do You Think About What You Think About?

I have been ministering for over 15 years and throughout that time I have come to the conclusion that the key to living out the Christian life is in large part based on what you think and believe is true. In light of this, think about this statement and this question:

***You will not live beyond what you THINK and BELIEVE.
Is what you THINK and BELIEVE the TRUTH?***

Proverbs 23:7 bears this out:

“As a man thinks in his heart so is he”

Based on this truth, what you think about will determine how you live life. Have you ever thought about how many thoughts run through your mind every day? The count is approximately 50,000. With this many thoughts a day, stop and ponder this question:

Do you THINK about what you think about?

It is interesting the looks I get when I ask this question to a live audience. It is as if no one has ever asked them this question. However, if we don't think about what we think about then it is possible that many of those unexamined thoughts are doing great harm to our minds which may lead to sinful, fleshly choices and behaviors.

In addition to thinking about what we think about, we must realize that there is a battle in our minds between truthful thoughts and sinful thoughts. Therefore, we will explore in this booklet the battle that is going on in our minds and what it looks like to engage God to win this battle.

CHAPTER ONE

The Battle and The Foundation For Winning The Battle

There Is A Non-Stop Battle For Your Mind

There is a non-stop battle being waged in our minds according to Romans 7:23:

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

Concerning the battle of the mind, please remember this:

***There is not only a battle IN your mind, there is
a battle FOR your mind.***

The battle “for” your mind is one to control what you think by the enemies of your mind. We will talk about the enemies of your mind in Chapter Two.

The Battle: God’s Truth Versus Sinful, Fleshly Thoughts

As I said in the introduction, that battle involves a choice between you thinking spiritual, truthful thoughts versus sinful, fleshly thoughts. 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 that God’s truth will set us free. Think about

the converse of this question

***If the truth will set you free, what are the results
of LIVING from the LIE?***

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 you 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.***

Unfortunately, no one told me what THE Christian life was until I had been a Christian for 30 years. What I was told at the beginning of my Christian walk 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 living the Christian life “A” life. It was a “self-sufficient, God help me” Christian life . I was told that THE Christian life was about me:

- **Trying** to keep a set of rules.
- **Trying** to keep God’s commands.
- **Trying** to change or transform myself.

- **Trying** to stop sinning.
- **Trying** set myself free.
- **Trying** to produce the fruit of the Spirit

I “tried” for 30 years to do these things because I believed it was the truth. 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. He was only sharing with me what he believed to be true.

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. In addition, I was losing the battle in my mind because I was told that it was up to me to win it. These were the devastating consequences of my living from a lie or a false belief instead of living from the truth.

However, in 1998 I heard the truth about living “THE” Christian life from a man named Ian Thomas. When he came to speak at my church these were the first words out of his mouth:

***God NEVER intended for YOU to live “THE” Christian life
that ONLY CHRIST can live in and through you***

The truth is that I can’t live THE Christian life. Only Christ can because He is the only One capable of living it. Look at the following scripture that back this up:

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

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

“For me, to live IS Christ....” Philippians 1:21

"He is the SOURCE of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." 1 Corinthians 1:30 (RSV)

The Lord revealed to me through these verses that there is only One Person who can live THE Christian life and that is Christ who is THE Life. You see, I was told to be the "source" with God's help to live THE Christian life. However, we see in 1 Corinthians 1:30 that there is only One Source and that is Jesus.

As I began to learn, believe, and walk in the truth that only Christ can live THE Christian life, my life began to radically change. God began to set me free from my sin strongholds of fear, anxiety, rejection, and unworthiness. He transformed me to a point that I could forgive my father who severely wounded me through physical, emotional, and verbal abuse. The bottom line is this:

***The LIE kept me in bondage with no transformation.
The TRUTH set me free and transformed my life.***

Therefore, the battle is between God's truth and the lies/false beliefs.

[Note: If you are hearing about Christ being THE Christian life for the first time, I have materials on our website (www.christislifeministries.com) that explain this truth further. Under the Discipleship Booklets tab you will find a booklet called "A" Life? Or "THE" Life. I also have another booklet and curriculum called "Living Life From A New Source" under the Discipleship tab. These resources will give you a deeper understanding of "THE" Christian life].

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. We see this in John 16:13.

*“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*

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

1. Teach you God’s truth.
2. Make God’s truth become revelation to you.
3. Renew your mind to believe God’s truth.
4. Remind you of God’s truth in the midst of the battle.
5. Overpower the enemies in the battle of the mind.

More importantly, it is the Holy Spirit who will take your thoughts CAPTIVE.

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 the Holy Spirit, you cannot win the battle of the mind.

Here are some other key reasons why we need the Holy Spirit to do battle for us:

- We can be deceived in our thinking
- We can't discern between the truthful thoughts and the lying thoughts.
- We have taken ownership of thoughts that do not line up with God's truth for so long that they have become reinforced false beliefs.
- Our finite minds are no match for the thoughts inserted into our minds by the flesh and Satan/demons.

I hope that this section helps you understand that apart from the power of the Holy Spirit, we have no chance to win the battle. However, you do have a part to play in the battle.

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 the first part John 15:5 to give you a better idea of what your 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:

***God created man to be DEPENDENT upon Him.
His design from the beginning was for you
to DEPEND on Him.***

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

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

***Your Part In The Battle:
Live with an ATTITUDE of TOTAL DEPENDENCE on
God as the SOURCE to OVERPOWER your enemies
in the battle and to win the battle in your mind.***

Summary

Let's look at the key points of this chapter.

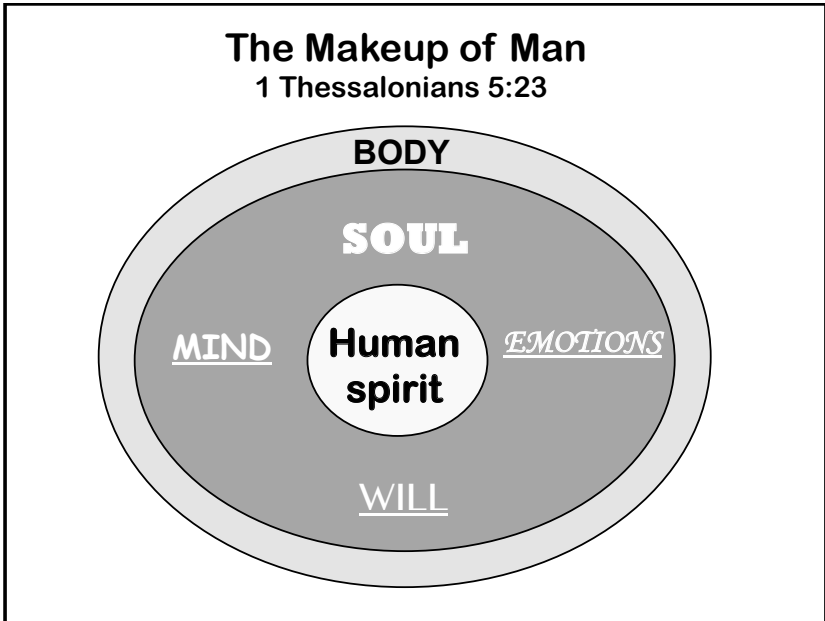
- There is a non-stop battle IN and FOR your mind.
- The battle is BETWEEN God's truth and sinful, fleshly thoughts.
- Understanding and living THE Christian life is the foundation for winning the battle of the mind.
- CHRIST, not you, is the only SOURCE to win the battle.
- Only through TOTAL DEPENDENCE on the Lord can you win the battle of the mind.

CHAPTER TWO

The Enemies In The 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. But before we discuss the enemies, let me give you a diagram illustrating and explaining man's makeup. I will be using this illustration from this point forward to talk about the battle of the mind.



God's Design 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...." Parenthesis mine*

(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. 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:

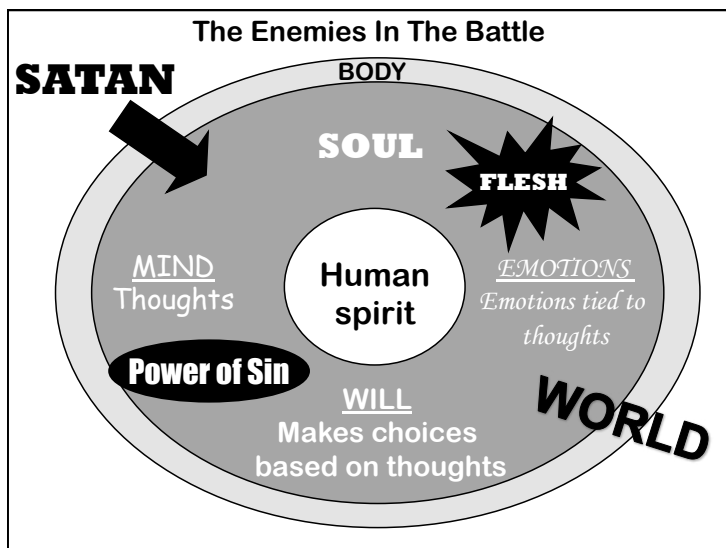
"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

In addition to worshiping 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 began at the point you trusted Christ by faith for salvation.

The human spirit is not to be confused with the Holy Spirit because all people have a human spirit from birth. It is only through acceptance of Christ that someone's human spirit comes alive to God through the Holy Spirit's union with that human spirit.

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 negative thoughts from these enemies that produce emotional reactions linked to those thoughts. If you accept, without examining them, these thoughts and their resulting emotions, they will negatively influence your will and cause you to make fleshly choices. Before going further, let's gain some insight into these four enemies of our minds.

Enemy #1 – The FLESH

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

Let me first define the flesh:

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.

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 control my thoughts.

Living from the flesh will always bring our focus back to self resulting in a constant battle between the flesh and the Spirit. We see this battle in Galatians 5:17:

“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

What will be the outcome of this battle if we live from the flesh versus living from the Spirit? We will not do the things that we please (i.e., be dependent on the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, live from the Spirit). Paul makes this flesh/Spirit struggle very personal 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*

What we “would like to do” is to live dependently on Christ. However, the flesh is like the wolf at the door ready to drag us back to self which produces what Paul calls, “the very thing I hate.”

If you choose to live from fleshly thinking, where will that lead? Romans 8:6 tells us that it leads to “**death:**”

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

This “death” is defined in Strong’s Lexicon as “**the misery of our soul as a result of sin.**” If you continue to think and live independently of God, the inevitable result will be “misery” in your soul.

Concerning the battle of the mind, the problem with living from the flesh is this:

It leads to fleshly THINKING which will result in ONGONG defeat and misery in the battle for your mind.

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 (Parenthesis mine)

What is the power of sin?

The power of sin is an INTERNAL power in your SOUL that CONSTANTLY seeks to draw you away God or tempt you to sin.

The power of sin is in partnership with your flesh. 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.

A key truth in understanding the power of sin is that your willpower is no match for the power of sin. Living independently of the Holy Spirit's power will always result in defeat by the power of sin with the result that you will consistently lose the battle in your mind.

Enemy #3 - SATAN and His DEMONIC Forces

*“For our struggle is **not** against **flesh and blood**, but against the **rulers**, against the **authorities**, against **the powers of this dark world** and against the **spiritual forces of evil** in the heavenly realms.” Ephesians 6:12*

*“....for **he (Satan) is a liar** and the **father of lies**.”*

John 8:44 (Parenthesis mine)

We are in a fierce battle with Satan and his demons. These enemies are formidable foes. The problem is that we are dealing with an unseen enemy who knows the Bible all too well and what God can and will do in our lives if we walk by faith.

Consequently, Satan and his demons’ objectives are to prevent us from walking by faith, experiencing transformation, and developing a personal, intimate relationship with God. Satan’s strategy is summed up in three words in John 10:10: **steal, kill, and destroy**.

He accomplishes his strategy through inserting fleshly, tempting, condemning, etc. thoughts in your mind.

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 you are immediately bombarded by the world's thinking. Remember that Satan is the god of this world, and he is using all that the world offers to tempt you to try to compare, to succeed, to win, to be strong, to be self-sufficient, and, most importantly, to be independent. It is the only message that you will ever get from the world. Why? All that the world can serve up to you, as it says in 1 John 2:16, is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful PRIDE of life.

In addition, world events, politicians, etc., can invoke fearful, angry and anxious thoughts. I know Christians that can't get past their anger about what the government is doing or is not doing. They let politicians and governmental action (or inaction) steal their peace and rest in Christ. They are stuck in "wallowing" in their "stinking" thinking. I believe that we would be surprised to know how deeply our culture influences our thought life and how much it can trigger fleshly thoughts of lust, anger, anxiety, etc.

Now that we have identified the enemies of the battle let's look at the consequences if we succumb to these enemies.

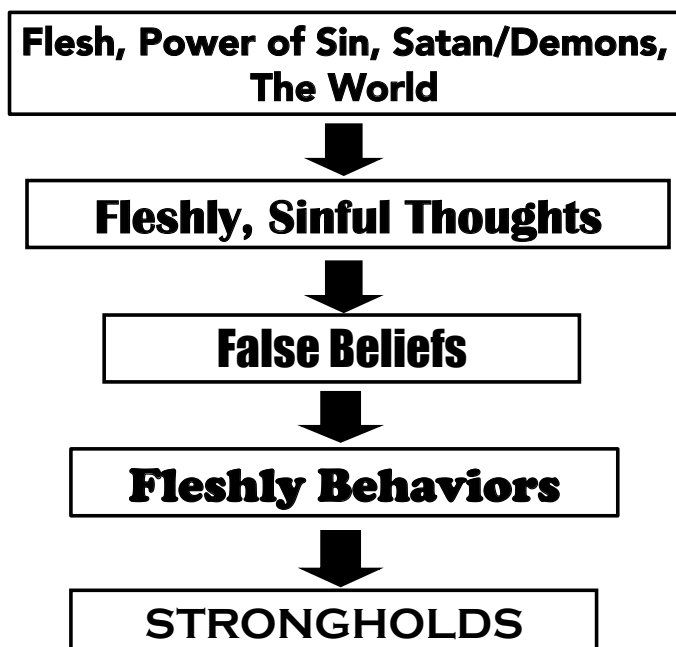
CHAPTER THREE

The Results Of Not Fighting The Battle

Introduction

Now that we understand the four enemies in the battle, I want to look at the consequences of 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 first look at what flows from being influenced by our flesh, the power of sin, Satan, and the world.

1. FLESHLY THOUGHTS

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

a. 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.”

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

Deceiving thoughts primarily come from Satan and his demonic forces. They are deceiving because they come disguised in first person and sound like you.

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

c. Tempting Thoughts - thoughts that tempt you to live out of your flesh.

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

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

d. Condemning Thoughts –thoughts that produce guilt, shame, or self-condemnation.

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

Example: “I can’t believe I rejected that person again. I feel so ashamed.”

These are just a few examples of the multiple thoughts that bombard your mind throughout the day. If these thoughts are not taken captive then eventually they become false beliefs. Here is a visual that illustrates the battleground of our thoughts.



2. FALSE BELIEFS

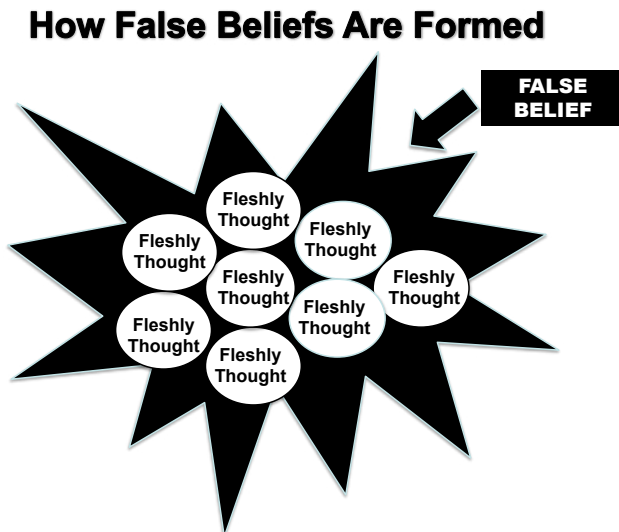
What flows out of recurring fleshly thoughts are false beliefs about ourselves, God, others, and living the Christian life. I define a false belief as follows:

***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 fleshly thought. If you take ownership of that thought and continue taking ownership of similar fleshly thoughts they will start accumulating eventually resulting in a false belief.

Building false beliefs is much like building a brick wall. Each brick laid represents a fleshly thought that is being laid on top of another thought until a false belief is formed. Look at the following diagram to get a picture of what I am talking about.



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 thought came to mind it started connecting to the previous thoughts resulting in your believing you were rejectable and a failure.

3. 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 flesh: anger, inadequacy, unforgiveness, envy, controlling, fear, worry

Examples of POSITIVE flesh: 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 will flow fleshly behaviors. Since these were part of my 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.

4. STRONGHOLDS

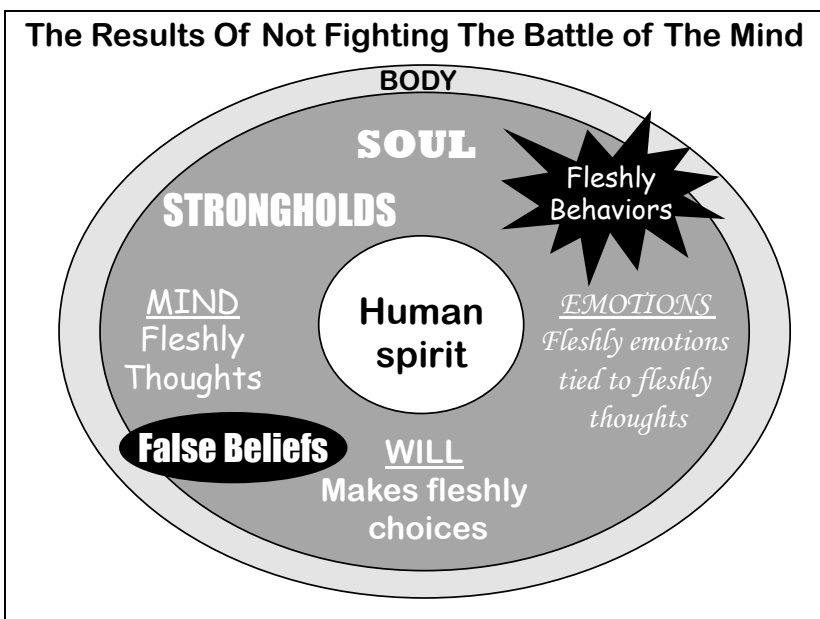
Once a false belief is formed, every time that thought comes into your mind it reinforces your false beliefs. If these false beliefs are reinforced long enough, they become strongholds. I simply define a stronghold as:

***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 rejectable, angry, unforgiving, and critical became deep-seated strongholds. (Another form of strongholds is addictions.)

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.



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
- taking ownership of fleshly emotions tied to those fleshly thoughts,
- which eventually result in false beliefs
- that produce fleshly choices and fleshly behaviors,
- which over time produce of sin strongholds.

I hope this chapter was a sobering one. If you find yourself experiencing a sin stronghold(s), the good news is that you can be set free. However, this can only happen if you first learn and then engage God to win the battle for your mind.

CHAPTER FOUR

Key Truths About The Battle Of The Mind

Introduction

Now that we know there is a battle and we know the enemies that we face in the battle and the results of not engaging in the battle, let's look at some key truths about winning the battle of the mind.

Truth #1 - The VICTOR In The Battle Lives Within You.

The good news about winning the battle of the mind is this:

***The VICTOR of the battle for your mind lives within you.
The victor is the HOLY SPIRIT.***

We see the Holy Spirit as the Victor in 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*

God knew that without His power indwelling us, we would never overcome the power of the flesh, the power of sin, or Satan/demons.

As your Victor the Holy Spirit will:

- Teach you God's truth. – John 14:26
- Make God's truth become revelation to you. -1 Corinthians 2:12

- Renew your mind to believe God's truth. – Romans 12:2
- Discern the truthful versus lying thoughts. - 1 Corinthians 2:11
- Remind you of God's truth in the midst of the battle. – John 14:26
- Overpower your enemies in this battle. Galatians 5:16
- Take your fleshly thoughts captive. – 2 Corinthians 10:5

There is NO victory in the battle of the mind apart from PARTICIPATING WITH and ENGAGING the Holy Spirit

TRUTH #2 - 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 that the battle will be over but the truth is that this battle lasts a lifetime. The reason being is that we live in fallen bodies influenced by our flesh, the world and Satan. They are not going away until we die. That is why we must engage in the battle and learn how to engage God to fight this battle.

TRUTH #3 - Who Wins This Battle Will Determine Whether Or Not You Will Experience A TRANSFORMED And An ABUNDANT Life (or not).

“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 don't engage God to win this battle then we will never experience a transformed or abundant life.

TRUTH #4 - There Will Be CONSEQUENCES To LOSING The Battle In 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 fruit** of the Spirit produced in your life.

Each of these consequences represents a promise that God made us as we live in moment by moment dependence on Him. As a result of not fighting the battle you will lose out on ever experiencing God's promises. Another consequence is that you will harden your heart towards God which means that your resistance towards God and the work of the Holy Spirit to transform your life will grow.

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 two 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.

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 Christian, 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 Christ’s wisdom, discernment, understanding, and revelation.

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.

FILTER #3 - The HOLY SPIRIT

“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

Just knowing the word of God intellectually is not enough. Biblical information must become revelation and that 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*

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 as to 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 Christ's discernment to discern my thoughts.

Summary

Let me summarize the key truths in this lesson:

1. The Victor, the Holy Spirit, lives within you.
2. The battle for your mind will last a lifetime.
3. Who wins this battle will determine whether or not your life will be transformed.
4. There are consequences to losing the battle.
5. You have three spiritual filters: word of God, mind of Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER FIVE

Engaging God To Win The Battle In Your Mind

Introduction

In this chapter, we will look at some key truths in winning the battle of the mind. Keep in mind that this is not a checklist. These are practical, applicational truths that hopefully will be of help in engaging God to win the battle in your mind.

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 the introduction, “Do you think about what you think about?” This is the first step in winning the battle of the mind. Therefore, 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 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.”

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
(Emphasis mine)*

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

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

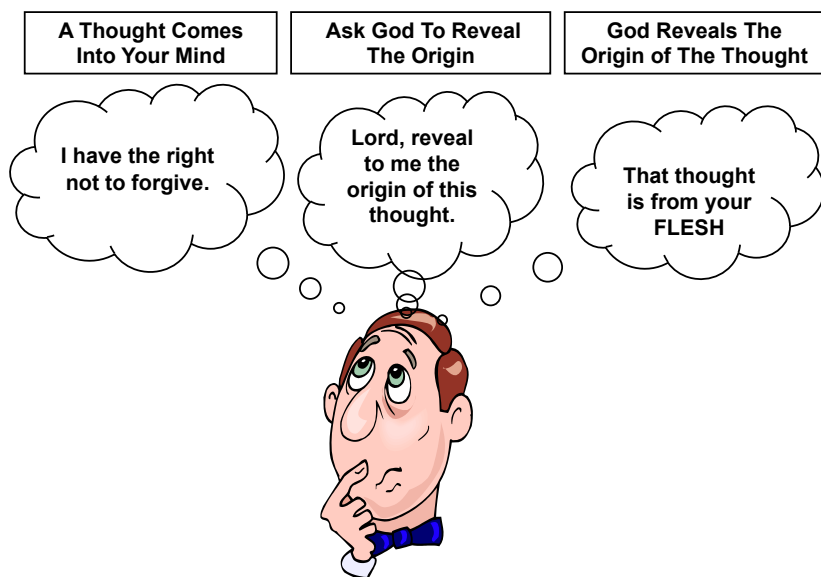
Step of Faith: “Lord, I am asking You to give me a greater awareness of what I am thinking. Expose any thinking that does not line up with Your truth. Give me “spiritual” eyes to see and discern what kind of thoughts I am thinking.”

***If we are not AWARE of the battle for our mind,
we have already LOST the battle.***

3. Ask God To Reveal The ORIGIN of Your Thoughts

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

The key thing we need to understand in 2 Corinthians 13:5 is that when Paul is telling us to examine ourselves he means to bring the Holy Spirit’s discernment into play to examine that thought and tell us the origin of that thought. The diagram below illustrates engaging God to discern for you the origin of your thoughts.



4. Draw On Your Divine Filters To DISCERN That Thought

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

Remember from the last chapter, we talked about the three “divine filters” we have to discern out thoughts: the word of God, the mind of Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, use these divine filters to discern what kind of thought that is: a truthful or lying, condemning, deceiving thought, etc.

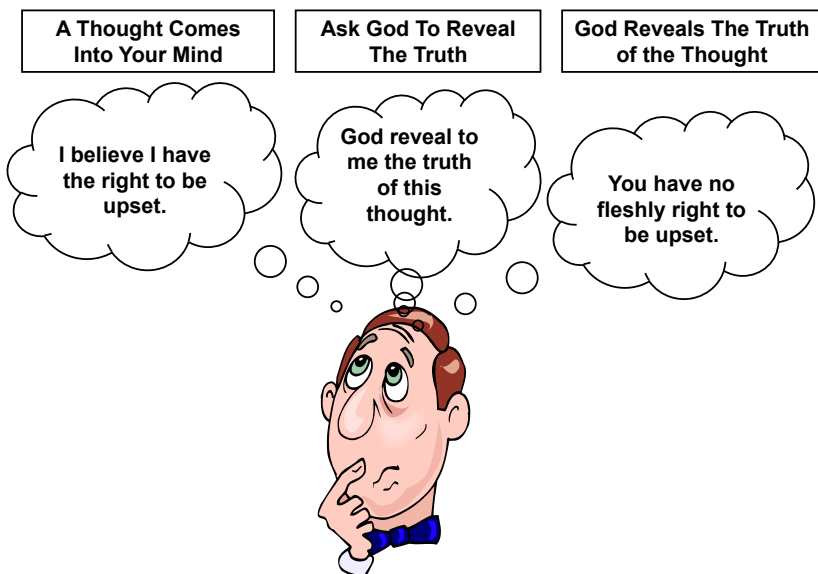
Step of faith: “Lord, I am thinking that You are not a good God because of what You allowed in my life. However, I choose to believe you are good because your word says that Your goodness does not depend on what You do or don’t do. Your goodness is based on your character.”

5. Ask God to Reveal The TRUTH Concerning Your Thoughts.

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

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

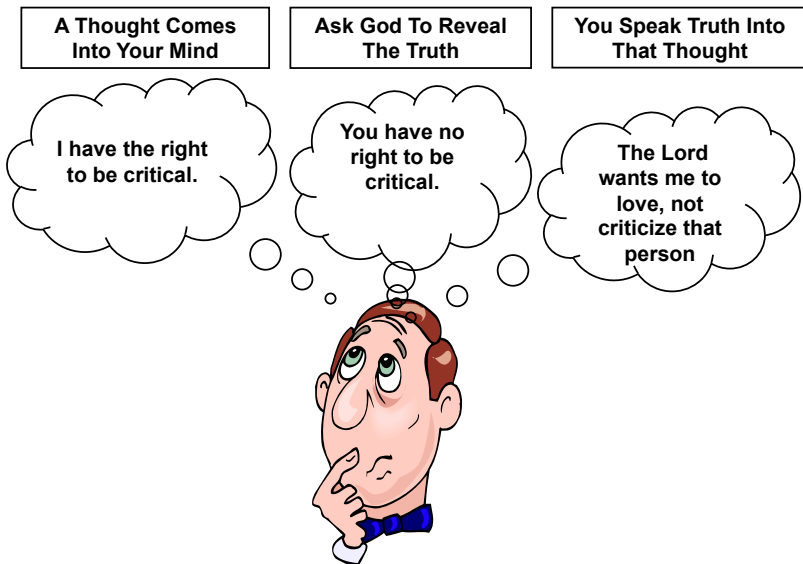
Early on in engaging the Spirit in the battle of the mind, you will need to spend more time intentionally asking Him to tell you the origin of your thoughts. However, the more your mind is renewed by the truth, the easier you will be able to recognize the truth versus the lie.



6. SPEAK Truth Into That Thought

When the Spirit reveals that 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. In our continuing example, 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.”



7. ENTRUST Your Fleshly Thoughts To God.

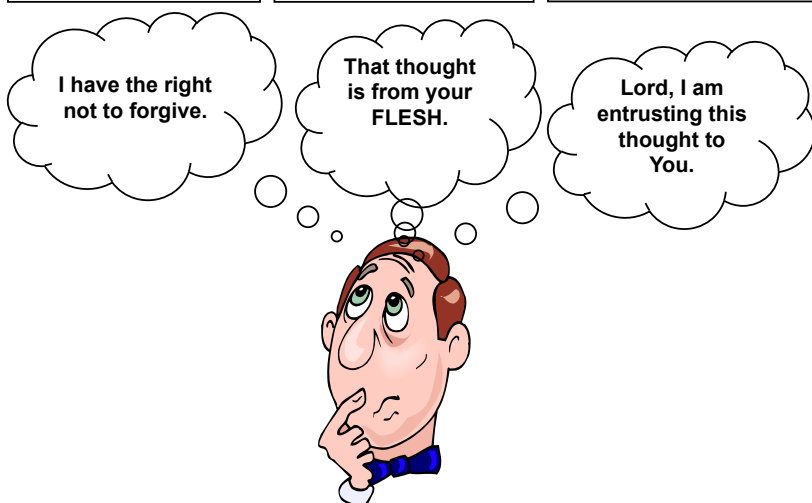
“Throw all your worry on Him, because He cares for you.”
1 Peter 5:7 (ISV)

Once the Spirit has revealed to you the truth of the thought, He wants you to entrust that thought to Him by faith for Him to take captive. **Entrustment means that you give God the ownership of that thought.** If you don't entrust that lying/fleshly thought to God, you will be tempted to continue thinking this thought until you take ownership of it and let that thought eventually take you to sin.

**A Thought Comes
Into Your Mind**

**The Spirit Reveals The
Origin Of The Thought**

**ENTRUST That
Thought To God**



This is why you can't waste time with your fleshly or lying thoughts. It is crucial that you entrust them to God immediately. That is why Peter says in 1 Peter 5:7 to "throw all your worry on Him." Throw your temptations, your lies, and your condemnation on the Spirit for Him to take captive.

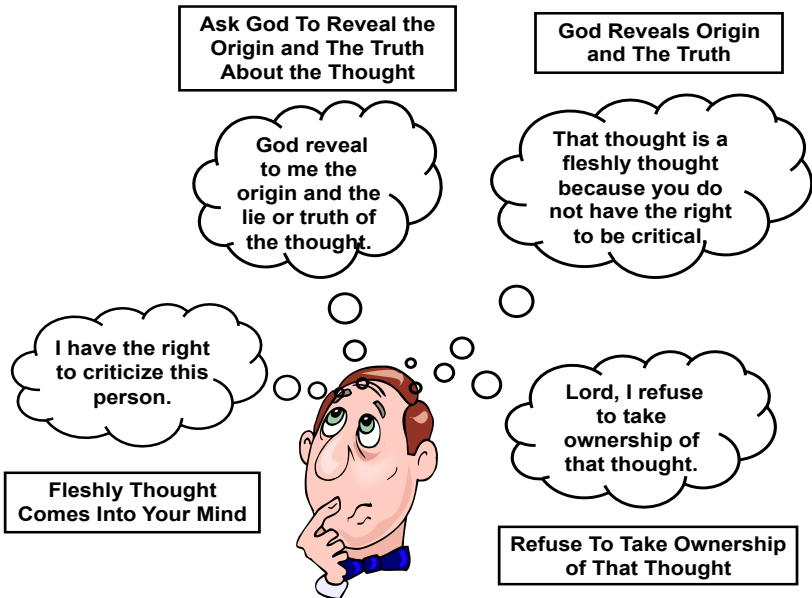
8. In Christ's Power, REFUSE To Take Ownership Of That Thought

"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 through drawing on Christ's power refuse to take ownership of

that thought. In Christ's power, you have His power to say **NO** to any sinful, fleshly thought. As someone once said, "If a fleshly or lying thought comes through the front door of your mind, simply open the back door and let it out." The illustration below shows us the process from moving from the original thought to ultimately refusing to take ownership of the thought.



Summary

I hope this lesson has helped you by giving you practical application in taking our thoughts captive. As these principles become "holy habits," then 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.

CHAPTER SIX

Spiritual Warfare With Satan/Demons

How Satan and His Demonic Forces Come Against Us

*“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

Satan and his demons come against you to keep you:

- Distracted from your faith walk with God.
- In bondage to your false beliefs.
- In ongoing defeat concerning your defeating sin patterns.
- Turning back to yourself as the source for living life.
- Trying to deal with your problems independently of God.

Even though Satan and his demons CANNOT INDWELL you as a Christian, they CAN negatively INFLUENCE your soul.

Satan/demons, flesh, and the power of sin work together to defeat you in the battle for your mind. Let's look at an example of how they work together.

[Note: From this point on when I use the term Satan that will include his demons as well.]

Satan's Strategy – Insertion, Reinforcement, Conclusion

It is important to remember that Satan and his demonic forces know your past history. They know your strengths and weaknesses. They know intimately your flesh patterns and the strength of those flesh patterns. Therefore, they can strategize on how best to keep you focused on yourself and will use your

fleshly behaviors and false beliefs against you. They have a three-fold strategy when it comes to your thought life.

- INSERT fleshly thoughts into your mind.
- Insert a REINFORCING thought to reinforce your false beliefs.
- Insert a CONCLUDING thought to reinforce your fleshly choices.

Before we look further into Satan's strategy, remember this key truth concerning Satan and your thought life:

Satan is a DECEIVER and the ultimate deception is for him to insert thoughts that always come into your mind in FIRST person and sounding like you.

Satan doesn't insert a thought in third person that says "You are a failure." He inserts the thought in first person that says, "I am a failure."

a. Inserts fleshly, lying, condemning, and tempting thoughts.

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

"From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. ²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 'Never, Lord!' he said. 'This shall never happen to you!'" "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 16:21-23 (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 that Satan was behind the thoughts that were verbalized by Peter. Now let's look at an example of how Satan fulfills his strategy.

Example: Let's assume that you were wounded by your dad. Satan inserts a thought like this: "Why did God allow this to happen to me?"

b. Satan inserts thoughts that REINFORCE your false beliefs.

That first thought is followed by a reinforcing thought that reinforces or affirms your false beliefs.

Example: Continuing our previous example, Satan inserts a reinforcing thought like this: "I don't believe God is trustworthy." This thought reinforces your false belief that God is not trustworthy because He allowed your father to wound you.

c. Satan inserts CONCLUDING thoughts.

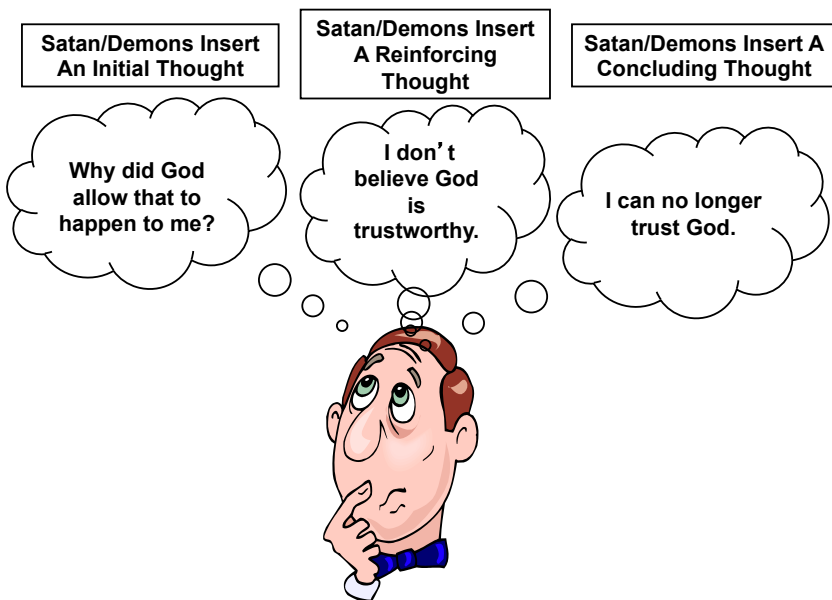
Ultimately, Satan want you to come to a false conclusion concerning what you are thinking. Therefore, they will insert a concluding thought that results in a false conclusion.

Example: Satan inserts a concluding thought like this, "I can no longer trust God because He let that happen to me."

If Satan can your reinforce your false beliefs and bring you to false conclusions, (in this case to no longer trust God), then

he has won the battle.

The following is an illustration of Satan's three-fold strategy



Engaging God To Do Battle With Satan

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

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

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

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

Satan wants to steal the rest, joy, and peace that you have in Christ, kill your momentum of walking by faith, and to destroy your desire and willingness to continue depending upon God. Another ongoing scheme of the enemy is to persuade you that God is the source of your problem when it really was Satan, not God, that was the source. Ultimately,

Satan's main objective is to keep you focused on yourself as the source to live life.

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

*"And then the **lawless one (Satan) will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow** with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming." 2 Thessalonians 2:8
(Parenthesis mine)*

Since you are fighting an unseen, powerful, and deceiving enemy, you can't possibly win the fight against Satan. Therefore, do not talk directly to or try to engage Satan or his demons. That is God's job. Your part is to engage God and His power to deal with these enemies.

Truth #3 - Satan and his demons are powerless when we walk in God's POWER.

*"Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death **He (Jesus) might render powerless him (Satan) who had the power of death, that is, the devil.**"
Hebrews 2:14 (Parentheses mine)*

As we walk by faith, we are walking in the Holy Spirit's power over Satan. Satan is a "toothless" lion when we depend upon, rest upon, and draw upon God's power.

Truth #4 - God has already DEFEATED Satan and is SOVEREIGN over him

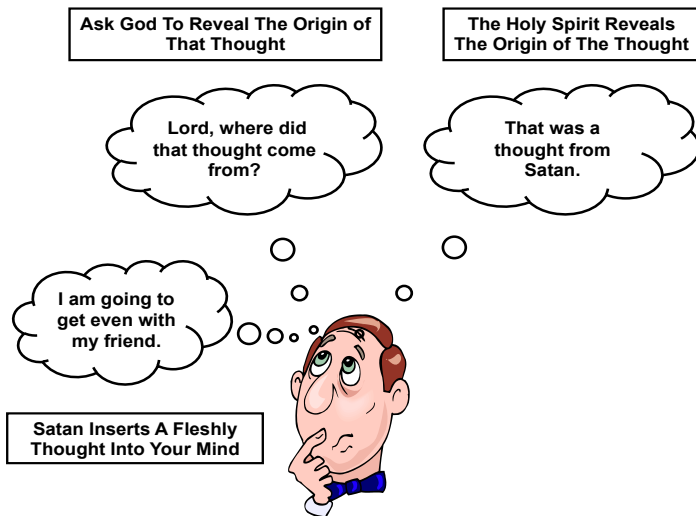
*"...**greater is He (God) who is in you than he(Satan) who is in the world.**" 1 John 4:4 (Parenthesis mine)*

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 if you live in an abiding relationship with Christ.

2. Ask God to REVEAL to you whether the thoughts that you are thinking are from Satan.

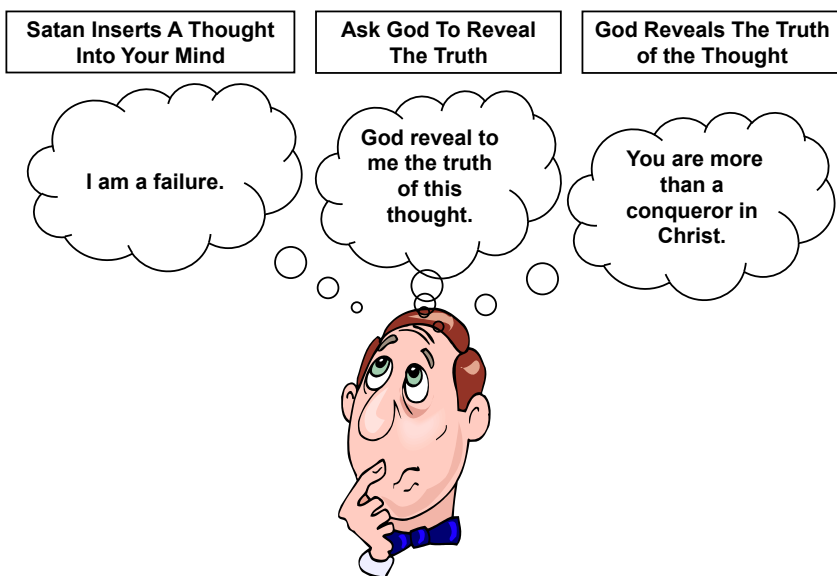
*"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits to see whether they are from God.**" 1 John 4:1*

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:



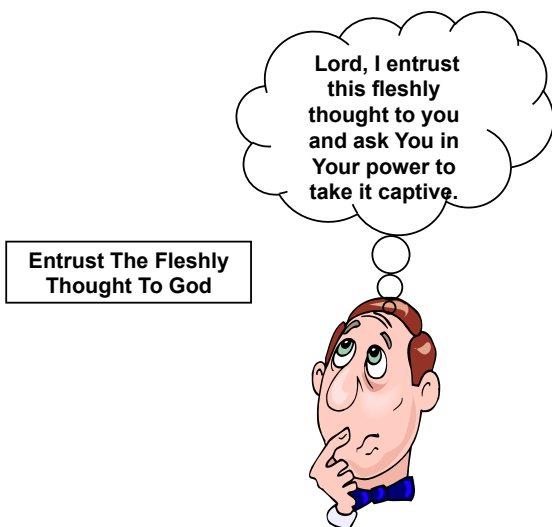
3. Ask God to REVEAL the truth concerning your thoughts.

When Satan inserts deceiving thoughts in our minds we can become confused about whether or not that thought is true. Therefore, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you whether that thought is true or not.



4. 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 the origin and the truth of your thoughts, then refuse to take ownership of those thoughts. Instead, entrust (or hand over) those thoughts to God so He will take them captive.



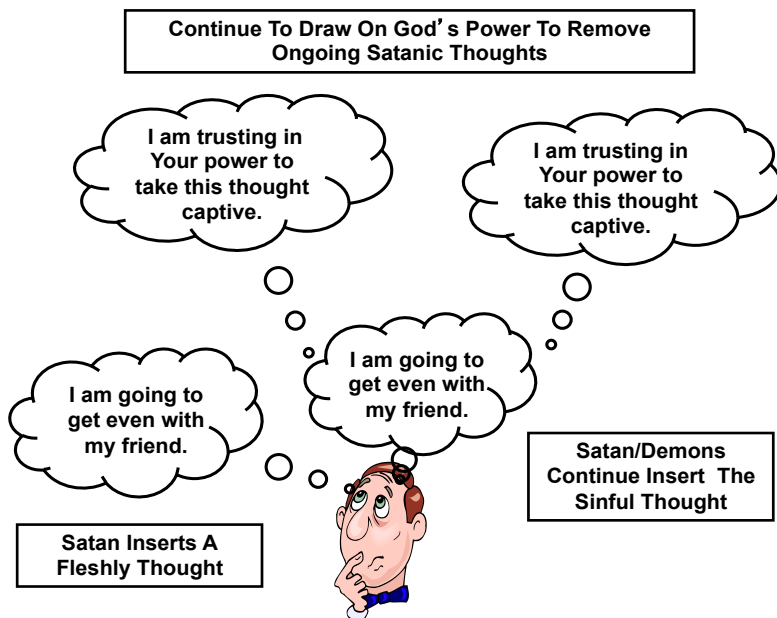
3. If the thoughts continue coming, KEEP drawing on God's POWER to remove those thoughts.

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

Many times Satan will not insert a thought only one time. 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 your flesh. 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 through you.

It may take REPEATED entrustment of your thoughts to God before Satan GIVES UP on inserting those thoughts in your mind.

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



Summary

There is much more that can be said about spiritual warfare. However, in this booklet I want to give you some practical applications of what it looks like to engage the Holy Spirit to do battle with Satan.

CONCLUSION

I hope this booklet has given you deeper insights into why we must know: (1) there is a real ongoing battle for your mind; (2) the enemies we are facing in this battle; and (3) how to engage God to win this battle for us. However, there is much more I want to share with you if you are willing to learn more.

How Can I Learn More?

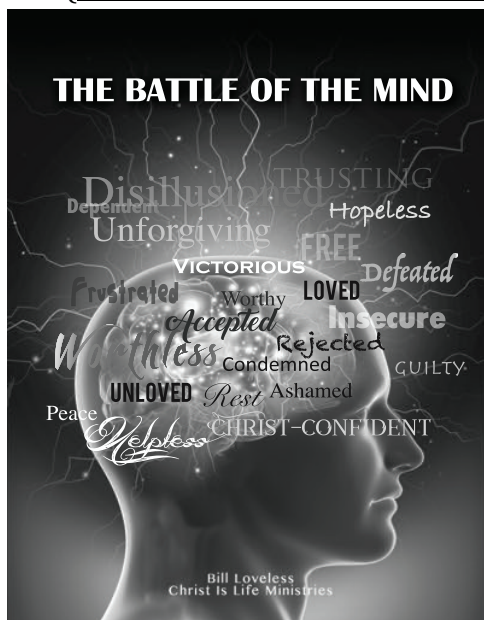
I have written a follow-up curriculum to this booklet called *The Battle Of The Mind*. In this curriculum, I go into greater depth on the topics I discussed in this booklet. If you would like to learn more, I would encourage you to go to our website: (www.christislifeministries.com), and look under the

Discipleship tab. When you get to that page, scroll down until you see the curriculum pictured left.

You can either download this curriculum for free or purchase a written copy that we will mail to you.

I hope you will take advantage of this study and seek the Lord for a deeper understanding of what it means to engage God to win the battle in your mind.

*Blessings in Christ,
Bill Loveless*



(5-1-17)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

To learn more about Bill and his journey, please go to his website and look at the section called Bill's Personal Journey.

THE BATTLE OF THE MIND

After all my years of teaching and discipling, I believe the key to God's transformation process starts with our thought life. When I teach on the battle of the mind, the first question I ask is, "Do you think about what you think about?" I have discovered that many Christians don't really think about the thoughts that come into their minds. They take ownership of every thought without questioning the origin of them.

This can be dangerous because there is a non-stop battle going on for the control of what you think. In this battle, you have internal enemies: the flesh and the power of sin and external enemies: Satan and his demonic forces and the world. These enemies' objective is to steal, kill, and destroy your walk with God. Their primary way of accomplishing this goal is through your thought life. Since this area of our Christian walk is so crucial, I trust the truths that I share in this booklet will help you better understand the battle and give you a greater willingness to engage God to win the battle in your mind.

Here are the key points we will focus on in this booklet:

- What is the battle of the mind.
- Who are the enemies are in this battle.
- What are the consequences if we don't engage God in the battle.
- How we engage God to win the battle of the mind.



Bill Loveless is the director of Christ Is Life Ministries (CILM). CILM is a non-profit, non-denominational ministry that focuses on discipleship. We teach Christians that Christ is our only Source for living the Christian life and what it looks like to be transformed into Christ-likeness.

For further information, see the ministry website at: www.christislifeministries.com

