

## **Reprogramming the toxic thought with the truth.**

### **Do you control your thoughts or do they control you?**

**The Bible tells us to take every thought captive. (2 Corinthians 10:5)** That means that I have a chance to do something about all thoughts that are not well-pleasing to God, before they enter my heart and become a part of me!

**The Bible says:** "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).

**You renew your mind with the Word of God.**

#### **Proverbs 3:5-6 Living Bible (TLB)**

<sup>4-5</sup> if you want favor with both God and man, and a reputation for good judgment and common sense, then trust the Lord completely; don't ever trust yourself. <sup>6</sup> In everything you do, put God first, and he will direct you and crown your efforts with success.

#### **Ephesians 6:10-19 Living Bible (TLB)**

<sup>10</sup> Last of all I want to remind you that your strength must come from the Lord's mighty power within you. <sup>11</sup> Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand safe against all strategies and tricks of Satan. <sup>12</sup> For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies—the evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world; and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world.

<sup>13</sup> So use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy whenever he attacks, and when it is all over, you will still be standing up.

<sup>14</sup> But to do this, you will need the strong belt of truth and the breastplate of God's approval.

<sup>15</sup> Wear shoes that are able to speed you on as you preach the Good News of peace with God.

<sup>16</sup> In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan. <sup>17</sup> And you will need the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit—which is the Word of God.

<sup>18</sup> **Pray all the time.** Ask God for anything in line with the Holy Spirit's wishes. Plead with him, reminding him of your needs, and keep praying earnestly for all Christians everywhere. <sup>19</sup> Pray for me, too, and ask God to give me the right words as I boldly tell others about the Lord and as I explain to them that his salvation is for the Gentiles too.

## **2 Timothy 3:16-17 Living Bible (TLB)**

<sup>16</sup>The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. <sup>17</sup>It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone.

**This means you must find the specific promises to counteract the particular lie you are believing and speak them out loud.**

**"As a man thinks, so is he." Proverbs 23:7.** What we think about is crucial to who we are.

- Scientists don't agree on how many thoughts we have each day, but all agree there are thousands of them.
- Who we are is shaped moment by moment by the thoughts we choose to let into our mind and heart.
- But how can we control the thousands of thoughts that enter our mind each day?
- What do we do with the thoughts that are not pleasing to God?
- How can we, in reality, take every thought captive?

**Taking every thought captive** – a battle almost all talk of battles and wars when concerning a Christian life refers to the inner battle that arises when a sinful thought tempts you. God's Spirit and the flesh are at odds. When you have decided to only do...

**Often, our thoughts have to be focused on the regular tasks we must accomplish that day.** However, as we go through the day, we can catch thoughts and attitudes that are contrary to God's will and keep them from gaining control of our mind and heart.

**Paul explains how this is possible:** "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:4-5. It is written that we need to battle to keep our thoughts pure, but it is also written that we have weapons to fight with!

**Let's consider a typical daily situation where I would have the opportunity to take my thoughts captive:**

Perhaps my supervisor at work gives me a task I hate, and negative, complaining thoughts come into my head. These thoughts are temptations – and I have a chance to do something about them before they enter my heart and become a part of me.

It is these types of thoughts we need to take captive by instead choosing to obey words of God such as **Philippians 2:14: "Do all things without grumbling or complaining."**

Such a choice requires a real battle in our thought life, but the weapons of our warfare – the Word of God and the power of His Holy Spirit – are mighty to help us. By praying to God in the moment when we sense we are being tempted, we can receive power to keep our thoughts pure. Then I have taken the thought captive!

### **Prepare for war**

We must also strengthen ourselves for this warfare beforehand by following Jesus' example when He was tempted by the devil to turn the stones into bread: **"But it is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" Matthew 4:4.**

The Word of God and the power of His Holy Spirit are mighty to help us take captive our thoughts. Jesus had armed Himself by reading and meditating on the Word of God that could help Him in the trials of His life. If we notice there are areas of our thought life that we find difficult to overcome, we can find specific Scriptures that can help us to get victory over them, and believe in a God who is mighty to save!

### **God's Word is our weapon!**

For example, if we know we are easily tempted to impure thoughts about the opposite sex, we can take Jesus' words to heart: "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell." **Matthew 5:28-29.**

If we are prone to anger, we can arm ourselves with James' exhortation: "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God." James 1:19-20. These words of God are our weapons, and will give us power to take all impure thoughts captive!

### **Transformation – by the Holy Spirit**

By the Holy Spirit we can get grace and power to bring the thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and in this process, we become transformed into the person He wants us to be. We have the wonderful hope that by overcoming sin in our thought life, we can become a little more like Christ as each day progresses.

In this way, we become valuable tools in God's hands. Allowing this inner work of God to take place in us is the greatest task we can take on in life.

**What is the Holy Spirit saying to you today?**