

THINKING STRIGHT!

2 Timothy 1:7; 2 Corinthians 10:1-6

INTRODUCTION: So much of our life is affected by the way we think it is time we go a little deeper into God's Word to learn how to control our thought life in a healthy way. We all struggle to some degree to control our thoughts: Proverbs 23:7 KJV. All of us struggle to think straight or to think according to the way our Lord tells us to think, but God always gives us a way of escape so we can think properly: 1 Corinthians 10:13.

I. THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT!

When Christians chose to rebuke the devil when an evil thought comes into their minds have sadly put their thoughts in the wrong direction. We never see anyone in the Bible rebuking Satan for their thoughts. The root of our problem with straight thinking is not in the devil or other people, it is within ourselves, our flesh. We need to learn to repent when our thinking goes in the wrong direction: James 1:13-15. The source of our temptation is within our own flesh! The solution is not to blame Satan, but to turn from temptation and deny the flesh. Self-control, even in our thought life is found in the fruit of the Spirit: Galatians 5:22-25, not through human effort. The fruit of the Spirit is given right after the list of the works of our own flesh: Galatians 5:16-21. We are told that the weapons of our warfare against the flesh are not carnal but spiritual. Only God can produce His fruit in our lives as we yield to Him. Romans 5:5; Romans 8:6.

II. THE BIRDS AND OUR THOUGHTS!

When you have a thought pop into your mind it is not yours until you choose to dwell on it and act on it. Satan does know what you fell for yesterday. He will continue to feed you thoughts that he knows you fall for over and over again. Rebuking Satan doesn't work. Here is how the Bible tells us we can resist Satan: James 4:6-8. We must submit to God before we can successfully resist Satan's luring of our desires. When we submit to God, our flesh is once again put to death and we can resist evil thoughts.

The victory that overcomes this world's evil is our faith in Jesus Christ: 1 John 5:1-5; Mark 7:18-23. We are warned in the Word of God to guard our hearts: Proverbs 4:23. So how do we guard our hearts? It is by guarding the gatekeeper of our hearts our mind. What we accept in our minds gives that thought access to our hearts. Luke 6:45. As we learn to hide God's Word in our hearts we begin to cleanse our thoughts: Psalm 119:11. Our thoughts have no power over us until we choose to receive them into our lives. We are told in the Word of God even what to think on: Philippians 4:8. This is the call of faith. It is a call to leave the fleshly mind behind and take on the spiritual mind where there is life and peace: 2 Timothy 1:7 KJV.

III. PULLING DOWN STRONGHOLDS!

Pulling down strongholds is not easy, we must overcome a lifetime of habits and programming of our thoughts to pull those strongholds down: 2 Corinthians 10:4-6. A stronghold is a place in enemy territory where an opponent has gotten an advantage and will use that to gain more ground in your heart. We can remove strongholds but not by our own efforts but by the Spirit of our God through the Word of God and faith in the Word of God! The first rule in any war to win the battle is to cut off the supply line. We must stop feeding our

minds the things we are trying to root out of our lives. Proverbs 22:24-25. We are told to take every thought captive: 2 Corinthians 10:5. We are commanded to police our thoughts: 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; Ecclesiastes 8:8. One thing about our thoughts; they are either you enemy or your ally. We must determine which side we are on. If you join the enemy then you make yourself an ally for the flesh and its war against the Spirit of God. There are no passive observers here.

IV. AVENGING ALL DISOBEDIENCE!

Once we take every thought captive, there is one final instruction we must follow. We must be ready to avenge all disobedience once our obedience is fulfilled: 2 Corinthians 10:6. We must not get these two out of order. Until we master our thought life through submission to the Spirit, we cannot avenge anything. We must know here what God means here for us to avenge disobedience. This is not us avenging wrongs. The Bible has addressed this concern: Romans 12:19.

The vengeance of disobedience is to correct what is wrong—beginning with ourselves and then becoming a light to the world around us. The word “avenge” means “to make right, do justice to something or someone.” It does not mean to retaliate. It means to make what is unjust become just. We must be careful here because we can easily get the cart before the horse here: Luke 6:41-42. We must learn to be leaders by example and not enforcers. As we learn to take every thought captive to the Holy Spirit we can then avenge the disobedience of the flesh in many areas of our lives.

Once our thinking is taken captive we can then have the power to control the stronghold and have the power to avenge disobedience in our own lives. We must all learn how to identify the strongholds in our own lives and then we can take them captive and battle through this life in obedience to the Holy Spirit in order to find true peace and victory in our lives. Our battle is to depart from the flesh and abide in the Spirit of our God. It truly is all about walking through this life in intimate fellowship with our God. Remember: to be spiritually minded is life and peace: Romans 8:6-13. All this is ours if we believe God, apply His truth to our lives and walk in these principles.