

Casting Down Thoughts

Scripture instructs us *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 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.”*
11 Corinthians 10:3-5 NKJV

Types of Thoughts

Four specific areas which offer challenges in the thought life:

A. Feelings of self doubt and defeat

These are thoughts against ourselves, causing us not to fully acknowledge, embrace and walk in our God given abilities. Comparing ourselves with others is a very common trap.

B. Thoughts involving other people with the temptation to take offense, pass judgments, and react with ungodly mean-spirited behavior.

C. Impure thoughts involving acts of sin (among these are worry, fear, envy, bitterness, discouragement, lust, pride, lying, and anger).

D. Thoughts that cause us to doubt God’s love and provision for our every need or the needs of others.

These thoughts war against the very character of God.

Thoughts are introduced from outside ourselves as well as from within ourselves. The five God given senses (seeing, hearing, smell, taste, touch) offer entrance to the threshold of the mind. In addition, thoughts spring from within us or they are planted there by the actions or words of others. Thoughts are triggered by these four sources:

1. Our own mind (past experiences, preconceived ideas, wrong teaching, things we take in through the senses)
2. The words or actions of others
3. Satan
4. God

Many Christians have been deceived into thinking sin lies in having an ungodly thought flash across their minds. We feel defeated and helpless because **we do not understand that the thought itself is not sin**. The important thing is what we do with the thought. If we let it in, it leads to sin and shame. Doubt, anxiety, anger, and nervousness show up disrupting our physical and spiritual rest. We are not responsible for the thoughts coming to our mind (unless we are exposing ourselves to situations that we know trigger the thoughts). We are responsible for controlling them through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Four Steps to Victory

Anabel Gillham’s, (*A Study of the Mind* pamphlet), identifies four steps that provide a tool for victory in the believer’s thought life.

I. Recognize

Examine the thought to see where it is coming from. Check the thought according to the first piece of the armor of God provided for the believer. (the belt of truth Ephesians 6:14) Is the thought true? Does it line up with scripture and what God’s Word says? What triggered the thought? Will it bring glory to God? How would the Lord want me to think about this? Is it a thought that promotes or hinders growth in Christ?

II. Refuse

Do not allow the thought entrance. If an intruder tried to gain entrance to your physical house your attitude would be “halt-stop!” Likewise say “stop” to an intruder into the thought life. Refuse it in the name of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within every believer. The undesirable thought can be stopped at the threshold of the mind when it first comes knocking to gain entrance. Do not wait until the thought implants itself and gains expression through inappropriate actions.

III. Remember

Remember the provision of victory over sin which Jesus’ death on the cross provided through His blood sacrifice. Jesus’ blood provided a covering

for the believer to use against ungodly thoughts. We claim, believe and experience by faith, the blood of Jesus over and around our minds. Jesus' death provided the legal basis for the believer's victory in the thought life.

Mrs. Gillham uses the word "reckon" in place of remember. *"Reckon yourselves indeed to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord."* Romans 6:11b NIV Strength comes by remembering that we are in Christ and Christ lives in us in the form of the Holy Spirit. We have divine help for our thought life which is where all sin begins because the mind is the gateway to man's three-fold being.

IV. Rest

Rest in the victory. Romans 6:6, 7 NIV *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin."* I am in Christ. He is in me!

Focusing The Mind

Romans 12:2a NIV *"Do not conform any longer to this world."* Do not be ruled by feelings! It is possible to control the focus of the mind. Using the belt of truth in the Christian's armor involves the knowledge and recognition of the appropriate scriptural truth for the situation. The sword of the Spirit, also included in the armor of God, is **speaking audibly the word of truth** to the misconceptions arising from within ourselves (we are often our own worst enemy) or put there by our

adversary, Satan. The believer is not helpless in the face of defeating thoughts. **Satan is stopped by the word of God spoken in faith.**

Consider the story of the blood applied to the doorpost at the Passover (Exodus 12). The destroyer was halted at the door upon which the blood of the sacrificial lamb had been applied. Jesus is our passover lamb and the power of His blood, when declared in faith, provides protection against hindering, tormenting thoughts that seek entrance.

Scripture offers guidance for checking thoughts. *"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praise worthy think about such things."* Philippians 4:8 NIV

For additional thoughts see S.C.C. Women's Ministry brochures:
Doorways For Sin – ("Difference in Thought and Sin Section")
The Armor of God – ("belt of truth" and the "sword of the Spirit" sections)

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