

TAKING CHARGE OF OUR THINKING

Introduction

- A. Our thought life has a direct bearing on all our other functions. What we think on causes a reaction of our will (choices), our body (desires), and our emotions (feelings). Our thinking will also begin a process that will lead to other thoughts.
- B. To live successfully we must learn how our mind is related to our other functions, and how to "take charge" of our thinking. I'm speaking of the "self-control" of the Holy Spirit (Galatians. 5:23).

I. Your Thoughts are Not You—They Are Simply a Manifestation of One of Your Functions

PERSON	W	Mind (Thoughts)
	I	
	L	Emotions (Feelings)
	L	Body (Desires)

- A. Because of the Fall of man and our sin we have lost control of our functions. Now our functions often control us — as in the alcoholic — or any other form of bondage.
- B. Most if not all of us have two levels of thinking. The second level is almost always negative and condemning. It is extremely important to recognize this and take charge of it. See the work of David Bums in *Feeling Good*, and Aaron Beck in *Cognitive Therapy*.

II. Your Thoughts May Not Be Caused by You.

- A. They may be caused by the "Old Nature."

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries ... and these defile the man.
Mark 7:21,22.

- B. They may be caused by the "World."

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. I John 2:16

- C. They may be caused by "Satan and Wicked Spirits."

- 1. Satan could talk to Eve before she became a sinner.

Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree.... Genesis 3:1-5

- 2. Satan could talk to the Lord Jesus.

And when the tempter came to him, he said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Matthew 4:3

III. Your Thoughts Are Not Authoritative.

- A. Simply having a thought does not mean it indicates who or what you are. To accept your thoughts as authoritative opens one up to profound error.
- B. The presence of thought in our mind does not mean we must obey it.
- C. The presence of a thought does not mean it has come to pass or will come to pass. We do not create reality by our thought life.
- D. The presence of a wrong thought, as in temptation, does not make us sinful or guilty. The Lord Jesus did not become guilty in His temptation.

IV. We Must Learn to Reject Wrong Thoughts.

- A. When a thought is not in harmony with the Bible, and is not what you desire or believe, then you have not originated that thought—it has come from some other source.
 - 1. If we blame ourselves for such a wrong thought, then we give that thought some control over us. When we do that it produces guilt or fear or some desire. If Satan put that thought in our mind in some way, and we accept it and give way to it, then he has some control over us. He is the Deceiver, Accuser, and Father of Lies.
 - 2. It is important to reject wrong thoughts. Make use of the following suggestion:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I take charge of my thinking and reject that thought of _____ . I bring all my thinking into subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ and choose to believe the truth as revealed in the Scriptures.

- B. Learn to monitor your thought life.

If you have any question as to the origin of a thought, ask yourself what effect the thought has on you. Does it edify you or upset you? Does it make it easier to pray or harder? Does it make you fearful or bring peace? if the effect is disturbing, then it is not from God or from yourself (unless you are living out of the will of God). If it were from God, then you would know that.

V. We Must Learn to Think on Correct Thoughts

- A. The Scripture—*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true ... honest ... pure ... lovely ... of good report ... think on these things*. Philippians 4:8.

We must use the Bible as a sword. When we do, then the Holy Spirit can get involved. (Ephesians 6:17).

- B. Make a list of your negative thinking, and dare to correct it from the Bible. Learn to reject and correct your thinking moment by moment.

Stop being afraid of your thought life. The whole process is simply one of your functions, and you can take charge of it, like you take charge of your body. Make some choices as to what you are going to think on. Memorize scripture, and meditate on the verses. Sing worship hymns, and think about the words. Listen to good tapes, and concentrate on the teaching. And in doing all this, reject the wrong thoughts that come to you, correct them with truth and then believe and live that truth.

Conclusion: Use these truths to “take charge” of your spirit, will, emotions, body, marriage, job, etc.

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