

WORDshop” Session 9 - What Are You Thinking?

Before we do anything else, grab a pen and some paper. Yes, we’re writing again, and if you think writing the things you say was difficult and revealing, just wait until we address this topic! Write down the thoughts that you think on a regular basis. Be honest. What runs through your mind night and day? What are thoughts that you think over and over again? What thoughts overwhelm you at night?

Do you have at least ten things written down? If not, keep writing.

Romans 12:2, *“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by **changing the way you think**. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”*

Is the Holy Spirit already showing you some areas where you need to change how you think? If you yield to him and ask for that guidance, he will show you every wrong thought. This is not to condemn us or make us feel guilty. It is to teach us God’s will for our lives. We want that! It is pleasing and perfect!

In the dieting world, we often talk about transformation. There are twelve week transformation challenges everywhere. All kinds of products and plans promise to transform your body. However, in seeking God in all of it, transformation comes from renewing our minds – by allowing God to change how we think. But how do we do that? What does it mean? We need to look at other verses about our mind and thoughts to get a clear picture.

Isaiah 26:3, *“You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose **thoughts** are fixed on you!*

Perfect peace! Do you have perfect peace? If we believe God’s Word, it is possible to have perfect peace. If we don’t have perfect peace, where does the problem lie? Has God let us down? Is it just not possible in some circumstances? Or, does it simply come down to what the Word says? Do we not have perfect peace because we don’t trust God and our thoughts are not fixed on Him? The Word does not offer exceptions. Perfect peace is for all who do those two things, trust in Him and fix our thoughts on Him. Will having peace be transformative? When we fix our thoughts on Him, He literally fixes our thoughts! That, in turn, transforms us. It’s not a matter of just prayer and asking God to do something. He told us what to do and we have a responsibility to take action. **James 1:22-25**, *“**But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don’t obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don’t forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.**”*

So how do we keep our thoughts fixed on God? What does that even mean? We are offered some insight and step by step instruction in **Philippians 4:6-9**, *“**Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.**”*

I’ve read and quoted this passage of Scripture hundreds, if not thousands of times in my life, but am only now beginning to have any understanding of it. I’m finally putting it into practice and it is life changing. We are given specific instructions not to worry. We are told exactly what to think and do so that we can experience peace. We don’t just loop “God” and “Jesus” through our minds. There is so much practical application here.

“Don’t worry about anything”. That pretty much covers it. There are no exceptions that we are given. We are just not to worry. Instead, we are to “pray about everything”. If we are tempted to worry, we are told to pray

instead. To worry means to feel troubled, uneasy or anxious; **torment oneself with or suffer from disturbing thoughts**; fret. This is exactly what happens in depression and even just in the battle with food and weight loss. We torment ourselves with disturbing thoughts. If we are doing it to ourselves, that means we can stop. So, don't worry about anything! Next, pray about everything. That's pretty all inclusive. Talk to God about it ALL. Let God know what you need. Again, no exceptions are made. Then thank Him for ALL He has done. **After** you do these things, His peace will guard your **heart and mind in Christ Jesus**. His peace will guard our emotions and thoughts in the Word. As we continue to read this passage, we will see that we still need to do some work. When it comes to our thinking, we are first told to fix our thoughts on what is "true". Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, (John 14:6) Jesus is also the Word made flesh. (John 1:14) The Word is truth. Thinking on truth will certainly fix our thoughts.

John 17:17, "Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth."

Psalms 119:160, "The very essence of your words is truth; all your just regulations will stand forever."

2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is **true** and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is **right**."

Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. **It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.**"

In order to fix our thoughts on what is true, we need to fix our thoughts on the Word. We need to know it, memorize it and understand it so we can meditate on it when our mind tries to go elsewhere, or when the enemy tries to attack us through our own thoughts. This verse in Hebrews illustrates just how the Word ties to our thoughts and desires. It can expose wrong thoughts and wrong desires before they become wrong actions.

Since we need to fix our thoughts on what is true, let's take a look at some other definitions of true.

true

(trū)

adj. tru·er, tru·est

1.

- a. Consistent with fact or reality; not false or erroneous: fact
- b. Not counterfeit; real or genuine: **authentic**.
- c. Conforming to the characteristics or criteria of a group or type
- d Properly called: *true value*.

2. Reliable; accurate: *a true prophecy*.

5. Rightful; legitimate: *the true heir*.

6.

- a. Exactly conforming to a rule, standard, or pattern
- b. Accurately shaped, fitted or placed (***Are our thoughts accurately shaped by the Word?***)

The Word exposes what thoughts are untrue. Since Satan bombards us with untrue thoughts, it is fundamentally important to know the Word. **Hosea 4:6**, *My people are being destroyed because they don't know me. Since you priests refuse to know me, I refuse to recognize you as my priests. Since you have forgotten the laws of your God, I will forget to bless your children.*" (Rev 1:6 says He's made us priests) If we don't know the Word, we don't fully know Him. We are unable to recognize the lies of the enemy. Satan is the father of lies. (John 8:44) We've already discussed how one lie, a single untrue thought, embraced by Eve, plunged us all into sin. Satan still uses the same tactics. If he captures our thoughts, we are easily led into all kinds of bondage. This is yet another area where we do the enemy's work for him. We should not take **2 Corinthians 2:5** lightly, "*We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ*"

(ESV) Every thought needs to go through the filter of the Word. Is it true? If it is, there will be peace of heart and mind. If it isn't, we need to destroy it and stop thinking it.

Can you identify any lies that you believe and think on regularly? These can be food, diet and weight related or in any other area. Look at your list of thoughts that you wrote. Do you need to add to the list? Are these thoughts true? If not, you need to stop thinking them and replace them with true thoughts – Word thoughts.

I can hear the arguments that still remain. “That’s great, but my circumstances are true too.” “I can’t help but think about what is going on in my life.” “It’s impossible to have peace because of what I am facing.” “I can’t help how I feel.” I had these arguments too, but we are arguing with the Word. The Word will win and transform us by renewing our mind, if we continue to look to it, so let’s do just that.

We’ve looked at thinking what is true and established that the Word is truth, so we need to think on the Word. Just applying this one filter to our thinking would eliminate much of our wrong thinking, but we are given seven more filters to run our thoughts through. There is an “and” between these words, not “or”, indicating that they all need to apply to our thoughts. A thought could be true, but fail to meet some of the other criteria, which would mean we still need to not think on it.

- (1) Think on what is honorable or honest – Deserving honor, respect, or admiration. Not false or misleading; genuine.
- (2) Think on what is right - morally good, justified, or acceptable
- (3) Think on what is pure - free of any contamination, perfectly in tune
- (4) Think on what is lovely – Beautiful especially in a pleasing or charming way. Enjoyable; delightful. Inspiring love or affection. Full of love; loving.
- (5) Think on what is admirable or of good report – worthy of admiration; inspiring approval or respect; excellent.
- (6) Think on what is excellent – exceptionally good; extremely meritorious; superior
- (7) Think on what is worthy of praise - praise is an expression of approval, commendation, or admiration

Look at the thoughts you wrote and begin to run them through this test. Are they thoughts you should be thinking or thoughts that need to be taken captive?

I have known of Philippians 4:8 since I was a child, and as I stated, I have quoted it and read it hundreds of times, but even as I wrote this, I could not remember all eight of the things we are supposed to think on. I certainly had no clear understanding of what each of those things meant or how they applied. Yet it states very clearly in **Philippians 4:9**, “*Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.*” I hadn’t learned or received it and I certainly wasn’t practicing it and doing it. As a result, there were many, many times I did not have peace. It wasn’t because God wasn’t there or failed me in any way. I just was not doing what the Word said to do. I lacked wisdom and understanding. He already made a way for me to control my thoughts and feelings to establish peace. I was begging for supernatural intervention when it was just a spiritual skill I needed to understand and put into practice.

Psalm 139:23-24, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my **anxious thoughts**. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*”