

When Negative Thoughts Are Running Your Life

www.ncvchurch.com

Introduction: How can we build our hearts for God?

- A. The heart is a garden where thoughts are planted, cultivated that, over time, produces a character (heart) that *looks like Jesus*. **(Phil 2:5)**
 - 1. The fool does not *pursue wisdom* and ends up in a predictable place.
 - 2. Keeping a heart for God requires diligence, a *daily series of choices* and a clear path of actions and associates. **(Prov 4:23; 12:27)**
- B. God abundantly provides us with *all we need to succeed* in this! **(2 Tim 3:16-17)**
 - 1. Each of us must *personally make daily choices* to pursue this.
 - 2. At times we can be *pulled back* into destructive patterns that poison our minds.
 - 3. Let our *hearts be open* to the exhortation of God's word. **(Heb 4:11-12)**

I. Every man has a personal battle to fight

- A. A man left alone *will be overcome* and deceived by Satan. **(2 Cor 4:3-4)**
 - 1. How does a man *without* a reverence for God think? **(Prov 1:7)**
 - 2. Without God we naturally pay attention to *that which is negative*. Fear, anger and selfishness can be the "foundation" of our thinking.
 - 3. This is shallow, reactionary and *easily shared and followed*. (Ex. Media)
- B. Our desire to avoid unpleasant outcomes can *drive us to irrational actions*.
 - 1. Have you ever let fear *take over* your thoughts? When this happens these thoughts overpower all others. **(Mt 28:4; Dan 5:6)**
 - 2. There are other times where we *cannot stop thinking* about potential consequences. Worry can come to dominate our lives. **(Mt 6:26-27, 33)**
 - 3. We can put our mind on such an *overload* that both physical and emotional consequences will follow. A seed planted in youth can grow to a mighty oak.

II. How can we cultivate the thoughts of our hearts?

- A. Our God knows how to help us! Start with *fearing and adoring Him*. **(Ps 19:14)**
 - 1. One of the best ways to a peaceful heart is *meditating on the life of Christ*.
 - 2. When we *know God* as the creator, then our view of life is changed. **(Ps 148:5, 14)**
- B. We must choose what *we let grow* in our minds. **(Phil 4:8)**
 - 1. Are you troubled and anxious? Examine your thoughts *one by one* and then compare that to the "mind of Christ." **(1 Cor 2:14-16)**
 - 2. We then must *eliminate certain thoughts*. How? Repeat the thoughts from God that "cast down" the thoughts from Satan.
 - 3. "God has given up on me." "God cannot forgive me for what I have done."
What scripture *answers these thoughts*? **(Rom 5:6-8; 1 Jn 2:1-2)**
- C. We must fight to *protect the times and place* to cultivate the mind. **(Mt 13:22-23)**
 - 1. What do we choose to think about *the most* each day?
"The things that you think about the most will irrationally rise in importance in your mind."

2. Satan's thoughts seek to cast out God's thoughts! **(Rom 8:5; 2 Cor 10:4-5)**
3. You can so dwell on things that even may not be sinful to the point you push God's thoughts out. (Ex. Political "porn" - sports) **(Mk 8:15; Col 3:5)**
4. Daily worship is the primary way we accomplish this! Your prayer life is a mirror image of how much you really worship God. **(Jn 4:23)**

III. How can we be free from the "dungeon" created in our minds?

A. When we become imprisoned by the thoughts in our mind, we become miserable. **(Psa 55:4-6; 109:17-19)**

1. There is an inability to let go of hurtful thoughts and find rest.
2. There may be a loss of appetite or even an escape through overeating.
3. There is a desire to escape that can lead to creating your own reality. **(Psa 55:5-6; 1 Sam 22:8)**

4. You become ego centered and look at all problems only as it relates to you. You find it difficult to understand and listen to others.
5. You often complain and can even make your hurts to be the center of your life. Self-pity becomes a major issue. **(Ps 77:3; 142:3-4)**

B. You become fearful of seeing self and life itself as it really is.

1. Denial becomes a way of life. Loved ones learn the penalty that comes from telling the truth to one who wishes to deny it. **(1 Sam 20:32-33)**
2. You can begin to think that you can read minds and throw away good people.
3. Most addictions have their root in unresolved anger.
4. You can withdraw from the very association you dearly need. It truly becomes an ever-deepening hole that sucks you in further.

IV. How Jesus frees us from the thoughts of Satan

A. He asks us to choose to learn from Him. **(Jn 8:31-32; Mt 11:28-30)**

1. One of the most common mistakes we make is when we want to try to change someone against their will. **(1 Cor 3:5-7)**

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.

2. Learn how to defeat repeating patterns of failure. Many experience heartbreak and failure and do the same thing over and over. **(Prov 27:22)**
3. Why do people do this? Stubbornness, idealism and fear are some reasons.
4. We likely have learned faulty patterns of thinking. (Alcoholism, divorce, single parent, tragedy early in life)

B. We have the fellowship and council of God's people. **(Heb 10:23-25)**

1. What a blessing it is to have brethren to share our lives with. **(1 Cor 12:25-26)**
2. I often need to get my thinking in order, and I need someone to listen to me.
3. God has made wonderful provisions; great joy will be the fruit! **(Jn 15:11-13)**

Conclusion: God knows us and knows how to free us to an abundant life.